The Policy of Inclusion and the Support of Primary School Children with Dyslexia: A Comparative Study of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

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Abstract

All people are not born equally. The World Conference in Special Education which was held in Salamanca in 1994, sought to make inclusive education the norm. The aspiration is arguably noble. However, it would appear that defining the meaning of inclusive education poses difficulties. Over twenty five years have elapsed since the conference. This thesis reviews the support for primary children with dyslexia from the perspective of inclusion and offers the opportunity to explore the perception of teachers, parents and past pupils around inclusion and segregation. The literature review initially considers the theme of special education in five jurisdictions. The special education theme is then narrowed, focusing specifically on the area of dyslexia. Finally, the documentary evidence relating to the Republic of Ireland (ROI) Northern Ireland (NI) becomes the sole focal point where the policy of inclusion and the support of primary school children with dyslexia are carefully studied. The literature review provided the impetus for a comparative study using an online survey and a comparative case study involving participants from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The survey and the comparative case study employed in this research generated considerable data which was analysed qualitatively. In addition, the survey produced large amounts of statistics which were used as a means of triangulation. Eight thematic nodes from the survey expanded into an additional four thematic nodes from the comparative case study. The survey was conducted with 174 participating teachers and the comparative case study consisted of 21 semi structured interviews involving teachers, parents and past pupils. When the entire data was carefully analysed, twelve recommendations emerged. It would appear that the quality of teaching support for primary children in both the ROI and NI lacks a coordinated approach, where it is up to individual boards of management and boards of governors to organise and train school staff specifically in the area of special education.

Only 53.5 per cent of the participants in the survey had received any training in the support of children with dyslexia. The detection of children with dyslexia appeared haphazard with only 28 per cent of participants reporting that their school used dyslexia screening tests.

The findings from the case study illustrate the contrast in support which is available to primary children with dyslexia. In the ROI, children with a diagnosis of severe dyslexia who meet the required criteria have the option of attending either one of four special schools or twenty special units for children with a specific disability including dyslexia. The policy of the department of education and skills in the ROI encourages primary schools not to withdraw children from their classrooms wherever possible which is in contrast to the existence of four schools and twenty units where children are removed from their mainstream peers for up to two years and in exceptional circumstances this can be extended up to three years. Withdrawing children was the norm in NI and the findings from this research suggest that perhaps children prefer to be withdrawn.

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Abbreviations

BDA	British Dyslexia Association
BERA	British Educational Research Association
COP	Code of Practice
DEIS	Developing Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DFS	Dyslexia Friendly School
EA	Education Authority
EHC	Education for all Handicapped Children Act (United States of America)
EHC	Education Health and Care Plan (United Kingdom)
ELB	Education and Library Board
EPSEN	Special Educational Needs Act 2014
GAM	General Allocation Model
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDA	International Dyslexia Association
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IQM	Inclusion Quality Mark
LSC	Learning Support Coordinator (Title to replace SENCO or Special Needs Co-ordinator
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NI	Northern Ireland
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Study
PISA	Programme for International Assessment
ROI	Republic of Ireland
RtI	Response to Intervention Approach
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDIST	Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal
SER	Special Education Resources
SERC	Special Education Review Committee
SESS	Special Educational Needs Support Service
SET	Special Education Teacher
SIMS	School Information Management System
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Sciences
SSSD	Special School for Children with a Specific Learning Difficulty

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

> Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights. Within the field of education this is reflected in the development of strategies that seek to bring about a genuine equalization of opportunity (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994, p.11).

If we accept that inclusion and participation are paramount to human dignity one could suggest that our schools need to be inclusive schools. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) note that

> …the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is premised upon the notion that all children should learn together where possible, and that 'ordinary schools' must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, whilst also having a continuum of support and services to match their needs (ibid, p. 100).

Hodkinson and Vickerman (ibid) do not imply that all children need to be educated together in all circumstances thereby accepting that there may be circumstances where some children need to be educated in a location other than an 'ordinary school'. Hodkinson and Vickerman (ibid) refer to the requirement of being able to recognise the needs of the children and once recognised, then responding to those 'diverse needs'. One could argue that the requirement of recognising and responding to the 'diverse needs of the students' could place a considerable responsibility on schools. Equally, the need to provide all the various supports to the students might be challenging. Irrespective of our personal viewpoint O'Hanlon observes that it is

> apparent that educational inclusion is quickly gaining momentum throughout the world as a comprehensive ideal in education: that no child or young person be excluded from mainstream schooling because of perceived learning difficulties, cultural, racial, class, religious, or behavioural differences. (O' Hanlon, 2009, p.107)

This chapter introduces the research. At the outset, the rationale for the research is discussed. The aims and objectives of the research are set down. This is followed by providing a context to the research which includes background information regarding the research instruments. My philosophical approach is addressed. Finally, the structure of the thesis is explained. This thesis reflects on the development of the policy of inclusion in primary education with particular emphasis on the support

available to primary children with a diagnosis of dyslexia in Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI). The research of Nugent (2008) and O'Brien (2017) considers the perception of the children attending a special school in the ROI where pupils with a diagnosed specific learning difficulty including dyslexia have the possibility of transferring from a mainstream/ordinary primary school for a period of up to two years. In exceptional circumstances, the children can enrol for a third year. The existence of special schools such as the schools involved in the research of Nugent (ibid) and O'Brien (ibid) could be arguably surprising given that over 25 years have elapsed since the Salamanca Statement. My research seeks to explore the experiences of teachers, parents and past pupils in a small scale project on the themes of inclusion, segregation, training and school support.

Rationale

The rationale or justification for my research is derived from the Literature Review. The existence of four public special schools in the ROI which are reserved for primary children with a specific learning difficulty including dyslexia (SSSD) in the school year 2019/2020 is arguably at odds or in conflict with an internationally accepted push for inclusive education as evidenced by the adoption of the Salamanca Statement (Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994). Over 25 years have elapsed and yet there would appear to be a continuing need to withdraw children with a diagnosis of dyslexia from ordinary or mainstream primary schools. Over the border in the province of Northern Ireland, no similar category of special school for children with a specific learning difficulty exists. However, there was evidence of the existence of Dyslexia Friendly Schools (DFS). In addition, there were primary schools which had been awarded an Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM). Beck et al (2017) discussed 'Dyslexia Policy and Practice' in the ROI and NI from the perspective of professionals and parents. Beck et al (2015) had conducted comparative research using semi-structured interviews during 2013 to 2015, which included participants from the ROI and NI and explored the developments in the area of dyslexia support in NI since the publication of the Dyslexia Reports (2002). While Beck et al had sought the perspectives of professionals and parents; I noted that the perspectives of the children or past pupils had been excluded. Nugent (2008) had conducted research which included pupils

attending the SSSD and O'Brien (2017) had adopted a similar approach. Building on the existing research, there was a need to conduct a small scale research project which would address the opinions and perspectives of primary teachers, parents and past pupils around the policy of inclusion. In addition, the viewpoints of a number of peripatetic teachers would be included. The survey was reserved for primary teachers or peripatetic teachers who were teaching in either the ROI or NI. A comparative case study was formed around the framework of an SSSD, a DFS and a school which had been awarded an IQM. I adopted a reflexive approach, continually and mindfully observing my interactions with the participants with the objective of operating without bias or preconceived assumptions. I wanted to consider the argument for inclusion and or segregation within the delivery of primary education.

Research Aims and Objectives

My concerns regarding the policy of inclusion and the teaching of children with dyslexia in primary school were instrumental in the formation of my research aim and research objectives.

Aim

To explore the perceptions regarding the delivery of special education provision for children with dyslexia in primary schools in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Objectives

- to examine policy documentation with regard to special education provision in primary schools in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland;

- to undertake a survey of teachers' perspective about special education provision, including a review of current practices and knowledge

- using a comparative case study explore the perspectives of teachers, parents and past pupils regarding the special education provision for dyslexia in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

As my research was small scale, I needed to limit the scope of the research and to confine and refine my aims to ensure that I was setting realistic goals. As such, I decided to review the policy of inclusion within primary schools in just five jurisdictions. I discuss the rationale for choosing the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Alberta in Canada, Finland and the Republic of Ireland which are

explained in Chapter Two. The focus for the research is further refined through an exploration of policy documentation of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) with regard to primary children with special educational needs. There is a particular emphasis on the area of children with dyslexia. The documentary analysis formed the backdrop to a comparative study to the support of children with dyslexia in the ROI and NI.

Research Questions

The research questions which were addressed in this project are:

- What is the perception of the participants on the delivery of education with regard to inclusive education policies?
- What strategies are used by primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to teach children with dyslexia?
- To what extent and in what ways do the participants consider their teaching strategies meet the needs of the learners?
- Are there findings from the case study that would suggest that teaching children in a segregated setting is justified?

Several independent schools dedicated to dyslexia are complementing the work being carried out by education authorities across the world' (Reid, 2011, p. 3). Read (ibid) mentions the Fraser Academy in Vancouver, Canada as an example (p.3). Schools which are dedicated to the support of children with dyslexia exist. What marks the uniqueness of the SSSD in the ROI is the fact that it is a publicly funded or state school. The inclusion of the SSSD was central to the research design where the support provided to primary children with dyslexia at the SSSD and three of its feeder schools were compared with the support provided by a DFS and IQM school in NI.

Research Context: General

This research project was conducted between September 2017 and June 2018. Once the Literature Review had been completed research questions evolved and a research design was constructed. A pilot study was undertaken which involved both an online

survey and two semi-structured interviews. Following the pilot study and the analysis of the pilot findings it was necessary to make several telephone calls and to send many emails in an effort to obtain a willingness and informed consent from the participants to take part in the research project. I was very fortunate to receive the co-operation of school secretaries in the ROI and NI in my quest to complete my quota of 174 teachers who took part in the survey. I travelled to meet the principals of the participating primary schools in the comparative case study in advance of undertaking the research. I needed to explain the purpose of the research in person. Special education in terms of delivery and provision was undergoing change in both jurisdictions.

In preparation for the comparative case study, it was necessary to inform myself about the three categories of primary school which were central to the research. In addition, I examined the websites of the SSSD and three of its feeder primary schools, as well as the websites of the participating DFS and IQM School. I also familiarised myself with school reports from DES and DENI. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) provide an outline for the four special schools in the ROI which provide an educational intervention for children with a specific learning disability including dyslexia.

> Four special primary schools for pupils with specific learning
> disability, including dyslexia have been established. Three of these
> schools are situated in Dublin with one in Cork. The four schools
> cater for approximately 250 pupils. The criteria for enrolment are
> the same as for special classes in designated special classes. As in
> the case with special classes, these schools have a ratio of 11:1.
> Placement in these schools is for one or two years, after which they
> return to mainstream education (NCSE, 2019).

NCSE mention that at present there are thirteen special classes attached to mainstream primary schools in the ROI with seven of these special classes based in Dublin. The chosen special school (SSSD) had an enrolment of 63 pupils, seven primary teachers, six special needs assistants (SNAs) and had access to a part-time speech and language therapist. There was an outline of the Wilson Reading Programme (WRS) on the school website. 'As a structured literacy program based on phonological-coding research, WRS directly and systematically teaches the structure of the English Language' (SSSD website, 2019). The chosen three feeder schools to the SSSD came from three different categories of primary school in the ROI, namely

a Developing Equality of Opportunity School 1 (DEIS 1), Developing Equality of Opportunity School 2 (DEIS 2) and a primary school located in an affluent area which did not qualify for any DEIS status. The latter school was a single sex boys school while the two DEIS Schools were mixed cohort schools. The DEIS Schools initiative was launched by DES in 2005, and it is a 'national programme aimed at addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities' (education.ie, 2019). Schools in the DEIS 1 category receive the highest category of support with the schools in the DEIS 2 band receiving a lower amount of support.

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) offer two different awards which are 'designed to recognise and celebrate best practice in supporting students with dyslexia' (BDA website, 2019). There is the Literacy Leap Certificate Framework and the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Award for Schools. The latter award recognises 'good practice' in the areas of 'leadership and management, quality of learning, the learning environment' and partnerships' (BDA website, 2019). The chosen DFS had been awarded the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Award for Schools. The DFS had 16 teachers which included one nursery teacher and one learning support teacher, three classroom assistants and three special needs assistants. There were 337 pupils in the school excluding the children attending the nursery class. The special educational needs organiser at the school explained what being a dyslexia friendly school meant to her.

> All of the teachers are trained in recognising the signs of dyslexia and using good inclusive practices in their classrooms to ensure that dyslexic children are taught in a way that they can learn. Our parents are also trained in recognising dyslexia and how to help their children at home (Mary, DFS, 2018).

The second participating primary school from NI had been awarded an Inclusion Quality Mark.

'The Inclusive Quality Mark provides schools with a nationally recognised framework to guide their inclusion journey. The IQM team helps schools evaluate and measure how they are performing; empowering them to improve and grow' (The Inclusion Quality Mark, 2019). The principal at the participating IQM School was asked by me to explain what the IQM meant. 'Well, it's a quality mark for quality of the inclusion within the school, so that involves dyslexia but it also involves the

range of needs' (Quinn, IQM School, 2018). Quinn explained that their school had been awarded 'the flagship status for inclusion and she further added that there are eight different sections to an award from the IQM.

> There are eight different sections. You have to provide evidence for each section of where you are at, best practice areas of strength and then areas for improvement. And then every year, they come and assess you again (Quinn, IQM School, 2018).

The IQM School had been assessed as meeting the standard for the Flagship School Award. The school had 206 pupils. Similar to the DFS the IQM School had a learning support. Principal Quinn confirmed that it was very unusual for primary schools in NI to have a learning support teacher.

The mainstream/ordinary primary schools in the ROI have access to special education teachers (SET). The Department of Education (DES) informs the individual boards of management of their allocation of SET and the background to the criteria for allocation is set out in Circular 007/2019 (education.ie, 2019). The SET and special need allocation of every primary school is available on the NCSE website. The boards of management appoint their allocation of SET. The education support service in the ROI is in contrast to the service provided in NI.

> The Education Authority is responsible for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education services are available to meet the needs of children and young people, and support for the provision of efficient and effective youth services (Education Authority, 2019).

The website for the Education Authority (EA) provides an outline regarding a literacy service which states that it 'provides support for pupils, schools and parents in the area of specific learning difficulties (SpLDs)/dyslexia (Education Authority, 2019). Support is provided in the areas of professional development for schools, advice and guidance and 'individual or group interventions from pupils referred by the EA Psychology Service' (ibid).Five peripatetic teachers who worked as part of the Literacy Service participated in the survey and I decided to interview a peripatetic teacher as a representative of the peripatetic service in NI. The experience of one parent with a diagnosis of dyslexia is included as a contrast to the reported experiences of the parents and past pupils who participated from the DFS and IQM School. Her child did not get the opportunity to avail of peripatetic support.

The participants from the ROI were teachers working in one of three categories of primary school, namely, DEIS band 1, DEIS band 2 or schools other than DEIS schools and they worked in schools with either one of three ethos as in Roman Catholic, Protestant or Gaelscoil. The primary schools could be urban or rural, single sex or mixed schools. The participants from NI were working in either of five categories, namely, controlled schools, maintained Roman Catholic schools, Gaelscoileanna, grant maintained integrated schools and controlled integrated schools. Gaelscoileanna primary schools teach through the medium of Irish. The primary schools could be urban or rural and single sex or mixed schools. The employment authority of controlled schools differ from that of maintained schools, be they Roman Catholic or Gaelscoil. Controlled Schools are under the management of a board of governors and the employment authority is the Education Authority.

> Controlled (nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar schools) are under the management of the schools Board of Governors and the employing authority is the Education Authority (Department of Education, 2019).

While the maintained Roman Catholic schools and Gaelscoileanna have a board of governors, the employment authority is the Council for Maintained Schools (Clarke and O'Donoghue, 2016, p. 82).

> Integrated education brings children and staff from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, together in one school. Integrated Schools ensure that children from diverse backgrounds are educated together (Department of Education, 2019).

Clark and O'Donoghue remark that while the controlled schools tend to be supported by the Protestant community, integrated schools 'attempt a balanced enrolment of pupils from both traditions' but though they are gaining in popularity the 'sector remains small'(ibid). In 2015, there were 557,107 children attending primary school in the ROI with a workforce of 34,576 primary teachers. By 2020, 12, 852 primary teachers worked as Special Education Teachers (SET) in the ROI. By comparison in NI, there were 168,669 children attending primary with a workforce of 8,165.6 primary teachers.

Research Context: Personal Journey and Positionality

I worked as a primary teacher in the ROI for 34 years. For sixteen years of my teaching service, I worked as a learning support teacher. I worked as a teaching principal for fifteen years. I completed an elective in remedial teaching as part of my initial teacher training and during the course of my teaching career; I completed a post graduate diploma in remedial education as well as a Master's in Special Education. I worked as a home school co-ordinator for a year and this experience heightened my awareness of the anxiety and frustration which was experienced by parents and their children around the issue of homework. I took early retirement from primary teaching in December 2017. I was acutely aware that my experiences of teaching in primary schools could influence or impact on my research. To offset the risk of bias, I took great care to locate participants that were unknown to me. I knew that I would need to phrase all of the questions in both the survey and the interview with objectivity. My knowledge of working as a teacher and as someone who had worked closely alongside parents and pupils informed me but my experience as a researcher allowed me to assume the role of interested observer.

Philosophical Approach

One could question what is meant by philosophy. Pring provides a succinct definition when he states that '…philosophy is in great part a quest for clarity and meaning where so often language holds us captive' (ibid, 2012, p.25).

> Philosophical theses in ethics, epistemology, philosophy of mind
> and political philosophy permeate every aspect of research into
> educational policy, practice and research though this is seldom
> recognised. It is the job of the philosopher to make explicit what is
> implicit in educational thinking (ibid, p. 28).

Pring (p.29) discusses what constitutes as an educated person. I was reared in an environment where gaining a third level education was paramount. It is arguably true that one can be an educated person and not have attended a third level college. Pring questions what knowledge is to be acquired if one is to become knowledgeable (ibid). Bryman (2012) refers to epistemology as concerning 'what should pass as acceptable knowledge' (p. 690). In considering my epistemological stance, I concluded that the positivist notion 'that all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by observation and experiment' was at odds

with my understanding of knowledge (Cohen et al, 2011, p. 7). Pring suggests that governments 'talk of evidence based policy but too often evidence is confused with proof, and proof is too often seen as leading to certainty(p. 29). I found myself aligned with anti-positivism although I have a respect for the acquisition of accurate, reliable statistics wherever possible as a means of triangulation.

I have a subjective approach to social science. Cohen et al (2012) mention the difficulty of applying positivism to

> the study of human behaviour where the immense complexity of human nature and the elusive and intangible quality of social phenomena contrast strikingly with the order and regularity of the natural world (ibid, p. 7).

From an ontological stance, I am of the opinion that reality is in the perception of the individual. Cohen et al constructed a table to reflect 'alternative bases for interpreting reality' and they refer to the' philosophical basis' of the 'subjectivist 'as one of idealism where 'the world exists but different people construe it in different ways' (2012, p. 8). It would appear that I am an idealist in this regard. Therefore this study adopted an interpretivist or non-positivist approach which reflects my subjectivist concept of social reality (see chapter 3 for further details).

Structure of Thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One provides a backdrop to the research and introduces the aims and research questions. The research design is outlined and background information regarding the participating schools and the range of participating teachers, parents and past pupils are explained. The context of the research is provided. Chapter Two initially looks at the history of special education with particular reference to five chosen jurisdictions. The chapter then reflects on the area of dyslexia with the emphasis on the support of children with dyslexia in primary schools in the ROI and NI through an examination of a variety of documentation pertaining to these two jurisdictions. Chapter Three sets out my philosophical approach and methodology which includes why I undertook both a survey and a comparative case study. Chapter Four sets out the findings of both the survey and the comparative case study. Five analyses the findings under twelve thematic nodes and Chapter Six presents my recommendations based on the research

findings and my suggestions for future research. I have also included a Reflective Account.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of my research was to gather accurate perceptions of representative primary teachers, parents and past pupils with regard to inclusion and segregation in the area of dyslexia support for primary children in the ROI and NI. A secondary purpose referred to the training of primary teachers both at initial teacher training and as professional development and following the completion of Chapter Two, the theme of teacher training came to the fore. As the comparative case study progressed, the issue of homework became more contentious. I had not included a question relating to homework in the survey but I would like to return to undertake further research relating to homework and children with dyslexia in the future.

Chapter Two   Literature Review

Introduction

This review is divided into five sections. The review begins with an exploration of the history of special education from earliest times up to the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality in 1994. The second section focuses on social justice, the concept of inclusion and the evolution of the policy of inclusion. The third section explores special education in five chosen jurisdictions, namely, England, the United States of America, Finland, the province of Alberta, Canada and the Republic of Ireland. These jurisdictions have been carefully chosen. Canada and the United States have been included as 'the inclusion movement originated in Canada and the United States' (Griffin and Shevlin 2007, p.82). Finland was chosen as the children in Finland appear to be performing particularly well in the Programme for International Assessment (PISA) in 2009 in the area of literacy. (ibid, p.14) Finland was placed third behind Shanghai-China and Korea (OECD, 2010). In the PISA findings for reading in 2018, the Republic of Ireland was ranked fifth, marginally behind Finland (The Irish Times, 2019). The United Kingdom and the Republic were included because of their closeness in geographical and economic terms and the fact that both jurisdictions have been working jointly in the area of dyslexia (Report of the Task Force, 2001, p.vi). The fourth section focuses on dyslexia and a comparative of the already selected five different jurisdictions with respect to the delivery of educational support to primary children with dyslexia. The fifth and final section provides a comparative documentary analysis pertaining to the delivery of special education to primary children in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland with a particular emphasis on the educational support of primary children with dyslexia.

Background to the History of Special Education

'There is a general agreement that policy making in the area of special education can be divided into three phases: segregated provision, integrated/mainstreaming and inclusion' (Griffin and Shevlin, 2009, p.74). It would be challenging to document the history of special education in detail but an overview could provide a context to the evolution of the policy of inclusion.

> Throughout recorded history, people with disabilities have occupied a position on the margins of society. There have been examples of enlightened practice informed by humane motives, but these are far outweighed by the consistent attempts to exclude, control and regulate people with disabilities within society. Disabled people have been seen as 'other' and often as a threat to the well-being of the community (Griffin and Shevlin, 2011, p. 11).

Griffin and Shevlin (2011) cite Braddock and Parish (2001) stating that they 'provide a comprehensive overview of the historical experiences of people with disabilities' (Griffin and Shevlin, 2011, p. 12). Griffin and Shevlin (2011) refer to the practice of infanticide in ancient Greece and Rome when disabled children were sacrificed as 'an appeasement to the gods' (Griffin and Shevlin, 2011, p.12). In medieval times, Griffin and Shevlin (2011) mention the connection of disability with 'supernatural or demonic causes' (Griffin and Shevlin, 2011, p.12). The list of disabilities supplied by Griffin and Shevlin include 'general learning disabilities' (Griffin and Shevlin, 2011, p12). By the early modern period, Griffin and Shevlin (2011) note the shift from the supernatural as the root cause of disability, the attempts to 'cure various disabilities' and the gradual alignment of disability with poverty. (p.12). Griffin and Shevlin (2011) mention the 'institutional segregation of people with mental illness and those with learning disabilities' in the nineteenth century, the 'revival of freak shows' and the influence of the eugenics movement 'from the end of the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth century with the supposed 'threat to the purity of the gene pool' posed by people with disabilities (p.12-13).

Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) suggest that the late eighteenth century produced what they refer to as the 'embryonic beginnings' of special education provision, which was to develop into the 'integrative practice in the 1970s and early 1980s. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) note that the introduction of the 1870 Elementary Education Act (Education Scotland Act 1872) introduced 'compulsory state schooling for all' and though special education provision was not specifically included, 'it did nonetheless create a basic right for all children to be educated within local schools. (p.58). Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) discuss the challenges posed by including all children. Ordinary schools depended on 'payment by results' and since there was no financial benefit to the school for including the less able, this gave rise to a 'rapid expansion of a segregated school system' (p.61). Separation as the

dominant motif remained a fixture of special education until at least the 1960s (Winzer, 2009, p.17).

Segregation was followed by integration although the alternate term of mainstreaming is prevalent in the United States of America. Hall (1997) mentions that the term 'mainstreaming has become synonymous with the term integration' (ibid, p. 118). Hall goes on to discuss the problems surrounding defining mainstreaming.

> Some have argued that it means merely dumping children to fend for unsupported in a largely unwelcoming or even a hostile school environment, while others say it means carefully integrating pupils with extensive planning and appropriate supports. The reality is that mainstreaming, like integration, means hugely different things to different people, and hence, as a term, is about as unhelpful.
> (Hall, 1997, p.118)

Griffin and Shevlin (2007), offer a definition of integration, stating that 'integration has been generally conceived of as making additional arrangements (teaching/support/assistive technology) for a specific group of pupils labelled as having special educational needs, though there was minimal change to the overall school organisation' (p.84). Griffin and Shevlin also remark that the terms of integration and inclusion 'are often used interchangeably' despite the fact that the two concepts differ in both philosophy and practice. (p.84). Griffin and Shevlin quote the 1994 report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development where it was noted that integration had been 'a goal of education for many countries and is a significant trend in almost all OECD countries' (2007, p.78). While no internationally accepted definition of integration had been adopted and the practice of integration varied between countries, nonetheless 'there appeared to be widespread agreement that the integration of pupils with disabilities into the mainstream of education was desirable' (2007, p.78). However, Griffin and Shevlin (2007) also remark that by the 'late 1980s and early 1990s there was growing dissatisfaction which was perceived as inadequate progress in realising the goals of the integration movement' (p.82).

The Salamanca Statement followed a World Conference in Special Needs Education, which was held in Spain in 1994. This conference was held in the same year as that of the OECD which acknowledged the 'goal' of integration. It called on governments

to 'adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there were compelling reasons for doing otherwise.' (Salamanca Statement, p. ix) Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) note that at the conference, 25 international organisations and 92 governments 'developed' the 'Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action,' and they refer to Clough (1998) when they describe the statement as 'bold and dynamic' where there was a the call for inclusion 'to become the norm.' (ibid, p. 73)

Social Justice

> Social justice is concerned not in the narrow focus of what is just for the individual alone, but what is just for the social whole. Given the current global condition, social justice must include an understanding of the interactions within and between a multitude of peoples. (Capeheart and Milovanovic, 2007, p.2)

The above reference from Capeheart notes the relevance of social justice to each and every one of us. The website of Pachamama Alliance provides a brief history of social justice.

> Social Justice as a concept arose in the early 19th century during the Industrial Revolution and subsequent civil revolutions throughout Europe, which aimed to create more egalitarian societies and remedy capitalistic exploitation of human labor. (Pachamama Alliance, 2020)

While the initial focus of social justice advocates primarily concerned 'property, capital and distribution of wealth' the focus has shifted over time, and since the middle of the twentieth century, 'social justice had expanded from being primarily concerned with economics to include other spheres of social life to include the environment, race, gender, and other causes and manifestations of inequality' (ibid). Burchardt and Craig (2008) note that 'theories of social justice makes use of a number of other concepts that perhaps have more familiar currency in social policy debate, such as inequality, rights and citizenship' (ibid, p. 5).

> The concept of the social contract and social justice has been with us for centuries. More recent investigations into the nature of social justice have been developed by Mill, Rawls, Habermas, Dworkin, Gilligan, and Clement. Each attempts to develop principles of a just social order. (Capeheart and Milovanovic, 2007, p. 18)

Wolff (2008) discusses and compares the theories of social justice of Rawls, Dworkin and Sens. Each of the three theories appear to have inadequacies. For example, Rawls theory omits the need to investigate why those less well off 'came to be in that position' before allocating resources to them' (ibid, p.19). Wolff (ibid) explains that if we do not investigate the reason for their poor economic circumstances, then we may be rewarding insolence or the absence of an effort to succeed. Wolff (ibid) has concerns 'about Dworkin's treatment of disability' (p.25). Wolff (ibid) notes that Dworkin relies on 'a medical model of disability, where disabled people have an entitlement to 'a financial remedy.' Wolff considers that the 'cash transfer' should only be part of the requirement. (ibid, p.25) Wolff (ibid) mentions two issues concerning Sen's theory, namely, 'understanding the meaning of equality' and the absence of a 'definitive list of human functionings' (ibid, p.23). Wolff states that a functioning is 'what a person can do or be' and Dworkin theorises that each society should draw up their own 'account of functioning' (ibid, p.23). The difficulty regarding Sen's 'understanding of the meaning of equality' appears to stem from the measuring of 'functionings against each other' which is at odds with a pluralistic viewpoint (ibid, p.23).According to Capeheart and Milovanovic, Rawls would appear to accept that inequality can be justified once the 'worst off benefit maximally' (2007, p.20).

Torres and Barber (2017) adopt the theory of social justice as proposed by Gewirtz (2006). They suggest that social justice is composed of 'three constructs' as in distributive justice, recognitional justice and associational justice. Distributive justice concerns 'rules by which goods and cultural and social resources are distributed among members of society' (ibid, p.13). Recognitional justice incorporates respect and 'non-denomination in society' and associational justice is concerned with 'opportunities for democratic participation' and giving a 'voice to the disadvantaged' (ibid, p.13). Torres and Barber explain that our special education system is failing where the focus is on 'access' and a distribution of resources.

> It ignores deeper concerns about the actual quality and outcomes of
> special education, issues of over and under identification, the
> stigma and differential treatment experienced by students with
> disabilities, and the relative lack of power that families and
> students themselves have in the special education referral and
> placement process. (ibid, p.13)

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Torres and Barber (ibid) argue against a reliance on distributive justice. The argument of Torres and Barber arguably illustrate the importance and relevance of the role of philosophy and the development of policy by governments.

> Human development, human rights, and social inclusion are currently among the main challenges for democratic life. John Dewey understood democracy not only as an individual and social task but also as a moral commitment to human growth deeply related to education. (Striano, 2017, abstract)

Striano (ibid) reminds us of the challenges that society faces in the quest for 'democratic life.' There would appear to be a general consensus in the aspiration for social justice but defining what social justice means is arguably challenging. The quest for an egalitarian society and the elimination of inequality is arguably laudable. The argument for tolerance for difference is evident in the passing of legislation in areas such as sexual preference although acceptance is not universal. Atkinson (2015) notes that on hearing the term inequality, 'they think in terms of achieving equality of opportunity' (ibid, p.9). Atkinson (ibid) quotes Richard Tawney regarding what he considers to be an entitlement owed to all. Tawney suggests that everyone should be 'equally enabled to make the best of such powers as they possess' (ibid, p. 9).

The Concept of Inclusion

Inclusivism is 'the practice of trying to incorporate diverse or unreconciled elements into a single system' (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2005, p.876). The definition is perhaps helpful in that it appears to imply a challenging process by acknowledging the existence of 'diverse or unreconciled elements'. Ainscow (2020) mentions that the terms equity and inclusion 'can be confusing and mean different things to different people' (ibid, p.9). 'Put simply, if there is not a shared understanding of the intended direction, progress will be difficult. There is, therefore, a need for agreed definitions of these concepts' (ibid, p.9). Ainscow adds that the principles of equity and inclusion 'should be seen as principles that inform all aspects of educational policy' (ibid, p.9). Ainscow (ibid) explains that in some countries inclusive education is concerned with including children with disabilities 'within general education settings'. However, international approaches to inclusive education are evolving and…

> it is increasingly seen more broadly as a principle that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners. It presumes that the aim of inclusive education is to eliminate social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability. (ibid, p.9)

Ainscow notes the belief that 'education is a basic human right' and that as such, education 'is the foundation of a more just society' (ibid, p.9). If inclusive education seeks to remove social exclusion it arguably suggests that special schools and special units should be phased out and Ainscow refers to Lauchalan and Fadda (2012) when he states that the 'Italian government passed a law in 1977 that closed all special schools, units and other non-inclusive provision' (2020, p.14). The challenge suggested by Ainscow might be daunting and the existence of four special primary schools in the Republic of Ireland for children with specific learning difficulty unclosing dyslexia is surely at odds with this concept of inclusion.

The Evolution of the Policy of Inclusion

Griffin and Shevlin (2011) observe that the movement for inclusion emerged in the mid to late 1980s and that this movement originated in Canada and the United States (p.82). Hodkinson and Vickerman trace the ideology of full inclusion back 'to the world –wide pressure for civil rights during the 1960s and 1970s (2009, p.80). Following the adoption of the Salamanca Statement, Clough and Corbett (2000) observe that there was ambiguity regarding the meaning of the term inclusive education, and so politicians, bureaucrats and academics can interpret inclusion differently (Clough and Corbett, 2000, p.6). Terzi (2010) states that 'while there seems to be a general consensus on the value of inclusion, there is little agreement on what this actually means in an educational context.' (Terzi, 2010, p.2-3) Similarly, Huag (2017) points out that 'in spite of an overriding normative consensus, it is not possible to find one institutionalized definition of inclusive education' (Huag, 2017, p.206). Despite the absence of one universally accepted definition of inclusive education it could be argued that an exploration of a selection of definitions could prove worthwhile. Terzi comments that for some, 'inclusion is seen as a process towards the aim of an inclusive society,' where 'every child would be educated in mainstream schools' (2010, p.3). Haug (2017) illustrates how 'inclusion is strongly value and ideology driven, in the same category as other similar concepts such as

democracy and social justice.' (Haug, 2017, p.206) Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) discuss the concept of full inclusion.

> Within full inclusion it is generally accepted that all children
> should be together in terms of location, need, curriculum and
> attitudes, with no tolerance of or justification for the maintenance
> of a separate segregated system of education. (Hodkinson and
> Vickerman, 2009, p.80)

Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) draw the connection between the push for civil rights during the 1960s and the 1970s and the concept of full inclusion (p.80). Barton (1998) explains that inclusive education 'is not merely providing access into a mainstream school for pupils who have previously been excluded' nor does it include 'dumping those pupils in an unchanged mainstream system' (p.85). Barton is seeking 'the removal of all exclusionary practice' (Barton, 1998, p.85). One may agree with Barton when he states that inclusion is more than merely placing the child with a special educational need or SEN in a mainstream setting. When he argues for 'the removal of all exclusionary practice,' perhaps he is looking for the impossible? As Obiakor et al (2012) remark, 'the practicality of full inclusion is debatable.' (ibid, 2012, p. 487)

However, Warnock (2005) suggests a different scenario and quotes the definition of inclusion put forward by the National Association of Head Teachers in their Policy paper on Special Schools in 2003.

> Inclusion is a process that maximises the entitlement of all pupils
> to a broad, and stimulating curriculum, which is delivered in the
> environment that will have the greatest impact on their learning.
> All schools, whether special or mainstream, should reflect a culture
> in which the institution adapts to meet the needs of its pupils and it
> is provided with the resources for this to happen. (Warnock, 2005,
> p.41)

Warnock (2010) asserts that 'inclusion should mean being involved in a common enterprise of learning, rather than being necessarily under the same roof.' (Warnock, 2010, p. 32) There would appear to be a conflict of opinion, between the goals of full inclusion in a mainstream setting versus the acceptance that inclusion can also accommodate an element of segregation. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) refer to 'locational inclusion,' where it would appear that merely being educated together is more important than the attitudes or environments that each child is subjected to' (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009, p.77). Haug (2017) notes that 'inclusive education

faces challenges connected to ideals and actions,' and he notes that it is difficult to be against or to criticise this concept of inclusion (p.206).

Mittler (2000) discusses the concept of inclusion in terms of what he describes as a shifting of paradigms, 'from defect to social model' (p.3). Mittler notes that the 'defect or within-child model is based on the assumption that the origins of learning difficulties lie largely within the child' (p.3). Mittler, (2000) refers to the practise of diagnosing through 'a thorough assessment of the child's strengths and weaknesses' (p.3). Mittler (2000) refers to Campbell and Oliver (1996) when he illustrates the sharp contrast between the defect and social model. In the social model, society and its institutions are described as 'oppressive, discriminatory and disabling' and thus it is incumbent on society 'to remove the obstacles to the participation of disabled people in the life of society, and in changing institutions, regulations and attitudes that create and maintain exclusion'(Mittler, 2000, p.3). Mittler (2000) suggests that the 'reconstructing of schools along inclusive lines is a reflection of the social model in action' (p.3). Mittler, 2000, suggests that teachers already have the skills to teach inclusively but 'what they lack is the confidence in their own ability to teach inclusively' (p.130).

Avramidis and Norwich (2016) question the positive benefits of inclusion.

> Notwithstanding the value of existing research in the field, it could
> be that there is no clear endorsement of positive effects of
> inclusion, an observation that has led authors such as Farrell
> (2000) and Lindsay (2007) to conclude that inclusion has been
> advanced on the basis of socio-political arguments rather than
> empirical evidence. (Avramidis and Norwich, 2016, p.32)

Warnock 2005 states that 'the idea of inclusion should be rethought in so far as it will be demoted from its present position at the top of the list of educational values' though she accepts that this might not be possible and she would compromise for a situation where children could 'pursue the common goals of education in the environment within which they can best be taught and learn' (Warnock, 2015, p.44). Haug (2017) suggests that 'the empirical evidence for inclusion is ambiguous, a possible consequence of promising too much.' (p.206) Winzer (2007) reflects on the elusiveness of achieving inclusion.

> For the moment, inclusion seems set to remain at the forefront of
> special education reform. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that

for students with special needs, the ethic of universal provision remains an elusive dream and many issues remain unresolved. While it is almost universally conceded that people with disabilities have a natural and rightful place in society and that schools should mirror this broader commitment, the dilemma that emerges is not just what such a commitment should mean but how to operationalize it and make it happen. (Winzer, 2007, p.32)

It could be suggested that the lack of an agreed definitions of inclusion and integration could be a hindrance to assessing the benefits of inclusion. If different interpretations are reflected in the adoption of different practices, then making an effective comparison could prove challenging. Furthermore, how are we evaluate successful inclusion? Hodkinson and Vickerman refer to the term of 'inclusion by choice,' and they refer to Norwich and Kelly, 2004, when they note that 'the research suggests that some children do not want to be forced into the mainstream placements' (p. 81). One could question if there has been sufficient consideration given to the choice of intervention for the pupil with a special educational need as opposed to a perception that all children have the moral right to a fully inclusive education irrespective of their special educational need. One could consult the child in order to ascertain whether they would prefer to be working alongside other children who have experienced similar difficulties rather than devising a means whereby children with educational challenges are obliged to work in a mainstream context.

Avramidis and Norwich (2016) quote Farrell 2000 when identifying six areas in need of more research. These areas refer to

'effective in-class support, the management, role, and training of teaching assistants, the views of teachers in mainstream schools about inclusion, their training, etc., the future of special schools, factors affecting parental attitudes to inclusion' and 'the views of pupils with special educational needs.' (Avramidis and Norwich, 2016, p. 39)

While Avramidis and Norwich acknowledge 'some notable research' in the six above areas their review concludes that there is need for more research (Avramidis and Norwich, 2016, p.39).

Special Educational Needs

The concept of special educational needs is broad, extending beyond categories of disability, to include all children who are in

need of additional support. However, many countries still use categorical descriptions of disability for the purpose of special educational provision though the precise nature of the categories varies. (Florian, 2007, p.12)

Florian (2007) distinguishes between special education and special educational needs (p.12). Florian notes the association of special education with special schools and the connection between special education and the placement of a child in a special class or a special school (2007, p.12). Terzi, (2010) considers the use of the term special educational need and the possible negative connotations associated with the term. Terzi refers to Barton (2003) and Corbett (1996) when she mentions the 'possible discriminatory and labelling use of the concept' where individual 'differences' are seen as 'deficits' (Terzi, 2010, p.1). Terzi (2010) considers the challenges surrounding the provision of special educational needs.

Provision for children with special educational needs raises important and questions at the level of theory, policy and practice in education. Many of these questions relate directly to the fundamental problem of how best we can enact the entitlement of every child to education, while acknowledging and respecting individual differences. (Terzi, 2010, p.1)

Some children with a disability might not need additional support, such a child with spina bifida, so having a disability is not necessarily synonymous with a special educational need.

Special Education Provision: England

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 (COP) provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations, and applies to England. (Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years, p.12)

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years was published by the Department of Education in the United Kingdom, on August 27th, 2015. The new code replaced the existing Special Needs Code of Practice (DFES, 2001a). The code consists of 292 pages. The SEND Code of Practice referred to England. Under the 2001 Code, some children with a special educational need met the criteria for statement of need. Under the new code which was issued jointly by the Department of Education and the Department of Health, a

child could be entitled to an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan) which replaced the practice of statementing and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs). The criteria for selection remained the same as for the granting of a statement. A transition period from September 1st, 2015 until April 1st, 2018 would remain in place, where children with a statement prior to the initiation of the new code would transition to an EHC plan which would continue to recognise the elements of the 1996 Education Act which referred to statementing. The SEND Code of Practice specifically mentions the use of differentiation, personalisation and the need for high quality teaching in terms of delivering educational support to its clients.

> High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of children and young people. Some children and young people need educational provision that is additional to or different from this. This is special educational provision under Section 21 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Schools and colleges must use their best endeavours to ensure that such provision is made for those who need it. Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less. (SEND, 2015, p.25)

A brief review of special education provision from the Warnock Report of 1978 up to the SEND Code of Practice 2015 illustrates the evolution of special educational provision from categorisation to an apparently more inclusive approach. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) refer to the Education Act 1996 and The Special Education and Disability Act 2001 regarding the definition of a child with a special educational need on page 3.

> A child has special educational needs if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special education provision to be made for him. A child, for the purposes of the SEN provisions, includes any person under the age of 19 who is a registered pupil at a school. (Education 1996 [DfEE, 1996] and SENDA, 2001 [DfES, 2001b, section 312])

Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) explore the concept of SEN citing the above definition and then explore the various scenarios necessary if children are to meet the criteria, which permit them to qualify for special educational needs in England and Wales. Five different categories are mentioned including children who have a 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age,' and children whose disability 'prevents or hinders them from making use of

educational facilities of a kind generally provided in schools'(Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009, p.4).

It is in the Special Needs Code of Practice (DFES, 2001a) where one can find the fine detail of how SEN provision works in practice. A child's SEN may fall within one or more categories. Hodkinson and Vickerman explain that these categories refer to cognition and learning needs, behaviour, emotional and social development needs, communication and interactive needs and finally sensory and or physical needs. They outline the broad similarities of SEN provision within England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (p.7). It may prove noteworthy that Scotland no longer uses the term SEN having abolished the term in 2004 and replaced it with 'additional support need' in the Education [Additional Support for Learning] [Scotland] Act 2004 and Hodkinson and Vickerman also mention that the additional support 'refers to any child or young person who would benefit from extra help in order to overcome barriers to their learning' (ibid, p.8)

The Warnock Report (1978) was chosen by Peter Clough as the 'starting point' of his 'overview of developments towards inclusion' because the report was in his opinion 'evolutionary.'(2000, p. 4). One could suggest that the report announces a change of perception, which is evident in the choice of terminology used throughout its many recommendations. While the title of the report refers to an enquiry into the 'Education of Handicapped Children and Young People,' henceforth the term 'children with learning difficulties' would replace the terms 'educationally sub-normal and those with educational difficulties.' (The Warnock Report, p. 338) Derek Gillard notes that the recommendations were 'radical' and 'formed the basis of the 1981 Education Act' (2012, p.4). He goes on to outline some of the key changes to special education provision, which was introduced by this act. These include the introduction of 'statementing', which ensured an entitlement to special educational support; new rights for parents of children with a special need and the introduction of 'inclusion' where special needs children were educationally included alongside their mainstream peers (The Warnock Report, p.2).

> In 2007, government data (DCSF, 2008) indicated that 16.4 per cent of all pupils had a SEN and that an additional 2.8 per cent also had learning that was so severe that they would require the provision of a statement. (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009, p.10)

The introduction of the 1996 Education Act (DfEE, 1996) clarifies the requirements needed to merit a SEN. It does not include gifted children for example. There are four main categories, namely cognition and learning needs, behaviour, emotional and social development needs, communication and interaction needs and sensory and or physical needs. Dyslexia otherwise referred to as a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) comes under the category of cognition and learning needs (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009, p.5).

United States of America

A comparative review of special educational development in the United States from the 1970s to the present day could provide an interesting backdrop to the events in the British Isles and it would also offer the opportunity to assess if the inclusion model advocated by the Salamanca Statement is the established model of delivery with regard to special education. 'By the 1970s, only a small number of children with disabilities were being educated in public schools.' (History of Special Education in the United States, 2019) Two pieces of federal legislation, which were passed in 1975 brought about changes in this regard, namely the Education for All Handicapped Children Act or EHA and the Individuals with Disabilities Act or IDEA. Under the EHA all children in the United States of America (USA) had a right to attend a public school. Furthermore, under the IDEA, all children with a 'qualifying disability' was entitled to 'individualized or special education (p.1). The U.S. Department of Education website notes that the IDEA 'governs how state and public agencies provide early intervention and special intervention to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youths with disabilities' (U.S. Department of Education, undated)

> In the US disability is constructed from a medical diagnosis driven discrepancy model, and politicians operating in an 'equal opportunity' and 'civil rights' framework shape policy. (Itkonen, 2010, abstract)

Itkonen and Jahnukainen (2010) state that the US has 13 categories of eligibility for special education. Itkonen points out that the U.S approach to special education is 'highly formalized (ibid, p.10). Itkonen states that while the 96 per cent of students in the U.S. are taught in 'regular school buildings,' but in reality 'it is far more

typical for a U.S. student in special education to be outside the general classroom more than 21 per cent of their school day (ibid, p.19).

Research shows a shift from what Itkonen and Jahnukainen term as a 'psychological disability construction' (2010, p.19). The use of an intervention model had been outlined in the IDEA 2004 but it appears that it took some time for the introduction of such a model. Reid (2011) and Itkonen and Jahnukainen (2010) adopt the term Response to Intervention (RTI) to describe the intervention model.

> Response to Intervention (RTI) is essentially an 'evidence based' proactive model used mainly in the US that seeks to prevent academic failure through early intervention and frequent progress measurement. It attempts to avoid the 'wait to fail' method which is used in many areas in the assessment of children with dyslexia. (Reid, 2011, p.5)

Itkonen and Jahnukainen explain the RTI approach in more detail. It is described in terms of three tiers, which is roughly similar to Learning Support model, which was introduced in the Republic of Ireland in 1998. In Tier 1, the children are receiving instruction in their classroom. Where evidence illustrates that additional support is required, these children progress to a more intensive intervention service, which Itkonen describes as 'frequent, intensive and highly targeted.' (Itkonen and Jahnukainen, 2010, p.20). Where neither Tier 1 nor 2 is successful, then Tier 3 is introduced comprising of perhaps a smaller group moving at a slower pace. Itkonen informs that four states use RtI at present; namely, Colorado, West Virginia, Delaware and Georgia and that Florida and Indiana are considering adopting this tiered approach too (ibid, p.20). The tiered approach appears similar to the staged approach, which is evident in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

Canada

While the U.S. has a federal department of education, the situation in Canada is quite different. Responsibility for education 'rests almost entirely with provincial legislation (Jahnukainen, 2011, p.450. Canada consists of ten separate provinces and three territories. The latter comprises forty per cent of the landmass of Canada, but only three per cent of the population (AngloInfo Canada, 2013). Though there are differences in approach as one moves between the provinces and territories, there are also many similarities. Most provinces and territories have an Education Act

outlining their policy on special educational needs. The federal government does not provide the majority of the funding, and so it is up to the various provinces and territories to allocate their own funds. The differences between provinces and territories include funding for private special needs schools.

> By law, all state schools must have a special education. However, this is not possible in all schools and parents may have to enrol their children in private special needs schools. This can be difficult for some parents due to the cost although some provinces/territories provide 100 per cent funding in order for children to attend these schools. (AngloInfo Canada, 2013)

Reid (2011) complements two independent schools in Vancouver. He mentions the Fraser Academy, which is a day school for children with dyslexia and language difficulties, and also the Kenneth Gordon Maplewood School, which is dedicated to children with dyslexia (Reid, 2011, p.3). The centralisation which is evident in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland contrasts with the state differences which are apparent in both the United States of America and Canada.

Canada and Finland

Just as Itkonen and Jahnukainen (2010) chose Finland for their comparative study of special education provision between the U.S, Jahnukainen (2011) once again uses Finland in his comparison of SEN provision with the province of Alberta, Canada. In 2003 the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) showed Finland to be among the top performers in Mathematics and reading. In addition, Finland had the 'narrowest gap between its highest and lowest achieving student.' (Itkonen and Jahnukainen, 2010, p. 4). Finland provides high achieving students outperforming American 15 year old students. On the other hand, students from Alberta perform well in international tests such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2007 has a population which is relatively similar in size to Finland and both Alberta and Finland are situated in the Northern Hemisphere. A study could focus on how each achieves success in terms of special education.

> From a retrospective point of view, the main historical finding of the special education systems in Finland and Alberta is that they followed the same developmental path, from segregative environments to more inclusive settings. (Jahnukainen, 2011, p.493)

In Finland the inclusive approach involves every effort to educate pupils as closely as possible to the mainstream or 'regular' class. This contrasts with the push for full inclusivity in Alberta. In addition, adopting inclusion in Finland has been a slow process while in Alberta the policy was adopted rapidly in the late 1980s (Jahnukainen, p.493). Though the successful educational outcomes for pupils in both Alberta and Finland are clearly evident in the OECD and PISA reports of 2007 Jahnukainen alerts the reader to the crucial contrast in costs between the two jurisdictions. Alberta spends on average twice as much per student. Finally, special schools in Finland are guaranteed at least 1.5 fold extra funding. There is therefore no pressure on schools to perhaps inflate the number of eligible children codified in the severest categories, in order to increase funding. This may well be happening in Alberta (Jahnukainen, 2011, p.497. In Finland, one can access special education without a diagnosis. A need is observed and that is sufficient (Jahnukainen, 2011, p.498).

The role of part time special education in Finland is highlighted. Its focus is prevention and it provides a support service to those with a mild or temporary need for a relatively low cost. The effectiveness of this intervention explains the narrowing gap between the highest and lowest achieving students in Finland. There is no long wait for codification as one might expect in Alberta. The support is simply provided. Furthermore, where individual schools in Alberta provide resources for children without a formal entitlement to special education, it lacks the organisation and consistency evident in Finland. Part time special education support service is available in almost every school in Finland (p 497). While some states in the US have adopted the interventionist model of RTI, Finland would appear to have fully embraced early intervention alongside an appropriate budget unconstrained by the need to justify the need through sufficient numbers of codified pupils. It could be asserted that this unconstrained budget is not evident in the United Kingdom, the United States or Canada. Unfortunately, a review of the situation in the Republic of Ireland will reveal evidence of cost restraints.

Republic of Ireland

While the 1981 Education Act overhauled special education provision in England, Scotland and Wales, it was a further twelve years before the Special Education

Review Committee (SERC) completed its report in the Republic Of Ireland. Included in this report were seven principles. These principles included the need for an appropriate education for every child where the child's needs were 'paramount' and where the parents of the special need child were included in the decision-making (SERC Report, 1993, p.208). In so far as it was practically possible, children with a special need should be taught within mainstream education (SERC Report, 1993, p.208).

Two noteworthy pieces of legislation were to follow, namely the Education Act 1998 and the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004. The Education Act applied many of the recommendations sought for in the SERC report including the recognition that the Minister of Education would provide the necessary funding for special education support. (Part Two, p.11) The SERC Report had noted the absence of an educational psychological service and on September 1st, 1999, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) was founded. In the decade that followed the formation of NEPS, four significant circulars concerning special education were issued by the Department of Education to the Boards of Management of all mainstream primary schools in its jurisdiction. These circulars concerned the appointment of special needs assistants (SNAs) and the appointment of both part-time and full-time resource teachers. These circulars were enforced in advance of a national census, which was carried out by the department in September 2003. Following the analysis of their findings, a circular was posted out to Boards of Management, which impacted on future appointments of resource teachers. This third circular which can be abbreviated as SP ED 24/03 signalled that the department was investigating a new method of allocating resource to children with a SEN. In addition, the circular set out an approach to supporting these children, which mirrored the approach in the Code of Practice 2001 in England. The approach was also recommended by NEPS.

The introduction of Special Education Circular SP ED 02/05 had a direct effect on special education provision for children with a diagnosis of dyslexia in primary schools across the Republic of Ireland. Eleven different categories of low incident special need are specified and there is no mention of dyslexia or specific learning difficulty (SP ED 02/05, p. 15). Instead, children with dyslexia, with or without a diagnosis from an educational psychologist could access learning support from a

learning support teacher. Children who met the criteria for low incident SEN would be taught by a resource teacher or RT (SP ED 02/05, p.6). Children with dyslexia no longer needed a psychological report to access support, which is similar to the situation in Finland. The circular introduced the three-staged approach to intervention similar to the tiered approach in the United States (SP ED 02/05, p.7). Special Education Circular SP ED 02/05 guaranteed one to one tuition for a specified time allocation to those children whose disability came within certain low incidence categories. The time allotted to the eleven low incidence categories were reduced over time due to economic cutbacks. For example, pupils with a diagnosis of autism had their allocated weekly time reduced from five hours to 4.25 hours. In 2017, a new special education circular was sent to all primary schools. This circular was 0013/2017 and it was the Special Education Teaching Circular. It replaced Sp ED 02/5 and marked a change from categorisation to the use of an allocation model based on data relating to each school's profile.

> The new Special Education Teaching allocation will provide a
> single unified allocation for special educational support teaching
> needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile.
> This single allocation is being made to allow schools to provide
> additional teaching support for all pupils who require such support
> in their schools. Schools will deploy resources based on each
> pupil's individual learning needs. (Circular 0013/17, p.1)

There is no reference to the need for a psychological report or a medical diagnosis. Support could be provided based on the perceived needs of the child and the decision to introduce the support rested with the school itself rather than an outside agency. Circular 0007/2019 was issued to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools on February 25th, 2019. It confirmed that there were now a total of 13,300 Special Education Teachers (SET) working in primary schools in the ROI (Circular 0007/2019, p.1), and there would be a reassessment of SET allocations in primary schools based on the data from the Primary Online Database (POD) of 2017/18 (Circular 0007/2019, p.7). Allocation of SET teaching hours would be reassessed after a period of two years (Circular 0007/2019, p.5).

It is arguable that there have been similarities of approach to the provision of special education provision between England, the Republic of Ireland and the United States with the use of categorisation. Circular 0007/2017 heralds a move away from this

approach in the ROI. Terzi (2005) discusses debates within special education and includes the difficulties relating to terminology.

> A further crucial aspect of the debate concerns the use, in general terms, of classificatory systems for educational purposes and the use, more specifically, of classification in relation to disabled students. (Terzi, 2005, p.444)

The issue centres on whether the categorisation is required in order to best provide the most appropriate provision or whether a possible outcome of such categorisation is discrimination and oppression. Terzi suggests two opposing approaches to special education. One side 'casually relate children's difficulties to their individual characteristics, often seen as individual limitations and deficits.' (Terzi, 2005, p.446). The use of medical categories of disability or learning aligns favourably with this approach. The latter approach focuses not on the individual child's shortcomings but on the school institution's requirement to 'meet the diversity of children's learning.' (Terzi, 2005, p.446) Barton favours this approach and is opposed to 'any form of category or classification of children's differences.' (2003, p.15) Research indicates in the recent past that a categorisation approach was favoured in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and the Republic of Ireland. Finland did not use categorisation, which might suggest that it was more harmonious with Barton's ideology. The Progress in International Reading Study 2016 (Pirls) results place the participants from the ROI in fourth place behind, the Russian Federation, Singapore and Hong Kong with Finland now in fifth position (The Irish Times, 2017). These results precede the introduction of Circular 0013/2017 in the ROI. The question remains if children identified as having a special educational need are enjoying increased literacy and numeracy success at school and if they are happy with the delivery of special educational provision which they receive. While government policy impinges on special education provision it could be argued that litigation can also play a role and cases such as Sinnott v Minister for Education (2001) illustrate how a parent in the Republic of Ireland can seek to alter and change the special educational support entitlements of not just her child but all children with an SEN.

Special Education Provision: Dyslexia

> Dyslexia is a processing difference, often characterised by
> difficulties in literacy acquisition affecting reading, writing and
> spelling. It can also have an impact on cognitive processes such
> as memory, speed of processing, time management, co-ordination
> and automaticity. These may be visual and/or phonological
> difficulties and there are usually some discrepancies in
> educational performances. (Reid, 2009, p.4)

The above definition of dyslexia by Reid (2009) is followed in the same chapter by
three further definitions of dyslexia. The definition from the International Dyslexia
Association (IDA) states that dyslexia is a 'specific learning disability that is
neurological in origin' (Reid, 2009, p.6).

> It is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word
> recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These
> difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological
> component of language that is often unexpected in relation to
> other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom
> instruction. (Reid, 2009, p.6)

The IDA definition also mentions secondary consequences which also are present
such as 'problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience' with
the knock-on effect on 'growth of vocabulary and background knowledge' (Reid,
2009, p.6). The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) also describes dyslexia as 'a
specific learning difficulty' (Reid, 2009, p.6). The specific learning difficulty 'mainly
affects the development of literacy and language skills' (Reid, 2009, p.6). While the
BDA definition is similar to the IDA definition, it includes a number of additional
observations. Dyslexia is 'likely to be present at birth and to be lifelong in its effects,
and 'it tends to be resistant to conventional teaching methods, but its effects can be
mitigated by appropriately specific intervention, including the application of
information technology and supportive counselling (Reid, 2009, p.6). The third
definition provided by Reid comes from the Task Force on Dyslexia in the Republic
of Ireland in 2001. Again, the definition from the Task Force Report shares
similarities with the previous two definitions but there are also slight variations.
While the Irish definition mentions difficulties 'at the neurological and cognitive'
levels it also includes difficulties at the 'behavioural levels' and the definition also
specifies difficulties with 'sequences' (Reid, 2009, p.6). Reid (2009) stresses the
crucial role played by teachers in the identification of dyslexia 'but they can only do

this successfully if they have sufficient training and opportunities to follow this up' (p.9). If children with dyslexia are to be supported effectively, it could be argued that they will need specific intervention by appropriately trained teachers with the correct level of resources including technology and that the children are identified as early as possible. Reid (2009) refers to Reid (2004) when he outlines seven possible barriers to the implementation of policy when had been identified by educational authorities in the United Kingdom. These barriers referred to the

> numbers of children requiring support; the number of requests for
> additional training, the reluctance to label too early; lack of staff
> awareness that results in late identification; dyslexia is only one of
> a range of 'inclusion issues'; lack of clarity of views on dyslexia;
> the 'waiting for an assessment' approach among some teachers is
> not helpful-they should be able to use their skills and experiences
> to intervene appropriately even if an assessment has not been
> conducted (Reid, 2009, p.8).

It could be argued that some if not all of these barriers still pose challenges to the delivery of appropriate support to children with dyslexia. 'Ten per cent of the population are believed to be dyslexic, but it is still poorly understood. With the right support, the strengths and talents of dyslexic people can really shine' (British Dyslexia Association, 2019). The Rose Report of 2009 mentions that dyslexia is a continuum and appears 'across the range of intellectual abilities.' (The Rose Report, p.9). At the start of the report, is a letter from Sir Jim Rose which addressed to the Secretary of State. The requirement for specialist intervention in the support of children with dyslexia is outlined.

> It is important to develop high quality interventions for children
> with literacy and dyslexic difficulties and to implement them
> thoroughly. This will require well trained, knowledgeable
> teachers and support staff. (Identifying and Teaching Children
> and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties, 2009,
> p.1)

This need for additional specialist training is again emphasised later in the report. 'Virtually all recent reviews of educational provision call for more and better training of teachers and other members of the workforce.' (The Rose Report, p.15). The support available to children with dyslexia in the five chosen jurisdictions at primary school level is compared beginning with England and followed by the United States, Canada, Finland and finally the Republic of Ireland.

England

The new SEND Code of Practice was introduced in September 2014. Four areas of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are identified, namely communicating and interacting, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health issues and sensory and/or physical needs (The Code was updated in 2015). The Department of Education produced an explanatory book about the new code of practice for parents and carers. The guide explains that there are four stages of special education support beginning with assess, followed by plan, do and review. The guide offers definitions and a step by step explanation of the legal entitlements of parents and their children with regard to special education support (Special educational needs and disability, 2014, p.1-59). The Code of 1994 had five stages, the Code of 2001 had three as in School Action, School Action Plus and Statement but now there were to be four stages. It could be suggested that the introduction of a new code needed to be explained well to parents particularly since it appeared that they were going to have an active role.

United States of America

> The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) define the rights of students with dyslexia and other specific Learning disabilities. These individuals are legally entitled to special services to help them overcome and accommodate their learning problems. (The International Dyslexia Organisation, August 17th, 2013)

The rights of the dyslexic learner are enshrined in law. If one wants to explore how these children are 'helped' or 'accommodated' within the education system, the reality of fifty independently controlled states could pose a huge and impossible task in an assignment such as this. The researcher has chosen to take a closer look at the State of Texas by reviewing the findings of Balido-Dean, Kepezynski and Fedynich from their research of 2007. They note the impact of the No Child is Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 on all public schools. Proficiency in reading, maths and science is given centre stage and schools will get credit only where all children achieve this proficiency level. This development could pose a problem where the existing programme of instruction for children with dyslexia failed to yield the required levels

of proficiency. Balido-Dean et all state that the NCLB Act 'changed the accountability system of public schools in the United States.

Balido-Dean et al identify a rule, statutes, codes and mandated guidelines, which pertain to the education of children with dyslexia in the State of Texas. 'In Texas, the identification and instruction of students with dyslexia are mandated and structured by two statutes and one rule.' Testing is mandatory as is the provision of instruction. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 'establishes assessment and evaluation standards and procedures for students. Charter schools and district schools are bounds by the legislation and the dyslexic programme employed in these schools is a matter of choice. There are many programmes to choose from. (p 3) Schools need to ensure no dyslexic child is left behind. Early intervention, diagnosis, implementation of a programme such as Basic Language Skills, assessment and evaluation appear to be the cornerstones of the Texan approach where there is strong pressure to perform and accountability if one fails.

Canada

When the researcher attempts to explore special education provision in Canada, one is faced once again with the challenge of a decentralised approach to educational administration, where there is the absence of overarching legislation. Alberta has been chosen again as a sample province when exploring special education provision for children with dyslexia in primary school. Both Canada and the United States use the term elementary rather than primary school. Important legislation includes School Act (Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000 and Standards for Special Education Amended 2004. In order to access special education support the child must meet the requirements of a codified disability as set down in the Special Education Coding Criteria 2009/10. They are then entitled to an individualised program plan or IPP.

> School boards play an important role. Children with dyslexia may
> qualify under Code 54 which refers to a learning disability.
> (Special Education Criterion 2009/10, p 3) Alberta.ca, undated)

The role of school principals is outlined by the Ministry of Education, Alberta in its website.

> School principals are responsible for ensuring that the school has
> processes and a learning team in place to provide consultation,
> planning, and problem solving related to programming for students
> and children with special education needs. The principal assigns
> teachers to coordinate, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate

> student IPPs. The teachers involve parents and, when appropriate, other teachers and students, in this process. (Alberta, Inclusive Education, undated)

Accountability rests with the principal. In addition the Standards for Special Education Amended 2004 contain eighteen pages of specific instructions detailing the requirements for teaching special education as laid down by Ministerial Order.

Finland

> There is no definition or special legislation relating to dyslexia but about 10 per cent of children who are slow in learning to read receive special attention in school from specially trained teachers. Pupils whose educational problems are considered to be relatively mild (e.g. reading, writing or speech disorders) may receive this help in the form of part-time education within the course of normal instruction. (Smythe I, Everatt, J and Salter, R, 2004, p 93)

Smythe et al, (2004) note that there are no standard criteria with regard to entry into special education and children are assessed individually with regard to his or her attainments, abilities and disabilities. The class teacher and the special teacher usually carry out this assessment jointly. Support is available to children with a severe difficulty at pre-school level (Symthe et al, 2004, p 93). They remark that the publication of 'stringent standardised reading tests' occurred in 1998. Special education for children with reading and writing difficulties has existed since 1967 and this coincided with the graduation for the first time of special education teachers. (Symthe et al, 2004, p. 94)

Republic of Ireland

McPhillips and Shevlin (2009) conducted research into special education provision available to primary school children with a diagnosis of dyslexia in the Republic of Ireland. They observed that three different 'settings' were available. These were placement in a special school, attendance in a reading unit or the option of receiving learning support while attending a mainstream school. The special schools are commonly referred to as 'reading schools' and there are a total of four such schools, catering for a 250 children. Three are based in Dublin and the remaining school is in Cork. Where a child with dyslexia scores at or below the second percentile on a standard reading test, there is the possibility of attending one of the schools for two years. The child then returns to his mainstream school. (McPhillips and Shevlin,

2009, p. 64) The pupil teacher ratio is 9:1 in this setting (Dyslexia Association of Ireland, undated).Clearly, there is a geographical constraint where it might not be possible for a child to uproot to Dublin or Cork. McPhillips and Shevlin observe that a second possibility rests with attendance at a reading unit. There are 19 reading units or special classes attached to mainstream schools in various parts of the Republic of Ireland (Dyslexia: An Irish Perspective, 2006, p.59) Once again, the child needs a diagnosis of severe dyslexia. The child is segregated from its own mainstream class for a period of one or two hours per day.

From 1998 until 2003, a child with a diagnosis of severe dyslexia could receive individual resource-teaching hours in his or her own school. When the Department of Education and Skills (DES) wishes to introduce a change of policy it issues a circular, which provides the information necessary for the school to implement the stipulated adjustment. McPhillips and Shevlin outline circulars 24/03 and 02/05. These circulars concerned the delivery of special education in primary schools. Eleven categories of learning disability would entitle a child to individual resource teaching. The time allocation varied from three hours up to five hours per week. Where a child was diagnosed as having autism, a severe or profound general learning disability or had multiple disabilities, they could receive the maximum of five hours resource teaching. The child with dyslexia was no longer entitled to receive individual resource teaching (Appendix 1, 02/05).

Where children are performing at or below the tenth percentile in a standardised reading or mathematics test, there had been an entitlement to learning support. A special education circular in 2005 explained the rationale behind the introduction of the general allocation model. Instead of one to one tuition, henceforth, children with high incidence disabilities would have their needs met from a learning support allocation known as general allocation model or GAM. Thus, children with a borderline general learning disability, mild general disability and specific learning disability (dyslexia) would attend a teacher to be known as the learning support teacher or LST (Sp. Ed. 02/05). The amount of GAM a school received depended on their enrolment. If a school had five mainstream teachers then that school would have a full LST entitlement, with a fifth of an LST post allowed per mainstream teacher (Appendix 2, SP ED 02/05).

A staged approach to learning support had been introduced under Circular 24/03. This followed the formation of an educational psychological service referred to as NEPS on September 1st, 1999. Appendix 3 of 02/05 explains the operation of the staged approach. (SP ED 02/05, p21. Stage One involves the intervention by the class teacher, stage two involves the assistance of the LST and stage three includes the involvement of a specialist such as a child psychologist. At a time where mainstream schools were being allocated individual resource hours to accommodate children with even severe or profound disabilities and individual tuition was discontinued for children with severe dyslexia, four special schools for dyslexia were allowed to continue as well as the 23 reading units. The present number of units has been reduced to 19 (Dyslexia: An Irish Perspective, 2006, p.59).

The research focused on the teaching and learning content for pupils with dyslexia, the support teacher, the mainstream teacher and the experience of the student. The main participants were teachers and tutors supporting pupils with dyslexia and the parents of these children. The findings reflect suggested shortcomings in the teaching of reading and writing across the three settings (McPhillips and Shevlin, p.63). Nugent's focus is not on the prevailing teaching methodologies but centres on the children themselves. 'The emphasis is on the child's experience of special education.' (Nugent, 2008, p. 189) She notes that the focus of research on inclusion in education has tended to reflect 'the beliefs and opinions of professionals.' This is to neglect the opinions of the parents and children themselves. Perhaps inclusion is not the best approach in all cases and that sometimes, special schools can provide the best solution (McPhillips and Shevlin, 2009, p.189).

Both studies consider the three possible settings and compare and contrast. However, only Nugent provides a meaningful contribution from the children themselves. Her survey included 100 children, all of whom were individually interviewed using structured and semi-structured interviews. In addition, their parents were invited to participate in a written survey. In contrast, McPhillips and Shevlin focused on 'key personnel' from the six schools involved in their research, in other words the teaching staff and relied on a group discussion with pupils in participating schools to glean child experiences. Parental involvement included a postal questionnaire; follow up focus groups and telephone interviews with parents of past pupils. It would appear that no intensive research of an individual special school for children with severe dyslexia in

the Republic of Ireland as yet existed. Rather than constantly comparing the special school with alternative settings, a special school could be the single focus. Nugent argues that her research paper 'challenges professionals to rethink the divide between inclusive education in mainstream settings and segregated education in specialist schools or units' (Nugent, 2008, p.189). Nugent may have a point.

The participants in a new body of research could include what McPhillips and Shevlin describe as the key personnel such as the principal and staff but could also equally involve the parents and the children themselves. Is the inclusive setting not necessarily always the best setting or in other words, when is segregated the best educational approach? The personal experiences of the participants might offer an insight and a possible answer. Nugent's findings in her concluding paragraph are perhaps noteworthy. 'It behoves professionals and administrators to listen to the views of service users, even when what they hear does not readily fit with the "inclusive" orientation. A crucial issue here is choice (p. 203). Nugent points to the need for further research to explore her findings. This researcher is willing to probe and explore. The introduction of Circular 0013/2017 reunites special educational provision of low and high incidence, where categories of special need are removed. The principal and his/her staff allocate special education support using their professional judgement rather than as prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills.

Summary

There is written evidence from the five explored jurisdictions that the preferred method of delivery of special education provision to primary children is that of inclusion. Again and again, the passing of legislation heralds the change of approach with regulations or codes issuing to the respective schools laying down the method of delivery. The predominant requirement in order to access provision is one of diagnosis by a professional other the child's teacher. The assessment needs to meet the criteria as set down in the documentation provided by the school. The three tiered or three staged approach of remediation offered to children with a dyslexic diagnosis is broadly similar in the United Kingdom, the United States and the Republic of Ireland. The Finnish and Irish model offer some perhaps interesting differences as compared with the other three jurisdictions where there is no requirement of a psychological report in order to access special tuition. Like Finland, the child can avail of support from the

outset, once there is a difficulty in reading or writing. However, the provision provided is not necessarily an individual one as was offered to children in the ROI with the codified categories such as dyspraxia or autism up to 2017. While the availability of support is important another factor, which could impact on his or her progress, could be class size. The UK had an average class size of 24.5, with the U.S. at 22.3 and Finland stood at 19.8 in 2011. Finland not only had the smallest class size average, but also spent the greatest GDP percentage of the five jurisdictions on education institutions (Data Blog of The Guardian, September 14th, 2012). With no legislative guidelines as yet in place regarding class size in Alberta, the classrooms are nonetheless designed to accommodate up to 25 pupils (Department of Education, Alberta, 2013). Average class size in the Republic was 27 in 2008 though schools situated in economically disadvantaged areas were as low as 20 in the junior classes and 24 in the senior classes (Department of Education and Skills, August 17th, 2013). Finland places an emphasis on early intervention at pre-school level, which differentiates it from the Republic of Ireland, as does the requirement that all primary teachers hold a master's degree as an entry requirement.

The only jurisdiction with publicly funded special schools for primary children with a diagnosis of severe dyslexia was to be found in the Republic of Ireland. The children who meet the criteria have the opportunity to spend up to two full years in a school with exclusively dyslexic children. The notion of inclusion is nowhere evident here. I wanted to explore the prolonged segregation of children attending such a school. This research focused on one of the four special schools sometimes referred to as a 'reading school' with the following research questions in mind. Is it possible that segregation of children with severe dyslexia is educationally justifiable and economically justifiable? What are the experiences of the children attending these schools? What are the perceptions of the children's class teachers at the feeder school, which the child will ultimately return to?

Nugent (2008) chooses to focus on the children rather than the teaching methodologies used by either the reading school or the feeder school. This contrasts sharply with the focus of Phillips and Shevlin (2009). My research includes elements of both researches though on a much smaller but more detailed scale, specific to just one reading school. The opportunity to interview the principal, class teacher, children and parents in both

the reading school and feeder schools offers the opportunity to qualitatively research their experiences (see chapter 3 for further details).

Examination of Documents: The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

The two jurisdictions which were chosen for a deeper analysis were the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI). As a starting point, documentation relating the special education provision at the Department of Education in ROI was contrasting with the documentation from the Department of Education Northern Ireland. Special educational needs (SEN) and inclusion is an area which is both complex and diverse (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009, ix). There is interplay between government departments, civil servants, researchers, teachers, courtrooms and the media. This complexity can be simplified to some extent, by reducing the number of jurisdictions which explains the focus in this section on the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It could be suggested that these two jurisdictions share some similarities in the area of education. There is evidence of co-operation in the Task Force Reports on Dyslexia and also Autism. Yet, there is also evidence of differences of approach too. The two jurisdictions are situated on the same island which facilitates travel. In addition, the subject of my Master's in Education was the comparative study of special education provision in the Republic of Education and Northern Ireland which could provide a fount of knowledge and perspective to further study.

The comparative analysis of documentary evidence focuses on the Report on the Task Force on Dyslexia (2001) in the ROI, the Task Force Report (DENI) 2002 from NI, relevant circulars from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and DENI, Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the SEND Act), draft of Special Needs (SEN) Regulations (2017), Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998 and the 2005 Supplement to the 1998 Code of Practice. A new Code of Practice for Northern Ireland is underway and 'staged implementation of the new SEN Framework is anticipated to be put in place during 2020 (Website of the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) accessed on June 30th, 2019). In addition to these sources, the websites of DES and DENI will be explored as well as the website of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in the ROI. Finally, there will be a review of an article entitled

Dyslexia policy and practice cross-professional and parental perspectives on the Northern Ireland context (2017)

> Consequently, this research sought to obtain the perspectives of original and current stakeholders, North and South, to ascertain the main influences on current provision; to find out whether the Task Force Report (DENI, 2002) recommendations have been met; to establish whether positive changes in provision have been influenced by the report; and to identify the challenges that lie ahead. (Beck et al, 2017, p.146)

The article 'considers policy and practice in relation to dyslexia provision in Northern Ireland since the 2002 Task Group Report' and states that

> …concerns remain regarding the optional nature of training, the maintenance of the discrepancy model of dyslexia identification, the need for early multi-disciplinary identification, whole-school policy development and post-primary provision. In addition, stakeholders questioned the sustainability of funding and advocated enhanced transparency for parents, whose voices, it would appear, can still go unheard. (Abstract, Beck et al, 2017)

The eleven different sources of documentary evidence are examined individually with three exceptions, namely, the two reports from the Task Forces, circulars from DES and DENI and the departmental websites of DES and DENI.

The Task Force and Task Group Reports

The Report on the Task Force on Dyslexia (2001 Report) consists of 153 pages which is considerably larger than the NI Report of the Task Group on Dyslexia (2002 Report) which has only 81 pages. The 2001 Report refers to children in preschool, primary and secondary school. The purpose and range of the NI Report is set out clearly where it states intention 'to audit current provision for children and young people with dyslexia, from nursery level to further education, and to identify training needs and for teachers' (2002 Report, p.1). The report from NI appears to be clearer and more concise than its ROI counterpart. Each of the two reports opens with a foreword for its respective Minister of Education. The ROI Minister of Education acknowledges the links and contributions with Northern Ireland and Britain as well as the contribution from the United States of America.

> I particularly value the links with Northern Ireland and Britain, which highlight the extent to which educators in these islands face common challenges. I also value the co-operation between my

Department and the U.S. Department of Education, which resulted in the expertise of the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs being made available to the Task Force. (Woods, 2001, page vi.)

Mr Michael Woods addresses concerns around the support for children with dyslexia. 'Our educational system works well for most students but there are some who need extra help. In particular, I want to address the needs of students with dyslexia as a matter of urgency' (2001 Report, p.vi.)

In the Ministerial foreword by the NI Minister of Education, Martin McGuiness refers to the creation of the North South Ministerial and the subsequent focus on dyslexia and autism as areas of joint concern in the jurisdictions of the ROI and NI. Martin McGuinness also remarks on the mutual benefit of sharing of both experience and information. 'At the same time, parallel Task Groups were established in these areas here and in the South, and we took pains to ensure that membership of both groups overlapped so that experience and information could be shared to the benefit of all' (McGuinness, 2002, p.2).

A closer examination of the two reports show that the ROI report is divided into seven sections with the seventh section devoted to the recommendations. The report form NI is divided into five chapters with the fifth and final chapter devoted to 'Indicators of Good Practice for Teachers and Parents' (2002, p.3). The first section of the report from the ROI focuses on 'The Context of the Task Force's Work' which is followed by sections on submissions, 'National and International Perspectives on Dyslexia, a 'Review of Current Provision and Services for Students with Learning Difficulties Arising from Dyslexia', 'Identifying Difficulties Arising from Dyslexia' and 'Implementing School and System Level Provision' and the finally, the aforementioned section on recommendations. (2001, p.5) The chapter titles in the NI Report are arguably more approachable. Chapter 1 is simply titled, 'Setting the Scene.' Chapter 2 is 'Dyslexia, An Overview' followed by 'Current Provision', 'Teacher Training and Training Needs' and the previously mentioned 'Indicators of Good Practice For Teachers and Parents' (2002, p.3). Chapter 4 with its focus on 'Teacher Training' is not surprising given that Minister Martin McGuinness highlights areas of concern in his foreword.

It highlights very real concerns and challenges for all of us in education, particularly the need for training for classroom teachers in recognising where children have, or may have, dyslexia, and in

putting in place the means to address their difficulties – and, most importantly, to ensure that the obstacle which their difficulties presents in accessing the rest of the curriculum is minimised. Equally, these are challenges for further and higher education, for employers and for society, because dyslexia is not a condition which disappears with maturity. (McGuinness, 2002, p. 2)

In the Executive Summary of the ROI Report, the committee also mention a need for further training for classroom teachers if they are to meet the needs of children with dyslexia.

As classroom teachers exercise a key role in addressing and meeting needs, enhanced levels of teacher preparation and of in-career development and training will be required. The recommendations of the Task Force seek to ensure that both the financial and human resources required for an individualised approach will be put in place to maximise the capacity of the system to meet the needs of students equally throughout the state.(2001, p. xv)

'The 2001 Report considers individualisation of provision to be an educational imperative and a legal requirement' and it conceded the need for 'debate and on-going research' if the 'goal of individualisation' is to be attained (2001, xv). The Executive Summary includes 'A Summary of Recommendations of particular Interest to Parents' although one could question if the recommendations have been relayed to parents (Report 2001, p. vii-viii). Listed amongst the fourteen recommendations are references to change needed in terms of pre-service and serving teachers. 'Pre-service teacher education programmes and in-career development courses for serving teachers should pay special attention to identifying and the needs of students with learning difficulties arising from dyslexia' (2001 Report, p.17). This theme of identification deficit recurs throughout the report. 'Submissions to the Task Force indicate that some class teachers may not be adequately prepared to identify and address the needs of students with learning difficulties arising from dyslexia' (2001 Report, p.32). Parental submissions to the report also mention this weakness with regard to teacher support.

Submissions made to the Task Force by parents expressed the view teachers are very supportive of students with dyslexia, others are not sufficiently familiar with dyslexia to identify students who may be at risk of developing difficulties, and therefore may not be in a position to provide appropriate support or seek additional help (2001 Report, p.29/30).

The 2001 Report notes the disparity between the Unites States and the ROI with regard to the percentage of children receiving support for dyslexia. 'Certainly, it appears that considerably fewer students in Ireland with specific learning difficulties arising from dyslexia are in receipt of services than in the United States, where 5.58 per cent of students (aged 6-17 years) are in receipt of services' (2001 Report, p. 36). Other recommendations 'of particular interest to parents' include the need for the need for better access to educational psychological services, support and advice for teachers on the use of assistive technology for children with dyslexia, the need for a website, brochures and leaflets as a form of advice and information around dyslexia for parents. In addition, the requirement for a policy incorporated into the 'School Plan' is outlined.

> Every primary and post-primary school should incorporate into its
> School Plan a policy for addressing the needs of students with
> learning difficulties arising from dyslexia and for involving parents
> in all aspects of its response to these needs. (2001 Report, xviii)

The 2001 Report offers recommendations with regard to the four special schools 'for Children with Specific Difficulties' which include children with dyslexia meeting entrance criteria similar to those of the special classes attached to mainstream schools (2001 Report, p.35). At the time of the report, 450 children in the ROI were either attending either a special class attached to a mainstream school or attending a special school. There are eleven recommendations, which include that the pupil teacher ratio in the four special schools and special classes attached to mainstream schools should be reduced from 11:1 down to 9:1, that special needs assistants should be assigned to special schools and special classes to support children with dyslexia 'on a needs' basis and that adjustments needed to be made regarding circulars dealing with dyslexia.

> In consultation with relevant bodies, including the National
> Educational Psychological Service, the Department of Education
> and Science should review and amalgamate current circulars
> dealing with the identification of specific learning difficulties,
> including those arising from dyslexia, to remove inconsistencies
> between circulars, and to incorporate the phased mode of
> identification and other changes recommended in this report (2001
> Report, p.38).

At the time of the report, there were three different types of provision available for children with dyslexia, namely, support from a learning support teacher, attendance

in a special class or removing the child from their present school to a special school for a period of up to two years. The 2001 Report recommended that the effectiveness and appropriateness of each of the three types of support for the needs of individual children be evaluated (2001 Report, p. 38/39).

The 2001 Report refers to the involvement of the five teacher training colleges in the ROI in the study and confirms that all of the colleges acknowledge that more than needs to be devoted to the area of dyslexia. 'There is general agreement among the colleges that the issue of dyslexia deserves more dedicated time but that time constraints are a particular difficulty' (2001 Report, p.52). The report goes on to make eight recommendations regarding changes needed in the training of teachers and they include the necessity for 'more systematic and detailed approaches required to teach reading and writing to students with learning difficulties arising from dyslexia' at teacher training for primary level teachers, an expansion of the number of places available to teachers for specialist training and the development of the four special schools as resource centres for special class teachers and resource teachers. In addition, the report again focuses in on deficits regarding training in identification and support. 'Intensive in-career development courses dealing with the identification of learning difficulties arising from dyslexia, differentiated teaching, and programme planning and implementation at the individual student level should be arranged for all class and subject teachers on an on-going basis' (2001 Report, p.54/55). While four 'phases' are proposed with regard to the identification of dyslexia, there is very little reference to the role of pre-school in this report. The four phases mentioned are initial identification of a learning difference, 3-5 years of age, identification of a possible difficulty, 5-7 years of age, identification of dyslexia and analysis of learning needs, 7-12 years and annual renew of learning needs, 12+ years, and there is a very helpful and useful table provided which could indicate the presence of a 'learning difference' (2001 Report, p 58-60). While the report provides some excellent recommendations and insightful research, perhaps its size and volume could make it unlikely to be read by teachers and parents.

The full title of the 2002 Report is The Education of Children and Young People With Specific Learning Difficulties Report of the Task Group on Dyslexia. The use of the term 'dyslexia' as opposed to 'specific learning difficulty' is mentioned on two occasions. 'While most practitioners in Northern Ireland prefer to use the term

"specific learning difficulties", the term "dyslexia" is more frequently used in research papers and by voluntary groups' (2002 Report, p. ii). On the second occasion it could be suggested that the term 'dyslexia' might not be the preferred term, though it is adopted nonetheless.

> More recently in 1978 Warnock advocated caution when using the term and in 1998 the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of Special Educational Needs included dyslexia as part of a subset of Specific Learning Difficulties. However, for the purposes of this report the term 'dyslexia' will be used throughout. (2002 Report, p.3)

Unlike the 2001 Report, there is not a whole section or chapter devoted exclusively to recommendations and so the recommendations are placed as appropriate as part of each individual chapter. Like the 2001 Report, the 2002 Report has an Executive Summary in the early part of the report. This summary states that the terms of reference for the report were set down by the Department of Education and the report goes on to set down five recommendations within the sub section entitled 'Dyslexia: An Overview, The first recommendation confirms that the definition of dyslexia contained in the 2001 Report is 'endorsed' in the 2002 Report. The second recommendation reflects the need for a variety 'interventions' to meet the 'range of difficulties' from mild to severe dyslexia. The third recommendation emphasises the importance of early identification in order to minimise the 'experience of academic failure and associated consequences.' The fourth recommendation concerns a holistic approach.

> It is essential that these interventions include whole school policies, within-class approaches and individual interventions at Stages 1 and 2 of the Code of Practice, as well as the type of external support available through the various ELB Services, as outlined in Chapter 3. (2002 Report, p. iii/iv)

The final recommendation outlines the need for a 'regional conference to disseminate' the findings of the report (2002 Report, p. iv).

With regard to the provision which was currently available for children with dyslexia, the report commented that there were several variations depending on a number of factors.

> Task Group noted variation in the availability and nature of this provision, as a result of differing theoretical positions and geographical factors. There were also variations in the structure

and staffing of support services and in the amount of support
available to parents and pupils. (2002 Report, p. vi)

It could be suggested that the five Education and Library Boards were not operating with a centralised approach. Two other recommendations of note regarding the appropriate provision which needed to be provided in all Education and Library Board (ETB) areas reflect the necessity of a 'continuum of provision 'which is 'regardless of age or geographical location' and also the presence of 'as a matter of urgency' an agreed 'theoretical perspective and access criteria to inform the future development of provision and support' (2002 Report, p. v). If changes were to be made, some of the responsibility was to rest with the ETBs who needed to provide key training to 'core personnel' and to 'an appropriate accredited level' as well as providing 'access for teachers to a centralised system of advice, support and resources' and also 'awareness-raising courses for mainstream teachers' which had been developed and delivered by trained and/or experienced personnel in all ELBs' (2002 Report, p. vi). The recommendations noted the need for 'an accredited training course on dyslexia' which would be devised through the collaboration of universities, university colleges and ELBs 'which should be made available through local centres, to maximise uptake' with the possibility of funding being made available for SENCO's to take part (2002 Report, p. vi). One could argue that the recommendation regarding the opportunity to offer an accredited training course on dyslexia support to trainee teachers reflects an inspired contribution, where the qualified primary teacher commences his or her teaching career equipped with a vital teaching support at the very onset of their career. 'Consideration should be given by DE to the dyslexia training component of Initial Teacher Education courses, with a view to offering students the opportunity to gain accredited training' (2002 Report, p. vii).

The final chapter contains very many recommendations in the area of 'indicators of good practice' with the recommendations grouped into four subdivisions, namely, indicators for teachers, school ethos/pastoral issues, the quality of teaching and learning and school management issues. Twenty indicators are listed in the quality of teaching and learning subsection, and the indicators are clear and precise. The following four recommendations are included.

> Advice and practice in skimming and scanning text is given to develop higher level literacy skills. They are encouraged to use mind maps as a means of organising their thinking. According to age and stage, they are given help to improve their study/revision skills taking full advantage of their learning strengths. Regular opportunities are given to develop their independence and self-responsibility. (2002 Report, p. 52)

Unlike the 2001 Report, the Task Group mention the need to develop a 'Good Practice Guide' for both schools and parents as well as a CD Rom (2002 Report, p. 58). The development of such a guide could potentially inform parents on what constitutes good practice. One would hope that such a guide would be mindful of the fact that one or more of the parents with dyslexia could also be dyslexic. A CD Rom and DVD was developed 'as a joint initiative of the Departments of Education in Ireland, North and South, and was issued to all schools in 2005' (Ball et al, 2006, p.54). There would appear to be no particular recommendation advising parents of the genetic pattern with regard to dyslexia. There is however mention of the complication of dyslexia existing alongside other types of learning difficulty (2002 Report, p.54).

DES and DENI: Relevant Special Education Circulars

Both of the Education Departments issues circulars throughout the year. The department in the ROI tends to release a greater number of these circulars. For the purposes of this research, only circulars relating to special education are considered in the time frame of 2017 up to an including 2019. During these aforementioned three years, DES issued a total of 204 circulars. Fortunately, only two of the circulars relate directly to special education provision although an additional three circulars are arguably important when reviewing special education provision in the ROI. Two circulars from NI are particularly relevant to special education provision. As well as circulars, both departments produced many documents other than circulars, and reference will be made to a variety of these documents where appropriate. Finally, the introduction of recent legislation concerning special education provision is included.

The two key circulars from the ROI are circulars 0013/2017 and 0007/2019. The circular from 2017 is twenty-four pages long. The circular introduced a new model of special education support teaching in mainstream primary schools for the school year

2017/18. 'The new Special Education Teaching allocation will provide a single unified allocation for special educational support teaching needs to each school, based on that school's educational profile' (Circular 0013/17, p.1).The previous model of allocation had been introduced through circulars SP ED 09/04 and SP ED 01/05 where special education resources (SER) were allocated to mainstream/ordinary primary schools based on a weighted scale.

> The new system will involve a general weighted allocation for all primary schools to cater for pupils with higher incidence special educational needs, (borderline mild and mild general learning disability and specific learning disability) and those with learning support needs (i.e. functioning at or below the 10th percentile on a standardised test of reading and/or mathematics) (SP ED 09/04 p.1)

SP ED 01/05 made some adjustments to SP ED 09/04 with the introduction of the National Council for Special Education. 'The purpose of this circular is to advise the authorities of schools of the establishment of and the transfer of certain functions to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)' (SP ED 01/05, p.1). The Department recognized that there was a need for decentralization. Schools were assigned SER on the basis that Learning Support Teachers (LST) would meet the needs of those children within the 'high incidence category' and Resource Teachers would be employed either on a full time or part time basis to meet the needs of children within the low incidence categories. The weighted allocation for learning support was to be reviewed given that a school's enrolment was constantly subject to change. Circular 0013/17 heralded a radical overhaul of SER.

The latest model of allocation to primary schools was based on a school's educational profile as devised by the NCSE through the application of data such the results of standardised tests, school enrolment figures, socio economic factors and 'the numbers of pupils with complex needs enrolled to the school' (0013/17, p.6). 'The allocation to schools would remain unchanged for a minimum period of two years with revised profiled allocations due to be made to schools from September 2019' (0013/17, p.3). Crucially, school authorities should be in a better position to plan around SER as there would no longer be the need to apply for resource teaching support annually to a Special Needs Organiser (SENO) and in addition they wouldn't have to provide psychological assessments to justify allocating SER to a child needing support. 'The new model will provide a greater level of autonomy for

schools in how to manage and deploy additional teaching support within their school, based on the individual learning needs of pupils, as opposed to being based primarily on a diagnosis of disability' (0013/17, p. 2). Circular 0007/19 updated school authorities regarding adjustments to Special Education Teacher (SET allocations for the school year 2019/20 and explained the need for these adjustments. It could be argued that the NCSE, on behalf of DES had devised a formula which they believed to be fair and equitable and schools needed to allocate their allotment as carefully as possible to support their pupils. A child didn't need a report from an Educational Psychologist in order to qualify for support but one could question if this might lead to children never getting access to such a report. Furthermore Circular 0004/19 confirmed that 295 places would be available on the Post-Graduate Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Special Education Teachers, 2019/2020 to cover all of the ROI including primary and secondary teachers. One could question if the number of 295 places is sufficient, given that there is a limited induction to special education provided in the teacher training colleges.

The relevant circulars from DENI concern the update regarding the new SEN Framework and the recording of children with an SEN. Circular 2017/12 consists of four pages and states that the implementation of new special needs framework had an 'anticipated' date of 2019. (2017/12, p. 1) 'The Department is working on bringing together the legislation and guidance necessary to enable a new, more responsive and effective SEN Framework to be put in place' (2017/12, p. 2). The circular refers to primary and subordinate legislation, a new SEN Code of Practice and 'capacity building' which would include training. (ibid, p.2) The primary legislation concerns Education (Northern Ireland Order 1996 (SENDO) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 or SEND Act. The circular outlines the legislation in four short paragraphs. 'The Act, once fully commenced, will place new duties on Boards of Governors, the Education Authority (EA) and health and social services authorities, and provide new rights for parents and children over compulsory school age' (Circular 2017/12, p. 2). The duties for the Education Authority (EA) once the legislation is commenced would require the authority to 'publish an annual plan of its arrangements for special educational provision' as well as include the 'views' of the children in receipt of special education provision when 'making decision', to provide for an 'independent dispute avoidance and resolution

service' as well as 'independent mediation arrangements' (ibid, p.2). The circular outlines three new duties for the Board of Governors which include 'that the teachers in the school take all reasonable steps to identify and provide for those children with SEN' (ibid, p.3). Furthermore, the co-ordinator for SEN provision would be known as 'the Learning Co-ordinator' replacing the existing title of SENCO and 'each pupil with an SEN would have a 'personal learning plan (PLP) as opposed to an IEP and the IEP would be transferred if the 'child moved' to another grant aided school providing there was consent. (ibid, p.3)

The final sections of Circular 2017/12 refer to the draft of the new SEN Regulations which would provide the secondary legislation and would once implemented, replace the existing SEN Regulations and finally, the circular refers to the new SEN Code of Practice. The circular states that the new SEN Regulations 'will provide a strengthened legislative base for delivering a more responsive and effective SEN framework,' and the new SEN Code of Practice (COD) 'informed by the SEND Act and the SEN Regulations provisions, it will aim to provide clear and practical advice and guidance to schools, the EA and others on carrying out their statutory duties within the SEN framework. (ibid, p.3) Before the implementation of the new SEN Framework, 'capacity building training' would be provided for Learning Support Co-ordinators, principals, teachers, other school staff, Boards of Governors and the Education Authority (EA). The EA replaced the five different regional Education and Library Boards and 'became operational on 1 April, 2015 in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014' (Education Authority, 2019).

In 2017, in the ROI, the circular 0013/2017 launches a new direction from DES where the need for a psychological report and careful categorisation of an SEN to ensure SER is substituted by providing the schools with special education teaching posts and the autonomy to apportion the support where it is needed. By contrast, Circulars 2018/10, 2018/19 and 2019/ 03 in NI appear to be devoted to the correct categorisation of an SEN. Circular 2018/10 instructs that the category 'mild' would be available for selection when recording special education needs using the Schools Education Management System (SIMS). 2018/19 provide further updates when recording an SEN 'and/or medical diagnosis/diagnoses' on page one of the three page circular. 2019/03 also provides guidance.

> The purpose of this circular is to make schools aware of
> supplementary guidance which is now available in relation to the
> revised SEN and Medical categories which will be used for
> recording and capturing information about pupils with special
> educational needs for inclusion on the new School Information
> Management System (SIMS) in the October 2019 DE annual
> school census. (Circular 2019/03, p. 1)

It would appear that maintaining precise categorisation of SEN is ranked as imperative at a time when the ROI is investing heavily in providing additional SET teachers to support mainstream teachers.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the SEND Act)

The purpose of the Act is stated at the outset. 'An Act to amend the law relating to special education and disability discrimination in schools.' The Introductory Text contains nineteen headings covering duties of the Education Authority and the Boards of Governors, time limits for assessments, appeals including appeals and claims by children, rights of children who are over the compulsory age, interpretation of the Act and a heading titled 'Supplementary.' (SEND Act 2016) The Northern Ireland Assembly issued an explanatory note about the SEND Act. It remarks that there has been an increase in the number of children with an SEN in recent times. 'In 2005/06 a total of 16% of pupils had SEN, rising to 22% in 2015/16.1 This amounts to 74,760 pupils, which includes over 16,500 who have a statement of SEN (indicating that they require significant additional support)'. (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2016) The explanatory note entitled 'Research and Information Briefing Note' broadly confirmed the proposed changes as outlined in Circular 2017/12. With reference to the anticipated new Code of Practice (COP) it suggests two specific changes. 'This will be particularly important as it is likely to reduce the stages of the SEN assessment process from five to three and place greater emphasis on in-school support' (ibid, p.2) There is also reference on page two to a 'pilot scheme' which would allow children over compulsory age to 'make an appeal to the tribunal' known as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Draft SEN Regulations

The proposed SEN Framework consists of four different elements. While the SEND Act 2016 has received Royal Assent since March 2016, two of the elements have yet to be finalised. DENI states that 'work is on-going to finalise the draft SEN Regulations' and that the 'new Regulations, once finalised, will provide a strengthened legislative base for delivering a more responsive and effective SEN framework' (DENI, undated) Training has commenced for schools, the Board of Governors and the EA and a staged implementation of the 'new SEN Framework is anticipated to be put in place during 2020' (DENI, undated). The Northern Ireland Assembly which is responsible for legislature in NI was suspended in January 2017. One could perhaps speculate that this suspension has had an effect on progress with regard to the finalisation of the new SEN Framework.

DENI provide a link to the draft SEN Regulations in Circular 2017/12. The accompanying Consultation Document notes that 'many of the individual regulations contained in the 2005 Regulations are being carried forward without change' (DENI, 2016). In the foreword of the Consultation Document, John O' Dowd, Minister of Education, and NI states the purpose of the new regulations, though the SEND Act 2016 had not yet received Royal Assent. 'They expand on the out workings of the Bill and they deal with procedures and practices' (ibid, p.3). The Consultation Document clearly sets out new regulations, amended regulations and the unchanged regulations. There are fifteen new regulations in the draft. Regulations 5 and 6 focus on the Education Authority Plan.

> The form and content of the annual Education Authority plan of
> arrangements for special educational provision (resources,
> advisory, support services and training), the procedure to be
> followed in connection with the preparation, reviewing or revision
> of the plan including the persons to be consulted about it. (DENI,
> 2016, p.9)

Regulations 8-10 focus on the qualifications, experience and function of the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC). The Consultation Document stares that the LSC is 'responsible for co-ordinating the provision of pupils with SEN' in both mainstream and special schools. The regulations also outline the 'LSC functions setting out the timescales for and the information to be issued to a parent of a child under age 2 following the EA decision on whether to make a statement (including rights of

appeal)' (ibid) While the LSC needs to be a qualified teacher, there is no requirement that he/she has undertaken any additional qualification in the area of special education. In Regulation 10, which refers to the Board of Governors, special conditions are set down to facilitate the LSC. The Regulations refer to the LSC as a male using the term 'he' and notes that the board shall 'provide or make arrangements' for the 'necessary training' and 'sufficient time to conduct his role effectively.' He shall communicate on 'SEN matters' on a regular basis and the Board of Governors shall 'monitor the effectiveness of the' LSC in carrying out his functions. (Draft SEN Regulations, 2017, p.8) The draft SEN Regulations are contained within forty pages and one could suggest that the regulations are written in a legalistic format, which might prove off-putting to many readers. Fortunately, DENI also provides a Consultation Document on the draft SEN Regulations in an 'easy read version' which might encourage people with a mild reading difficulty to engage with the material, for example adults with dyslexia.

Code of Practice

> The new Code of Practice currently under development will replace the 1998 Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Children with Special Educational Needs and the 2005 Supplement to that Code. Informed by the SEND Act and the SEN Regulations provisions, it will aim to provide clear and practical advice and guidance to schools, the EA and others on carrying out their statutory duties within the SEN framework.
> (Circular 2017/12, p.3)

The reference to 'statutory duties' appears to underpin the SEN framework, where legislation in the area of special education precedes new regulations and adjustments to the delivery of special education. A new SEND Code of Practice was introduced in England in 2015. The new Code of Practice in NI will be introduced at least five years later and unlike its English counterpart, it appears that the NI COP will retain the use of statements and replace the SENCO with the title of Learning Support Co-ordinator. In the interim the 1998 Code with the 2005 Supplement remains in operation. 'The Code of Practice addresses the identification, assessment and provision made for all children who may have special educational needs at some time in their school careers, or even earlier' (Department of Education, undated). The COP consists of 90 pages which are divided into six parts. The glossary on pages 87-90 contains a definition of integration but there is no mention of the term 'inclusion'.

The Appendix contains eight separate categories of SEN. The second category referred to is Specific Learning Difficulties, for example Dyslexia. The outlined duties are addressed to the Board of Governors and are divided into two sections. The first section clearly sets out the requirement to monitor, assess and record indicators of a possible learning difficulty. The second section outlines the actions that the board should implement to support a child with a learning difficulty. Proposed action include the introduction of individualised plans, structured reading and spelling programmes and the 'use of multi-sensory teaching strategies' (COP, p.72) There is also mention of the use of 'the possible benefits of information technology' which could be used 'across the curriculum' (ibid). The COP introduced a five stage approach in recognition of 'the continuum of needs' where stage one and two refer to school based support, stage three involves the intervention of an outside specialist, stage four concerns the consideration by the Board for a statutory statement with stage five focused on the possible need for a statement of special educational needs and the associated need for monitoring and review.

The Department of Education issued a Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Assessment and Identification of Special Educational Needs in 2005. The Supplement followed the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (the 2005 Order). 'The 2005 Order enhanced the rights of children with SEN to attend mainstream schools and introduced protections against disability discrimination to the education system for the first time' (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2015, p.12). The Supplement consists of 71 pages and is divided into five sections. The Supplement includes the new SEN provisions arising from the 2005 Order as well as an entire section devoted to inclusion entitled 'Guidance on Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs' (Supplement 2005, p.40-53) 'The new law strengthens the right to an ordinary school place for children with a statement unless it is against the wishes of parents or it is incompatible with the efficient education of others' (ibid, p. 13).

Websites of DES and DENI

The website of DES (www.education.ie) has seven different areas listed along the left hand side and the subsection concerning special education is to be found under the second area known as 'The Education System'. It notes that Section 2 of the

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSN) Act 2014 states 'a child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs' which has two provisos or limitations. These concern what is perceived as the 'best interests of the child' and the 'effective provision' for the other children. There is repeated reference to the department's policy of integration and no reference to a policy of inclusion. The Department's policy is to achieve as much integration as possible, as envisaged in Section 2 of the EPSEN Act. The website of DENI (www.education-ni.gov.uk) has a helpful 'Quick Links' section to the right of the home page which has eight headings with 'Special Educational Needs' as its final heading. The search site option at the top of the home page is also available but typing in 'special education' provides over a thousand options. However, typing in the term dyslexia provides four helpful items including an item entitled 'Helping learners with dyslexia' which was compiled in response to a recommendation of the Task Group on Dyslexia. Among the ten strategies for developing a dyslexia Friendly environment are the need for practice and overlearning, the use of coloured paper instead of white paper and the modification of the 'homework format and expectations' (Developing a Dyslexia-friendly environment, undated, p.8) The document also mentions the importance of early intervention even if this results in 'false positives for dyslexia. (ibid, p.9) While the DES homepage also has an advanced search option, typing the term 'dyslexia' provided seventeen different options. Amongst the many options, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) supply a two page article called 'Dyslexia-Tips for Parents Primary Aged, but one could argue that this very useful aide could be easily overlooked and one could question if the aide has been disseminated to teachers and parents alike.

National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The website of NCSE has an audio feature allowing the visitor to listen rather than read. The Council was established in 2003.

> The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. The Council was first established as an independent statutory body by order of the Minister for Education and Science in December 2003. (NCSE, 2019)

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The website informs that it provides a local service through its Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) and the SENOs 'who interact with parents and schools and liaise with the HSE in providing resources to support children with special educational needs'. The EBSEN Act has yet to be fully implemented, and as a result 'the implementation of key sections which confers statutory rights to assessment, education plans and appeals processes on children with special educational needs has been deferred due to the current economic circumstances (NSCE, 2019). The mission statement for NCSE states that it 'will promote a continuum of educational provision which is inclusive and responsive' and that they will achieve this through supporting schools and by advising 'educators, parents and guardians; undertaking and disseminating research into special education; and by providing policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills on special education issues' (NCSE, 2019). They provide four different guidebooks for parents. They also have produced 'Information Booklet for Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs' which can be downloaded but it runs for sixty-eight pages. The booklet is comprehensive but perhaps the sheer size of the booklet might prove a disincentive to read it. The website announces a new publication relating to improving inclusive practices in schools.

> The Inclusive Education Framework is a new interactive tool to be used by schools to assist schools plan, measure and improve how pupils with special educational needs are supported. This resource will help re-affirm good inclusive practices already in place in many schools and will guide other schools to develop good practice. (NCSE, undated)

The Special Education Support Service (SESS) is now under the remit of NCSE. Where schools need support and additional training in an aspect of special education, they can apply online requesting this support. Its role is explained on the NCSE website.

> The role of the SESS is to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in relation to special educational provision. The service co-ordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures for school personnel working with students with special educational needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special schools and special classes.

Dyslexia policy and practice cross-professional and parental perspectives on the Northern Ireland context (Dyslexia Policy and Practice)

The Report of the Task Group on Dyslexia (2002 Report) had made many recommendations with regard to improving special education support for children with dyslexia. The Dyslexia Policy and Practice reports on small scale research which was carried to investigate 'the extent to which recommendations have been met in the intervening years' (Beck et al, p 144-164). The article is divided in nineteen sections with the second from last section devoted to conclusions and recommendations. The research was qualitative and consisted of semi-structured interviews, with sixteen participants from the ROI and ten from NI. Seven of the participants had been members either the Task Force of Dyslexia (2001) in the ROI or the Report on the Task Group on Dyslexia (2002) in NI, eleven participants made up of teachers and parents and five were members of state bodies involved in supporting children with dyslexia. The research findings included areas of concern with regard to training and the identification of dyslexia.

> Perspectives of interviewees indicated that while pockets of good practice have existed, this has been inconsistent. Despite the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) promoting and funding a significant and replicable model of teacher education and making efforts to monitor its efficacy, concerns remain regarding the optional nature of training, the maintenance of the discrepancy model of dyslexia identification, the need for early multi-disciplinary identification, whole-school policy development and post-primary provision. (Beck et al, 2017, p. 144-164)

The report noted the need for better training in both teacher training colleges and qualified teachers. 'The need for specific training in the core elements associated with literacy difficulty for student and existing teachers has been identified internationally for some time' as well as specific training for dyslexia support and that better competence for teachers would lead to earlier identification of dyslexia. The findings also focused on the need for a greater voice for parents, a move away from the 'discrepancy model' with a 'greater reliance on the collated evidence of trained, accredited teachers' as well as a 'greater access to information' for all the stakeholders which would promote transparency and reduce anxiety' (Beck et al, 2017, p. 144-164).

While the Dyslexia and Policy research focused on NI two other recent research reports provide further insights regarding special education support in the ROI. The research of O'Brien (2017) is focused on six children who have left their mainstream schools and are attending a 'reading school' in the ROI. The children are between ten and twelve years of age and they have been referred to a specialist school because of their learning difficulties. The children were happier in their segregated setting. 'All of the children in this school appeared more content with the special setting compared with the mainstream schools. They were no longer 'afraid' of 'messing up'. The children had more self-confidence, better 'self-esteem and self-efficacy in the special setting.' (O'Brien, 2017, p. 153) In contrast to the research of O'Brien (2017), Rose and Shevlin report on the popular approach of withdrawing children from their classroom to receive special education support, commenting 'that this approach has limitations and may not be conducive to the promotion of inclusive practice' (Rose and Shevlin, 2019, abstract) While in-class support is also practiced, Rose and Shevlin note that withdrawing children 'continues to be the dominant model' (ibid).

There is evidence that difficulties remain around defining inclusion and dyslexia. While DES and DENI have policies where the provision of special education support is attempting to provide an inclusive approach, it is unclear that the departments are successful. In the Dyslexia and Policy research, one participant suggested that the 'inclusive approach was being used to reduce costs rather than improve services' where the school was obliged to provide the support 'without access to outside intervention' (Beck et al, 2017, p.144-164). If the best possible type of support for children with a special educational need is dependent on individual circumstances one could argue that a very flexible, open approach is required, where withdrawing children either individually, in a group or even to a special specialist school might be the most appropriate intervention. Whether in an inclusive or segregated setting, the need for highly skilled professionals working alongside involved and informed parents might be the most effective approach.

The chapter opens with a brief review of the history of special education. This review provides the context for the Salamanca Statement and the policy of inclusion. The exploration of special education is then confined to five chosen jurisdictions. The area of special education is then further refined to one specific area, namely,

dyslexia. Finally, the focus of exploration is distilled to only two jurisdictions, namely the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The narrowing of the focus is necessary in order to achieve critical analysis. In the next chapter, I will focus on my philosophical approach and my research design. While the research aims and objectives as well as the research questions evolved from the literature review, the research design was heavily influenced by my philosophical stance.

Chapter Three   Methodology

Introduction

This research project was conducted as a mixed method study through the application of both a survey and a comparative case study. The survey was confined to primary school teachers working in primary schools in either the Republic of Ireland (ROI) or in Northern Ireland (NI). The comparative study was restricted to a total of 21 participants with 11 of the participants living in the ROI and ten of the participants living in NI. The data from the comparative study was gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews. Relevant documentation relating to Special Education from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in the Republic of Ireland and the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) was explored in advance of both the survey and the case study. The chapter comprises of an introduction, six subdivisions, a conclusion followed by a research overview chart. The first subdivision addresses my philosophical underpinnings. This is followed by a discussion of the research approach. The third subdivision explains the methods used to collect the data and this subsection is followed by a review of the data analysis. There are subsections devoted to trustworthiness and the limitations of the research and an overview completes the chapter.

> All social research is a coming-together of the ideal and the feasible, so that there will be many circumstances in which the nature of the topic or of the participants in an investigation and the restraints on a researcher loom large in decisions about how best to proceed. (Bryman, 2016, p.36)

There was an acceptance and a consciousness that I needed to adhere to the highest standards of ethical research methods, keeping in mind the above quotation from Bryman, where the need for realistic goals is uppermost.

Philosophical Underpinnings

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) discuss the connectedness between ontology, epistemology and methodology.

> It follows that ontological assumptions will give rise to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choice of particular data collection techniques.

> The significance of the interplay of all these aspects cannot be over-estimated (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.21).

If we are to accept the suggestion of Hitchcock and Hughes then the philosophical stance of the researcher plays a role in the research design chosen by the researcher. Cohen et al (2011) refer to the assumption of Hitchcock and Hughes. However, it is their assertion that the researcher's values and beliefs or axiology also needs to be included. Axiology refers to our beliefs and values (Cohen et al, 2011, p.3). 'This view moves us beyond regarding research methods as simply a technical exercise and as concerned with understanding the world' (Cohen et al, 2011, p3). Bryman (2016) explains that ontology concerns 'a theory of the nature of social entities' (p.693).

> The central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can or should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can or should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions of social actors (Bryman, 2016, p.28).

Bryman (ibid) offers two opposing stances regarding what constitutes reality, namely, constructionism (p.689) and objectivism. (p.693). Constructionism asserts a changing and evolving perspective while objectivism reflects a static or fixed reality which is external to the researcher. 'Is reality of an objective nature or is it the product of individual consciousness' Cohen et al, 2011, p. 5). Establishing the ontological stance of the researcher is relevant.

> Ontological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality, in other words what is. Researchers need to take a position regarding their perceptions of how things really are and how things really work (Scotland, 2012, p.9).

Epistemology concerns 'the question of what is or should be regarded as accepted knowledge in a discipline' (Bryman, 2016, p. 24). It refers to 'its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how it can be communicated to others' (Cohen et al, 2011, p.6). Opie (2004) explores two different views of knowledge. It can be viewed as 'hard, real, capable of being transmitted in tangible form or softer, subjective, based on experience and insight of an essentially personal nature' (p.13). Opie suggests that if one's view of knowledge is of the former, then one is more likely to favour quantitative procedures, while the latter group would be more likely to favour qualitative procedures.

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Bryman (2016) suggests that there are three fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative researchers. These differences concern ontology, epistemology and what Bryman refers to as the 'principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research' (ibid, p.32). Bryman suggests that quantitative researchers have an objective ontological stance; their epistemological stance is a Natural science model, particularly positivism and they have a deductive approach with regard to 'the role of theory in relation to research' (ibid). Qualitative researchers in contrast have a constructivist ontological stance; their epistemological stance is one of interpretivism and their principal orientation concerns inductivism or 'the generation of theory' (ibid). Bell (2010) explains that quantitative researchers "collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another." (Bell, 2010, p. 5) This allows them to reach possibly generalisable conclusions. 'Qualitative researchers are more concerned to understand individuals' perceptions of the world' (Bell, 2010, p.5).

My personal philosophical stance reflects my divided opinion with respect to epistemology. My ontological stance is constructionist but my epistemological viewpoint is principally but not exclusively one of interpretivism. The objective scientific approach of data collection can arguably support the subjective data garnered through the individualized approach of interpretivism. Cohen et al (2011) provide a table which sets out four 'differing approaches to the study of behaviour' (2011, p.46). Cohen et al refer to normative, interpretative, complexity theoretical and critical. The list of characteristics associated with the interpretative approach aligns well with the aspirations of my research with the exception of the reference to 'non-statistical.' (ibid) While statistics are associated with the quantitative research, I suggest that they can be used to support my qualitative research. The survey element of my research informs and influences the shape of the qualitative case study and I suggest that the survey provides triangulation.

Research Approach: Mixed Method Approach

Hammersley (2012) offers a definition of the term paradigm. With regard to research methodology, Hammersley states that paradigm refers to 'a set of philosophical assumptions about the phenomena to be studied, about how they can be understood and even the proper purpose and product of research' (ibid, p.2). There are

difficulties relating to the labelling of various paradigms (ibid, p.19). Bryman (2016) defines interpretivism as 'an epistemological position that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action' (p.692). Cohen et al (2011) include terms such as small-scale research, personal involvement of the researcher, interpreting the specific, qualitative and subjective which summarises the characteristics of the interpretative paradigm. Hammersley (2012) points out that if researchers are to understand why people respond in a particular way or 'why institutions exist and operate in characteristic ways, then we need 'to understand the distinctive nature of their perceptions, beliefs and so on' (ibid, p.22). Before undertaking the Literature Review, I had come to the realisation that my philosophical stance aligned with the interpretative paradigm, despite the fact that I wanted to include a research tool more closely associate with positivism. Denscombe (2014, p.2) considers the shift in social scientific research where one is no longer necessarily ring fenced with regard to philosophical paradigm. 'Paradigms need not ring fence the choices.' He goes on to point out that 'social researchers can, and do, combine features of positivist and interpretivist paradigms within individual projects, crossing boundaries within the traditional paradigms.' (Denscombe, 2014, p.2) The final decision regarding my research approach would be confirmed once I had established my research questions.

The Literature Review traces the evolution of special education across time. There is no shortage of literature on the topic of special education, and at times I felt overwhelmed by the sheer volume. The theme of inclusion became apparent especially following the adoption of the Salamanca Statement in 1994 at the World Conference in Special Education. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) state that the Salamanca Statement was adopted by 25 international organisations and 92 governments and they refer to Clough (1998) who observed that the Statement was a 'bold and dynamic statement that called for inclusion to become quite simply the norm' (ibid p.73) The focus of the Literature then sharpens its focus to include five chosen jurisdictions with an overview of special education provision with specific reference to primary children and dyslexia culminating in an in-depth comparative analysis of special education provision of the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI). As I probed the topic of special education, differences and similarities between the five chosen jurisdictions emerged. There was evidence of

increasing collaboration between the department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI).

Gradually, research questions emerged which were designed to probe the attitudes the perceptions of the participants regarding the policies of inclusion, segregation and homework and best practice with regard to the support of primary children with dyslexia. Existing and emerging research concerning special education provision for primary children with dyslexia in the ROI and NI was probed and I noted a gap in the research. The policy of inclusion could be explored through the participation of teachers, parents and past pupils in the form of a small-scale research project, where the findings of an initial cross border survey informed the design of a cross border comparative case study. A figure of 174 participants was needed to complete the survey and 20 participants were sought for the comparative case study although as it transpired, the eventual number rose to a figure of 21.

'In most cases, a survey will aim to obtain information from a representative selection of the population and from that sample will then be able to present findings as being representative of the population as a whole' (Bell, 2010, p. 11). Lankshear and Knobel (2004) discuss three types of survey, namely, simple descriptive, cross-sectional and longitudinal. Simple descriptive surveys are referred by Mertens (1998) as 'one shot' where characteristics are described 'of a sample at one point in time' (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p. 164). The cross-sectional survey uses a 'targeted sample' and is used 'to generalize the responses to the broader population of interest' (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p. 164). The longitudinal survey surveys a cohort of participants but returns to the same chosen group more than once. They are thus conducted 'over a period of time. (Cohen et al, 2011, p. 266) After careful reflection, I chose to use a cross-sectional survey as discussed by Lankshear and Knobel.

A sample size of 30 is held as many to be the minimum number of cases if the researcher s plan to use some form of statistical analysis of their data' (Cohen et al, 2011, p. 144). The sample of 87 participants in each jurisdiction might appear small, but it is a representative sample, carefully including as it does a number of personnel across all sectors responsible for delivering teaching support to primary children with dyslexia in both jurisdictions. The numbers of participants within each category

was limited with an email inviting participants to take part. Every effort was made to include participants of varying age groups as well as well as including participants of different gender. In so far as it is practicable, age and gender was replicated in both jurisdictions. Thus, the approach used sought a homogeneous sampling in an effort to make tentative generalisations. Surveys can be conducted by interview, telephone, post or through the internet. The cost alone as well as the time involved made the internet-based survey the only feasible option for this researcher. Cohen et al (2011) explore eight different problems associated with internet-based surveys. These problems concern sampling, ethics, hardware and software issues, unfamiliarity of respondents with the internet and media, layout and presentation of survey, reliability of the survey and the dropout of respondents (2011, p. 283-284). I was mindful of the pitfalls alluded to by Cohen et al.

According to Miles and Huberman, a case study is 'a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context.' (1994, p. 25) Cohen et al state that a case study 'can penetrate situations in ways that that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis' (Cohen et al, 2011, p.289. Yin suggests that the case study is 'an empirical enquiry' and that it investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context' (Yin, 2009, p.18). Slight at el (2011) discuss how case studies can be conducted in a manner which reflect either a single epistemological standpoint or may draw on more than one standpoint. They refer to Doolin (2004) who pointed out that 'in the context of undertaking interpretative case studies, researchers can usually draw on a critical, reflective perspective, 'and so have cognisance of 'the wider social and political environment that has shaped the case' (Slight et al, 2011, p. 5). The interpretivist standpoint on its own could potentially overlook what Slight et al describe as 'surrounding historical contexts' (ibid, p.7). With regard to the critical stance, Slight et al refer to the possibility of 'focusing solely on power relationships and may give the researcher a position that is too privileged.' (Slight et al, 2011, p.4). They state that the positivist stance omits the 'role of the researcher in influencing findings' (Slight et al, 2011, p. 4). The case study as envisaged by me reflected a primarily interpretive standpoint but included a reflective critical slant, mindful of the social and historical context of the environment.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) refer to Stake's subdivision of case study into three different categories. These are intrinsic, instrumental and collective. These authors

describe the instrumental case study design as one where 'the researcher is usually interested in how and why a phenomenon exists. The intrinsic is centred on a specific case and the collective involves multiple cases (Johnson and Christensen, 2014, p.436). One of the chosen primary schools in the comparative case study is a special school for children with specific learning difficulties including severe dyslexia. It is one of only four in the ROI and does not have a comparable case study in NI. Nonetheless, the fact that no special school exists in NI offers an arguably interesting contrast. As such, I would suggest that the proposed case study is instrumental, as it endeavours to understand some important issue better. (Johnson and Christensen, 2014, p. 436)

Despite the opportunity that case studies present to gather the 'close up reality' and the 'thick description' identified by Geertz (1973) as cited by Cohen et al (2011, p. 292), there are also possible pitfalls and drawbacks associated with this form of research. Cohen et al cite Nisbet and Watt (1984) where they provide seven advantages and only three disadvantages of using a case study to carry out research. The advantages include their appeal to a wider audience, where the results are easier to understand, and the fact that 'unique features' can be captured as can 'unanticipated events' and a single researcher can undertake a case study. The disadvantages include difficulties with generalisation of findings and possible issues of bias and subjectivity with the inability to verify or cross-check (Ibid, p.293). Flyvbjerg, (2006) argues that five common misunderstandings about case study research are refutable. These refer to the notion that theoretical knowledge is of higher value than 'practical knowledge', the inability to generalise from one case study, the suggestion that case studies are more suited to 'generating hypotheses', a belief that the case study is inherently biased towards verification and the difficulty with regard to summarisation of findings (2006, p.219). Cohen et al (2011) refer to Vershuren (2003) when they highlight that if the researcher 'can identify case studies that catch the range of variability, then external validity-generalization-can be demonstrated' (ibid, p.295). The opportunity to glean the 'thick description' identified by Geertz was impressive to this researcher and the importance of being able to generalise was considered as is perhaps secondary to this study.

Methods

Hodkinson and Vickerman refer to Hornby (2002) regarding the Salamanca Statement of 1994. 'The statement has resulted in what, at times, appears to be a tidal wave of inclusive intent preached with overpowering zeal by the church of inclusion' (Ibid p. 74)). The Literature Review confirmed a difficulty surrounding the definition of inclusion. Advocates of segregation also emerged. Existing research from Nugent (2008) and O'Brien (2017) suggested that pupils attending a special school for children with a specific difficulty including dyslexia had expressed their preference for segregation. Pupils at the special school are withdrawn from their mainstream school for a period of up to two years and occasionally three years. In addition to a thorough search of the website of DENI, I personally contacted the Department of Education in Northern Ireland so as to confirm if a similar category of special school (SSSD) existed in the province. As it transpired, the four special state schools in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) for children with a specific difficulty including dyslexia appeared to be unique. I questioned the existence of an SSSD in 2019. Gradually, a research aim began to emerge, namely, to explore the perceptions regarding the delivery of special education provision for children with dyslexia in primary schools in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In order to achieve my aim, I decided to conduct a small scale comparative study involving primary teachers in both the ROI and NI. This process would serve as a scoping exercise where the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of the participants could be considered. The involvement of 174 teachers would provide a wider sample than the much smaller group involved in the comparative case study. The inclusion of a comparative study of an SSSD in the ROI with a Dyslexia Friendly School (DFS) in NI could consider the issue of segregation alongside the policy of integrating and adapting a school to meet the needs of children with dyslexia. Of necessity, it made sense to include the involvement of a number of feeder primary schools to the SSSD. In the interest of balance, I decided to include a primary school in NI which had been awarded an Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM). Finally, I invited a peripatetic teacher and a parent of a dyslexic child in NI whose child was not a pupil at either of the two participating NI primary schools.

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The Pilot Study

The two chosen data collection instruments were ready for the pilot phase of the research project by September 2017. The instruments consisted of a short survey and a semi-structured interview. I decided to use Google Drive to trial the survey. The survey design was carefully compiled and it consisted of a total of sixteen questions. Ten of the questions looked for short answers and the remaining six questions were open-ended. I hoped that the inclusion of ten short, direct and uncomplicated questions would encourage the participants to take part in the survey and complete the entire questionnaire. Four of the ten short questions were used to ascertain background information about the school where the participant was teaching. Three of the questions related to the educational background of the participant, their staff position within the school and an email contact, so that it would be possible to contact them at a later date if necessary.

The blueprint for the survey was designed for the 169 teachers participating in the survey although there needed to be a slight variation to the fifth question on the survey form reflecting the fact that the primary schools in the ROI had access to Special Education Teachers (SET) where as the primary schools in NI could apply for support from the peripatetic service. The survey design for further modified slightly to accommodate the inclusion of five peripatetic teachers from NI which increased the total survey participation up to 174. The six questions which sought a more detailed reply were purposely included to support the research findings from the comparative study. The semi-structured interview involved ten questions which related directly to both the research aims and the research questions. A mainstream teacher (Stephanie) in the ROI agreed to pilot the online survey. A different principal teacher (Rita) and a school's inspector (Mark) agreed to pilot the interview questions.

I was very happy with the pilot survey and pilot interviews. My initial concerns around using an online questionnaire proved unfounded. Stephanie had no difficulty negotiating the survey and emailed the completed questionnaire without delay. Rita and Mark appeared relaxed and at ease but I knew that one or two of the questions needed reappraisal. My opening question to Rita invited her to discuss the dyslexia policy at her school. The school did not have a dyslexia policy. In addition, on mature reflection, I decided that my first question in future would be to ask the

participant to tell me a little about themselves. I adopted this approach as the first question for Mark. At times, I formed the opinion that Mark's responses reflected an idealistic approach. When I questioned him regarding the possible need for teacher training around inclusive teaching practice, he suggested that such training was up to the teacher to secure as part of his/her professional development. 'They could attend courses in their own time,' Mark spoke at length about differentiation. I was shocked that despite the many years that I had attended courses, the term differentiation had eluded me.

Ethics

Before making any decisions regarding the research design I consulted the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) and the Code of Practice for Research, University of Lincoln (2018). The BERA Guidelines discuss the various responsibilities of the researcher. There are seven specific responsibilities explained with regard to the participants in the research. These responsibilities refer to consent, transparency, right to withdraw, incentives, possible harm, privacy and storage and disclosure. When formulating the research design, I was conscious at all times of the adherence to BERA Guidelines and the Code of Practice for Research. My research design was submitted for ethical approval from the University Research Ethics Committee and my application was successful.

> Ethical research involves getting the informed consent of those you are going to interview, question, observe or take materials from. It involves agreements about the use of this data, and how its analysis will be reported and disseminated. And it is about keeping to such agreements when they have been reached (Blaxter et al, 2006, p.158-159).

Every participant in the survey was provided with an accompanying explanatory email outlining the purpose of the research. Confidentiality was guaranteed. Participation was voluntary and there would be no reward as an incentive to take part. The questionnaires would be stored appropriately for a period of four years. The principals of the five participating primary schools were consulted at the outset and their informed consent was provided. Additional staff from four of the five primary schools was asked by their principals if they would like to take part in the research. It had proved challenging initially to source feeder primary schools to the SSSD. However, it transpired that I had an extra principal who was eager to take part and so

I had a total of twenty one interviewees or an extra participant from the ROI. An explanatory letter was provided and written consent was sought from all of the interviewees. Pseudonyms were used by me at all times and there was no reference made to either the names or geographical position of the schools. As there was no special school which was similar to the SSSD in the ROI, I sought the participation of one peripatetic teacher and a parent in addition to the eight participants associated with the DFS and IQM School from NI. All twenty one participants were asked permission for the interview to be recorded. They could stop the interview at any time and they were asked at the conclusion of the interview if they would like any of the content of the interview excluded. As there are only four SSSD in the ROI, the staff at the participating SSSD were aware of the possibility that the school might be identified but the three participating staff which included the principal and deputy principal were nonetheless happy to consent to their inclusion.

Sampling

All of the 174 participants in the survey were teaching in either the ROI or NI. Every effort was made to ensure that the sample included teachers who had trained in a broad variety teacher training colleges including teachers who had attended universities other than teacher training colleges in the ROI and NI. The sample included teachers working in a wide variety of primary school categories from the two jurisdictions. In addition, there were participants representing the differing teaching roles within primary schools. Five of the 174 participating teachers worked with the peripatetic service in NI. The careful efforts to include a wide spread of participants reflects my conscientious efforts to represent the voice or perspective of as many individuals as possible. I am conscious however, that 174 participants is a small sample but I hope a representative sample none the less. I naively believed that if I wrote a strong, appealing accompanying email that a flow of interested participants would email by return.

I consulted the advice regarding the problems and possible solutions for conducting internet surveys as outlined by Cohen et al (2011, p280-281) and I believed that I had prepared well. I did not know that in very many cases the email had been seen only by the school secretary and that the email with the attached questionnaire had been deleted. I began to make follow up telephone calls to the school. I noted that all too

often, the school website had not been updated and that the name of the school principal was inaccurate. I came to the conclusion that my best method of acquiring completed questionnaires involved befriended the school secretary and appealing to him/her for their assistance. There was also an element of 'snowballing' as discussed by Bryman (2011, p. 188). I found the process of gathering the questionnaires torturous but worthwhile.

One of the findings from the survey that I found alarming was the number of teachers who reported that they had never received any formal training in how to support children with dyslexia. This finding gave me an extra impetus to interview a sample of participants from the ROI and NI which would include parents of children with dyslexia but also past pupils who had dyslexia. The participants from the ROI needed to have a connection with the SSSD. The principal, deputy principal and another teacher from the SSSD were very willing participants. My difficulties began when I sought the names of parents and past pupils from the SSSD. Suffice to say that I was going to have to source them without the assistance of the SSSD. There are only 63 pupils attending the SSSD at any given time and the school supports a large mainly urban geographical region of up to 40 miles north to south and about 10 miles west to east.

Trying to find feeder schools with a pupil or pupils attending the SSSD at the time of research proved challenging. I began telephoning and chatting to school secretaries once more. One of the participating staff from the SSSD telephoned me unexpectedly and mentioned that a past pupil of the SSSD would like to take part and she gave me the necessary phone details. It had taken a number of weeks but at last all twenty one participants had given their informed consent to take part. The group of eleven from the ROI consisted of three staff from the SSSD, three principals of potential feeder schools to the SSSD, one special education teacher, two parents of children with dyslexia who had a child who had either attended the SSSD in the past or at the time of the research and one past pupil of the SSSD. The ten participants from NI were three staff from the DYS, a parent and a past pupil of the DFS, two staff members of the Quality Inclusion Mark School (IQM), a parent of a child with dyslexia at the IQM, a peripatetic teacher and a parent of a child with dyslexia not attending either the DFS or the IQM.

Positionality

I have spent 34 years working as a primary school teacher. As part of my initial teacher training, I chose the area of remedial education as my elective in the final year of my Bachelor of Education degree. My background is firmly embedded in special education.

'A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions' (Malterud, 2001, p. 483-484).

I was very conscious of my position as a former principal and special education teacher. When appealing for participants on the survey, I avoided any direct telephone conversations with teachers. I emailed the explanatory information including all data concerning informed consent and attached the questionnaire. During any telephone calls with school secretaries, I emphasised the promise of confidentiality. The final question in the questionnaire encouraged the participants to add any further information that they wished to include. I never met any of the participants who took part in the survey. My objective was to remain as impartial as possible and that my own views and attitudes would not taint the collection of the data. When conducting the semi-structured interviews, my position as objective facilitator was more challenging. Bell (2010) refers to Selltiz et al (1962) where she recalls that 'interviewers are human beings and not machines and their manner may have an effect on respondents' (ibid, p.583). I have a deep rooted interest in special education but I am aware of the importance of remaining open at all times to adopting new ideas and approaches to the support of children with a special need. Bell (2010) discusses the approach adopted by Jan Gray to address the issue of bias. Gray 'was constantly on the lookout for signs of bias and she placed great emphasis on reflection, on practice and on triangulation' (ibid, p. 170). I endeavoured to be a reflective researcher and the inclusion of a survey at the outset of my research was used in an effort to cross-check the findings of the comparative case study.

Preparation for Survey and Interviews

Cohen et al (2011) provide a representation of the planning stages for a survey (ibid, p.260). Cohen et al acknowledge that the design is adapted from a representation by

Davidson (1970). I decided to adapt the design to accommodate my proposed survey. I noted the difficulties associated with the response rate to a survey and endeavoured to include much of the advice referred to by Cohen et al (ibid, p.263-267). Bryman (2012) offers a representation which illustrates a methodology for formulating interview questions (ibid, p.470). I was happy to apply his approach when formulating my interview question. I practised using the recording device for the interviews in advance. I was determined that I would have carefully planned my travel route in preparation for the interviews and that I would always arrive a little early for all my appointments.

The questions in both the survey and interviews were designed to provide answers to the research questions. Three different questionnaire formats were necessary to conduct the survey. There was one format for the participants who were teaching in primary schools in the ROI, a second format for the participants who were teaching in primary schools in NI and a third format for the five teachers working as peripatetic teachers in NI. In the case of the first two formats there was only one variation to reflect the presence of special education teachers (SET) in the ROI and the possibility of access to peripatetic teachers in NI. The third questionnaire format shared 12 questions in common with the other two formats and the rest of the format included a further eight questions where four of those eight questions were adapted to reflect the role of a peripatetic teacher. The remaining four questions were not closely aligned with the previous two questionnaire formats but were geared specifically to the work of a peripatetic teacher.

The interview schedule needed to be flexible enough to accommodate six different categories of participant. The categories were principal, mainstream teacher, SET, peripatetic teacher, parent and past pupil. The schedule consisted of ten questions but there was the possibility for further questions if the opportunity presented itself. The questions were kept as similar as possible and about five questions were almost identical to all categories. The questions referred to background information regarding the participant, inclusion, segregation, the type of support provided to the pupil with dyslexia and the opportunity to add additional information not already asked of the participant. All of the participants were asked about homework.

Conducting the Interviews

I was careful to speak slowly and to listen intently. I was conscious in particular of the need to sometimes ask follow up questions, the need to probe a little more at times, the benefit for asking for clarification where necessary but also the importance of the use of silence. Bryman (2012) refers to allowing 'pauses to signal that you want to give the interviewee the opportunity to reflect and amplify an answer' (ibid, p. 475). I studied the 'ten criteria of a successful interviewer' from Kvale (1996) as referred by Bryman (ibid, p.473). I took special note of the importance of not speaking too much and the need to be 'ethically sensitive' which are two extra criteria which Bryman has added to Kvale's list (ibid, p.473).

The Data

I decided to print off all of the questionnaires at the library in the University of Lincoln. I wanted a hard copy of all of the survey data. I carefully transported the photocopied questionnaires back to my home. All of the questionnaires are stored in a secure locked cupboard. The data from the interviews was downloaded from the digital recorder and all of the interviews were typed and the transcripts were printed off from my laptop. I wanted a hard copy of the interviews. There were times when I found it helpful to analyse the data manually from both research instruments in addition to the use of relevant software. All the transcripts are stored in a secure locked cupboard.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaire was analysed before the semi-structured interviews took place. The survey findings could inform the subsequent questions to be asked in the interviews. I used the software Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the survey data. The transcripts from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using NVivo software. While both sets of software were very helpful, I also analysed both sets of data manually from time to time. SPSS offered the opportunity to generate vast amounts of data but I needed to consider carefully what specific information was both useful and relevant. NVivo made the huge amount of transcribed material manageable when I started to analyse the interview data. I was very grateful to have access to both sets of software.

'Quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another' (Bedford and Wilson, 2013, p.55). Cohen et al (2011) devote a chapter to 'approaches to quantitative data analysis' and I must admit that having read the chapter I seriously considered excluding the survey from my research design (ibid, 604-621). The terminology associated with quantitative research appeared overwhelming. However, I persevered, as I believed that the findings could provide a context for the comparative case study. SPSS software was most helpful for binary questions or questions requiring a number response which applied to eight of the sixteen questions. The open-ended questions permitting longer answers were analysed by both sets of software. I was searching for the recurring nouns and adjectives used by the participants. I wanted to compare sets of data. Sometimes the sets of data referred to the two jurisdictions of the ROI and NI. Other times, I wanted to compare the responses of male participants with those of the female participants. Occasionally, I needed to examine the hard copies of the questionnaire as I wanted to read the responses for myself. From time to time, I counted through the 174 questionnaires and I used a calculator to double check the findings. Realistically, I could not have analysed the survey without SPSS. The frequency and descriptive data was invaluable.

Patterns emerged from the survey data. For example, just over half of the participants reported that they had received specific training in order to support children with dyslexia. In addition, over half of the participants who had not received specific training were teaching in the ROI. The comparative case study provided the opportunity to explore if the findings of the survey were replicated.

> Any researcher who wishes to become proficient at doing
> qualitative analysis must learn to code well and easily. The
> excellence of the research rests in large part on the excellence of
> the coding (Strauss L., 1987, p. 27).

Strauss (1987) notes the importance of excellent coding. I had applied thematic analysis during the pilot phase with the two pilot interviews. Braun and Clark (2006) suggest a six step approach to thematic analysis. I adopted the approach with my comparative case study. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) provide a helpful table which sets out the six steps. (ibid, p.3254) Accordingly, I familiarised myself with the data. This allowed me to start to generate initial codes which I termed primitive nodes. I then searched for possible themes. I still had too many nodes and so I reviewed my

themes. I defined my themes which had now reduced to twelve coherent nodes. A flow chart illustrates the evolution of the thematic coding.

All of the 21 interviews were transcribed manually which gave me the opportunity to engage with the dialogue. I played the digital recorder, a sentence at a time and then typed what I had heard with careful attention to the exact wording of each interviewee. I had to replay some of the dialogue from the participants from NI repeatedly as I strained to hear beyond their accent. The transcripts were then transferred into an NVivo file. Each interview transcript was scanned and rescanned by me individually in search of meaningful data. I looked for themes. Braun and Clark (2006) say that 'a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set'(ibid, p.10). At the primitive stage of coding, many of the headings referred to the individual schools and participants. I started to cluster all the background information into compatible sets which reduced the number of headings considerably. Some themes such as dyslexia detection and testing merged very easily at the second stage of node refinement. By the final stage of coding only twelve nodes remained. I was able to store every chosen snatch of information from the twenty one interviews under the twelve nodes. This allowed me to focus specifically on the chosen interview extracts. I occasionally looked back over the full transcripts in case I had overlooked any additional data but in general, I restricted my focus to the stored nodes. Without the use of NVivo, I could have become overwhelmed by the volume of data in the transcripts.

On completing the Literature Review, the issues of inclusion and segregation within primary education in the ROI and NI were uppermost in my mind. Task Forces had reported on dyslexia in both the ROI (2001) and NI (2002). In advance of the pilot phase of the research, five themes had been identified by me. These were inclusion, segregation, teacher training, resources and ideal teaching conditions and these themes are reflected in the pilot questionnaire and pilot semi-structured interview schedule. However, following the final data analysis of the research survey, the five themes had enlarged to become twelve themes. The semi-structured interviews permitted new themes to emerge such as homework, nursery/preschool and the transfer of children into secondary school. Braun and Clark (2006) discuss inductive versus theoretical or deductive thematic analysis. Braun and Clark explain that

inductive thematic analysis is 'data-driven' whereas deductive analysis is 'more explicitly analysis-driven' (p. 12). Braun and Clark (ibid) also remind the researcher that our thematic approach to coding does not take place 'in an epistemological vacuum' (p.12). The positivist and interpretivist collision or struggle became evident once more. I initially sought to find data which aligned with my research questions but as I delved deeper and deeper into the transcript data, new themes emerged which could tweak my initial research questions. The thematic approach was not entirely deductive.

Table 3.1 Node evolution

Primitive Nodes	Intermediate Nodes	Final Nodes
All 21 Transcripts were read and reread in search of headings that might be common or useful points of comparison. A total of 65 headings were ascribed. These headings were revisited and merged where compatible. Other headings were deleted. These headings referred to snatches of interesting information which was merely background data about the participating schools and the participants themselves	Detection of dyslexia Educational psychology Homework In class support Inclusion Inclusive school Issues around dyslexia Segregation Parental involvement Past pupils Past support Dyslexia policy Resources Role of nursery teacher Classroom assistants/SNAs Support strategies Support NI Testing Training	Teacher Training Testing School support Classroom assistants/SNAs Resources Parental Involvement Homework Inclusion Segregation Recommended Approaches Educ. Psychological Services Preschool and Secondary

Derivation of Nodes from Raw Data

The comparative case study generated a very large amount of data which at first appeared to be somewhat overwhelming and unwieldy. A total of 65 headings needed to be carefully and methodically merged through the application of themes. Initially, many of my headings referred to background information concerning the schools where the participants worked. The removal of the background information whittled down the large data bank considerably. At the intermediate phase of node

evolution, background information concerning the participants' careers to date was removed and the merging of similar themes resulted in only 24 nodes.

The derivation of the school support node illustrates the progression of the node from primitive to intermediate to final node. At the primitive phase, school support of children with dyslexia was represented by nodes labelled as differentiation, dyslexia assembly, dyslexic support, school dyslexia policy and effective special education mainstream teaching. Five different nodes were merged into three nodes at the intermediate stage, namely, 'in class support', 'support strategies' and 'support Northern Ireland'. A single node labelled 'school support' emerged at the final phase. For example, the following question was asked of the participant from the IQM school. 'What kind of support do children with dyslexia get in this school? In reply, the participant stated the following. 'Well, they have the staff, they have the learning support teacher and they have their classroom assistants, you know, so they have that all year round.' Further information was sought by the interviewer and the participant mentioned the role of the two classroom assistants who support the five statemented children in her classroom. The SENCO from the DFS school outlines the role of the annual school dyslexia assembly and a parent of children with dyslexia attending the DFS school mentions that her child returned home after the dyslexia assembly with 'some news for her'. Her son told her that having listened to the description of dyslexia he was of the opinion that he had 'that dyslexia thing.' Both the answer of the teacher participant and the parent participant appeared to belong in school support node.

Trustworthiness

Bryman (2012) defines trustworthiness as 'a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research' (2012, p. 697). Bryman (ibid) considers the four criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research from Guba and Lincoln (1985) and provides the parallel criteria for trustworthiness in quantitative research (p.44). Credibility parallels with internal validity and Bryman states that these criteria refer to 'how believable' the findings are. Transferability is equated with external validity and therefore if the findings are explicable 'to other contexts.' Dependability is aligned with reliability and so Bryman asks if the findings are 'likely to apply at other times.' Finally, confirmability is paralleled with objectivity

which concerns whether or not the 'investigator allowed his or her values to intrude to a high degree' (ibid, p. 44). Johnson and Rasulova (2017) review the criteria for trustworthiness and construct a table which is based on the criteria of Pretty (1994) and Guba (1985). Johnson and Rasulova include five criteria for trustworthiness. The criterion of authenticity is added and unlike the previous four criteria from Bryman (2012), no parallel quantitative criterion is offered for the fifth qualitative criterion of authenticity (ibid, Table 1).

Cohen et al (2011) define triangulation 'as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour' (ibid, p. 195). By choosing to conduct a survey and a comparative case study, I was seeking to achieve triangulation. However, the need to maintain trustworthiness posed the additional challenge of applying the criteria of both quantitative and qualitative research. In addition, six of the survey questions were analysed both from a quantitative and qualitative prospective. I resolved the challenge of trustworthiness by accepting that interpretivism is my overarching perspective but the inclusion of the survey provided statistical data which could lend additional credibility from a wider participatory pool leading to greater confidence in my findings. Ivankova et al (2018) refer to Greene (2007) and Teddlie et al (2009) concerning the advantages of using a mixed method approach. 'Using mixed methods allows researchers to address complex research questions, find answers to both exploratory and confirmatory questions within a single study, and reveal a fuller picture of a problem in practice' (Ivankova et al, ibid, p.980). Ivankova et al (ibid) refer to Creswell et al (2011) and Morse et al (2009) when they note that a mixed method approach 'allows for exploring more divergent viewpoints on the same issue and providing contextual understandings shaped by real life experiences and cultural influences' (ibid, p.980).

I approached the research from an objective standpoint and I made no effort to predict the findings. The research was small scale but represented a cross section of participants, teacher training colleges, primary school categories including schools of differing ethos and four different bands to reflect the number of years of teaching experience of the participants. I actively pursued internal and external validity and my efforts were rigorous. 'One central issue in considering the reliability and validity of questionnaire surveys is that of sampling' Cohen et al (2011, p. 209). My sampling was representative and with 174 replies it arguably met the size criterion.

Cohen et al (ibid) acknowledge that 'case studies may not have the external checks and balances that other forms of research enjoy or require, nonetheless there is to the need to 'abide by the canons of reliability and validity' (ibid, p.295). Cohen et al (ibid) outline some examples of how to achieve reliability and validity in case studies. Included in the list are references to 'construct validity' by using 'accepted definitions and constructions of concepts and terms' and the 'avoidance of bias' including the selective use of data (ibid, p.295). I adopted a reflexive stance to offset the possibility of bias.

When evaluating the survey findings for internal and external validity I took particular note of the similarity of the findings from both jurisdictions. The sample included principals, mainstream teachers, SET and peripatetic teachers. I did not restrict the number of participants from each category but instead sought to ensure that each category was represented. In this sense, I would argue that the sample was supervised but as random as possible. The wording of each question was simple and direct. As mentioned previously, I made strenuous efforts to keep the questionnaire as identical as possible with a few modifications as strictly necessary. I applied the checklist suggested by Bryman 'for doing and writing up quantitative analysis' and took care to handle the issue of 'missing data' (2012, p.349. I had never met the participants and the application of the SPSS software further enhanced the distance from the participants and me as the researcher. My intention was to be in a position to suggest tentative generalisations.

The purpose of the comparative case study was to provide a snapshot of the experiences of a small number of participants in the ROI and NI around the support of primary children who have a diagnosis of dyslexia. I had never met any of the participants in advance of conducting the semi-structured interviews. All of the participants gave their permission to be digitally recorded. Cohen et al (2012) refer to Oppenheim (1992) when discussing causes of bias when interviewing (p.205). I made every effort to observe the role of unbiased interviewer. While modifications to the interview schedule were necessary to reflect the fact that there were six different categories of participant, the sequencing of the questions were kept as uniform as possible. My aim was to keep the interview schedule as similar as I could. Interviews were transcribed meticulously and references to the interview data were recorded with accuracy. The comparative study did not seek to produce generalisable findings

rather it sought to record the true and accurate accounts of the participants. The findings could stand alone or could be re-examined in the light of the survey findings. The use of both a survey and a comparative case study provides triangulation which arguably assists achieving both validity and reliability. The findings from the survey confirmed the findings from the comparative case study.

Limitations of the Research

There were limitations attached to both the survey and the comparative case study. When drawing up the questionnaire for the survey the research questions were uppermost in my mind. I sought to involve an equal number of teachers to participate from the two chosen jurisdictions. The use of Google Drive ensured that there would be no monetary cost involved for the participants and the use of an arguably short questionnaire would hopefully reduce the time it would take the participant to complete the survey. Luckily, I could make national and international telephone calls at no extra cost to myself but the time involved in sourcing and making follow-up telephone calls and emails restricted the size of the survey sample. Once I had secured a sample of 174 participants, it was necessary to close the sample.

Time considerations were to the fore when deciding on the number of participants in the comparative case study. I would need to travel to Northern Ireland on a number of occasions and I would also need to travel considerable distances in order to interview the participants from the ROI. I did not want to use Skype. I wanted to meet the participants personally. I wanted to establish a rapport and yet I wanted to maintain a professional remove where the participants were expressing their own opinions and not saying what they thought that I wanted to hear. I needed to limit the length of the interviews as I was conscious that longer interviews would generate larger amounts of data that I would struggle to analyse effectively. The questions were generated in order that I would have sufficient data to address my research questions.

Conclusion

On completion of the Literature Review, a number of research questions had emerged. The absence of any internationally accepted definition of inclusion within an educational context was a cause of concern of me. If there was no agreement

around the concept, I wondered how primary teachers were expected to teach inclusively. The Salamanca Statement of 1994 seemed to imply that the governments of Republic of Ireland and Great Britain had accepted that inclusion would permeate how we were going to teach. The task force reports into dyslexia undertaken by the ROI in 2001 and in 2002 by NI demonstrated the need for additional training. My research was designed to provide a snapshot of the circumstances facing primary teachers in the ROI and NI followed by an in-depth discussion with a small group of the principle stakeholders. I wanted to find out how the policy if inclusion was faring in the primary schools of the participants.

Figure 3.2 Research Overview Chart

Theme: Special Education-Dyslexia

Policy: Inclusion

Research Angle: Comparative

Literature Overview: Background History of Special Education
Five Jurisdictions: England, USA, Finland, Canada (Alberta), and ROI

Focus on ROI and NI

Research Instruments: Online Survey and Comparative Case Study

Survey 174 teachers
87 from the ROI and 87 from NI

Comparative Case Study: 21 Semi- structured interviews

(14 teachers, five parents and two past pupils)

ROI: The composition comprised of staff from four different primary schools including a special school for children with a specific learning difficulty including dyslexia (SSSD). In addition, there were two parents and one past pupil with personal experience of the special school (SSSD)

NI: The composition was comprised of staff from two different primary schools (DFS and IQM School). In addition, there was a senior peripatetic teacher, a parent from each of the DFS and IQM Schools, a parent from neither the DFS nor IQM School and a past pupil from the DFS

Chapter Four   Findings

Introduction

This chapter sets out the data from both a survey and a comparative case study. Initially, a short description of the background details concerning the survey participants is provided followed by a summary of relevant data in the form of an explanatory table. Both the background details and table are necessary as a context for the survey findings. The software SPSS was used to facilitate the analysis of the data. The survey indicated a quantitative approach, although there was also an element of the qualitative approach evident in a small portion of the middle section of the survey. The chapter then turns its focus to the comparative case study. A background is supplied regarding the six schools and the participants and once again a table illustrates pertinent facts regarding the participating schools and participants. The software NVivo was used to analyse the qualitative data arising from the semi-structured interviews. The analysis adopted a thematic approach. (Gibbs, 2007) The software was also employed in order to code the qualitative data gleaned from a small portion of the open ended questions included in the survey. Where findings are represented as a percentage of the participants, the data is correct to one decimal place.

In Chapter 1, four research questions were set down:

- What is the perception of the participants on the delivery of education with regard to inclusive education policies?
- What strategies are used by primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to teach children with dyslexia?
- To what extent and in what ways do the participants consider their teaching strategies meet the needs of the learners??
- Are there findings from the case study that would suggest that teaching children in a segregated setting is justified?

These questions were the product of a combination of extensive reading in the area of the policy of inclusion and an analysis of a wide range of research materials relating to the teaching of primary children with dyslexia in five chosen jurisdictions. There was also an examination of the policy of special education in a more general

sense, where teaching primary children with dyslexia is viewed as a subset of special education. The research questions became the bedrock for further research and were integral to the question posed to all participants whether part of a survey or semi structured interview. The purpose of the research was ultimately to find answers to the research questions. The perceptions of the participants regarding the delivery of primary education and the policy of inclusion were explored, the teaching approaches adopted by the participants when teaching children with dyslexia were considered with particular reference to the suitability of the teaching strategies with the context of inclusivity and lastly, evidence was sought from the participants concerning their attitude to the teaching of children in a segregated setting.

The Survey: Background to the Survey

There were a total of 174 participants in the online survey. The survey was in an electronic format using Google Drive. An equal number of participants from the primary teacher profession working in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI) agreed to take part. Since differences exist between the two jurisdictions with regard to the delivery of special education support in primary school, rather than seeking an exact match in categories of participation, an adapted model was chosen. There were seven teaching role categories of participants. Three of the categories were similar in each of the jurisdictions, namely, the administrative principal, the teaching principal and the mainstream or class teacher.

In the ROI, the special education service in primary schools is administered under the auspices of the principal teacher, with special education teachers or SET Teachers playing a key role in the delivery of this support. The SET teacher does not necessarily teach a whole class grouping but liaises with the parents and class teachers in the drawing up of individual education plans (IEPS) and works alongside the class teacher using a variety of teaching strategies. This differs from the delivery of support in NI where there each primary school has its own special educational needs co-ordinator or SENCO and where the school can sometimes demonstrate the additional need of a peripatetic teacher. It could be argued that the role of the SET teacher in ROI shares some similarities with that of the SENCO in NI. However, whereas the SET teacher is freed from the responsibility of also being a class teacher, a SENCO can sometimes have the additional role of class teacher.

The participants from ROI came from five categories of primary school were included; namely, Educate Together, Gaelscoileanna, Catholic, Protestant and private primary schools. There were participants from six different teacher training colleges in ROI and the participant sample reflected the different school sizes and both urban and rural catchment areas. The 87 participants working in primary schools in NI were chosen in part, to ensure there was participation from four different primary school categories. Thus, there are participants from controlled, maintained, integrated and model primary schools. In addition, care was taken to include participants from the two teacher training colleges in NI, namely, Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College. There was also provision to include schools of varying sizes and also both rural and urban primary schools. Every effort was made to include both male and female participants. Finally, there is participation from each of four age groupings reflecting not only an age spread but allowing for different educational trends when the participants were in teacher training college.

The survey was conducted online and once the survey was completed by the 174 participants, the data was then inputted into a file in SPSS. Even a small scale survey can generate a large amount of data. After careful consideration, findings were sought under the headings of frequency, location and gender, where the answers from the participants shared similarity, where the answers of the participants in ROI and NI could be compared and whether the responses of the participants showed a pattern with respect to gender.

The findings in the tables 4.1 to 4.5 demonstrate the distribution of participants under the headings of their present role in the school where they are working, the training colleges they attended, the spread of school size by pupil population, the multiple choice answer regarding the number of years spent teaching by the participants and the percentage of male and female participants. The majority of the participants were class/mainstream teachers with 64 participants, which represent 35.6per cent of the total participation or over a third of the total. In ROI, almost all of the participants had attended training colleges within ROI with just four having attended a teacher training college in the United Kingdom (UK) which included one teacher who had trained in Stranmillis College University. This contrasted with the data from NI with 31 of the teachers having attended neither of the two teacher training colleges in the

province. This represented over 35.6 per cent of the NI participation or 17.8 per cent of the total participation.

The predominant school size participation was in the category 50-99 pupils where the figure of 41 schools represented almost 23.56 per cent of the total number of schools involved. The category representing the number of years spent teaching was divided into four bands with the highest number of teachers in the 21-30 year band with a figure of 52 or 29.9 per cent of the total participation. The findings show that the overall gender participation is predominately female at 73 per cent although the percentage of male respondents from NI with a figure of 32.18 per cent is considerably higher than the figure of 21.84 per cent from male respondents in ROI.

Tables of Background Survey Data

Table 4.1 Background data: Survey participants

Role	Number of participants
Administrative principal	19
Teaching principal	44
Class teacher	62
Teaching principal and SENCO	2
Class teacher and SENCO	12
SET teacher	28
Peripatetic teacher	5

The majority of the participants were class teachers at 35.2 per cent.

Table 4.2 Teacher training colleges attended

Our Lady of Mercy College (ROI)	19
Church of Ireland College of Education, Dublin City University (CICE)	5
Froebel College of Education (ROI)	5
Hibernia College, Dublin	7
Mary Immaculate College (ROI)	19
St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University	25
Marino Institute of Education, (ROI)	3
St. Mary's University College (NI)	38
Stranmillis University College	22
Thirteen Universities scattered throughout the United Kingdom	31

Both CICE and St. Patrick's College were incorporated into Dublin City University Institute of Education in October 2016.

Froebel College of Education became Froebel Department of Primary and Early Education, University of Maynooth, (ROI) in September 2013.

Table 4.3   Distribution of primary schools by size

School pupil number between	Number of schools
1-49	18
50-99	41
100-149	17
150-199	25
200-249	15
250-299	13
300-349	14
350+	15

Over a quarter or 25.9% of the participants were working in primary schools with between 50-99 pupils.

Table 4.4 Years of teaching experience of the participants

Up to 10 years	11 to 20 years	21 to 30 years	More than 30 years
43	46	52	33

The smallest band refers to the number of participants who had been teaching for more than 30 years which was 18.6 per cent.

Table 4.5 Distribution of male and female participants

Gender	Total Number	Number in ROI	Number in NI
Male	47	19	28
Female	127	68	59

The majority of the participants were female at 72.2 per cent.

The Survey Format

The survey consisted of twenty-three questions. Each participant was asked to record their email address as this would facilitate the possibility of contacting the participant where their response required clarification. The tables 4.1 – 4.5 represent the responses to a further five questions requiring short factual replies. In addition, the participants were asked six questions requiring a numeric response concerning staff numbers including the number of SET or peripatetic teachers supporting their school, an estimate of the number of pupils in their school with dyslexia and three questions

relating to ideal class sizes. Four dichotomous questions required the participant to tick either yes or no. The remaining six questions were open-ended where there was an opportunity to provide a longer answer and these answers were analysed using both SPSS software and NVivo software. The final question in the survey checked to see if there were any further question they would have liked to have been asked.

Dyslexia Estimate

The data concerning the number of pupils in each school was combined with estimated number of pupils with dyslexia within each school population. This permitted the production of a new set of data. The findings show a range of percentage of school population from just .4 per cent in one school in NI up to a 37.1 per cent in two schools in NI. This contrasts with a smaller range in ROI which extends from a low of 1.5 per cent up to a high of 20 per cent. Table 4.6 presents the findings when the results of both jurisdictions are combined. The percentage mean of the combined jurisdictions was 7.3 per cent. Table 7 illustrates the findings in ROI and Table 8 presents the findings from NI. The percentage mean in ROI was 4.4 per cent and the percentage mean in NI was 10.2 per cent with a difference of 5.8 per cent between the two jurisdictions. All the results are correct to one decimal place. When the 5 peripatetic teachers were excluded from the question referring to the estimated number of pupils with dyslexia, there were eight respondents who left this answer blank and one respondent who stated that she 'had no idea how many children with dyslexia' were in the school.

Table 4.6 Findings from combined jurisdictions: Estimated school population dyslexia data

Number of schools	Percentage band
47	0% up to 4%
63	4.1% up to 8%
28	8.1% up to 12%
12	12.1% up to 16%
11	Greater than 16%
Total number of schools	161

Sixty three schools in the 4.1 per cent up to 8 per cent represent 62.1 per cent which one could argue reflects an anticipated finding. Forty seven schools in the 0 per cent up to 4 per cent could suggest a possible under detection of dyslexia and eleven schools with greater than 16 per cent might reflect an inaccurate concern of dyslexia in the school population.

Table 4.7 Findings ROI: Estimated dyslexia school population data

Number of schools	Percentage band
19	0%-4%
37	4.1%-8%
19	8.1-12%
3	12.1%-16%
3	Greater than 16%
Total Number of Participants 81.	94.2% (Six Participants did not complete the question)

Table 4.8 Findings NI: Estimated school population dyslexia data

Number of schools	Percentage band
28	0% to 4%
26	4.1% to 8%
9	8.1% to 12%
9	12.1% to 16%
8	Greater than 16%
Total number of participants 80	92% (Excluding 2 participants and 5 peripatetic teachers)

The Findings

The findings for the three questions relating to ideal class size questioned the effect of having two children with dyslexia in the class, the effect of having two pupils with a special need other than dyslexia and finally the effect of having two pupils with dyslexia as well as two pupils with a different special need to dyslexia. Irrespective of the three scenarios suggested, the majority of participants suggested 20 as their ideal class size, with a figure of 71 participants or 41.4 per cent where there were two children with dyslexia present, 64 participants or 36.8 per cent choosing a class size of 20 where there were two children with a special need other than dyslexia and 36 participants or 20 per cent where there were two children with dyslexia and two

children with a special need other than dyslexia. The smallest ideal class for two children with dyslexia was 10 and the largest class size reply was 30.

The first of the four dichotomous questions asked if the participants had ever taught a child with dyslexia. A total of four respondents reported in the negative while one other respondent ticked both the yes and no boxes. Only one of the four respondents came under the zero-10 years teaching experience. Of the remaining three respondents, one was in the 21-30 teaching band and two were in the 30+ band. In the pilot survey, a class teacher, with over 30 years teaching experience, remarked that they were no children with dyslexia in the school where she was a staff member. Six months later, the newly appointed principal completed the survey and indicated that there were four children out of a school population of 47 or 8.51 per cent of the pupils with dyslexia in the school.

The second dichotomous question asked if the participant had enough resources for teaching children with dyslexia. Of the 174 respondents, only 54 or 31 per cent replied in the affirmative. Those respondents who answered in the negative were then asked what extra resources they needed. The respondents were not restricted to a prescriptive list. Five respondents while indicating that they had insufficient resources, did not record any answer when given an opportunity to express what resources were needed by them. The third dichotomous question asked if there was a reading recovery teacher on their school staff. This question was an additional question which was circulated at a later date. Of the total of 110 participants who replied, only 40 of the schools had a member of staff trained in reading recovery. The 5 peripatetic teachers were excluded as they are not assigned permanently to a specific school. All of 87 participants from ROI replied with 27.59 per cent giving a positive response. The fourth dichotomous question asked the participant taught inclusively and 166 participants or 95.4 per cent answered positively. When the five peripatetic teachers in NI are excluded from this question, the percentage rises up to 98.2 per cent with 3 participants or 1.8 per cent stating that they did not teach inclusively.

Of the six open ended questions, three referred to teaching children with dyslexia, two focused on the topic of inclusion and the final question focused on teaching in a segregated way. The participants were asked if they had any training specific to

teaching children with dyslexia and to indicate the type of training where relevant. A majority of the teachers indicated that they had received training with 92 teachers or 53.5 per cent stating that they had received training. However the figure of 80 teachers or 46.6 per cent replied that they had no training in this area. When the location of the teachers was analysed, 46 or 57.5 per cent of those who replied stated that they had not had any training were from ROI with 34 or 42.5 per cent coming from NI. Two teachers provided no reply. Two participants commented that they had had to 'figure it out on the job.'

The reply to the type of training received differed significantly. About a third or 36.2 per cent replied that their only specific training consisted of attendance at a short professional course which varied from an evening course, a one day course or a week long summer course. Only nine teachers had completed a module covering the teaching of children with dyslexia as part of their initial teaching course, with three of the nine participants teaching in ROI and the remaining six participants teaching in NI. When the two participants who left the answer space blank are excluded, the nine teachers represent just 5.2 per cent of the total participation. Again, just nine of teachers had successfully completed a Post Graduate Diploma in special education and only four or 2.3 per cent held a Master's Degree in Special Education.

When the findings relating to the teachers who stipulated that they have no specific training were further analysed, eight of the SET teachers or 28.6 per cent replied that they had had no training. When compared with the findings for the peripatetic teachers, one of the five teachers taking part stated that she had had no training in this area. Ten of the nineteen male participants or 53 per cent in ROI had not received training while in the NI sample; sixteen of the twenty eight teachers or 57.1 per cent replied that they had received training. One teacher left the answer space blank. The type of training varied significantly, from a module in University, training given by the British Dyslexia Association, an initiative called NI Special Needs: Literacy provided by Department of Education (DENI) in 2016, SEN CPD Literacy Project 2012-2015 which was supported by Stranmillis University College, Belfast to training provided by the SENCO on their staff or short courses provided by the Education Authority around Dyslexia Friendly Schools. One teacher held a Master's Degree in Special Education.

The participants were asked how pupils with dyslexia in their school were detected. The peripatetic teachers were not included since they are only assigned pupils who meet the dyslexia criteria. The participants were free to describe the school's methodology for detection without a prompt list. One participant worked in a special school and noted that children are not tested to see if they have dyslexia and therefore there is no detection of dyslexia. She commented that the lack of detection was of concern to her. The remaining 168 participants provided twenty four different combinations of approaches to detection.

Forty seven participants or 28 per cent of the participants stated their school used dyslexia screening tests with 18 of the participants located in ROI and 29 participants located in NI. Of the 168 participants 41 did not mention the use of standardised tests or formal testing and 12 recorded the words 'teacher observation.' A total of eighteen participants noted the use of a variety of cognitive ability tests, primarily Non Reading Test of Reading Ability (NRIT) and Cognitive Abilities Test Fourth Edition (CAT 4). Parental Concern was mentioned on fifteen occasions. While the use of teacher observation was mentioned by 129 of the participants or 76.8 per cent only eight participants specifically mentioned the use of checklists. Only two participants referred to the family history of dyslexia and no participant included researching if any of the parents of the pupils had dyslexia or a suspicion of dyslexia when the parents had first enrolled their child or children. Fifty one participants made reference to the role of the educational psychologist in the detection of dyslexia with 29 coming from ROI through the auspices of National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and 22 from NI administered by the Educational Psychological Service (EPS). One participant from ROI noted her disappointment concerning the difficulty of getting a referral for diagnosis with NEPS and both she and a participant from NI commented on the limited number of annual referrals allowed by primary schools with priority given to the pupil considered to have more complex needs.

The participants were asked how their school supported pupils with dyslexia. There were a total of 44 different combinations of approach adopted by the participants. One teacher who had previously stated that there was no detection of children with dyslexia in the special school where she works answered that there was no support provided for children with dyslexia. The peripatetic teachers and two additional participants left the answer space blank leaving 166 answers for analysis. The most

frequently cited approach involved the support provided by the SET teacher in ROI and either the SENCO or peripatetic teacher in NI with 75 references or 45.2 per cent of the respondents. In twenty one instances, their entire response referred only to that of SET teacher, SENCO and or peripatetic teacher. Withdrawal of pupils was mentioned by forty eight participants or 29 per cent although in all but three instances, withdrawal of pupils was combined with other approaches including differentiation, team teaching and station teaching. Potentially, all 82 participants from NI could be expected to use withdrawal through the peripatetic service. Only 18 participants from ROI mentioned that their school was withdrawing children. Forty one participants or 24.7 per cent mentioned differentiation as part of their method of support with six of the participants not offering any other approach in their response. Twenty seven of the forty one participants worked in ROI. One class teacher in ROI commented that dyslexic children were very poorly supported writing that 'the blanket Toe by Toe book is pulled out and once it's finished there is little knowledge as to how to proceed.'

In ROI, SET teachers are available to every primary school in the jurisdiction with particular criteria used to formulate the number of access hours available to each particular school. The research findings showed a wide range of SET support with one school allocated twenty SET hours per week where there was an enrolment of 37 pupils and two mainstream or class teachers up to the appointment of twenty SET teachers in a school with an enrolment of 830 pupils and with 32 mainstream or class teachers. The ROI support service is different to that available in NI. Not all of the primary schools had access to a peripatetic teacher at the time of the survey with sixteen of the participants reporting that their school did not have a pupil meeting the criteria for selection to the peripatetic service at that time. One participant replied that she did not know if the school had any pupil receiving peripatetic support. The majority of the schools qualifying for the service had access to just one peripatetic teacher which represented 67.1 per cent of those schools that had qualified. The highest number of peripatetic teachers supporting an individual school was three which was reported by three different participants. One of the schools had an enrolment of 750 and a mainstream staff of 22 compared with a much smaller school with an enrolment of 70 and 4 mainstream teachers.

The five peripatetic teachers were asked to state the number of teachers on their team, the number of schools that they visited as well as the total number of pupil that they supported. Their replies varied considerably. The least number of schools visited referred to the Senior Teacher who visited three schools and supported five pupils. The most schools supported by an individual teacher were twenty. One participant did not record the number of pupils that she supported and when the data from the Senior Teacher is excluded, the mean number of pupils supported is 18.7 or 19 children. The mean number of schools supported by an individual peripatetic teacher is 11.3. One participant noted that her present model of delivery consisted of a block of eight weeks with four sessions per week with one to one tuition based on withdrawing the pupil. This model contrasted with the report of five of the class based teachers where the child was receiving support for one hour once a week.

The participants were asked for their understanding of the meaning of inclusion from the perspective of primary teaching. Key words were sought and similar replies were grouped accordingly. Twenty four different categories emerged. Two participants did not provide an answer and two further participants stated that they did not teach inclusively. The peripatetic teachers withdraw the pupils from the classroom. When the above nine participants were excluded, 165 replies were analysed. Eighty one definitions or 49 per cent referred to the development of each child's full potential. Forty one or 24.8 per cent mentioned each child accessing the full curriculum. Two participants suggested that inclusion meant not withdrawing the child.

The participants were asked how they taught inclusively. Eighty one participants or 49 per cent referred to differentiation although thirty three of these participants mentioned differentiation in conjunction with other approaches such as a maintaining a positive environment, the implementing individual child plans (IEP's) and team teaching. In ROI where SET teachers supported the class teacher, the practice of team teaching and station teaching was reflected in their replies. The promotion of a positive environment was the second most frequent approach and it was mentioned by forty participants or 24.2 per cent. Thirteen replies referred to either a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) or a classroom assistant.

When the participants were asked if they had sufficient resources for teaching pupils with dyslexia, 120 or 69 per cent indicated that they had insufficient resources. Five

participants commented that they did not know what the resources were that they needed and two did not provide any information other than they had insufficient resources. The remaining 113 participants outlined their needs which resulted in combinations of eight possible components, namely specific resources for children with dyslexia, additional technology with dyslexia specific software, specific training for teaching children with dyslexia, additional personnel, diagnostic testing materials, multi-sensory materials, more time to prepare and smaller classes. The most frequent need at 60 participants or 53.1 per cent was specific resources for dyslexia such as specific reading schemes and special rulers. References to technology and software were recorded 47 times or 41.6 per cent, with the need for training specified by 42 participants or 37.2 per cent. Twenty six participants or 23 per cent noted that they needed extra personnel with two further participants stating that they need smaller classes. A total of twenty participants or 17.7 per cent noted that they needed diagnostic testing materials. There were just three participants who stated that they needed more time. A significant difference between the two jurisdictions was evident with regard to the need for additional personnel, where 22 of the 26 participants came from NI.

The final open ended question asked the participants if they considered teaching children in a segregated way beneficial and to specify if and when they agreed with segregation. Three participants did not provide a response to this question. One hundred and thirty eight of the remaining 171 participants or 80.7 per cent of the participants agreed with segregation unconditionally, twenty seven participants or 15.8 per cent agreed if the segregation was for a specific purpose and seven participants disagreed with the practice of segregation. Thirty one answer combinations were provided by the participants. One hundred of the participants or 58.1 per cent justified segregation on the grounds that some children have gaps or skills areas which need to be addressed although there were 28 participants or 15.8 per cent who stated that segregation should be reserved for exceptional circumstances. Other reasons included behaviour issues with a figure of 20 or 11.6 per cent, to aid concentration with 15 at 8.7 per cent and a break from the noise of the classroom with 12 or 7 per cent.

Tables of Principal Survey Findings

Table 4.9 Inclusion

Inclusion	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Definition	Most frequently mentioned: developing the child's full potential	Most frequently mentioned: accessing the full curriculum
Do they teach inclusively	All replied that they did	Peripatetic teachers always withdraw. Three teachers said that they did not teach inclusively.
How do they teach inclusively?	Every school had at least access to a special education teacher. Station teaching and team teaching prevalent. Differentiation most popular approach.	Differentiation most popular approach. SENCO and classroom assistants also mentioned.

Table 4.10 Dyslexia

Strategies used to support children with dyslexia	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Use of screening test	20.7 per cent of participants said that their school used a screening test.	35.4 per cent said that their school used a screening test
Teachers have received specific training to support children with dyslexia	57.5 per cent of the participants had never received specific training.	42.5 per cent of participants said they had never received specific training.
Sufficient resources to support children with dyslexia	Only 27.59 per cent of participants reported that they had sufficient resources.	Only 35.63 participants reported that they had sufficient resources.
Ideal Class Size with two children with dyslexia	20 pupils most popular reply	20 pupils most popular reply
Estimate of the percentage of children with dyslexia	Estimated Mean: 4.4 per cent	Estimated Mean 10.2 per cent
Differentiation as a strategy of support	Only 27 participants mentioned that they used differentiation.	Only 14 of the participants mentioned that used differentiation.

Table 4.11 Segregation

Segregation	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Is teaching in a segregated way beneficial	Three participants said no. Only 18 participants mentioned that their school was withdrawing children from their classroom.	Four participants said no. A majority of participants gave conditional replies which appeared to imply reluctance.
When is teaching in a segregated way beneficial?	The most common benefit referred to catching up on a specific difficulty.	The most common benefit referred to catching up on a specific difficulty.

Survey Findings Review

A review of the survey findings can draw together some possibly interesting observations. Over one third of the participating teachers in NI had not trained in Northern Ireland. There may be differences in the training programmes available in the United Kingdom as compared with the two training colleges based in Northern Ireland. With 95.4 per cent of the teaching participants in the ROI having trained in the ROI, the possibility of similarities of training style exists. The wide range of dyslexia prediction within the school population could be considered alarming stretching as it does from bands of .4 per cent up to 4 per cent which rises to a band of over 16 per cent. There is also the difference in percentage mean between the two jurisdictions to consider, where the percentage mean with respect to estimated dyslexia percentage in the school population of participating primary schools in the ROI is 4.4 per cent as compared with the percentage mean in NI which resulted in a figure of 10.2 per cent. The most popular reply regarding preferred class size was twenty, with 41.4 per cent of participants choosing this figure with the scenario of two of the pupils having dyslexia. With the scenarios of two children with a special need other than dyslexia or two children with dyslexia in addition to two children with a different special need were suggested the preferred class size of twenty became less popular, dropping to just 20 per cent where four children with a special need were present.

It could be considered surprising to discover that four of the participants reported that they had never taught a child with dyslexia, particularly since three of the four participants were in the category with between 21-30 years of teaching experience. Sixty nine per cent of the participants revealed that they had sufficient resources for teaching children with dyslexia with five of the 120 participants indicating that they did not know what resources that they needed. Three participants disclosed that they did not teach inclusively. While the majority of the teachers confirmed that they had received training in the area of teaching children with dyslexia there was still about 46 per cent of participants who had never received training in this area. A majority of the teachers who reported that they had not received training in the area of dyslexia came from the ROI with a finding of 57.5 per cent. About one third of the 52.9 per cent of participants who had received training in supported children with dyslexia had only attended very short courses which varied from one day up to a week's

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duration. Only nine teachers reported that their initial teacher training had included a module relate to dyslexia support teaching. One of the five participating peripatetic teachers confirmed that she had not received any training in the area of dyslexia support.

With regard to the detection of dyslexia, there was a wide variety of approaches with only 28 per cent of the participants reporting that their school used dyslexia screening tests. The method of supporting children with dyslexia also illustrated a wide variety of approaches with 44 different combinations, although withdrawing children from their class was mentioned by 29 per cent of the participants. The findings showed a disparity between the two jurisdictions regarding withdrawal with only 18 participants form the ROI specifying withdrawal as a means of support. The use of differentiation was noted by 24.7 per cent of the participants although this figure rises to 49 per cent when the participants were asked how they taught inclusively. In the ROI, every primary school has continued access to a SET teacher who can provide extra support in addition to the support offered by the child's mainstream teacher.

The Comparative Case Study: Background

A comparative case study was conducted involving eleven participants in ROI and ten participants in NI. The participants in ROI were chosen because of their association with a special school for children with severe dyslexia. Four primary schools were involved with three of the schools as feeder schools to the special primary school for children with specific learning difficulties including severe dyslexia (SSSD). The two participating primary schools in NI were chosen on two separate grounds. The first school was chosen as they had been consistently awarded the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Quality Mark and was a Dyslexia Friendly School. The second school had been awarded an Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM), a fact acknowledged in its most recent inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) with the school receiving the highest possible inspection grade in NI. A total of eight participants had an involvement with either of the two selected primary schools in NI. Two additional participants were included without this association. The final two participants were a Senior Teacher with the NI Peripatetic Service and a parent of a child attending a primary school who had recently been

diagnosed with dyslexia. The child in question did not attend a Dyslexia Friendly School (DFS) nor had the child's school been awarded an IQM.

The websites for each of the six primary schools were studied. This provided background information such as contact names and numbers and inspection reports by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in ROI and the ETI in NI. Initially, only twenty participants were sought. It was difficult to locate feeder primary schools that had a pupil attending the SSSD at that present time. The annual intake to the SSSD was limited to just nine pupils and the school had a large school catchment area. Eventually, the decision was taken to include three feeder schools, one with a pupil presently attending the SSSD and two others with an historic association of pupil placement. The final number of participants included an extra participant from ROI. The tables below outlines the background details of the twenty one participants, with the data separated into two tables reflecting the two different jurisdictions.

Tables of Background Comparative Study Data

Table 4.12 Comparative study background details: ROI

Role and pseudonym	Experience
Principal SSSD Anne	SSSD 20 years-total 26years
Deputy principal SSSD Bridget	SSSD 7 years- total 10+ years
Class teacher SSSD Catherine	SSSD 20 years -total 26+ years
Past pupil SSSD Deirdre	Attended SSSD for two years
Principal school A Eamonn	School A 16 years total 33 years
Deputy principal School A Felicity	School A 14 years –total 16 years
Parent school A Gerard	Son was in second year SSSD
Principal school B Harry	School B 2 years-total 23 years
SET teacher school B Irene	10 years- total 26 years
Parent school B Jill	Son attended SSSD
Principal school C Kieran	Pupils have attended SSSD

Table 4.13 Comparative study background details: NI

Role and pseudonym	Experience
Principal DFS Linda	DFS 18+ years Total 28 years
Vice principal Mary and SENCO	DFS 15 years Total 24 years
Class teacher Natalie DFS	19+ years Total 22 years
Parent DFS Olwyn	Parent of pupils with dyslexia DFS
Past pupil DFS Peter	Diagnosed with dyslexia DFS
Principal IQM Quinn	13 years Total 24 years
Vice principal IQM Rachel	All experience IQM 26 years
Parent IQM Sheila	Parent of pupils with dyslexia IQM
Peripatetic teacher Teresa	Peripatetic 14 years Total 29 years
Parent of child with dyslexia Una	Child recently diagnosed

The three participating feeder schools from ROI represent three different types of primary school. Feeder 1 and Feeder 2 schools were designated as DEIS schools. DEIS is an acronym for Delivering Equality in Schools and it refers to a DES initiative dating back to 2005. Guided by the definition of disadvantage in the Education Act (1998), DEIS sought to address the perceived economic or social disadvantage which impeded the educational outcomes for pupils in both primary and secondary schools in ROI. Primary schools were identified following a national survey carried out by the Educational Research Centre where the prevalence of six chosen variables was recorded. These variables concerned parental unemployment, local authority housing, lone parenthood, traveller families, large families and eligibility for free books. Primary schools identified as having the greatest disadvantage was classified as DEIS Band 1and qualified for the highest level of additional supports and resources. The support package included lower teacher pupil ratios (PTR) which was set at a 20:1 in junior schools and 22:1 for vertical schools that is schools which include all eight grades within the primary school system and a pupil enrolment of 116 pupils entitled the school to the appointment of an administrative principal. DEIS Band 1 schools received a special grant and had access to several support programmes such as Reading Recovery and Maths Recovery. Feeder School A was a DEIS Band 2 School with 200 pupils. Feeder School B was classified as a DEIS Band 2 school. The level of perceived educational

disadvantage was calculated as not meeting Band 1 status. The school qualified for a special grant and had access to special support programmes and with an enrolment of 142 pupils although it had earlier met the enrolment requirement of 144 which permitted the school to appoint an administrative principal. Feeder School C was located in what could be described as an affluent catchment area, did not qualify for DEIS status and the school had an all boy enrolment of 319 pupils. All three primary schools were urban schools and Feeder A and Feeder B were mixed primary schools. While a cohort of rural schools also benefitted from the DEIS support programme, rural schools in ROI were not directly selected for the comparative case study. However, the past pupil of the special school had attended a small rural primary school for six years of her primary education.

There are four special schools in the ROI for primary school children with a specific learning disability including dyslexia. In addition, there are thirteen special classes attached to mainstream schools scattered in various parts of ROI with seven of the thirteen special classes attached to schools located in Dublin. One of the four special schools was asked to participate in the comparative case study. The principal explained that the school had 63 pupils with nine pupils in each of seven classrooms. The school had 5 special needs assistants (SNAs) and an administrative principal. The school had a very large catchment population and pupils travelled by bus from as far away as forty eight miles. The minimum age for enrolment was eight years and the maximum age was twelve years. The pupils attended for a period of two years although in exceptional circumstances this could be extended for a third year. As places were so limited, many pupils could not be accommodated. Very strict admission requirements are applied which required that the child had to have been assessed by an educational psychologist, the child was performing at a very low percentile in reading and he or she was of average intelligence. In reality, she explained that only pupils at or below the first percentile in reading were offered a place at the school. Three staff members of the special school participated in the comparative study. The parent of a pupil attending the special school also agreed to take part as did a past pupil of the special school.

The selection of participants from the primary school in NI with the BDA Dyslexia Quality Mark Award is similar to the composition of participants from the special school in the ROI. Three teaching staff, a parent of a child with dyslexia attending

the school and a past pupil of the school participated. The school SENCO explained the requirements necessary for such an award and she explained that all of the teaching staff including the classroom assistants had received training in the recognition of the signs of dyslexia and also good inclusive practices in the classroom. Every three years, the school was reassessed by the BDA to ensure that the school met the high standards of teaching support necessary if they were to retain the quality mark. The SENCO remarked that the school had 337 pupils.

The second primary school in NI taking part in the comparative survey had been awarded an IQM. When the principal was asked whether she had ever considered applying for an award from the BDA, she remarked that the IQM was preferable since it reflected an award of excellence for inclusion which encompassed not just children with dyslexia. The school had recently been a recipient of the IQM Flagship School Award which is the highest level open to schools. Two of the teaching staff as well as the parent of a child with dyslexia attending the school took part in the comparative study. The school had an enrolment of 206 pupils.

In the ROI, the special education teachers (SET) are members of a school staff and they are either working in a single primary school or may be shared between a number of schools. In NI, only children that meet the required criteria can qualify for the support of a peripatetic teacher. The ninth participant from NI was a Senior Teacher with the peripatetic service. The tenth and final representative reflected the experience of a parent who has a child with dyslexia but is not a pupil of either the two participating primary schools in NI. The parent was keen to participate as it gave her the opportunity to express her difficulty in accessing support for her child. Her child attended a large urban co-educational school with an enrolment of 395.

The interviews of all twenty one participants were recorded, transcribed and transferred using NVivo. The initial number of thematic nodes was reduced to twelve following a careful process of regrouping to reflect frequently recurring themes. The questions asked of the participants were broadly similar and the questions were framed around certain chosen subject areas. The nodes were used as a platform to report the findings of the comparative study. The nodes were as follows:

- Teacher Training
- Testing
- School Support
- Classroom Assistants and Special Needs Assistants
- Resources
- Parental Involvement
- Homework
- Inclusion
- Segregation
- Recommended Approaches
- Educational Psychological Services
- Preschool and Secondary School

Each node is discussed in turn below.

Teacher Training

The theme of teacher training includes both the initial teacher training in third level universities and on-going professional development training by practising primary teachers. The survey had revealed that only nine of the participants had received specific training in the supporting of children with dyslexia as part of their initial teacher training, representing 5.2 per cent of the 174 participants. In the comparative case study, fourteen of the twenty- one participants were primary teachers, with the remaining seven participants comprising of five parents and two past pupils who had received a diagnosis of dyslexia while attending primary school. None of the participating teachers reported that they had received training on how to specifically support children with dyslexia as part of their initial teacher training. Of the eight primary teachers from the ROI, two of the teachers held a Master's in Special Education one of whom was principal Harry at Feeder Primary B and the second participant was both a deputy principal and class teacher named Felicity at Feeder Primary A. The SET teacher at Feeder Primary B who was named Irene had no third level qualification in special education and she had never received any training in the area of supporting a child with dyslexia. She would be retiring in a few years and so she would not be pursuing a post graduate diploma. The principal at Primary A (Eamonn) and the principal at Primary C (Kieran) had had no training in the support of children with dyslexia.

One of the three participating staff at the special school for primary children with a specific difficulty and dyslexia (SSSD) had completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Special Education. The principal named Anne explained that all of the teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) had received training on the Wilson Reading System and that her newest teaching recruit who had very recently graduated from teacher training college had completed a module on special education as part of the degree programme. While many of the teachers had additional qualifications in the area of special education, experience of teaching as a Special education Teacher (SET) was not a prerequisite.

Six of the ten participants from NI had worked as primary teachers. The remaining four participants were comprised of three parents and a past pupil of the DFS. Two of the teachers held post graduate qualifications in special education. The principal (Quinn) at the primary school with the IQM Award held a Diploma in Professional Development in Special Needs. She had worked as an advisor to teachers of special needs classes and she was also an Associate Inspector. The senior teacher with the Peripatetic Service (Teresa) held a Master's in Education and a Diploma in Advanced Study of Education (DIASE) in the area of Special Education. She had also trained as a Reading Recovery teacher.

The SENCO at the DFS (Mary) was also the vice principal. She held a Certificate in Competency in Educational Testing (CCET). She had received SENCO training which was available to all SENCO's but it was her opinion that all SENCOs did not avail of it. Mary did refresher training for SENCO's annually and provided training for all of the teachers and classroom assistants at her DFS school. One of the staff had completed either a certificate or a diploma in special education and Mary confirmed that it was unusual for a staff member to have a post graduate qualification in special education among primary teachers of her acquaintance. No pupil at the DFS had met the criteria for peripatetic support during the previous twelve months. The number of pupils meeting the criteria had been reducing over the years. One staff member (Natalie) had trained in linguistic phonics in England. It had been a five day course which was held in Oxford. The principal had given her paid leave and she had paid for the course herself. On Natalie's return from Oxford, she requested permission to apply her linguistic training in the school. Natalie's role at that time was in literacy support. She trained all of the teachers and classroom

assistants in linguistic phonics. It was Mary's belief that the improved literacy scores at the DFS were attributable to the successful introduction of linguistic phonics. ('It's a really good structured accumulative phonic programme, to ensure that every child is taught every sound of our language, and every child is taught every variation in the spelling of those sounds, so that's really good, and that actually means that a lot of our dyslexic children don't meet the criteria for support, because their reading scores are really good.')

All of the participating teachers were asked if their initial teacher training had prepared them adequately for supporting children with dyslexia. Every teacher reported on the inadequacy of the training that they had received. While there was a consensus that support for children with dyslexia needed to be included in teacher training there was also agreement on the need for on-going training. Quinn at the IQM School outlined the many training initiatives in literacy support that she had introduced in her school. For example, every teacher and classroom assistant had received training on supporting children with dyslexia. She noted that a module in special education at the teacher training colleges remained optional. Quinn at the IQM School remarked that student teachers should only be given a placement where the school had received a high standard from the inspectorate. All of the participants from ROI expressed an interest in learning more about linguistic phonics.

Testing

The method of dyslexia detection in five of the six participating primary schools was sought by questioning seventeen of the participants. Included in the participating cohort was the parent of a child in NI who was not a pupil at either the DFS or the IQM School. The parent (Una) was asked about the dyslexia diagnosis of her daughter who attended a primary school in different county to the two participating primary schools in NI. The senior teacher with the Peripatetic Service (Teresa) was excluded from the findings relating to dyslexia detection as only children who had been assessed by the EPS were referred for peripatetic support. The three participating teachers from the SSSD were excluded from the findings relating to the detection of dyslexia for a similar reason as only children meeting strict criteria which included an assessment by a psychologist could be offered a place at their school.

While pupils from both Feeder Primary B and Feeder Primary C had had pupils who attended the SSSD in the past, only Feeder Primary A had a pupil enrolled at the SSSD at the time the interviews with the various participants took place. All three principals at the feeder schools were unaware of how low the pupil needed to score in reading tests in order to have a chance of an offer if a place at the SSSD. The principal at Feeder B (Harry) was knowledgeable regarding the names of the specific tests carried out at the school and appeared to be very actively involved with his staff in the monitoring of every child's progress in literacy and their performance in general. He had been a mainstream teacher for ten years and a learning support teacher for three years. He stated that his initial teacher training had not prepared him regarding the support of children with dyslexia. He decided to pursue a Post Graduate Diploma in Special Education. He reported that the experience of working alongside his peers on the diploma course had been very rewarding and inspirational. He mentioned that the contribution by a speaker from the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) had been turning point for both himself and his peers. He was surprised that a pupil with a diagnosis of dyslexia would not meet the criteria to attend at the SSSD. The school used teacher observation checklists, the Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT), standardised reading tests and class based tests to inform the staff discussions between the principal and his teaching staff. He remarked that a screening test for dyslexia was not used at the school.

The principal at Feeder School A (Eamonn) and the principal C (Kieran) commented that they could not remember the names of the tests used by their teaching staffs as an aid to the detection of literacy difficulties. They suggested I chat to their learning support teachers (now known as special education teachers) as the appropriate person to discuss such matters. They were aware of the use of checklists and word recognition tests. Eamonn noted that two of the teachers on his staff had a Master's in Special Education. Kieran spoke in very general terms and explained that he had not completed any post graduate studies in the area of special education. Unlike Harry, neither Eamonn nor Kieran have ever worked as special education teachers.

The deputy principal (Felicity) at Feeder School A and one of the Special Education Teachers at Feeder School B (Irene) were interviewed. There was a marked difference in qualifications between the two interviewees. Felicity had a degree in psychology and she held both a Post Graduate Diploma and a Master's in Special

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Education. Irene had qualified in the late 1970s and held a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Feeder School B had not reached its maximum number of pupils and therefore it was open to enrolling several pupils with special needs. Irene was grateful that a number of charitable organisations such as Enable Ireland were keen to offer their advice and support in the accommodation of special needs pupils in a mainstream setting. Enable Ireland supports children and adults with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities in fourteen counties in the ROI. Felicity had worked as a SET for over half of her teaching career. While the school used the Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) in the second year of the infants' cycle in primary school (senior infants) and standardised reading tests were carried out towards the end of the third year equivalent to P3 in NI, the staff also relied heavily on teacher observations and teacher to detect pupils with dyslexia. Irene confirmed that just as the principal had indicated; underperforming pupils were identified using a team approach where teacher observation and standardised reading test scores played a pivotal role. She also mentioned the use of the Belfield Infant Assessment Profile Test.

The past pupil of the SSSD (Deirdre) explained that she did not get any learning support until she was in first class which is equivalent to P3 in NI. Her first two years were very difficult for her. She constantly had to ask for help from the children who were sitting beside her. When she finally got literacy support, she was withdrawn from her classroom and repeatedly missed her mathematics lessons. She was assessed by a psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) when she was in fourth class or the equivalent of P6 in NI. She transferred to the SSSD for her final two years of primary school. She reported that she had little or no self-esteem and that she was bullied at her original primary school. She was withdrawn and played on her own. She was very unhappy. Her time at the SSSD was 'heavenly'.

Gerard had a son attending the SSSD. He himself had dyslexia but he had not known that there was a genetic likelihood that his children might also have dyslexia. His son had attended Feeder School A for six years. He praised the principal for choosing that his son got one of the school's two annual referrals to NEPS. His son was assessed when he was in third class or P5. He had to wait a year until there was a place for him in the SSSD. Gerard remarked on the varying experiences of his son as

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he moved throughout his six years at Feeder A. His son did not cope well when his class teacher went on maternity leave or was absent for a number of days and a substitute teacher had been employed to teach the class. His son was now attending the SSSD and was a transformed child, no longer distraught at homework time or developing tummy pains every Sunday evening with the dread of returning to school after the weekend.

Jill's son was also a past pupil at SSSD. Her daughter had recently been diagnosed with dyslexia and her daughter was a pupil at Feeder School B. Jill had endured a distressing time when her son attended his first primary school. Jill was not dyslexic but she knew something was not quite right with her son. He had attended Montessori Playschool and for the first year or two of primary school he appeared to be progressing normally. When he went into first class (P3) he began to struggle. He could not learn his spellings and he had great difficulty writing things down on paper. Jill requested that he receive literacy support. She stated that the school principal was not supportive. Finally, when her son was in second class or P4, she arranged to have her son privately assessed by an educational psychologist with funds she could ill afford. When she gave a copy of the report to the school principal confirming that her son had severe dyslexia, the principal insisted that Jill's son should be assessed by NEPS. Her son transferred to the SSSD for his final two years of primary school. Jill said that moving her son to the SSSD had saved her son's soul.

The principals at the two primary schools in NI presented different leadership approaches to special education. At the IQM School, Quinn demonstrated a very active participation with regard to the professional development of her staff and she worked very closely with the Education and Library Board and the teacher training college that she herself had attended. The IQM School had given a presentation on best practice on 'the world around us' for second year students at the teacher training college. She outlined a list of eight different tests which was used by the school in their assessment of the pupil's progress. One staff member had just received a Certificate in Competency in Educational Testing (CCET) which would give them 'even more scope next year with a battery of tests.' Quinn remarked that children with dyslexia were detected early in their primary school years and she stated that 'we have them by P3 and screened by P4.'

At the DFS the principal Linda indicated that the person I needed to speak with was her vice Principal Mary who was also the school SENCO. Linda had entrusted Mary with the responsibility of maintaining all of the paperwork which was necessary to maintain the DFS status that the school had enjoyed for several years. Mary was responsible for all aspects of testing, record keeping and the co-ordination of the school's support service for children with special needs. Linda was similar to two of the principals in the ROI in that she was not conversant with the details of the school support system for pupils in their schools with special needs.

Both the vice principal at the IQM School (Rachel) and the DFS (Mary) were mainstream class teachers. Rachel was also head of literacy at her school and she commented that the head of literacy, the head of numeracy and the SENCO liaised very closely in identifying high achieving children and also children in need of additional support. The school had a learning support teacher who was available for both literacy and numeracy support. Rachel noted that during P1, the class teacher tests and screens the children, noting any issues of concern and places the child's name on a record of concern. The child is recorded at being on stage one of the register. There may need to be differentiation in place in order to support the chid. The child's progress would then be monitored carefully during P2 where it might be necessary to move the child on to stage two. The child would have an individual educational plan (IEP) and they would complete the MIST test during P2. The child would progress to stage three if an assessment by an educational psychologist was deemed appropriate. Rachel mentioned that the school used intelligence tests as an aid to the detection of learning difficulties. She expressed concern that the five stage approach of the Code of Practice was to be reduced to three in the future. There would be no register of concern. Instead the child would be given an IEP, and then referred to a psychologist with the possibility of peripatetic support and the final stage would be a statement. It was the opinion of both the principal and vice principal that the reason for the proposed change was one of economics. The present staged approach was costing a 'humungous amount of money.'

The staged approach as advocated by the Code of Practice was followed meticulously at the DFS. Mary noted that stage three could occur as early as P1 or P2 but it was more usual for a child to be at stage three in P4. The school had just introduced the Dyslexia Portfolio Online and this portfolio was used for all of the

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children in both P3 and P4. Furthermore all of the parents from P4 were invited into the school to learn about the possible signs of dyslexia. All of the teachers, classroom assistants had been trained in the area of dyslexia detection. Two years previously, the school had switched from using Progress in English Tests and Progress in Maths Tests and the Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) in favour of a different battery of tests from GL Assessments. The tests were corrected electronically. The battery of tests included a baseline test for P1 in literacy and numeracy and PTE and PTM tests for P3 up to P7 and a cognitive abilities test called CAT. The PTE tested English comprehension, spelling and grammar and the PTM tested mathematics. The tests and the correction of the tests cost the school £4,500 annually and the parents paid for this with the total cost divided by the number of pupils enrolled that year. (With 337 children on the roll, it would have cost about £13.65 per child in 2017/18 school year). In ROI none of the parents had been required to pay for their children's test materials. All primary schools had received a separate grant to cover the purchase of test materials.

The participating parent from the DFS (Olwyn) and the participating parent from the IQM School (Sheila) both reported very positive experiences concerning the detection of their children's dyslexia. Olwyn had three children and the second and third child had been diagnosed as having dyslexia. Both of the children had been given IEPs before the end of P1. She wasn't quite sure if the formal assessments had been carried out in P3 or P4. Both children had received peripatetic support and while the older boy had made great progress the younger boy, who was still a pupil at the DFS had yet to reach his potential. Sheila had been a past pupil at the same school as her children. She had known very little about dyslexia before her oldest child had received a diagnosis of dyslexia. As a first time mother she was surprised that her daughter was struggling with literacy. The principal and the class teachers had been very supportive. They had also been very honest and while they were giving a lot of extra support to her daughter by P2 her daughter continued to struggle. Her daughter was formally assessed by an educational psychologist when she was in P4. Sheila's son struggled even more than his big sister but the school were aware of his struggles in P1. Despite the school's intervention her son needed a formal assessment in P4 and her son was now in P7 and he had been statemented.

While both Olwyn and Sheila reported on very positive school experiences for their children, the third participating parent from NI (Una) was very dissatisfied with her child's primary school. Una had two daughters. The eldest child had recently received a diagnosis of dyslexia. She was nine years old. Una had noticed that her daughter was struggling at literacy even when her child was in P1. Her daughter could not grasp phonics. She could not sound out the words. Una met her child's teacher and she alerted the teacher of her concerns. Each year, Una had her concerns dismissed. When her daughter went into P4 her teacher was also the SENCO. Una hoped that the SENCO would make a difference. Her child did get an IEP and to Una's surprise, her daughter's mathematics was now a concern as she was unable to read the mathematics. Una wanted her child to receive a formal assessment but she was told that she should wait another while. Una didn't wait and the assessment conformed that her daughter was severely dyslexic. Unlike the experience of Olwyn and Sheila, Una had to be her child's advocate. The school was not proactive.

The past pupil from the DFS (Peter) reported that the first two years at primary school he had been a happy student, unaware of any particular difficulty. His realisation came in P3 as he couldn't write quickly and he was constantly way behind his classmates. He was the eldest of two children and his mother noticed how long he was spending at his homework. He was spending the entire evening; sometimes taking between four and five hours. He was eventually assessed by a psychologist. He wasn't sure if it was P5 or P6 before he received additional literacy support at the school.

Only one of the three principals of mainstream primary schools participating from the ROI was conversant with the tests used to detect dyslexia in their schools. This same principal who demonstrated a deep knowledge had also completed a post graduate diploma course in special education. The participating past pupils from both jurisdictions each related negative experiences before the eventual detection of dyslexia. The parents from both jurisdictions reported varying experiences, where in some cases, the primary school where their child attended was very supportive but this was not always the case and so the experience seemed to depend on the particular school the child attended.

School Support

Each of the three participating mainstream primary schools from the ROI represented a different category of primary school. Feeder Primary A was a DEIS 2 School. The principal (Eamonn) explained that for the most part the only advantage to having DEIS 2 status was that the school got extra money and an extra teacher. Eamonn explained that prior to 2005; schools could apply for resource teaching hours for children with a diagnosis of dyslexia. The children would then be allocated one to one teaching for a period of 2.5 hours per week. A special education circular in 2005 had replaced the individual teaching resource hours with a general allocation model. In short, the children's needs were to be met within whatever number of hours the school was allocated by the Department of Education and Science. (The department was renamed the Department of Education and Skills or DES in 2010).

Eamonn was principal of a fourteen teacher school which included four SET. He complained that as his school was entitled to 91 special education teachers hours, which equated to three teachers and 16 additional hours. The problem for him was that he was nine hours short of a fourth full teaching post and so he had to contact other primary schools in the hope that some other school or schools could agree to join in a school cluster by offering him their available resource hours. Another concern for Eamonn was that primary schools were due to have their special education teaching hours reviewed and this uncertainty was unhelpful. He believed that the newly qualified primary teachers who joined his staff were not trained to support children with dyslexia or children with other special needs. They needed to be mentored by experienced teachers on the staff. He spoke about the past pupil who was now a pupil at the SSSD. Despite the school's best efforts, he said that the child needed specialist intervention. Perhaps if individual resource hours with a trained teacher were still available, the pupil might have been able to remain at Feeder School A.

The deputy principal at Feeder School 2 (Felicity) expressed her concern regarding the lack of training in special education among primary teachers in ROI. She had worked as a special education teacher and without this experience she would have been very ill equipped to support children with dyslexia or any special need as a mainstream teacher. She hoped that the other mainstream teachers were

differentiating for children with dyslexia or other special needs but to be honest it was something that she couldn't be sure of as she was no longer a SET having returned to teaching in a mainstream setting. ('You know like I mean it's probably very good to have a deputy principal or someone in management, who is in a resource position because you have influence, and you can go into the classes and you can and well, a lot of the times you are dealing with children in those classes you know, or one of the Special Ed. Team is, one of the other RT is, so you'd be very aware on the ground if people are tolerant of children with special needs'). She was unaware if homework was being differentiated in the mainstream classrooms. ('Homework. I don't know about the homework').It was great to have SET teachers available to come into her classroom and assist her in supporting children with a special need it could sometimes be 'mayhem in the classroom.' It was so difficult to get the time to plan with the SET and she had never received any training in managing a team. It was a great help that a few of the teachers had a Diploma in Special Education as who was going to give her advice if not them? She was happy that because she had experience as a SET herself, she was in the position to be a positive influence as the deputy principal of the school. She acknowledged that a former pupil of the school had spent two years at the SSSD and when he returned he was a much changed pupil. He was now a confident child with a healthy self-esteem and he was eager to confirm that he had dyslexia.

The principal at Feeder School B (Harry) stated that the pupil teacher ratio at the school was 1:22. The school qualified for 84.5 special education teaching hours and so he had three full SET and 16 additional hours. The school had 142 pupils. He had sufficient personnel to meet the needs of a school. The school was not yet full. The participating SET at the school (Irene) was withdrawing small groups of children who showed signs of dyslexia. While the principal suspected that there were perhaps ten children with dyslexia, Irene suggested about six. She usually started any child with dyslexia on the Toe by Toe book once they were in third class. For the Toe by Toe book, she needed to take them on an individual basis but for other activities they could come out to her in a group and did for example SNIP. She worked very closely with the junior and senior infant teachers (P1 and P2). She helped to facilitate the 'Power Hour' with the first and second class (P3 and P4). While she was conscious

of the need to work alongside the mainstream teacher in the classroom sometimes it was necessary to withdraw the children.

The principal at Feeder School C (Kieran) reported that they had 319 pupils. The school had been allocated 36.58 special education teaching hours. For some reason, these hours translated into one full SET and an additional 11 hours and 35 minutes. The school also had nine SNAs. Kieran remarked that though the progress of all of the children was carefully monitored by the school's Special Education Team, they tended to wait until the child was in first class before there was an intervention. The individual child's circumstances dictated whether the child would be supported in the classroom or whether he would be withdrawn.

The principal at the SSSD (Anne) had emphasised that raising the pupil's self-esteem was paramount at the school. Both of the two other participating staff at the SSSD had also mentioned the importance of building up the child's confidence. Anne mentioned that having dyslexia posed lifelong challenges and that the SSSD did not offer a cure. There were never more than nine children in each classroom. The classes were streamed so that for example there were two sixth classes. The school had five SNAs. The school offered the full curriculum but the emphasis was on literacy. All of the teachers and SNA's were trained in the Wilson Programme which was a 'synthetic phonics programme' and it was 'based in the Orton Gillingham Method. It consisted of twelve steps. The deputy principal (Bridget) and participating class teacher commented that while the programme was very effective, it was very repetitive and could be a little boring for the child. Anne noted that some but not all children became 'automatic readers.' She said that despite everyone's best efforts a child could still leave the SSSD as he or she had arrived. The two participating parents from ROI were very relieved that their children had been given places at the SSSD. Their children were transformed. Similarly the participating past pupil had a very positive experience.

At the IQM School, the principal Quinn outlined how the school supported children with dyslexia. In the June before the new pupils enrolled the P1 teacher and the main classroom assistant would spend time in the Nursery School. For the month of June, they would join the Nursery Leader and the nursery children in the playground at play time. The children would be observed through playing with them. This

observation was an advantage once the children transferred into P1. T The children were 'base lined' from the very start of P1.The children were carefully monitored in P1 and where concerns arose, the parents were informed by the Easter. Quinn was particularly alert where a sibling had already had a diagnosis of dyslexia. The learning support teacher (LST) became involved only when the child had started P2. The LST would withdraw small groups from P2 if they needed extra support and this support could extend right up to P7. Her school were fortunate enough to have their own LST. Quinn said that having a LST was preferable to having smaller classes. The classes generally had thirty pupils. She spoke about the effectiveness of Reading Partnership. By P3, any child with dyslexic tendencies was definitely identified. She confirmed that three pupils were receiving peripatetic support for dyslexia at the time of the interview.

While Quinn extolled the virtues of the Reading Partnership, all three of the participating DFS spoke glowingly of Read Write which is a linguistic phonics programme. There was good communication between the Nursery Teacher and the P1 teacher and their classrooms were side by side. The Vice Principal Mary noted that the Nursery Teacher informally looked out for possible signs of dyslexia. Mary emphasised the vitally important role played by the classroom assistants in supporting children with literacy difficulties. The classroom assistants were trained in linguistic phonics and withdrew children in need of support on a one by one basis. Linda explained that instead of employing a LST, she believed it was much better value to employ classroom assistants and to train them in linguistic phonics. She also praised the PATHS Programme which had been introduced which promoted social and emotional competencies.

Mary discussed the dyslexia best practice hand out which set out positive classroom strategies in support of dyslexic children. These practices were evident throughout the school and included for example the marked emphasis on differentiation and the use of buff paper instead of white paper. She remarked that the success of the Read Write Programme meant that the children could decode effectively and they were not qualifying for peripatetic support. The principal Linda and the class teacher Natalie did not speak particularly positively about the peripatetic service. Natalie in particular spoke very negatively. She had spent a year working as a peripatetic teacher and she suggested that there was a haphazard and disjointed element to the

peripatetic support offered by peripatetic teachers. No pupil at the DFS was receiving peripatetic support for dyslexia at the time of the interview and all three participating teachers at the DFS emphasised the positive effects of intensive linguistic phonics in the gradual reduction and present elimination of any children qualifying for peripatetic support for dyslexia.

Some of the suggested improvements to support for children with dyslexia included a return in the ROI to the practice of providing one to one resource teaching for children with dyslexia, additional training in special education for all primary teachers in the ROI and the expansion of Read Write linguistic programme in primary schools with the participating teachers in the ROI showing a keen interest in hearing more about this approach.

Classroom Assistants and Special Need Assistants

In the ROI, children are sometimes assigned the support of a special needs assistant but unlike the situation in NI, schools do not have access to any classroom assistants. Primary schools in the ROI do not have classroom assistants. Instead each school applies to the National Council for Special Education for special needs assistants and following an inspection to the school by the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) the school awaits the decision of the SENO. The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is paid directly by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). In NI, classroom assistants are appointed by the school but the number of assistants appears to depend on the percentage of the school budget that the School Principal and his or her Board of Governors elect to allocate to such appointments. A child with a statement could also have an entitlement to classroom assistance.

In the ROI, all four of the participating principals expressed their concern regarding the provision of SNAs. At the SSSD, Anne emphasised the essential and vital support that her SNA's provided. Despite the fact that the pupil teacher ratio was 9:1, the pupils still needed one to one instruction which the SNA was in a position to provide. Strictly speaking, the SNA was expected to provide care needs. Some of the pupils attending the SSSD had other challenges such as autism which facilitated the appointment of an SNA. Once the child entitled to the assistance of an SNA left the SSSD, the school was not entitled to retain the SNA unless another pupil had

enrolled with an entitlement to an SNA. The participating principals were interested in the notion of classroom assistants where the entitlement was not dependent on safety or toileting needs of a particular child or children. As the Deputy Principal at Feeder School A (Felicity) explained, 'the SNA is there as much for the teacher as they are for the child.' Supporting and responding to the children's needs while teaching in an inclusive way simply impossible without the back up of an SNA.

In NI, both of the participating principals emphasised the vital role of the classroom assistant. Linda at the DFS employed as many classroom assistants as the school afford. She received funding for a number of part time classroom assistants so she paid for the additional hours from the school budget so that these classroom assistants were employed for a full school day. The classroom assistants withdrew the children on a one to one basis to provide literacy support. Quinn at the IQM School remarked that she had sixteen children at her school that had a statement. The Vice Principal at the IQM School stated that she had five children in her room that had a statement. She had two classroom assistants working alongside her at all times. While the classroom assistants withdrew children they also spent a lot of time in the classroom, supporting the children with a statement.

In the ROI, the principal teacher and his or her Board of Management must apply for an SNA and the decision to appoint an SNA rests with the Special Needs Organiser (SENO) who is allocated to the area where the school is located. The role of the SNA relates to the care needs of the specific child and the SNA can be removed following an annual review. This uncertainty causes distress to the school. The principals in NI appeared to have the necessary authority to appoint as many classroom assistants as their budget permitted.

Resources

The resource needs in the ROI differed from those of the participants in NI. The participants from ROI reported a need for a variety of resources to support the pupils with dyslexia. At the SSSD, the principal Anne mentioned the issue with speech and language. The school had access to a part time speech therapist but she was on maternity leave and there was no temporary cover available. Anne mentioned the annual expense of providing the Wilson Programme. The parents had to cover the

cost. A grateful parent had made a generous donation towards the cost of a training course for the teaching staff and special needs assistants. While she praised the support of the Special Education Support Service (SESS), they could only provide limited training on the Wilson Programme to the school. The deputy principal Bridget expressed a wish that all classes at the SSSD should have access to a classroom assistant thereby avoiding the 'annual panic' as they awaited news of their SNA allocation.

The three Primary Feeder Schools had different wish lists. Both teaching participants from Feeder School A bemoaned the scarcity of resources specifically suited to children with dyslexia. Apart from Toe by Toe, they had little else. Principal Eamonn was exasperated with the new model of special education teaching hours. The pupil numbers at the school were increasing rapidly but the allocation of support hours had not been revised upwards. He had no idea when this situation would be addressed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The principal wanted additional software. The participating parent was surprised that the cost of the Toe by Toe book which had been recommended for his son by the psychologist was proving an issue by the school. He had informed the school that he was more than willing to purchase any resource that the school recommended for his son. The Principal Harry at Feeder School B wanted a version of the Wilson Programme for his school and the SET teacher wanted more software. Harry observed that sometimes it felt like 'money was just being thrown at us,' without any clear understanding of the needs of the school. The new language curriculum was designed for children from the middle class and did not reflect the needs of his pupils. The new language materials were not relevant to his pupils and they therefore did not connect with the materials. It could be argued that the development of language skills plays a very important role in the acquisition of literacy and Principal Harry believed that an opportunity had been lost by not producing language materials which reflected the actual world that his pupils lived in. Like Eamonn, principal Kieran at Feeder C was annoyed that the special education teacher hours for his school had not been reviewed to reflect the increased intake of children at the school with s special need. He said there was no possibility of appealing the situation. Fundraising by the parents ensured that the purchase of resources was not an issue.

In NI, the biggest resource concern at the IQM School was the reduction in the school budget. The principal Susan reported that she had no choice but she would no longer be in a position to employ a learning support teacher for the next school year. The principal Linda at the DFS wanted more classroom assistants. Linda had curtailed the amount of money available to the mainstream teachers for resources as she was aware that a lot of money had been spent in preceding years on resources which ultimately ended up unused in cupboards. She wanted them to be more discerning in future.

Two of the participating principals in the ROI were unhappy with the allocation of special education hours for their schools as the allocation had not been reviewed to reflect the increase in the number of pupils with a special educational need (SEN) attending their schools. There had been a promise that the SEN hours would be reviewed but to date there had been no revision. The SSSD needed more funding and both of the participating primary schools in NI would no longer have the services of a LST for the new school term. Principal Linda at the DFS wanted more funding for the appointment of classroom assistants and she had sacrificed the appointment of a LST in favour of the appointment of additional classroom assistants.

Parental Involvement

The level of parental involvement in the four participating primary schools in the ROI differed significantly with the level of parental involvement in the two participating primary schools in NI. The principal Anne at the SSSD spoke about the information evening for the parents of children who had been offered a place at the school. While the parent of a child attending the SSSD was impressed by the information evening, he also spoke about the information overload and how he struggled to keep up with all the data. The parent was dyslexic and he would have appreciated some simple visual presentations. He said overall, there was very good communication between the school and the parents.

The parental involvement at the three Primary Feeder Schools was very similar. There was one scheduled parent teacher meeting per year except where there was a particular concern about a child's progress. The SET teacher would meet the parents of a child with a special need at least three times a year. The parental contact at the

two participating primary schools in NI shared parallels but the two schools also provided parental training courses. At the IQM School, the course explained to parents how they could support their child with phonics. The parent course at the DFS was for parents with children in P4 and informed the parents on possible signs of dyslexia. The class teacher Natalie also gave a training course on linguistic phonics. While attendance at the courses was very good, Natalie remarked that the very parent you would most like to attend was often the parent who was absent.

While parents at the two primary schools in NI were offered courses on how best to support their child, the participating parents from the ROI did not mention that they received any instruction. Principal Irene at the IQM School remarked that that apart from an initial meeting between the parents of a child before the commencement of peripatetic support, there was no further contact between the peripatetic teacher and the child's parents. The parent from NI whose child did not attend either of the two participating schools in NI expressed her frustration when she wasn't listened to at the various parent teacher meetings about her daughter. Eventually, she sought a private assessment for her and also arranged for private tuition outside school hours. The experience of this parent Una shared a parallel with the experience of Jill in the ROI. While Jill was very happy with the support her second dyslexic child was receiving at Feeder School B she had recalled the nightmarish experience of her dyslexic son at a different primary school which had been the nearest school to her then home.

At the IQM School and the DFS, there was clear evidence of inviting parents into the school where information and courses were available to inform parents on how best to support their child. The SSSD provided an initial information evening for prospective parents but there didn't appear to be any further information general meetings. There seemed to be an absence of general information meeting on how to support your child for the parents at the participating primary schools in the ROI, although there were annual parent teacher meetings.

Homework

The findings reflect issues with homework where a child has yet to be identified as having dyslexia. At the SSSD the deputy principal Bridget explained that she gave

homework four nights a week and that the work took the children about forty minutes to complete. Her pupils were in the final year of primary school. The past pupil from the SSSD Deirdre confirmed that homework was not an issue for her while she attended this special school. In contrast, she explained that her mother had to write an explanatory note to her original primary school most nights as Deirdre could not cope with her homework. The participating parent Gerard from Feeder School A gave a similar account concerning her son as did the participating parent Jill from Feeder School B. Gerard talked about the nightly arguments with his son over the homework and Jill described the tortuous attempts to explain the home work to her son. The relief brought by the change of homework at the SSSD was immense. Jill's second child was very happy with the homework she received at Feeder School B. Her daughter attended a home work club which was very supportive and her child only spent about a half an hour or so at her homework.

The deputy principal at Feeder A (Felicity) acknowledged that the homework for children with dyslexia should be differentiated and she hoped that the teachers were differentiating the homework at the school but she had no idea if they were or not. Her concern was mainly with the more recently qualified teachers who didn't seem to be as 'tuned in' to the difficulty as the more experienced teachers. As a former SET she was very conscious of the children with difficulties and she involved the SNAs in her classroom to make sure that the pupils had their homework taken down and that they had everything that the child needed placed in their schoolbags.

At the IQM School the principal, deputy principal and the participating parent confirmed that differentiation of homework was taking place. The vice principal (Rachel) mentioned that once she received her new class in September she completed a baseline of the children. She was particularly mindful of issues with spelling and the impact of any difficulty with regard to homework. The participating parent talked about all the instruction she had received as a parent by attending courses at the school and by attending meetings with the teachers and the instruction had allowed her to support her dyslexic children with their homework. There was never an issue if the children had not been able to complete their homework and communication between the school and home was very positive.

The past pupil from the DFS remarked that prior to his formal assessment he sometimes spent four or five hours at his homework. The situation improved dramatically post the assessment and in his final year at the DFS he usually spent about an hour though occasionally it took him about an hour and a half. The participating parent reported that her son with dyslexia could do his homework on his own and she then just needed to check it and it took him about a half an hour per night. Vice principal Mary was pleased to report that homework was differentiated at the DFS and this was a continuation of the differentiated approach throughout the school day in each of the classrooms. It was the norm. The parent Una reported a different experience. Her daughter spent a half an hour doing her homework at her granny's and then another hour when she got home. There were arguments. Her daughter was only nine and she acknowledged that an hour and a half was too long for her daughter to spend doing her homework.

There seemed to be reluctance on behalf of parents to report how long their children were spending at their homework. One could question whether there needed to be better communication between parents and their child's teacher and also whether teachers were differentiating homework sufficiently.

Inclusion

All of the participants were asked to give their definition of inclusion from the perspective of special education. This was a similar question to one asked in the survey. The definition of inclusion given by the interviewees was sometimes confused with the definition of integration. The principal Anne from the SSSD stated that inclusion meant including children with a special need in a mainstream class. Her deputy principal Bridget pointed out that not all children with a special need is best placed in a mainstream child as sometimes the child needs specialist support that is not available in a mainstream setting. Bridget had never received any instruction on how to teach inclusively and Anne was in awe of the teachers in mainstream settings who were working tirelessly to include children with a wide spectrum of special need. She wondered how it could be possible and she expressed concern for the toll it must be on the teachers themselves. 'I don't know how in the name of God they do it.'

The participating class teacher (Catherine) had worked in England in the past and the experience left her very concerned as she believed that the policy of inclusion was being pushed through in circumstances where it was not in the best interest for the child. She had had a pupil with Down Syndrome in her class. Deirdre had had no SNA and she had no specific training in supporting a child with special needs. The past pupil from the SSSD said that she had never felt included at her initial primary school and that there had been no differentiation of work.

Principal Eamonn at Feeder School A believed that all children should be included in mainstream schools wherever possible but there was a role for special schools in exceptional cases. For deputy principal Felicity at Feeder School A, inclusion concerned enabling all children to participate at their own level and with the supports and scaffolding that was necessary to facilitate this participation. She believed that student teachers needed more training in special education and deputy principal Bridget was of the same opinion. Principal Harry at Feeder School B suggested that inclusion meant having the child 'absolutely at the centre of his education' and how the school adapted or changed to 'make sure that the child is included and an active agent in their own education.' Again, Harry didn't believe that his initial teacher training prepared him for the challenge of inclusion. He believed that the teachers on his staff were teaching inclusively but he had heard 'some horror stories' about schools that were not teaching inclusively.

For the participating SET teacher at his school, Irene said that inclusion meant not being withdrawn from the mainstream class and being included in every subject. Nonetheless she said that some children need to be withdrawn from class and taught in little groups. Principal Kieran at Feeder C gave an interesting definition of inclusion except that he thought he was defining integration. 'Inclusion for me is having a flat roofed extension on a Georgian house.' He went on to say that integration for him involved redesigning the Georgian house so that the extension became an organic part of the Georgian house.

Principal Linda at the DFS was very much in favour of inclusion but she believed that inclusion in NI was 'going overboard at the moment.' She went on to comment that inclusion must not be to the detriment of other children. She spoke of the challenge of including children with a social, emotional and behavioural difficulty

and the knock on effect on the other children in the classroom. Her vice principal (Mary) stated that inclusion to her 'every child feeling included in as much as possible in every activity.' She had never been trained in how to teach inclusively. Principal Quinn gave a definition which was similar to that of principal Harry in the ROI. She said that inclusion 'involved adapting so that every child is given the chance to reach their potential.' Her vice principal's definition was a little different. To Rachel, inclusion meant 'to bring in everyone no matter what their ability.' She said that the school worked very hard at inclusion and gave the example of their pupil with Down Syndrome who was now in P7 and who had been a pupil at the IQM School for his entire primary education.

Fourteen different teachers provided their definition of inclusion. Five of the teachers confused integration with inclusion. The remaining eight provided similar definitions. Two of the participating teachers cautioned on the dangers of over accommodating inclusion with one participant stating that we were taking the inclusion of people with SEN too far, to the detriment of other children.

Segregation

All of the participants were asked for their opinion about teaching children in a segregated way. Principal Anne at the SSSD reported that despite the very best efforts of the teachers in the mainstream schools there were still many pupils who were struggling significantly at reading. She outlined the many strategies employed by mainstream schools and she listened to the largely positive experiences from prospective parents. There was no doubt in her mind that there was a need for a special school where the children were placed in a classroom with just eight of their peers where they could get the intensive specialist support that they urgently needed. She stated that 'you can solve every educational need in the world if you have a small class.'

Principal Eamonn at Feeder School A suggested that a special school for children with severe dyslexia was contrary to the principal of inclusion but he accepted that there was a very real need for such schools. There was not the time or resources available at his school to meet the needs of children with severe dyslexia. Principal Harry at Feeder School B said 'that obviously in an ideal world we're all included in

the school from junior infants to sixth without any blips but we live in a very imperfect world'. He believed that depending on the child's needs we sometimes needed to adapt and find a way around the challenge and teaching in a segregated way was necessary. Harry's analysis was shared with both the deputy principal Bridget and the class teacher Catherine at the SSSD. Principal Kieran at Feeder School C suggested that the negative side of withdrawing a child from his peers is counterbalanced by the child's experience of success with learning.' Thus children were sometimes withdrawn at his school be it in a little group or one to one depending on the perceived needs of the child.

Principal Quinn at the IQM School explained that the children at her school preferred to leave the classroom when receiving support from the learning support teacher. 'They love going out.' This positive opinion from Quinn was largely supported by her vice principal. Rachel taught P7 said that most of the children loved to go out. She noted however that a small number of children became disgruntled. Parent Sheila at the IQM School said that neither of her two children minded having to leave the classroom for support but the younger daughter was not happy with she missed a favourite activity such as a practice for the school play.

Principal Jill at the DFS suggested that withdrawing children was preferential in the lower classes and she saw it as an opportunity to enhance the self-esteem of the children. Vice principal Mary focused on the children at her school which had more challenging behaviours who were taught in a segregated way in the mornings and then integrated for a time in the afternoons. Supporting children with dyslexia by withdrawing them for short periods every day made great sense to her. Class Teacher Natalie spoke very critically of the peripatetic service and did not believe that the peripatetic teachers provided the expert service needed. She believed that the children at her school were receiving a very good quality support from their own class teachers. She had no objection in principle to withdrawing a child but only where an expert support was on offer. The past pupil from the DFS had enjoyed being withdrawn in a little group and he believed that the support he had received from the peripatetic teacher had been very helpful.

The peripatetic teacher (Teresa) was asked if children minded being withdrawn. Teresa replied that occasionally children were unhappy about it. She was asked if

peripatetic teachers ever observed the children they withdrew in a classroom setting. Could a peripatetic teacher ever work alongside the child's class teacher? Teresa responded that neither observation nor in-class support could take place. Such practices were not possible as the peripatetic teacher would not be covered by insurance. Teresa's definition of inclusion was very similar to that of vice principal Mary at the DFS and when asked for her definition she say the topic of inclusion was 'very controversial'. Withdrawing children in order to support them was necessary.

Recommended Approaches

The schools in both jurisdictions reported on positive initiatives at their schools. The six participating primary schools each had its plan for supporting children with dyslexia. At both Feeder School A and Feeder School B, there were four SET. Principal Eamonn and his special education (SEN) team had to devise a model of support and Principal Eamonn and Deputy Principal Felicity reported that the SET teachers were supporting the children in a classroom setting in as far as it was practical. Felicity valued team teaching and initiatives like station teaching but time was limited and there could be personality clashes with that many adults in a room. With the inclusion of two SNA's there could be five adults working together. Principal Eamonn was very supportive of differentiation but 'there were only so many hours in the day' and with the requirement for more and more paperwork one had to set realistic limits.

At Feeder School B, the SET was very involved in the classroom and principal Harry and the participating SET teacher (Irene) spoke about Power Hours, Station Teaching, Team Teaching and Lift Off. The dual nature of support provided by the SET was mentioned by the participating parent as her child was pleased to see other children in her class being supported instead of just children being withdrawn because they were struggling with reading. Like Felicity at Feeder School A, Irene stressed the need for additional training in the area of in-class support.

In NI, Irene at the IQM School stated that the newly qualified teachers did not know how to differentiate for a whole class of maybe thirty children. She ensured that new teachers were trained by her in how to organise literacy hour. Unchecked, a teacher might do it wrongly for years. The school had accelerated reading, reading

partnership and active comprehension literacy. Irene praised the input of an outside trainer who had been privately employed by the school.

At the DFS, the school had arranged to have all the teaching staff and the classroom assistants to be trained in Read Write. One of the teachers on the staff was a trainer in this linguistic programme. Principal Linda said that she had not received any training in phonics at teacher training college and she had struggled to teach phonics. All three participating teachers at the DFS credited the marked improvement in literacy scores at the school to the systematic and sustained instruction in linguistic phonics at the school. They had introduced an assembly at the school dedicated to explaining about dyslexia to the children. The participating parent said that following an assembly her child had come home he had told her in a very matter of fact voice that he had 'that dyslexia thing.' He was right and he was very relaxed about the fact.

The availability of additional personnel in the form of SET in the ROI facilitated in-class support and initiatives like station teaching, team teaching and power hours. At the IQM School the principal had the experience and in-depth knowledge of special education to organise mentoring and training for all of her staff and at the DFS, the presence of an experienced tutor in the linguistic programme of Read Write facilitated whole staff training in this apparently very effective programme.

Educational Psychological Services

The findings reflect an access issue to the educational psychological services in both jurisdictions. Feeder School A and Feeder School B expressed dissatisfaction with access to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). Both of their schools were only entitled to two referrals per year. This number was greatly insufficient. There was a challenge with prioritising children and sometimes a child suspected of having dyslexia had to be overlooked. Principal Kieran at Feeder School C had a different challenge. He said that many parents chose to have their child accessed privately without informing or involving their child's school. Class teacher Catherine at the SSSD suspected that parents sometimes exaggerated their child's difficulty in order to get a diagnosis of dyslexia. She was also critical of many parents who weren't prepared to sit down with their own child and support them because they were too busy.

In NI, vice principal Mary at the DFS explained their school was entitled to nine annual referrals to an educational psychologist and also nine referrals to a psychological assistant. If a child received a report from a psychological assistant stating that the child had dyslexic tendencies, this would suffice to qualify for peripatetic support providing the child met the other criteria. The senior peripatetic teacher explained that to qualify for peripatetic support the child had to be performing in the bottom 2%. Vice principal Mary said that since evidence of dyslexic tendencies could suffice for securing peripatetic support, the school tended to reserve the nine referrals to the educational psychologist for queries other than dyslexia.

Two of the participating parents with one parent in each jurisdiction, arranged to have a private assessment as the child's school had not prioritised that their child should be assessed. One could argue that there are insufficient opportunities in school for children to be assessed for dyslexia. In addition, one could argue that the both the parent and the dyslexic child is entitled to an assessment even where the criteria to qualify for peripatetic support is not met.

Preschool and Secondary School

The findings regarding preschool and transfer to secondary school differ between the two jurisdictions. Principal Eamonn at Feeder School A reported that his school had 'reasonable communication' with the preschool situated on the same campus. He was aware that they were using the relatively new learning through play initiative called Aistear. Principal Harry at Feeder School B had an Early Start initiative situated alongside his school which offered the possibility of enhanced outcomes for pre-schoolers living in a socially disadvantaged area. The level of interaction between these two primary schools and their feeder preschools contrasted sharply with the very close co-operation between the IQM School and the DFS and their respective nursery schools. None of the five participating mainstream primary schools had a practice of enquiring whether any of their incoming new parents had either a diagnosis of dyslexia or if they suspected that they might have dyslexia.

While none of the participants from ROI expressed a major concern around the transfer of children with dyslexia to secondary schools the participants from NI all

remarked on difficulties concerning grammar schools. Vice Principal Mary at the DFS informed that changes were in progress and that grammar schools would be compelled to accommodate pupils who had not performed at the highest standard in the eleven plus examinations. The DFS past pupil had not attempted the eleven plus but instead availed of additional learning support while the class teacher concentrated on preparing the children who were going to take the examination. The participating parents from both the IQM School and the DFS said that none of their dyslexic children had taken the eleven plus examination and those children who were not yet in P7 were unlikely to take the examination. The parents did not want to put their children under the pressure of the examination and they were not aware of any special accommodations which might support their child attempting the examination.

There was evidence that there was greater involvement between the preschool or nursery school and its feeder school in NI than in the ROI. However, the transfer of children with dyslexia in the ROI did not involve the proposition of taking a transfer exam as existed in NI.

Conclusion

Overall, there was a consensus between all of the participating teachers that there was a need for further training at the teacher training colleges so that the newly qualified teachers would be better prepared to support children with dyslexia and to teach all children in an inclusive way. In addition, on-going professional development in the area of special education needed to be provided for primary schools although the IQM School and the DFS demonstrated leadership in seeking and providing effective training on their own initiative. None of the three participating mainstream primary schools in the ROI reported that they were using the dyslexia screening test which contrasted with the apparently effective use of dyslexia screening tests in both of the two participating primary schools in NI. There was no evidence of the use of a dyslexia screening test at the school where Una's daughter attended in NI. In addition, at the completion of P4, Una's child had still not been referred for an educational assessment. In both the IQM School and the DFS, the staffs were confident that any child with dyslexia would be identified by at least P4. One can only speculate why Una's child had not been referred. Perhaps the class teacher had not been trained sufficiently to recognise dyslexia?

The schools in ROI had placed an emphasis on in-class support and they had the benefit of special education teaching hours but there didn't seem to be evidence of a whole school approach for professional development. The two participating primary schools used differentiation to support the pupils in the classroom but they also placed a reliance on withdrawing children for one to one instruction. In the ROI, the role of the SNA was very important but there was evident stress around the uncertainty of SNA retention where the principals could be informed at short notice that the services of an SNA or SNA's could be withdrawn. The appointment of classroom assistants would be welcome. In NI the freedom to assign literacy support to classroom assistants by withdrawing pupils on a one by one basis was much valued even to the preference of appointing a literacy support teacher as it was less expensive to appoint a classroom assistant. Feeder School A expressed the greatest need for additional resources such as dyslexia specific reading materials and software. The principal at Feeder B wanted the new language curriculum to reflect the social reality of his pupils. The children did not come from the middle classes and they lived in an economically disadvantaged area. One could argue that material needs to be relevant and resonate with its clients in order to hold the attention of its audience and thus prove effective.

There appeared to be a greater openness to parental involvement at the SSSD and Feeder School B as compared with Feeder School A and Feeder School C. However, there was no mention of evening or night classes where parents were invited in to the school for instruction on how best to support their child with their literacy. This contrasted with the findings at the IQM School and the DFS in NI. While all of the participants agreed that homework needed to be differentiated, there was not always evidence of this happening. When one factors in the amount of time taken for homework, the children with dyslexia at the SSSD and Feeder School B appear to be given appropriate amount of homework. It would appear that the children with dyslexia at both the IQM School and the DFS are also receiving the appropriate amount of homework.

It could be argued that the definitions of inclusion given by the participants do not necessarily exclude the possibility of segregation where such segregation could prove advantageous to the child. The SET teacher at Feeder School B pointed out that the school inspectors wanted to see evidence of in class support where children

were not being withdrawn but were supported within their own classroom. This contrasted with the established and continuing practice of withdrawing children in NI. There were issues around referrals for educational assessments in the ROI and the option of a referral to a psychologist assistant in NI facilitated the possibility of receiving peripatetic support where the child met the criteria but the parents and their child missed the opportunity of a diagnosis of dyslexia in favour of 'dyslexic tendencies'.

Feeder School B in the ROI included Early Start for pre-schoolers and the teacher on the Early Start team was on the staff of the Feeder School B. The involvement of Feeder School A and the feeder preschool appeared to be much less close. The two schools in NI enjoyed a close relationship with their nursery schools. In ROI there was no pressure of a transfer examination. It was obvious that two of the three principals of mainstream schools in the ROI were not conversant around the day to day detail of special education delivery in their schools.

Chapter Five   Discussion of Findings

Introduction

This chapter brings together the findings of both the literature review and the research through the prism of the research questions. The literature review focuses on special education, the policy of inclusion and the teaching of primary children with dyslexia with a particular emphasis on the ROI and NI. The research explores the training, perceptions and teaching methodologies of the participants from the ROI and NI. While the survey was undertaken following a careful sampling strategy which was open to a wide range of teachers, the comparative case study is specifically and purposefully targeted with the twenty-one participants chosen for a particular reason. The eleven participants from the ROI have a connection with a special school for children with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia. Eight of the ten participants from NI have a connection with either a dyslexia friendly school or a school with an award for inclusivity, while the remaining two participants have a particular connection with children with a diagnosis of dyslexia. The twelve themes which emerged through the analysis of the comparative case study are adopted again to draw together the literature reviewed in chapter two with the findings of the survey and case study.

The research questions focus on the support of primary children with dyslexia in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The perception of the participants in both the survey and the comparative case study are sought with regard to the delivery of inclusive education policies. The concept of inclusive education was explored in the Literature Review. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) acknowledge that 'while this term might be widely employed, the question that dominates people's thinking is what exactly does inclusion mean' (ibid p. 76). Hodkinson and Vickerman (ibid) note that 'there is a plethora of definitions of inclusion' and so the concept 'may be defined in a variety of ways' (ibid, p.76). The concept of full inclusion and the elimination of social exclusion is arguably very different from the notion of merely striving to provide a mainstream education for all while not addressing inclusive strategies within the classroom. In addition, perhaps children with a special educational need might prefer to be withdrawn from the mainstream setting as suggested in the research findings of Nugent (2008) and O'Brien (2017). The

answers to the research questions evolved from a discussion of the findings under the twelve thematic headings. Sometimes there was a crossover, such as 'Classroom Assistants and Special Needs Assistants' where there was evidence of both a school strategy support but also evidence of an arguably effective and popular form of segregated support which was at odds with full inclusion.

Teacher Training

As outlined in Chapter 4, teacher training was explored from the perspective of initial teacher training and as part of on-going professional training for primary teachers. Both the survey and the comparative case study confirm that the vast majority of the 174 survey participants and 21 case study participants had received no specific training in the support of children with dyslexia at the teacher training college attended by them. The exception to this observation concerned just nine participants representing just 5.2 per centof the 174 participants in the survey who had completed a module as part of their initial teacher training. The 14 teachers who took part in the comparative study had not received any specific training in the support of children with dyslexia. The three teachers from the special school catering for children with a specific learning difficulty including dyslexia (SSSD) in the ROI had received training in the Wilson Reading System.

> As a structured literacy program based on phonological-coding
> research and Orton Gillingham principles, WRD directly and
> systematically teaches the structure of the English language.
> Through the program, students learn fluent decoding and encoding
> to the level of mastery (Wilson Language Training, 2019).

The principal (Anne) of the SSSD emphasised that all of the staff including the special needs assistants (SNAs) had received training in the Wilson Reading System (WRS). In addition, two of the three participating principals in mainstream schools from the ROI mentioned how they would particularly like to have access to the WRS. Anne spoke very highly of the system though she also remarked that it was expensive. A very generous benefactor had made it possible to both introduce and maintain the system. Anne outlined the contribution of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) through the provision of some training in the WRS and the occasional course in an area of special education. One of the teachers on her staff came directly from a teacher training college. One might question the wisdom of

employing a very young teacher with no teaching experience or any experience in the area of special education except for teaching practice. The pupils at the SSSD have already completed at least four years in a mainstream school and on admission to the school have at best attained the reading score in the first percentile. One could argue that a newly qualified teacher might lack the teaching experience and training specific to supporting a child with severe dyslexia.

While the majority of the teaching participants in both the survey and the case study were working as mainstream teachers, 28 of the participants from the survey were working as special education teachers (SET) and five of the participants were working as peripatetic teachers. In addition, 14 of the participants were special education needs organisers (SENCOs) at their respective schools. One could argue that SET, peripatetic teachers and SENCOs should have specialist training in the support of children with dyslexia. A closer inspection of the survey findings reveal that eight of the SET teachers and one the five peripatetic teachers had not completed any specific training in the support of dyslexic children. Three of the 14 SENCOs stated that they had not received any training in how to support a child with dyslexia. The 11 SENCOs who specified that they had received training with five SENCOs specifying that they had completed a CPD (Continuing Professional Development) in SEN. Only one SENCO noted that she had received SENCO training. Three findings are arguably of particular concern. 46 per cent of teachers in the survey recorded that they had not received any training in the support of children with dyslexia. Furthermore, of the 52.9 per cent of participants that had received training, 36.2 per cent had attended either an afternoon, day or at best a week long course. Finally, a significant number or SET, peripatetic teachers and SENCOs had not received any specific training.

The special education teacher (SET) at Feeder Primary B in the ROI had no formal training in special education and relied on occasional one day courses or the advice she received from a charitable organisation. While Harry, the principal at Feeder Primary B was evidently knowledgeable in the area of special education having completed a post graduate diploma and a Masters in this area the remaining two principals in the two Feeder Primaries appeared to have abdicated any duty in the supervision of children with a special need and relied on their deputy principals to answer questions as basic as what reading or screening tests are used in their school.

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The deputy principal at Feeder Primary A had completed a degree in psychology but she reported that she had gained her expertise in the field of special education through working as a SET teacher. The experience had changed how she approached teaching in a mainstream class. The training she had received in teacher training college had ill equipped her for supporting children with dyslexia. Every teacher who participated in the comparative study from the ROI gave the same reply, suggesting that they had not been adequately trained to support children with dyslexia.

The participating teachers in the case study from NI appeared to have received significantly better training than their counterparts from the ROI, though it should be noted that the role of the two participating Principals is significant in this regard. Linda, the Principal at the Dyslexia Friendly School (DFS) and Quinn, the Principal at the IQM School (Inclusion Quality Mark) showed immense leadership with respect to sourcing and resourcing quality training for their staffs. Linda at the DFS had actively sought to have her school become part of the then Western Education Library Board (WELB) initiative which facilitated the training leading to DFS status. While six primary schools had originally 'signed up' Linda's school was the only one which persevered and continues to retain its DFS status. In addition, Mary, the SENCO at her school has received SENCO training and she works tirelessly in her supervision and mentoring of staff in the area of dyslexia support. Finally, Natalie, one of the class teachers at the DFS had qualified in psychology, previously worked as a peripatetic teacher supporting children with dyslexia and had studied linguistic phonics. Natalie provided training in linguistic phonics to the entire staff including the classroom assistants. The school employed a whole school approach to the teaching of linguistic phonics. The school devoted one assembly each year to the celebration of dyslexia and Olwyn, a parent of a child with dyslexia at the DFS mentioned that her child came home after the assembly and said 'I think I have that dyslexia thing' and he appeared quite proud of himself. Despite the fact that the school has been enrolling a significant number of non-nationals of late, the school does not have a single pupil qualifying for peripatetic support. The three teachers from the DFS stated that it was their belief that their use of linguistic phonics was a key reason that their school reported such success in the area of literacy.

Quinn, principal at the IQM School had worked as an advisor to primary schools in the area of special education. In addition, she was an associate inspector in special

education. Quinn was highly qualified and experienced and prided herself in ensuring that all her staff received the appropriate training to support all the pupils in her school. She had never sought the DFS status because she believed that the IQM Quality Mark was much more preferable. Quinn was now working alongside one of the teacher training colleges in an effort to raise the standard of training of the students in special education and inclusivity. She believed that student teachers should only do their placements in schools that were shown to be performing well in school inspections. It was clear that Quinn was 'hands on' and leading her staff team in the area of special education.

The Report of the Task Group on Dyslexia (2001) is not a recent report but its recommendations are arguably still relevant. The five teacher training colleges were questioned on the proportion of time devoted to the area of dyslexia. Two of the five colleges indicated that they devoted between 30-40 hours to special education but neglected to mention how much of this time was set aside for dyslexia. One college stated that a mere three hours were 'directly allocated' but there was a 'further six hours' where the 'topic was dealt with indirectly' (2001, p.52). There was agreement among the training colleges that more time needed to be spent but there were time constraints (p.52). The Bachelor of Education Degree was extended in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) from three years up to four years in 2012 (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2014). The addition of an extra year might permit the acknowledged need for more time to be given to the topic of dyslexia. Of the 174 participants in the survey only two replied that they had never taught a child with dyslexia. However, only two teachers from the ROI responded that had received training at the teacher training college in dyslexia support from the category of teacher with up to ten years teaching experience and only one of the teachers had completed her preservice teacher education in the ROI. It would appear that despite the B. Ed Degree consisting of an extra year, the colleges of education have not amended their courses to accommodate their self-reported shortcoming. (2001 Report, p.52)

In the Report of the Task Group on Dyslexia (2002) in NI, shortcomings in the area of teacher training were referred to by a number of contributors. These include John Clarke of the Northern Ireland Dyslexia Association (NIDA) and Maura Totten from Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Support (DADS). Clarke (2002) remarked that 'that schools lacked expertise in the area of dyslexia' and 'they had no specifically trained staff'

(p. 62) and Clarke provided feedback from teachers where they reported that they had received 'sparse or no information during training' (p.61). Totten (2002) stated that 'teachers are supportive but lack knowledge, confidence, and feel inadequate, insecure, put-upon' and there was a need for increased training which she said 'should be demanded' (p.64). Furthermore, Totten discusses the need for a whole school approach around the support of children with dyslexia which was obviously not the case at that time. The 2002 Report notes that 'consideration should be given by DE to the dyslexia training component of Initial Teacher Education courses, with a view to offering students the opportunity to gain accredited training' (p.vii) and

> A Northern Ireland accredited training course on dyslexia should be developed in collaboration with universities, university colleges and ELBs. Where possible, it should be made available through local centres, to maximise uptake. Funded places for SENCOs should be given consideration. (2002 Report, p.vi)

There is much to praise in the 2002 Report but surely the key consideration is whether or not the recommendations were put into practice. As Beck et al (2017) confirm, regrettably that from the prospective of training and identification of children with dyslexia, there are only 'pockets of good practice' and 'it is inconsistent' (p.144-164). The survey findings would appear to suggest the need for accredited training which is not just a voluntary option at initial training level and the urgent need for up skilling on a whole school basis in the identification and support of children with dyslexia in NI and the ROI. It might have proved enlightening if the teacher training colleges in the ROI and NI had been asked to become involved in the survey. The impact of good leadership and team work at the DFS and the IQM School illustrate that despite the lack of appropriate training at initial teacher training, it is possible to up skill as a staff and co-ordinate an excellent support for the children with dyslexia in their schools.

Testing

'On the basis of BDA figures he indicated that 4% of the school population could be expected to be dyslexic, which in real terms is approximately one student per class' (Clarke, 2002 Report, p. 62). If we accept Clarke's suggestion of four per cent, then it might be worthwhile to compare his percentage with the detection readings in the survey. However, the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) reported that the

percentage could be up to ten per cent (2019) The range of percentages alongside the varied approaches to the detection of dyslexia in the associated primary schools could explain the confusing findings in the survey. The comparative case study illustrates different approaches to the detection of dyslexia in the participating primary schools. The use of a dyslexia screening test in the DFS and IQM School in NI is taken as the norm which is not reciprocated in the three participating ordinary primary schools in the ROI. The interview with the parent of a recently diagnosed child in NI who was not a pupil in either the DFS or the IQM School paints an arguably worrying scenario. Despite the existence of both the 2001 Report in the ROI and the 2002 Report in NI, one could question the extent to which the many recommendations of both reports have been acted upon.

Given that there is no internationally accepted definition of dyslexia, it could be suggested that an accurate reading for the true percentage of a population with diagnosis is not possible at the present time. Excluding the five peripatetic teachers in NI, only 28 per cent of the survey participants reported that their primary school used a dyslexia screening test with the majority of this percentage (61.7 per cent) based in NI. The most widely used approach for the detection of dyslexia in both jurisdictions was observation (76.8 per cent) though this was generally used in conjunction with the use of standardised tests. One could question why only eight participants mentioned specifically that they used checklists particularly since both the 2001 Report and the 2002 Report provide checklists. When the participants were asked to suggest how many children in their school had dyslexia the range provided stretches from .4 per cent up to 37.1 per cent of their school population. The percentage mean reported from the NI cohort was 10.2 per cent the percentage mean from the ROI was 4.4 per cent and the combined percentage mean was 7.3 per cent. Perhaps if dyslexia screening tests were used systematically in both jurisdictions, then the accuracy of possible numbers with dyslexia would be significantly improved. The lack of appropriate training for primary teachers in the area of dyslexia support could also be suggested as a factor when teachers are asked to provide a suggested figure of pupils in their school who have dyslexia. Given the acknowledged genetic link associated with dyslexia (2002 Report, p.22) it is perhaps surprising that it is not suggested in either the 2001 Report or the 2002 Report that it would be helpful to ascertain if either of the child's parents have received a diagnosis

of dyslexia themselves. If there is to be openness rather than a taboo about dyslexia, this might facilitate earlier identification.

The findings from the comparative study would appear to illustrate differing approaches to the detection of children with dyslexia in the primary schools of both the ROI and NI. Two of the three primary schools in the ROI (Feeder School A and C) relied on teacher observation, standardised reading tests, The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) and discussion at staff meetings as their method of dyslexia detection. One of the two schools had also used the Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) in the past, but the Special Education Teacher (SET) who administered this test returned to mainstream teaching and the practice was discontinued. Feeder School B was now the only school using the NRIT. Feeder School B also used teacher observation, standardised reading tests, MIST and Belfield Infant Assessment Profile Test. None of the three participating primary schools in the ROI indicated that they screened for dyslexia in their schools. At the DFS, the school had introduced a battery of electronic testing from GL Assessment including a dyslexia screener. The Dyslexia Portfolio was given to all pupils in P3 and P4. At the IQM School, informal screening began in P1 and the Principal confidently stated that they had identified all children with dyslexia by P3 and 'screened by P4.'

Three of the four participating parents in the comparative study reported negative experiences. The parent of the pupil who attended the special school for children with a specific learning difficulty including dyslexia (SSSD) Gerard was unaware of the genetic link with dyslexia and had struggled greatly himself at school. He had learned about his own dyslexia as an adult. His son was very unhappy at Feeder School A. His son was nine when he was finally diagnosed as dyslexic following an assessment by an educational psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). Gerard knew that he was very lucky that the Principal Eamonn had selected his son for assessment as the school was limited to just two referrals for assessment to NEPS annually and this had to cover all assessments be it for Attention Deficit Disorder or any area of educational concern. Gerard believed that had his son remained at Feeder School A, he would never have received the appropriate support and that his behaviour would have continued to deteriorate rapidly. His son did not want to go to school. His son was now attending the SSSD and his demeanour and behaviour had dramatically improved. Parent Jill at Feeder

School B had reported a nightmarish experience with her first son and switched primary schools when enrolling her second child. Her daughter had been diagnosed with dyslexia and she praised Principal Harry at Feeder School B for selecting her daughter for an assessment. Like Principal Eamonn, he too was limited to two annual referrals to NEPS. Jill had learned from her earlier experience with her son, and she had been proactive. She would have paid for a private assessment for her daughter if necessary .The participating parents at the DFS and the IQM School gave very positive reports regarding the detection of their children's dyslexia. Parent Una had a very different experience. Una had not been aware of any genetic link with dyslexia and she reported that she had also struggled at school. She now wondered if perhaps she too was dyslexic. She had repeatedly mentioned to her daughter's teachers that she was very concerned about her. She had been told to stop worrying herself. Finally, she had arranged for a private assessment. Her daughter had severe dyslexia.

The interviews of the two past pupils are not necessarily positive. Past pupil Deirdre recalled a traumatic time at her original primary school. She reported that she experienced bullying by some of her fellow pupils. She was assessed privately by an educational psychologist as her parents had become concerned about her. The school appeared surprised by her diagnosis and asked that she be assessed again by NEPS. She was assessed as being severely dyslexic. Deirdre was given a place at the SSSD. Like Gerard's son, Deirdre was very happy at the SSSD. Jill reported that the SSSD had 'saved her son's soul.' It appears that Deirdre had had the same experience. Peter, past pupil of the DFS appeared quite happy for the first two years of his schooling. By P3, he was becoming progressively unhappy. Fortunately for him, his parents were asked if he could be assessed by a psychologist. The diagnosis of dyslexia came just in time, as homework was taking him the entire evening and he was experiencing considerable distress. He was diagnosed in P4 he had received peripatetic support. He may not have achieved his full potential but he appeared happy and content with life. Perhaps the detection of his dyslexia could have been made sooner.

Reid (2009) outlined seven barriers to the implementation of policy with regard to the support of children with dyslexia. He referred to the reluctance to label too early, 'the lack of staff awareness that results in late identification' and to the 'waiting for assessment approach' (p.8). He also mentions the requests for 'additional training'

(ibid). Ten years have elapsed but there is an arguable likelihood that Reid's concerns are still an issue. 'The Group recommends effective early intervention to minimise the risk of children suffering the negative experience of academic failure and associated consequences' (2002 Report, p. iv). It would appear that there is a need for earlier dyslexia identification in the participating primary schools in the ROI and that the high standards of detection in the DFS and IQM School might not necessarily apply to all primary schools in NI. The survey findings suggest a lack of clarity and standardisation.

School Support

The participants of both the survey and the comparative study were questioned about how their school supported children with dyslexia. The question was open ended leading to 44 different combinations of school support in the survey. While the varied nature of approach could of itself cause concern, the finding that 12 per cent of the survey respondents simply noted that children with dyslexia were supported by the Special Education Teacher (SET) or the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENCO) or Peripatetic teacher is potentially of more concern. It could imply that the responsibility had been transferred to the SET or SENCO or Peripatetic Teacher and that the Principal or Mainstream Teacher had to some extent abdicated their responsibility. The finding that only 24.7 per cent of the survey participants reported that they used differentiation could be a cause of some alarm since differentiation has been identified as a recommended form of support for children with a special need including children with dyslexia. Only 18 participants or 20.7 per cent of the teachers from the ROI specified that they were withdrawing children from their classroom. It would appear that the Department of Education (DES) policy of inclusion where children are supported within their own classroom as much as possible has been very effective, based on the responses from the ROI cohort.

The policy of inclusion presupposes that a class teacher has the time and training to implement the policy effectively. In the ROI, the primary schools have access to a SET, based on a formula which takes account of the enrolment numbers, socio economic factors and the school's pattern of including children with a special educational need. The survey was conducted prior to a recent review whereby the school's allocation may have been adjusted. Nonetheless, every single primary

school has a SET allocation. In effect, the board of governors does not have to make the decision if it can afford a learning support teacher or not and if the money might be better spent on additional classroom assistants. The comparative study findings illustrate the point well. Feeder School A had 91 SET hours which translates into 3 full time SET and 16 additional hours or a part of another SET. The school had 200 pupils. Feeder School B had 84.5 SET hours which converts into 3 full time SET teachers plus 9.5 SET hours. Feeder School B had an enrolment of 142 pupils with a teacher pupil ration of 1:22. Feeder School C had 36 SET hours and 35 minutes or 1 full time SET and 11 hours and 35 minutes and an enrolment of 319 pupils. Feeder School C also had nine SNAs. The SSSD had a pupil teacher of 11:1 and five full time SNAs. The number of trained personnel available to the four participating primary schools from the ROI suggests that maybe the policy of inclusion could be advanced, although the gaps in teacher training could prove problematic.

The two participating primary schools in NI had decided to withdraw the post of Learning Support Teacher at their schools as and from the school year 2019/20. The DFS had had a Learning Support Teacher in the past, but Principal Linda could not justify the expense as she believed the employment of a number of Classroom Assistants was more useful to her. Principal Quinn at the IQM School could no longer afford to employ a Learning Support Teacher and so the class teachers would be supported by only the classroom assistants. However, both Linda and Quinn emphasised that their classroom assistants had received considerable training. The interview with the SENCO at the DFS suggested that the input by Mary was very time consuming and one could be perhaps forgiven for wondering where she found the time and energy to attend to her own class. One could argue that the access to a well-trained classroom assistant for the duration of the entire day might be more useful than access to a teacher with no specialised training for perhaps just an hour or two for a few days a week. Perhaps schools need access to both a classroom assistant in each classroom as well as a number of SET depending on the special education school profile.

The three tiered approach advocated by the Right to Intervention (RTI) in a number of States in the United States which is discussed by Itkonen and Jahnukainen (2010) and Reid (2011) appears to be very attractive. The tiered approach may be similar to the staged approach adopted in the ROI and the Code of Practice (COP) in NI, but it

is the nature of tier 2 which is very appealing consisting of a 'frequent, intensive and highly targeted' intervention. There is the implication that the child's needs have been carefully analysed and that a programme to match these needs has been drawn up. The frequency element of the recovery model is present. The time needed to ascertain the appropriate programme of intervention needs to be addressed. One could argue that the hardworking class teacher does not have the time, energy or possibly does not have the training required to draw up the individual programmes needed for the children with dyslexia or any special educational need. The RTI requires the withdrawal of children from their classroom. The RTI approach of the United States of America could be applied in the ROI by the SET but this might be at odds with the push for inclusivity. In NI, perhaps the time has come to employ regional specialists as advocated by the 2002 Report to advise and support the hardworking class teachers and SENCOs but one could also advocate for the appointment for more highly skilled peripatetic teachers where the criteria to qualify for an intervention is lowered to reach dyslexic children with moderate dyslexia. The British Dyslexia Association (2019) suggests that ten per cent of the population has a degree of mild, moderate or severe dyslexia. This would imply a lot of differentiation necessitating considerable amounts of preparation and intensive training at initial teacher training level and at the continuous professional development level. Perhaps there is a need for further research in the area of appropriate teacher training and support with realistic goals for teachers, parents and the children with dyslexia.

Classroom Assistants and Special Needs Assistants

No specific question about classroom assistants or special needs assistants was asked of the respondents to the survey. However, when the participants were asked how they taught inclusively, thirteen participants or 8.3% specifically mentioned either a classroom assistant or an SNA. When the participants of the comparative study were interviewed, every teacher spoke about the vital importance of the role of classroom assistant or SNA. In the ROI, Principal Anne at the SSSD discussed the anxiety and concern she felt as every school year approached knowing that she could lose one or more of her five SNAs. The Special Needs Organiser could arrive at the school, carry out an inspection and withdraw the SNAs. Even with a pupil class ratio of 1:11, she remarked that there was a need for one to one tuition with an SNA. In the ROI, an

SNA is appointed to a school to administer to the care needs of a pupil or group pupils. The role of the SNA is set out clearly in DES Circular 0030/2014. The role does not include educational needs which contrast with the role of the classroom assistant in NI. If we are to include children with special educational needs (SEN) the need for classroom assistants needs to be addressed. In NI, the substitution of a literacy teacher for the appointment of classroom assistants appears to be budgetary rather than providing specialist support teachers and appears to be at odds with the service envisaged by the 2002 Report. This is not to disrespect the service provided by the classroom assistants across NI.

Resources

All of the participants in the survey and the comparative study were specifically asked if they had enough resources to meet the needs of the pupils in their schools who had dyslexia. They were also asked to suggest what resources they would like to have. In the survey findings, it is perhaps alarming to note that of the 174 participants; only 56 replied that they had sufficient resources. This indicates that 120 participants or 69% stated that they had insufficient resources. When the figure of 120 is further analysed, the number of teachers expressing that they had insufficient resources is strikingly similar in both jurisdictions, with 58 from the ROI and 62 from NI. Although 56 participants answered that they had sufficient resources,45 of this number nonetheless suggested further resources that they would like to have, leaving a mere 18 participants of the total of 174 who apparently had every resource that they needed. The most frequently mentioned resource which was needed by the participants was specific resources for children with dyslexia such as reading schemes. Three of the five peripatetic teachers reported that they had insufficient resources. One peripatetic teacher remarked that the reading schemes that she was using were outdated. Another peripatetic teacher reported that she wished that there were more appropriately trained classroom assistants available and tablets which were working and that the tablets had useful apps. The third peripatetic teacher remarked that she wished that she could receive training as she was not feeling confident that the support she provided was properly supporting the pupils with dyslexia.

The Wilson Reading System (WRS) was referred to repeatedly by three of the four participating primary schools from the ROI. WRS 'provides multisensory, structured instruction in all five areas of reading (phonemic awareness, word structure/phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) plus spelling' (Wilson Language Training, 2019). Principal Anne at the SSSD praised the system and the Principals at Feeder Schools A and B wished that they had access to the reading system. Principal Anne spoke of the contribution of the system to the successful reading outcomes for the pupils at her school. The pupils had spent at least four years in an ordinary/mainstream primary school and yet they had been recorded in the first percentile in reading tests. The Wilson Reading System (WRS) provided a systematic if very repetitive approach which provided the children with the reading attack skills. Apart from the WRS and the fact that each class had no more than nine pupils, the Deputy Principal Bridget reported that many of the textbooks were the same as those used in mainstream/ordinary classrooms. Feeder School A was the only one of the three participating ordinary primary schools with a pupil attending the SSSD. The other two feeder primary schools had not had a pupil attend the SSSD for a number of years. Feeder School A had practically no specific resources for children with dyslexia. The parent of the child with severe dyslexia had paid for the Toe by Toe book. The parent also disclosed that his son would not be returning to the feeder school on completion of two years at the SSSD. The policy of inclusion requires that SET teachers need to work alongside class teachers in the child's classroom wherever possible. However, if the WRS is to be available and effective, children need one to one teaching in a quiet and private environment.

The two participating primary schools in NI were lucky enough to have access to highly trained teaching personnel and classroom assistants. The DFS reported on the very successful benefits of linguistic phonics. Unlike the IQM School, no pupil had qualified for peripatetic support for dyslexia. Principal Linda at the DFS noted that in the past, teachers on the staff had received additional expenses for the purchase of class resources. Many of the purchases remained in boxes in presses and were never used. Both the DFS and IQM Schools put an emphasis on the production of personalised worksheets, where they could be as many as three differentiated worksheets prepared to meet the different challenges and abilities within an individual classroom. The dyslexia software at the DFS was dated and there did not

appear to be an emphasis on using technology as a support tool for children with dyslexia. The dedicated approach at the DFS and IQM Schools would have been much appreciated by Parent Una. She reported that no steps had been taken to identify the child's dyslexia and there was no evidence of differentiation.

One could argue that funding is essential if appropriate resources are to support children with dyslexia. In the ROI, there were 9,280 SET working across 3,240 primary schools (DES, 2019). The employment of these additional teachers to support mainstream teachers is potentially a major asset as compared with the situation in NI where mainstream teachers do not always have access to a learning support teacher. DES pays primary teachers directly but there is evidence that the capitation grants are insufficient and so boards of management engage in fundraising to help offset the running costs of the school. At Feeder School C, Principal Kieran remarked that they could afford any resources they needed including special education resources as the school was situated in an affluent area.

It would appear that budgetary constraints have limited the amount of appropriate support resources available for children with dyslexia in both the ROI and NI. A number of the survey participants indicated that they did not know what resources were needed by them. If all trainee primary teachers completed a module specifically on dyslexia at their training colleges, the wealth of resources available could be discussed. Reid (2009) provides a very useful overview (pages 168-169). Reid (2011) sets out a helpful appendix of tests that are used to detect dyslexia (pages 225-229). Similarly, Ott (1997) published a very practical guide to the detection and support of children and adults with dyslexia and listed appropriate tests and teaching resources. Ball et al (2006) also include an appendix of support resources including easily followed checklists. Many of the texts read as part of the Literature Review in Chapter Two made no reference to teaching resources. When one considers that there are expert manuals such as those written by Reid, Ott and Ball et al, it is disappointing to realise that most of the teachers interviewed in the ROI had never heard of any of the dyslexia tests identified by Reid and Ott and that they were unaware of almost all of the resources. The two participating primary schools from NI were very aware of both the tests and resources. The survey findings confirm the low use of screening tests for dyslexia in both jurisdictions (28 per cent) although the figure was a little higher in NI where it was 35.4 per cent.

Parental Involvement

None of the 23 questions in the survey concerned a direct question around parental involvement. However, one might have expected that the role of parents would have featured in the area of dyslexia detection and also in the area of dyslexia support. In the comparative case study, all of the participants were asked directly about the role of parents in the detection and support of children with dyslexia. Parental involvement was almost completely ignored in the survey. Only fifteen teachers mentioned parental concern as a factor in the detection of dyslexia and only two participants recorded the presence of a family history of dyslexia as an aid to detection. It is perhaps surprising that no participant asked parents if there was a history of dyslexia in the family when recording school enrolment details. One could suggest that there is an embarrassment associated with dyslexia and also a realisation that many of the parents are unaware that they themselves may have undiagnosed dyslexia. The fact that no teacher outlined a role for parents in the support of their dyslexic child merits further investigation. As a special need teacher who saw the positive outcomes for both parent and child when a parent and friendly programme of home support was explained, supplied and supervised by a teacher trained in dyslexia support, it is disappointing to find no evidence from the survey participants of positive home school intervention. Reid (2011) outlines five ideas to encourage positive outcomes for parents supporting their children with their homework. The ideas include finding an environment that 'suits' their child's learning style which could include playing background music (pages 203-204).

The comparative case study offers a contrast of parental support. There is evidence of some similarities between the SSSD in the ROI with the two participating primary schools from NI. This is particularly obvious between the SSSD and the DFS. Both schools offer enlightening information meetings for parents and there appears to be almost a celebration of dyslexia. Parent Olwyn reported that her dyslexic son had attended the school information assembly which informed the children about dyslexia and informed her that he himself believed he was dyslexic. She said he seemed quite content and accepting and in no way upset or disappointed. At the IQM School there was an openness and welcome for children with special needs including dyslexia and there was a confidence around early detection which included close links and observation at pre-school level. Both parent Olwyn at the DFS and parent

Sheila at the IQM School had been encouraged to support their child at home although it would appear that Olwyn was less committed. The school had made the materials available to her but she found it difficult to give the time to her son on a regular basis. The experience of Parent Una is in sharp contrast with that of Olwyn and Sheila. She had been excluded from school involvement and had arranged for her child to be assessed privately and to receive support and tuition outside of school hours. Una would like to have moved her daughter to a supportive school like the DFS or IQM School but her daughter wanted to remain where she was as she would miss her friends.

The findings seem to indicate that parental involvement at Feeder School A was very different to that of the DFS and IQM Schools. This suspicion was supported by the interview with Parent Gerard. He appeared to be a diplomatic person who would not want to offend any teacher or staff member but his son was not happy at the school. He believed that it was not possible for his son to get the type of intervention that he desperately needed if he remained at the school. Deputy Principal Felicity confirmed that Feeder School A did not have appropriate resources for children with dyslexia. Principal Eamonn displayed a lack of knowledge around testing materials and resources and seemed more concerned about the complexity of having to share one of his SET with another school. There was no evidence of a bond or interaction between the pre-school situated in the grounds of Feeder School A. The school did not screen for dyslexia or use a non-reading intelligence test although Felicity had used NRIT in the past when she had worked as a SET in the school. The passion, training and knowledge of the teaching participants from DFS and IQM Schools contrasted with the apparent inaction at Feeder School A.

The participants from Feeder School B appeared considerably more positive than the participants from Feeder School A. Parent Jill spoke very highly of the school principal and staff. She praised the SET who was supporting her daughter and she reported that she found the principal welcoming and supportive. She had had a very negative experience at the school where her older child had attended and she had felt discrimination and belittlement owing to her poor economic circumstances. At Feeder School B, principal Harry treated with respect. Principal Kieran at Feeder School C commented that in general parents of pupils with learning difficulties could afford private assessments and private tuition. The school was situated in an affluent

area. The parents were very involved in fundraising and so the school had a plentiful supply of resources. His special education team were enthusiastic and well organised. He did not mention home school interventions. Children were taught inclusively with SET teachers working alongside class teachers in the child's classroom. One could argue that parental involvement in supporting a child with possible dyslexia can be abdicated and transferred to a private tutor where the financial cost of such an intervention is not an issue.

The Literature Review does not dwell on parental involvement. A revisit of the literature reveals a limited amount of reference to the topic of parents and their children with dyslexia. Griffin and Shevlin (2007) address the issue of parents in the final section of their book. 'There is usually an unequal power relationship between teachers and parents, and parents are often at a disadvantage in lacking relevant information about the workings of special education provision, particularly in relation to identification and assessment process' (ibid, p.250). Special education provision is continually in a state of flux. Each circular from either the DES or DENI can introduce changes to provision. One of the consequences of the changes is the need to update reference books such as Ball et al (2006) and Griffin and Shevlin (2007). Boards of Management in the ROI and Boards of Governors in NI need to keep pace with the recommendations. The glossary at the end of the 2002 Report covers almost two pages of acronyms. The use of so many terms and acronyms and regulations arguably adds to the challenge of involving parents and putting them at ease when addressing their child's special educational needs. Reid (2011) points out the importance of 'direct communication' between parents and the school. 'In practice, however, this can still be difficult to implement' (ibid, p. 197) He outlines the need for 'proactive and open policies to promote home-school partnerships with parents of children with dyslexia' (ibid, p.197). Both the 2001 Report and the 2002 Report specifically refer to the need for every school to have a policy devoted to dyslexia, only the DFS provided evidence that such a policy existed.

Homework

The survey did not include any specific question relating to homework. One of the six open ended questions asked the participant how children with dyslexia were supported in their school. This could have produced data about homework if the

school used a differentiated approach to homework. None of the 174 participants made any reference to homework. All of the 21 participants in the case study were asked specifically about homework. There appeared to be an issue around homework for children with dyslexia at Feeder School A as confirmed by Parent Gerard and Deputy Principal Felicity. Both Parent Gerard and past pupil Deirdre recalled the stress and anxiety experienced by both Gerard's son and Deirdre herself prior to their transfer to the SSSD. Gerard reported that his son 'was transformed' and there were no more tantrums. Deirdre reported a similar transformation. Parent Jill at Feeder School B was very happy with the approach to homework at the school. This contrasted with the 'melt downs' when her son attended his initial primary school. The participating staff from the SSSD confirmed that homework was differentiated and that there was very good communication between home and school where any difficulty had arisen.

Eight of the ten participants from NI were familiar with differentiated homework. The staff at the DFS and IQM School supported pupils in their school through differentiation and this approach included differentiation of homework. Peripatetic teacher Teresa reported that peripatetic teachers did not support children in their classroom and owing to time constraints there was seldom time to involve parents. The peripatetic teachers appeared to operate in an isolated manner but they were careful not to overload the child with excessive homework. Past pupil Peter at the DFS spoke about the long hours of frustration and tantrums prior to his diagnosis of severe dyslexia. He did not recall any homework problems until he entered P3. He had thrown books and copies in frustration. Once diagnosed, things improved and he was very happy to receive peripatetic support. He enjoyed leaving the classroom and the homework which he received from the peripatetic teacher was easy. One might expect that in 2019, the negative homework experiences of Peter and Deirdre would no longer happen but the report by parent Una would appear to indicate that this is sadly not the case.

Reid (2011) mentions some of the challenges faced by dyslexic children around the topic of homework. He refers to a study by Coffield et al (2008). While the inclusion of dyslexia friendly practices is helpful, 21% of the participants 'did not have time to write their homework down' (p.26). Reid also mentions the advantages of paired homework. (p. 143). Reid comments that children with dyslexia often forget to bring

their homework to school and they have difficulties 'managing time' (p.161). Children with dyslexia have special needs around homework. The evidence from the case study suggests that there needs to be careful monitoring regarding time management and appropriateness of the homework which is given to pupils with dyslexia.

Inclusion

The survey and the comparative case study addressed inclusivity with regard to the teaching of primary children with a special need. Very similar language was used in both the survey and the comparative study, although the participants in the later were also asked specifically about inclusion and the teaching of children with dyslexia. All participants were asked for their definition of inclusion in the context of primary education. The findings in Chapter Four illustrate that almost half of the participants or 49 per cent of the 165 replies refer to inclusion as developing the child's full potential with only two replies or 1.2 per cent commenting that inclusion meant not withdrawing children. This is hardly surprising since half of the participants from NI teach in an environment where using peripatetic teachers and classroom assistants to provide either one to one tuition or small group tuition is the norm. The two teachers that equated inclusion with the practice of not withdrawing children were teaching in the ROI. The second most frequent reply in the survey referred to each child assessing the full curriculum with a finding of forty-one participants or 24.8 per cent. When the two most frequent findings are added together they reflect a potential 73.8 per cent of the participants.

When the participants were asked to explain how they taught inclusively, the findings illustrate yet again a figure of 49 per cent listed the use of differentiation to achieve inclusivity. It is perhaps concerning that 51 per cent did not mention differentiation. The second most frequent reply at 24.2 per cent concerned the promotion of a positive environment. One might question how a child with a special need can be taught inclusively with a positive environment but with the absence of differentiation. There was no mention of the need to promote self-esteem although that might be included in the promotion of a positive environment. At the SSSD, principal Anne referred repeatedly to the primacy of developing each child's self-esteem. The importance of nurturing self-confidence appeared to trump possibly

everything else. Both the deputy principal Bridget and the class teacher Catherine confirmed the importance of cultivating each pupil's self-esteem. The availability of an effective reading system, classes of no more than nine pupils and an SNA assigned to each class might provide the conditions to assist each child to fulfil their potential but it is perhaps worth noting that children were withdrawn daily for one to one tuition despite the very limited number of children in each classroom.

When the fourteen different definitions of inclusion provided by the participating teachers in the case study are analysed, it appears that there is a lack of standardisation which is evident even with staff members of the same school. None of the participants stated that they had received tuition on how to teach inclusively as part of their preservice training. One might question the possible impact on the school culture where the principal states that he is promoting inclusion when his definition of inclusion equates with integration. One could question the impact on the delivery of special education support when the principal appears unable to discuss data specific to his own school such as testing and resources. The Principals at Feeder Schools A and C appeared very committed but seemed to have abdicated from the area of special education in their school. It is perhaps possible that due to time constraints they were not in a position to inform themselves are to play an active role. The lack of an agreed understanding around the meaning of inclusion as outlined in Chapter Two is confirmed within the replies of the teachers in both the survey and the comparative case study. In practice, while Feeder School B is endeavouring to include all pupils in a mainstream setting, they still continue to withdraw children for either one to one or in small groups. The principals at Feeder Schools A and C asked that specific questions around special education be referred to the special education co-ordinator. Children were being withdrawn in all of the primary schools involved in the comparative case study. One could argue that inclusion refers to a school adapting so as to help each pupil achieve their full potential and that the child's self-esteem and preference needs to be at the centre when considering how best to support the child. In other words, withdrawing a child is not necessarily at odds with the concept of inclusion. If children are to achieve their full potential, we need to listen 'to children and their families' and ensure 'that inclusion is by choice and not compulsion' (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009, p.88-89).

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Segregation

All of the 174 participants in the survey were asked if they thought that teaching in a segregated way was beneficial and what circumstances might it be beneficial. All 21 of the participants in the comparative study were asked about withdrawing children from their peers. Only seven survey participants stated that they did consider segregation beneficial in any circumstances. Three participants left the question blank whilst 164 participants or 95.9 per cent were of the opinion that segregation could be beneficial although 27 of these participants qualified their approval stating that segregation should occur in special circumstances. The findings confirmed that the most frequent perceived benefit was the opportunity to address gaps or teach specific skills to pupils in need of additional support. The popularity of withdrawing pupils was evident in the responses of all of the comparative case study interviewees.

Concern was expressed by a number of teachers in the survey. They remarked on the stigma of removing a child from her peers. This concern contrasts with the very positive feedback from the two past pupils and five parents who participated in the comparative case study. All eight participating teachers from the ROI were of the opinion, that there was a need for a special school for children with severe dyslexia. Five of the eight teachers were working in mainstream schools. They were withdrawing children where thought beneficial and necessary despite the apparent contraction with the inclusive model. Principal Harry at Feeder School B pointed out that 'in an ideal world' full inclusivity could happen but 'in the real world' children needed to be withdrawn and sometimes they needed to be removed so that they could receive the intensive intervention that the SSSD could provide.

The research findings of Nugent (2008) and O'Brien (2017) focus on children who are in need of support. This approach is in sharp contrast to McPhillips and Shevlin (2009) and Rose and Shevlin (2019). It would appear that Rose and Shevlin have adopted a purist approach to the adoption of inclusive practice. McPhillips and Shevlin have focused on the quality of intervention which was offered to children with dyslexia at the time of their research but did not interview the children in receipt of the support. Nugent and O'Brien recognise the importance of directly involving the participation of children in their research. None of the parents of children with dyslexia or the two past pupils with dyslexia had any issue with being withdrawn.

Instead, evidence to the contrary emerged. Parent Jill had reported that enrolling her child at the SSSD had saved her son's soul. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) present a compelling argument for choice and the common sense of putting the child at the centre. The research findings align with this argument.

Recommended Approaches

The findings of both the survey and the comparative study regarding teacher training are arguably concerning and perhaps even alarming. Despite the apparent deficit in training, the DFS and the IQM School appear to provide a comprehensive support to children with special needs because each of the two schools have shown dynamic leadership, In the case of the DFS, Vice principal Mary joined the staff at a time when the possibility of additional funding and training became available with the prospect of achieving Dyslexia Friendly status. Principal Linda appointed Mary as her SENCO and Mary applied herself to the task. The appointment of class teacher Natalie brought a member of staff who also held a qualification in psychology as well as the experience of working as a peripatetic teacher. Natalie sought qualification in linguistic phonics and she got the encouragement and the opportunity to offer training to all teachers and classroom assistants. The whole school adopted the linguistic phonics approach to literacy. Vice principal Mary provided a dyslexia friendly hand out for teachers. The hand out provides helpful hints and participants in the comparative case study repeatedly asked if they could make a photocopy of the hand out. In addition, I was asked again and again about linguistic phonics. The participants form the ROI showed an openness and enthusiasm to good ideas.

Principal Quinn at the IQM School was exceptionally well qualified in the field of special education and this was reflected in her appointment as an associate inspector focusing on special education. She showed a disinterest in Dyslexia Friendly as a concept, preferring to focus on inclusivity for all. Principal Quinn appeared to have a very real devotion and passion in the pursuit of inclusion. The school had performed exceptionally well in its most recent inspection. Principal Quinn stressed the importance of early intervention. Like the DFS, there was evidence of good communication between the IQM and its nursery school. The practice of teacher observation and participation in the playground by the reception teacher during the final term of nursery school facilitated early identification of a potential special need.

The careful assessment of pupils by class teachers through the use of baselines at the start of each school year facilitated planning and adoption of appropriate differentiation.

In the ROI, there were a number of noteworthy approaches. The mere existence of special schools and special units for primary children with a learning difficulty including dyslexia is unusual. No such schools exist or units exist at this time in NI. This fact was confirmed by a senior official at DENI. The use of the Wilson Reading System was praised highly by the three teaching participants at the SSSD. The findings from the survey and the interviews revealed a concerted effort to use team teaching and station teaching as in class support. The SET teacher or SET teachers worked alongside the class teacher in the classroom which negated the need for continually withdrawing children from the classroom. Rose and Shevlin (2019) report that withdrawing children is still the most prevalent approach but there would appear to be a genuine effort to introduce in class support wherever possible. Deputy principal Felicity at Feeder School B noted that the notion of a team of teachers working together the same room might appear to be a good idea, but there are many challenges to effective team teaching. One of the most significant challenges is finding the time to plan. There can be personality and leadership clashes and realistically the availability of SET is limited as they may be several class teachers on the staff. SET Irene at Feeder School echoed the challenges mentioned by Felicity.

The findings of the survey and comparative case study point to a need for more training for teachers both at preservice and as part of on-going professional development. There needs to be a standardised approach to the detection and support of children with dyslexia. A systematic approach to literacy decoding such as linguistic phonics could prove worthwhile and the availability of the Wilson Reading System for children exhibiting difficulty could prove very beneficial. Close co-operation with preschool or nursery schools and the feeder primary schools needs to be encouraged. Perhaps the presence of a family history of dyslexia could be recording on enrolling a young child in primary school. At the very least information on the possible indicators of dyslexia in children as young as four or five needs to be discussed with parents. There are also indicators for other challenges such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder which could prove very helpful to parents. Reid (2011) has compiled informative chapters which are not designed to frighten

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parents but rather to inform them. The positive findings from the DFS in this regard suggest that dyslexia needs to be explained and not necessarily celebrated but understood. Reid (2009), Ball et al (2006) and Ott (1997) offer a wealth of advice, support and strategies for parents, teachers and policy makers. The 2001 Report and the 2002 Report provide inspirational recommendations and Reid (2009) acknowledges and praises the 2001 Report. If reports though praiseworthy or not acted upon and if excellent manuals are not disseminated, the chances of a better outcome for children and adults are surely less likely.

Educational Psychological Services

The participants in both the survey and the comparative case study expressed dissatisfaction with the educational psychological services in both the ROI and NI. The recurring negativity concerned the difficulty in accessing an assessment. In both jurisdictions the paucity of allowed referrals resulted in prioritising children with challenges other than dyslexia. In NI the existence of assistant psychologists facilitated access to the peripatetic support service but it could mean that a child would never be assessed for dyslexia by an educational psychologist unless his or her parents opted to arrange to have their child assessed privately. In the ROI, the necessity to have a report from a psychologist in order to receive support from a special teacher had been removed which was similar to the educational system in Finland. However, it begs the question if having a label or a diagnosis is still relevant (Jahnukainen, 2011, p.498). Reid (2011) discusses the importance of the dyslexic child 'having a good understanding' of what dyslexia means, where the explanation in provided 'in terms of differences rather than in terms of differences' (p.203). When the child is given the opportunity of an educational assessment there is also the opportunity to explain to the child why he or she may be 'finding some tasks challenging' (ibid).

Preschool and Secondary School

The survey did not include a specific question relating to either preschool/nursery school or the transfer of children with dyslexia into secondary school. There was no mention of the role of the preschool/nursery school in the suspicion or concern around dyslexic tendencies. Checklists could be employed but there was no mention

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of any communication with feeder primary schools. The survey findings relating to how their school supports children with dyslexia did not make any reference to the transfer of pupils into secondary school. One could speculate that the participating primary teachers were focused solely on primary support but the possibility remains that the omission of close co-operation as the child moves from preschool/nursery to primary and eventually secondary school could reflect a lack of continuity between education providers.

The comparative study provided positive communication between nursery and primary schools in NI but there was no evidence of communication or co-operation between preschools and their feeder primary schools in the participating schools from the ROI. The past pupil from the SSSD was happy with the communication and reports that had been forwarded to the secondary school that she had attended but she was not happy with the support that she had received in secondary school. Two of the three participating parents from NI raised concerns around the transfer of their children into secondary school. They believed that despite the fact that children had scored highly in intelligence tests, transferring to a grammar school was not a realistic option. Reid (2011) points out that 'transition arrangements from primary to secondary school are not always given a high priority'(p. 134). One could perhaps argue that the existence of grammar schools is at odds with the policy of inclusion particularly if bright, intelligent children with a diagnosis of dyslexia feel precluded from taking their places in such educational establishments. Feelings of low self-esteem could become an issue for children with dyslexia transitioning to secondary school.

> Since school days revolve around literacy and academic attainment, those who are not performing according to expectations can feel they are 'defective', which is a stigmatising trait. Such feelings not only stem from their own self-evaluations, but also from where they perceive themselves within the school community (Lithari, 2019, p.292).

Findings and the Research Questions

What is the perception of the participants on the delivery of education with regard to inclusive education policies?

The relevant findings for this research question were derived from three of the themes, namely, school support, classroom assistants and special needs assistants and inclusion. While the definition of inclusion offered by the survey participants and the 14 teachers who participating in the comparative case study were broadly similar, their answers did not reflect either full inclusion or social inclusion. The DFS and the IQM schools promoted the removal of children from their classrooms to receive one to one support. The peripatetic service operates exclusively on a withdrawal basis. The parent of the class attending the SSSD, the parent whose child had attended the SSSD school in the past and the past pupil who attended the SSSD were warmly supportive the existence of the special school, despite the fact that children were withdrawn not only from their mainstream school but also withdrawn from their locality. In some cases the child was bused over 38 miles from their home. Withdrawing children from their classroom in NI is the norm. In the ROI, there was a concerted effort to provide support to a child in primary school with dyslexia in their own classroom. The SET teacher in Feeder School B confirmed that the school inspector had informed the school that support was to be provided in the child's classroom except in exceptional circumstances.

What strategies are used by primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to teach children with dyslexia?

Three themes captured the findings to the above research question. These themes were testing, parental involvement and recommended approaches. Only 28 per cent of the participants in the survey and none of three participating mainstream primary schools used a screening test for dyslexia. Both the DFS and IQM schools screened for dyslexia. The two past pupils participating in the comparative case study reported that it had taken a number of years struggling miserably at school before they were diagnosed with dyslexia. Past pupil Peter of the DFS school mentioned that no one had ever discussed the educational psychological report with him and he said that he would ask his mother if he could see it for himself. Peter was then aged 21 years of age. Past pupil Deirdre of the SSSD noted that the staff at her mainstream school was not convinced that she was dyslexic and suggested that she should be retested. Parent Jill, who was the mother of a past pupil of the SSSD also reported that the principal of her son's mainstream school insisted that her son would need to be retested. Parent

Una similarly experienced reluctance from the principal of her child's school in NI and she had arranged for a private assessment for her child.

The three participating mainstream primary schools in the comparative case study did not appear to actively involve parents. This contrasted with the evidence from the DFS and IQM schools participating from NI. The parental involvement included information evenings on how to support your child. Parent Gerard was disappointed that his son's school appeared to lack appropriate resources to support his child. The participants in the survey were not directly asked how they involved parents; however, it is perhaps noteworthy that none of the survey participants mentioned the role of parents when asked how children with dyslexia were supported at their school.

The findings from the survey suggested that the practice of differentiation was mentioned by 49 per cent of the participants when they were asked how they taught inclusively. When asked how the participants supported children with dyslexia, only 29 per cent included differentiation. Recommended approaches were discussed at length by the SSSD in the ROI and the DFS and IQM schools. The SSSD stressed the high priority given to Wilson Reading System. The DFS school prioritised Read Write and the IQM praised Reading Partnership.

To what extent and in what ways do the participants consider their teaching strategies meet the needs of their learners?

The findings for this research question emerged from six themes, namely, teacher training, resources, homework, recommended approaches, educational psychological services and preschool and secondary school. About 47 per cent of the participants in the survey had never received any specific training in how to support a child with dyslexia and of the roughly 53 per cent who had received training, many of the teachers had attended a very short professional course of perhaps a one day or maybe week long duration. With the emphasis on in-class support in the ROI it is perhaps surprising that 28.6 per cent of the SET teachers who participating disclosed that they had no training in how to support a dyslexic child. One of the five peripatetic teachers also stated that she had never received any training in this area. She hoped that she was not 'doing more harm than god'.

Only nine of the 174 teachers had completed a module covering dyslexia training during their initial teacher training. The 2001 Report had acknowledged that there was a need to include a module on supporting children with dyslexia and yet in 2019, only three of the 87 participants from the ROI reported that they had completed a module. The 2002 Report from NI emphasised the urgency of early intervention and yet only 28 per cent of participants confirmed that they schools screened for dyslexia. The participating teachers acknowledge that they would like to receive training. The participating teachers at Feeder School A and B expressed a need for training. Felicity at Feeder School A 'had learned on the job' and SET teacher Irene at Feeder School B had never attended any training and. The teachers from the SSSD appeared to put the priority on training in the Wilson Reading Scheme. The teachers from the DFS and IQM schools appeared confident and competent.

On the matter of resources, there was evidence of a lack of resources from both the participants in the survey and the comparative case study. Only 31 per cent of survey participants replied that they had sufficient resources to support children with dyslexia. Areas of particular interest were computer programmes. Feeder School A had a significant issue around resources. They had a multitude of readers but they lacked resources that were specific of addressing children with dyslexia. Principal Anne at the SSSD was relying on a benefactor to pay for much needed training and resources for the Wilson Reading Scheme.

The topic of homework did not arise in the survey. In the comparative case study, all of the participating parents discussed the issue of homework. Parent Gerard noted that his son had been very distressed and anxious while he attended Feeder School A and on completion of two years at the SSSD, his son would be changing mainstream school. Homework had become a major difficulty and his son was unable to complete the tasks. Similarly, past pupil Deirdre related distress and anxiety because her homework was inappropriate. Parent Jill at Feeder School B expressed her appreciation of the support her child received at the After School Club. Past pupil Peter who had attended the DFS school had endured years of tantrums until the school finally had him assessed and his homework was differentiated. Parent Una reported that her daughter, who was aged nine, spent a number of hours every evening attempting to complete her homework. There appeared to be an issue around the need for setting differentiated homework.

In the ROI, the Wilson Reading System was mentioned by the principals at Feeder School A and Feeder School B. If money permitted, both principals would have liked to introduce the reading system. Both Felicity and Feeder B and SET teacher Irene at Feeder School B expressed a need for further training with Felicity struggling to manage a team of up to four other adults in the classroom with several special needs pupils present. Irene wanted to train in linguistic phonics. The teachers from NI wanted to retain their classroom assistants although Rachel at the IQM school also mentioned the challenge of managing two or more other adults in the classroom supporting several children with special needs in her classroom.

The survey findings indicated an issue regarding educational psychological assessments. In both the ROI and NI, primary schools were limited in the number of annual assessments and children with suspected dyslexia were often unable to get an assessment as children with more urgent needs were given priority. The findings from the comparative case study also indicated similar challenges. SENCO Mary at the DFS school reported that the role of the assistant psychologist was useful in securing peripatetic support but the children missed out on a diagnosis of dyslexia.

The area of preschool and secondary school was not addressed in the survey. In the comparative case study the findings indicated that the three participating primary schools from the ROI did not have a close relationship with its feeder preschools. Principal Eamonn at Feeder School A said that he would like to work closer with the preschool on his school campus but he was so busy managing his school that there simply wasn't enough time. Principal Harry at Feeder School B had a similar time issue. The DFS and IQM schools prided themselves on the close link with their preschools. There was little evidence from the participants in the ROI with regard to the transfer of pupils with dyslexia to secondary school with the exception of the SSSD. Past pupil Deirdre was very grateful for the interaction between the SSSD and the secondary school that she attended. The participating parents from NI each discussed how unlikely they believed that any of their children would ever get to attend a grammar school.

Are there findings from the case study that would suggest that teaching children in a segregated setting is justified?

Four of the themes generated findings which addressed this research question. The themes were school support, classroom assistants and special needs assistants, segregation and recommended approaches.

Both the findings from survey and the case study arguably suggest that teaching in a segregated setting could be beneficial and perhaps justified. In the survey, only seven participants answered that the practice of teaching in a segregated setting was not beneficial. 58.1 per cent suggested that segregation was justified to address gaps while others mentioned the occasional need for timeouts where the child needed time to calm down or time away from the noise of a classroom. The participants from the ROI and NI were broadly in favour of the segregated setting although 15.8 per cent of the participants recorded that the practice should be reserved for exceptional circumstances.

While the participating teachers in the case study from the ROI acknowledged that the preferred method of support involved SET teachers working alongside the class teacher in the child's classroom, all of the teachers supported the existence of a special school such as the SSSD where pupils with severe dyslexia were withdrawn from their mainstream school for up to two years and in exceptional circumstances up to three years. The reason given was that sometimes, despite the best efforts of the child's school, the child needed an expert intervention such as that provided by the SSSD. In NI, the responsibility for supported the child lay with the SENCO and class teacher, and there seemed to be no conflict with the concept of inclusion and the withdrawing children on a one to one basis with the support of a classroom assistant. Equally, there seemed no difficulty with the practice of peripatetic teachers withdrawing children from their mainstream class for either one to one or small group support.

Conclusion

The findings from the survey and comparative study reveal shortcomings across the twelve themes. The findings also illustrate both positive and negative experiences as reported by a selection of teachers, parents and past pupils. The inclusion of parents and past pupils provides important feedback particularly in relation to homework and the experiences of the children prior to a diagnosis of dyslexia. The revelation by

four of the participating parents that they had been unaware of a genetic link associated with dyslexia is perhaps surprising but it illustrates that there is still a need for better communication between home and school. Two of the parents wondered if they themselves might be dyslexic. A third parent was wondering if her partner might be dyslexic. Nugent (2008) and O'Brien (2017) interviewed the children who have been segregated from their mainstream schools and placed in a special school for children with a specific learning difficulty including dyslexia. All of the participants reported how much happier they were to be attending the special school. The past participating parents and the past pupil from the SSSD all gave very positive accounts of their experiences with the special school. The findings could suggest that the needs and preferences of the children with dyslexia along with the feedback from their parents need to be prioritised and considered carefully. Perhaps there could be a compelling argument for positive segregation. It would appear that there can be difficulties around homework for children with dyslexia and further research could prove beneficial in the area of differentiation of homework. If the present generation of children were screened and given the opportunity of an educational psychological assessment then maybe future generations of parents would be in a better position to understand and support their own children with their education.

Chapter Six   Conclusions

Introduction

The overarching theme of this research was the exploration of the policy of inclusion with particular emphasis on the support of primary children in the ROI and NI who have dyslexia. In advance of the policy exploration, a brief historical review of special education was undertaken. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) was adopted as the starting point for the exploration of the policy of inclusion. The first challenge was the search for a meaningful and internationally acknowledged definition of the term inclusive education. Sadly, I would argue that such a definition appears to be non-existent.

> However, while this term might be widely employed, the question
> that dominates people's thinking is what exactly does inclusion
> means (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009, p. 76).

The confusion around defining inclusion encouraged me to question teachers, parents, past pupils and a school inspector about their understanding of the meaning of inclusion. Hodkinson and Vickerman (ibid) refer to Norwich and Kelly (2004) when considering the issue of inclusion and choice.

> Indeed for some this notion of choice is vitally important,
> especially as the research suggests that some children do not want
> to be forced into mainstream placements (ibid, 2009, p. 81).

The question of choice led me to conduct a comparative study which included participants from a special school (SSSD) in the ROI and two schools in NI where children were being supported in a mainstream school. Defining the term dyslexia proved less problematic. This chapter is structured around four sub-headings. Initially, there is a summary of the main findings followed by a synthesis of the findings. Recommendations are then set down and finally, areas for further research are discussed.

Summary of Key Findings

The survey was conducted in advance of the comparative case study. The findings of the survey influenced the content of the interview schedule for the semi-structured interviews. The thematic analysis approach adopted with the comparative case study

facilitated the distillation of a large number of primitive and intermediate nodes into twelve final nodes. The first two research questions sought answers around the perceptions of the participants in the areas of inclusion and segregation in the context of primary education. The third research question focused on the strategies used by the participants in the delivery of support to primary children who have dyslexia. The final research question sought to probe the possible argument for continued segregation as opposed to the debate for full inclusion.

> Many countries around the world are considering moving to educating all children together, where all really does mean all including students with complex physical, communication and learning needs (National Council for Special Education, 2019).

The key findings of the survey are presented using eight of the twelve thematic nodes. The key findings from the comparative case study follow. A short commentary on the joint findings of the survey and the comparative case study, considers points of overlap and divergence. There is also mention of similarities and differences between the findings relating to the ROI and NI.

Summary of findings from survey

Teacher Testing

53.8% reported that they had received specific training to support a child with dyslexia. 36.2% of this cohort had attended a short professional course consisting of from one day to a maximum of five days. Of the 46.6% who had never received any specific training to support children with dyslexia, 57.5% of this cohort was teaching in the ROI and 42.5% were teaching in NI.

Testing

28% reported that their school used a dyslexia screening test. The 28 per cent represented 10.7% of the participants from the ROI and 17.2% were teaching in NI. Seven per cent only referred to the use of teacher observation to detect dyslexia but these teachers may have been teaching very young primary children.

School Support

18% of participants from the ROI mentioned that children were withdrawn from their class. 24.7% of the total participants mentioned differentiation as part of how the school supports children with dyslexia. Every primary school in the ROI had access

to the services of a SET while 9.5% of the schools where the NI participants were working had not qualified at that time for access to the peripatetic service. 65% reported that they had sufficient resources.37.2% stated that they needed training.

Resources

Five participants recorded while they did not have sufficient resources they did not know what those resources should be.

Parental Concern

Parental concern was mentioned on 15 occasions with regard to the detection of dyslexia at the participant's school. A family history of dyslexia was not mentioned with regard to dyslexia detection.

Educational Psychological Services

30% of participants referred to the role of educational psychologists in the detection of dyslexia with the majority of the 51 participants coming from the ROI. Two of the 174 participants commented on difficulties around securing a referral for an educational psychological assessment.

Inclusion

49% of definition referred to the development of the child's full potential with 24.8% mentioning each child accessing the full curriculum.49% specified that they used differentiation as a means of teaching inclusively although 33 of the 81 participants mentioned differentiation in conjunction with other approaches. 24.2 % specified the promotion of a positive environment. Two participants recorded 'no' when asked if they taught inclusively. Thirteen replies made reference to either an SNA or a classroom assistant.

Segregation

80.7% approved of segregation unconditionally, 15.8% approved if it was for a specific purpose and about 4.5% disapproved of segregation

Summary of findings from the comparative case study

Teacher Training

There was a difference between the two jurisdictions in the area of training to support children with dyslexia. All of the teachers and classroom assistants at the DFS had received training in linguistic phonics. All of the teachers and classroom assistants at the IQM School had received training in how to support children with dyslexia. The

teachers participating from the ROI had received varying amounts of dyslexia support training. At the SSSD all of the teachers and staff had received training in the Wilson Reading System. Principal Anne and class teacher Catherine held post graduate qualifications in special education but deputy principal Bridget had never received any specific training in how to support children with dyslexia either as part of her initial teacher training or as a professional development course. When asked to give her meaning of dyslexia or specific learning difficulty she said that she would prefer not to give a meaning. Principal Harry at Feeder School B had taught as a special education teacher and held a post graduate qualification in special education. His SET Irene had never received any training in how to support a child with dyslexia. The principal at Feeder School A and Feeder School C had no post graduate qualification in special education and they had never taught as a special education teacher. Deputy principal Felicity had post graduate qualification and she had worked as a special education teacher.

Testing

All of the pupils at the SSSD had been assessed by an educational psychologist. None of the three feeder primary schools used a dyslexia screening test. Parent Gerard, whose son had attended Feeder School, noted that his son was very lucky to have been chosen for a referral for an educational assessment. Principal Eamonn confirmed that he could only refer a total of two pupils annually and if a child had an emotional/behavioural problem or if there was a query re autism, the child suspected of having dyslexia could not be prioritised. Parent Jill at Feeder School B praised Principal Harry for choosing her child to be assessed. Her older child had attended a different school and she became emotional as she recalled the refusal of his school principal to refer her child for an assessment. Jill had paid for a private assessment. Past pupil from the SSSD, Deirdre recalled her nightmarish experience at her initial primary school. One again, it was her mother who had arranged for a private referral for an assessment. Deirdre stated that the school principal was in denial that Deirdre had severe dyslexia and that she insisted that she would be reassessed by NEPS. The DFS and the IQM School booth used dyslexia screening tests. Both parent Olwyn from the DFS and from the parent Sheila IQM reported very positive experiences for their children. Past pupil Peter from the DFS had struggled at school from about P3 and he was immensely relieved following his psychological assessment when he was

in P4. He had received support from a peripatetic teacher and he had enjoyed leaving his classroom to receive support.

School Support

The pupils at the SSSD received intensive intervention and the cornerstones of the support were devised around self-esteem and the Wilson Reading System. The pupils at Feeder Schools A, B and C received support from both their class teachers and their SET. There was an emphasis on in-class support using team teaching, guided reading and station teaching. Pupils at Feeder School B were withdrawn in small groups although there was a concerted effort for the SET to work as much as possible alongside the class teacher. At the DFS and IQM School, the classroom assistants were withdrawing pupils for one to one support where a child needed literacy support. In addition, each of the two schools had a literacy support teacher (LST), due to budgetary constraints; neither school would have access to a LST the following year. Principal Quinn at the IQM School had introduced a reading partnership programme. Parent Una whose child in NI did not attend the DFS nor the IQM School recounted a very difficult experience where she had had to arrange for a private educational assessment for her child in P4 as the classroom teacher was of the opinion that there was no need. The teacher who was also the school SENCO was very surprised to hear that the child had severe dyslexia.

Classroom Assistants/Special Needs Assistants

All four participating principals in the ROI remarked on the vital necessity of SNAs and principal Anne and deputy principal Bridget at the SSSD spoke of the anxiety every year when the SENO reviewed their entitlement to SNAs. All the teaching participants from the ROI agreed that there is a need for classroom assistants in every classroom, particularly in the junior rooms. All of the teaching participants from NI were in agreement that the classroom assistants played a vital role in literacy support at their schools.

Resources

The principals of Feeder School A and B would like access to the Wilson Reading Scheme (WRS). The principal at the SSSD bemoaned the accompanying costs of training and materials with the WRS. Felicity at Feeder School A and SET Irene at Feeder School B needed new materials specifically for children with dyslexia.

Principal Linda at the DFS wanted more funding so that she appoint more classroom assistants. Principal Quinn also wanted a bigger budget.

Parental Involvement

Feeder Schools A, B and C had a similar approach. Parents of all pupils were met annually and parents of children receiving additional support met the child's SET, once a term. At the SSSD, new parents were invited to an information evening. There was on-going communication through the use of the child's homework diary where appropriate. At the DFS, parents of children in P4 were invited to attend an information evening around dyslexia. Class Teacher Natalie also provided tuition for parents on linguistic phonics. The IQM School provided a course for parents on how to support their children with their phonics.

Homework

While Felicity at Feeder School B gave differentiated homework to her pupils there was ambiguity on this issue regarding the other staff members at her school. SET Irene at Feeder School B was not completely sure. Parent Gerard, whose child had attended Feeder School A in the very recent past, reported the anxiety and frustration of his son around homework. Now that his son attended the SSSD, his son was very happy and there were no outbursts around homework. Parent Jill explained that her dyslexic daughter who attended Feeder School B had no issues around homework. The homework was differentiated at the DFS and IQM School. Both participating parents had no issues around homework. Parent Una recalled the long hours that her daughter spend each evening as she attempted to complete her homework.

Inclusion

The definitions provided by all but one of the participating teachers were very similar. The aspiration of each child reaching their full potential and accessing the full curriculum continually recurred. Principal Kieran at Feeder School C appeared to have reversed the meanings of inclusion and integration. The teaching participants from the ROI referred to the recommendations of their schools' inspectors to avoid withdrawing children from their classroom as much as possible. SET needed to support children in their own classrooms with all their peers if at all possible.

Parents Gerard and Jill recounted their relief that their children had been removed from their mainstream class. 'They saved my son's soul,' said Jill. Past pupil of the SSSD Deirdre described attended her mainstream school as 'hell' and the switch to the special school (SSSD) as 'heaven'. The participants from NI praised the literacy support providing through the withdrawal of the children.

Segregation

In the ROI, there was a policy preference for SET teachers to work alongside mainstream/class teachers and that the withdrawal of children from class would be kept to a minimum. This contrasted with the widespread practice of withdrawing children from their classroom in NI.

Recommended Approaches

Three approaches were highlighted, namely, The Wilson Reading Scheme, Read Write: Linguistic Phonics Programme and Reading Partnership Scheme.

Educational Psychological Services

Much greater access was needed in the ROI. While greater access needed in NI, the availability of psychology assistants appears to ease the problem. It would appear that a child needs to be performing in the bottom 2 per cent in his/her reading while having an IQ of at least 90, in order to qualify for peripatetic support in NI.

Preschool/Secondary School

There appeared to be little or no communication between the preschools and Feeder Schools A, B and C. There was a nursery school attached to both the DFS and the IQM School. There appeared to be an issue at the time of the research around children with dyslexia accessing grammar schools.

Comparisons between the Jurisdictions

The findings of the survey and the comparative case study would appear to indicate that the issue of appropriate support training in the area of dyslexia remains a significant issue. The staff at the DFS and IQM School in NI would appear to have successfully addressed the training needs of all the staff. The number of children at the DFS had been decreasing year on year and at the time of the research; no child had qualified for peripatetic support. Vice Principal Mary, believed that the non-

qualification for peripatetic support was primarily due to the whole school policy of linguistic phonics where all teachers and classroom assistants were trained well in the application of linguistic phonics. Only nine of the participants had completed a module at initial teacher training in the area of dyslexia support. If a module on dyslexia support were provided to all trainee teachers, then it would not be up to qualified teachers to arrange to attend a course as part of their professional development. 46 per cent of participating teachers in the survey had never undertaken any training in the area of dyslexia support. SET Irene at the Feeder School B had never undertaken any courses despite the fact that she was withdrawing small groups of children with dyslexia. The Task Reports of 2001 and 2001 had recognised the need for specialised training but the findings of the survey and comparative case study would seem to indicate an 'ad hoc' approach where it was up to individual teachers or individual boards of management/boards of governors to organise appropriate training.

The findings in the survey relating to dyslexia detection revealed a wide range of approaches. When the participants, all of whom were teachers were asked to estimate how many of the pupils at their school had dyslexia, the percentage of pupils ranged from zero per cent up to 16 per cent. Only 28 per cent of participants stated that heir school used dyslexia screening tests. This finding contrasts with the battery of tests used at the DFS where Vice Principal Mary at the DFS mentioned that all the children are testing using the GL Assessment Pack. The children were given literacy, numeracy and cognitive tests and they were also screened twice for dyslexia. Vice Principal Mary who was also the SENCO had an in-depth awareness of the test awareness and progress of every child. The impression was one of professionalism and dedication. The battery of tests was digitally administered and the cost of the tests sounded expensive but the overall cost was divided by the number of pupils and each family paid for the cost for their children. There is an argument that every child needs to be screened for dyslexia. I would add that note of a family history of dyslexia could prove helpful.

The findings of the survey revealed that 98.9 per cent of the participants were of the opinion that they were teaching inclusively and that about 4.5 per cent were opposed to segregation. It would appear that there was a broad acceptance that withdrawing children from their class is considered a useful practice although 15.8 per cent

specified that withdrawing children should be reserved for exceptional circumstances. It would appear that the participants supporting inclusive education in principle but they were not advocating full inclusion. All 11 interviewees from the ROI spoke in praise if the SSSD. The consensus was that sometimes it is necessary to withdraw children from their mainstream school. Again, there seems to be the acceptance that sometimes mainstream schools cannot provide the appropriate intervention for some children with severe dyslexia.

Synthesis of Findings

The NCSE have warned that the ROI may be in breach of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

> Earlier this week the National Council for Special
> Education warned that Ireland may be in breach of the UN
> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by
> 'segregating' pupils with learning disabilities in special schools
> and special classes. It said other countries have been criticised by
> the UN for not educating all children together in mainstream
> classes within their local school (The Irish Times, 2019).

My research findings are at odds with the suggestion that primary schools in the ROI are ready for 'full inclusion' because the participants expressed a need for further training and resources to cope with the present more limited version of inclusion. The NCSE refer to the province of New Brunswick in Canada where there is evidence of full inclusion.

> It says there is no substantial evidence that students with additional
> needs have better outcomes in special schools or classes. By
> contrast, it points to the Canadian province of New Brunswick as
> an example of where a fully inclusive system is delivering better
> results for children with special needs (The Irish Times, ibid).

About one fifth of the national education budget is devoted to special education (DES, 2019). The NCSE acknowledges that a move towards full inclusion would require 'considerable changes to teacher training, school buildings, class size, and therapy supports' (ibid). The findings of Nugent (2008) and O'Brien (2017) suggest that the children preferred to be taught in a special school. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) refer to Warnock when they consider the notion of choice within the argument for inclusion (ibid, p.81).

Deputy Principal Felicity at Feeder School A reported that she was 'stretched' as it was, in her attempts to include all the children with special needs in her classroom. There were three adults working in the room and there were pupils with dyslexia, dyspraxia, global developmental delay and attention deficit disorder as well as very bright children without an assessment and she had never received any training to prepare her for working as a team within the classroom. She had previously worked as a special education teacher (SET) and this experience had helped her to cope. The younger teachers on the staff were not trained to deal with children with dyslexia or any special needs. 'You're shooting in the dark as they say, like you do pick it up by experience'. The experience of SET Irene at Feeder School B suggests that she too was ill prepared for teaching inclusively and depends on the class teacher to take the lead. When the experiences of pupils, past pupils, parents and teachers are considered, the advisability of pursuing full inclusion is debatable.

Recommendations

The findings from the survey and comparative case study are presented using the twelve thematic nodes. My research was small scale and therefore the suggested recommendations are mindful that they reflect the contribution of 195 participants. There are a total of thirteen recommendations. In choosing the appropriate authority to address the recommendations, it was necessary to research the various roles assigned to a variety of ministries, statutory bodies and organisations across the ROI and NI. DES in the ROI and DENI in NI hold the overarching authority, particularly as they 'hold the purse strings'. However, the NCSE provide 'policy advice to the Minister of Education and Skills on special education issues' (NCSE website, 2020). Any policy change in the area of special education in the ROI could be suggested by NCSE. The role of the Education Authority with regard to special educational needs in NI is to provide 'information and guidance for parents, carers and schools to support improved outcomes for children and young adults with educational needs' (EA website, 2020). Perhaps changes in practices could be suggested by the EA in NI. With regard to initial teacher training, the 2001 Report would appear to imply that individual teacher training colleges have at least a degree of autonomy with regard to training in special education. The notion of autonomy of initial teacher training design in NI is borne out by reference to the Teacher Education Handbook

(2010). 'The design and detailed content of courses in initial teacher education depend on the nature of the courses (whether BEd or PGCE), and on how a HEI organises the programme for each course' (ibid, p.37).

- There is arguably a need to for a module on support for children with dyslexia as part of all initial teacher training courses both in the ROI and NI. This module could perhaps be compulsory as opposed to voluntary.

Relevant authority to address proposed recommendation:

ROI   The six initial teacher training colleges
NI   The three initial teacher training colleges

- There appears to be a need for specialised training courses to support children with dyslexia for mainstream teachers, SET and SENCOs on an on-going basis of professional development. These courses could reflect best practice and the latest research findings.

Relevant authority to address proposed recommendation:

ROI   National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

NI   Education Authority

- It would be arguably beneficial if Dyslexia Screening Tests were to be administered in primary schools.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Department of Education and Skills, NCSE, Irish National Teachers Organisation
NI   Department of Education Northern Ireland, EA, Teaching Unions

- It could prove beneficial if the availability of the Wilson Reading Scheme and Read Write programme were investigated with a view to making them available to all schools.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Department of Education and Skills.

NI   Department of Education Northern Ireland, EA

- There needs to be access to classroom assistants in all junior classes in ROI similar to the present situation in NI.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Department of Education and Skills and NCSE

- The research findings concerning the restriction in the role of the SNA to care needs in the ROI needs to be reconsidered and the four special schools for children with a specific learning difficulty including dyslexia need to have classroom assistants in each classroom, particularly in view of the fact that an SNA can be withdrawn by the Special Needs Organiser (SENO).

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Department of Education and Skills and NCSE

- There needs to be advice around the purchase of suitable resources including software for children with dyslexia along with the necessary finance in the purchase of these materials.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   NCSE and Dyslexia Association of Ireland

NI   EA and Northern Ireland Dyslexia Centre

- The positive findings around dyslexia information assemblies for children and dyslexia advice evenings for parents at the DFS suggest that this practice should be encouraged for all primary schools.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Irish Primary Principals Network and INTO

NI   EA and teacher unions

- The research findings point towards concerns around homework and the dyslexic child. Homework needs to be differentiated for children with dyslexia.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Department of Education Inspectorate and INTO

NI   Department of Education Northern Ireland and teacher unions.

- The research findings suggest that there is a need for greater access to the educational psychological service. The need for greater access to assessment to an educational psychologist was raised repeatedly by participants from the ROI and NI. While access to a psychologist assistant in NI facilitates access

to the peripatetic service, it denies the child's right to confirmation that he or she learns differently as they are dyslexic.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Department of Education and Skills

NI   Department of Education Northern Ireland and EA.

- The research findings suggest that there needs to be closer co-operation between preschools in the ROI and mainstream schools. The practice of close co-operation between the nursery schools and the DFS and IQM School suggested that early intervention was encouraged.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

ROI   Department of Education and Skills, Irish Primary Principals Network and INTO

- Children with dyslexia need to be encouraged and facilitated to attend grammar schools.

Relevant authority to address recommendation:

NI   Department of Education Northern Ireland and EA.

- A review of the concept of segregation objectively discounting the negative history of the past could prove advantageous.

Relevant authority to address recommendation

ROI   Department of Education and Skills and NCSE

NI   Department of Education Northern Ireland and EA

Areas for Further Research

I suggest that the area of homework would benefit from further research. Listening to Parent Gerard and past pupil Deirdre in the ROI and parent Una and past pupil Peter in NI conjured up images of anxiety and frustration as they described the herculean tasks of completing homework. Peter used to throw his books across the room. The issue of why we give homework and the benefit if any of homework is already an area of debate. One primary school in the ROI, Loreto Primary School, Rathfarnham, is piloting the idea of no written homework for primary children until the final year (The Irish Times, 2019).

Conclusion

The findings from the survey and comparative case study surprised me. I had presumed that all trainee teachers completed a module on supporting children with dyslexia. I was also surprised that two of the three principals at the Feeder Schools to the SSSD appeared to be so unaware of how children with dyslexia were supported in their schools. The principals appeared to have no knowledge of the type of testing or resources which were used in their schools. I was disappointed that the SET at Feeder School B had never received any form of training in the support of children with dyslexia. The standard of expertise which was apparent at the DFS and IQM School along with the availability of trained classrooms in the support of children with literacy needs was in contrast with the absence of screening tests for dyslexia, the fears of losing their SNAs and the shortage of appropriate resources for children with dyslexia at the three participating Feeder Schools in the ROI. One could speculate whether it would be more advantageous to have a trained classroom assistant in every mainstream classroom in the ROI as was the case at the DFS rather than to have access to a SET where the timetable allowed. There appeared to be a strong argument for continuing to withdraw children for literacy support and in extreme cases there seemed to be a continued desire for special classes and special schools.

A Reflexive Account

Personal History

During the third and final year of my Bachelor of Education Degree, I chose Remedial Education as my elective subject. I was given the opportunity to learn about many aspects of remedial education including testing, recommended approaches to supporting children with literacy and numeracy difficulties and an opportunity to examine and evaluate a variety of support materials. The course lecturer also conducted post graduate diploma courses in remedial education for practising primary teachers and she modelled our elective course on the post graduate course. I performed very well on the elective course and I have had a special interest in special education throughout my teaching career. Despite the fact that I had been lucky enough to have studied remedial education as part of my initial teacher training, I was mindful of the need for continuous professional development. I was

continually up skilling and conferring with my peers in the pursuit of the best possible support training in the field of special education.

On graduating, I worked as a substitute teacher for the first two years. Then, in 1985, I was appointed as a full time remedial teacher supporting children in the local boys' school as well as the local girls' school. I was the only remedial teacher catering for 450 pupils. I continued working in this area for 18 years and I adapted to meet the changing demands of the remedial teacher. In October 1998, the Irish government announced that every primary school child with a special need had 'an automatic entitlement to a response to their needs' (DES, 2000). Special resource teachers were appointed to support children in an integrated setting. The term integration is repeatedly used in the annual report from DES (ibid). My teaching role as remedial teacher was remodelled and I became a learning support teacher and over the following years, a number of special resource teachers were appointed. These latter appointments were not permanent posts which caused me concern. I pondered whether special education teachers would invest in additional training when one considered that the special resource post could be withdrawn at any time.

The Research Process

The twin issues of testing and training have been of special interest to me since my final year in teacher training college. When I returned to teaching in a mainstream setting in 2002, I was convinced that my experience as a support teacher had changed my perception of the role of class teacher. I began to question the content of initial teacher training. I wondered if a module on special education which included supporting children with dyslexia was included in the Bachelor of Education Degree. I attended a summer course which had been arranged by the local Education Centre which offered the opportunity of enrolling on a doctoral degree course. The participants were asked to consider an area of study of particular interest which might form the basis of doctoral research. As I mulled over my choice, a teacher in my group asked if I had considered the policy of inclusion. My reaction was immediate. I decided to focus on the policy of inclusion.

I had never heard of the term differentiation until I conducted the pilot study. I was surprised that I no memory of having ever heard of the term. Two of the three participants in the study spoke of differentiation. In the semi-structured interview the

school inspector spoke at length about how a primary mainstream teacher should teach inclusively and about how schools needed to adopt a whole school inclusive approach. He said that the teacher must teach each child as an individual and avoid the practice of pitching the lesson at the middle grouping while including the highest and the lowest performing children. I listened carefully to his argument. Privately, I wondered how I appeared to have missed what I perceived as a seismic shift in how teachers were supposed to teach. I asked if teachers had received additional training to prepare them to teach inclusively. He remarked that teacher professional development was a matter for individual teachers.

I reflected on the feedback from the pilot study. I had much to ponder. I was pleased to have had the opportunity of interviewing a school inspector. His input influenced the direction of both the survey and the comparative case study. I was very careful not to disclose my personal opinions on the policy of inclusion or on strategies of supporting children with literacy or numeracy difficulties. Mine was a listening brief. My outlook and opinions on the policy of inclusion have moved and evolved as the research was progressing. The issue of inclusion is complex but it is important not to exclude the opinions of children with special needs when considering how best to support them. We need to respect their dignity and that might be best reflected in offering them the chance to withdraw from a mainstream setting. In addition, one could consider the relevance of appropriate training and resources alongside the most conducive setting.

The self-esteem of the children in the SSSD was paramount. Perhaps the focus of any intervention needs to reflect the self-confidence of both support personnel and child. I am reminded of the proverb, nothing succeeds like success.

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Appendix A

The Interview Schedule was adapted to suit the different categories of participant:

Teacher

Parent

Past Pupil

The Interview Schedule Sample: Teaching Principal

1. Can you tell me about your teaching career so far?
2. What makes this school different from other schools?
3. What specific training have you or any of your staff received with regard to supporting children with dyslexia?
4. What resources does your school have for teaching children with dyslexia?
5. What is your understanding of the concept of inclusion where children are taught inclusively?
6. Do you think you have been trained adequately to teach inclusively and what might enhance your attitude towards teaching inclusively?
7. In your opinion, what are the conditions necessary which would best advantage teaching children with a special need in an inclusive way?
8. What is your opinion of teaching in a segregated way?
9. In an ideal school, what conditions would best serve the teaching of children with a special need?
10. Is there any question you would like to have been asked that I did not ask you?

Appendix B Letter of Background Information Seeking Consent

Online Survey

Sample: Head Teacher/Principal

Dear Head Teacher/Principal,

I am undertaking a doctorate that focuses on the Policy of Inclusion in Ireland. I am a full time teaching principal in County Kildare and as such I am working on a research project as a part time student with the University of Lincoln. My supervisor is Doctor Carol Callinan.

As part of my study I am exploring policy documents from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as well as conducting a survey with a selection of about 170 personnel involved with teaching primary aged pupils with dyslexia. Half of the sample will come from coming each jurisdiction, in order to support representativeness.

In addition, it is my intention to conduct a case study involving two former pupils with severe dyslexia who attended a special school such as your school and interviewing their parents and the teachers who taught them in their final two years of primary school. I will also interview two former pupils in Northern Ireland who have severe dyslexia along with his/her parents and associated personnel in their final two years of primary education.

I am hoping that you or any of your teaching staff will consider participating in the research by consenting to taking part in the research through an online survey. Confidentiality will be vital with no participant being identified and each one will have the option to withdraw from the research at any stage. The purpose of the research along with the possible action arising out of the results of the research will be explained. I can forward the online survey using Google Drive, and it genuinely takes about ten minutes to complete.

I await your response.

Joan Sweeney, Master of Studies, TCD.

Appendix C

Letter of Background Information Seeking Consent

Comparative Case Study

Sample Letter: Teacher

I am undertaking a doctorate that focuses on the Policy of Inclusion in Ireland. I am a full time teaching principal in County Kildare and as such I am working on a research project as a part time student with the University of Lincoln. My supervisor is Doctor Carol Callinan.

As part of my study I am exploring policy documents from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as well as conducting a survey with a selection of about 170 personnel involved with teaching primary aged pupils with dyslexia. Half of the sample will come from coming each jurisdiction, in order to support representativeness.

In addition, it is my intention to conduct a case study involving two former pupils with severe dyslexia who attended a special school such as your school and interviewing their parents and the teachers who taught them in their final two years of primary school. I will also interview two former pupils in Northern Ireland who have severe dyslexia along with his/her parents and associated personnel in their final two years of primary education.

I am hoping that you will consider participating in the research by consenting to taking part in the research through a semi-structured interviewer with me. Confidentiality will be vital with no participant being identified and each one will have the option to withdraw from the research at any stage. The purpose of the research along with the possible action arising out of the results of the research will be explained.

I await your response.

Joan Sweeney, M. Studies, TCD.

Appendix D

Survey Questions, with format available from Google Drive

1. How many years have you been teaching in a primary school? (11-20, 21-30, more than 30 years.)
2. Have you ever taught a child with dyslexia? Yes/No
3. Have you received specific training to teach a child with dyslexia? If so what this training?
4. How are children with dyslexia detected in your school?
5. How are children with dyslexia supported in your school?
6. What is your definition of inclusion with regard to teaching in a primary school?
7. Do you teach children with a special way in an inclusive way and if so how do you achieve this?
8. Is teaching in a segregated way beneficial and if so when?
9. Do you have enough resources for teaching children with dyslexia?
10. What extra resources would help you teach children with dyslexia?
11. What would be the ideal class size to teach if there were two children present with dyslexia?
12. What would be the ideal class size to teach if there were two children with a special need other than dyslexia?
13. What would be the ideal class to teach if there were two children with dyslexia and two children with a special need other than dyslexia?
14. Does your school have a teacher trained in Reading Recovery? Yes/No
15. What is your understanding of Reading Recovery?
16. Is there anything you would like to ask that I have not asked you?