Experiences and Perspectives on the Social Dimension of Inclusion of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in an Irish Primary School

By

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for examination on the programme of study leading to the award of the Degree of Doctorate of Education (Ed. D) is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: *Martine Butler*

Date: 26ᵗʰ May 2015

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study is conducted against the backdrop of national and international policies and legislation which promotes the inclusion of pupils with mild general learning disabilities (MGLD) in mainstream schools. Employing a predominantly qualitative case study approach, it provides an in depth exploration of the social participation of three children with MGLD attending a mainstream class in a mainstream school. An important focus of this study is the perspective and experience of the child, in particular the three target children who transferred from a special class for pupils with MGLD three years previously. Their experience is further illuminated by the insights of other relevant stakeholders, namely their teachers, parents, special needs assistants and peers. Data collection comprised focus group and individual semi-structured interviews, observations, sociometry, field notes, draw and write investigation, and analysis of school documentation.

Findings suggest that the three target pupils feel socially included in school life. Children, both with and without special educational needs (SEN) feel included when they are involved in playing games and everyday activities with their peers. Pro-social characteristics, such as those gained through participation in sport and music play an important role in facilitating social participation and access to peer networks for pupils. Findings reveal that social functioning is a critical area of development for pupils with MGLD; with appropriate intervention practices central to its development. Socially responsive and competent typically developing peers (TDPs) can facilitate the participation of pupils with MGLD in the everyday life of the school. However, in order to achieve this, TDPs require targeted intervention to develop relevant skills.

Findings also demonstrate that greater focus on the development of pupil knowledge and experience of disability is pertinent in relation to peer acceptance of children with SEN. Pupils require developmentally appropriate practice with regard to the conceptualisation of disability. Findings indicate that teachers may have idealistic expectations of TDPs in terms of requiring them to become socially responsive without receiving explicit support and development. Due recognition, consideration and intervention regarding this crucial aspect of inclusive education is warranted.

It is possible that inclusive schools (in the context of ever-reducing resource supports) may overstretch their resources, due to a high intake of pupils with SEN. The special class for pupils with MGLD is an important resource and should not be overlooked in terms of the continuum of provision. Meaningful consultation with pupils regarding their education is an important goal for educators to pursue. Since children's social experiences are affected by a wide variety of factors, there is a need for a coherent policy to guide practice at school level. Interventions incorporating parental support and involving peer support are important, specifically as parental attitudes impact on children's attitudes.

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Glossary/Abbreviations

AD/HD	Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills (formerly Department of Education and Science)
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EBSCO	Elton B Stevens Company
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
ERIC	Education Resources Information Centre
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
GAM	General Allocation Model
GLD	General Learning Disability
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
IQ	Intelligence Quotient

LD	Learning Disability
LS/RT	Learning Support/Resource Teacher
MGLD	Mild General Learning Disability
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCERI	National Center on Education Restructuring and Inclusion
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PE	Physical Education
RIAM	Royal Irish Association of Music
RTH	Resource Teaching Hours
SEBD	Severe Emotional-Behavioural Disturbance
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SERC	Special Education Review Committee
SET	Special Education Team
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SSLI	Specific Speech and Language Impairment
TDP	Typically Developing Peer

UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Chapter One

Introduction

Inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream education is a topic of interest worldwide (De Boer, Pijl, Post & Minnaert, 2012; Ferguson, 2008; Florian, 1998; Vislie, 2003; Wedell, 2008; Winter & O'Raw, 2010). Debates have resulted in a wide field of literature and policies (Deluca & Stillings, 2008; Rose, 2005), with some countries implementing legislation to provide equal education opportunities for all regardless of ability (Meegan & MacPhail, 2006). Ireland, like many other countries, has initiated a shift of focus from segregated provision for pupils with SEN to mainstream provision. *The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act* (EPSEN) (Ireland, 2004a) enshrines inclusive education as the preferred provision and gives "a legal dimension to the expectations that all children, wherever possible, will be educated together" (Day & Travers, 2012, p. 1). However, a number of recent national and international studies have raised concerns regarding the implications of inclusive policies for school engagement and in particular, for the ways in which friendships are established between children with SEN and their typically developing peers (TDPs) (Avramidis, 2012; De Boer et al., 2012; Frostad & Pijl, 2007; Koster, Pijl, Nakken & Van Houten, 2010; McCoy & Banks, 2012; Rose & Shevlin, 2010).

This chapter begins with a brief outline of current concerns, which have emerged both nationally and internationally, in terms of the social implications for children with SEN in mainstream settings. The problem addressed in this study is then outlined. Issues pertinent to the study are discussed including my reasons for undertaking this research and my

perspective as a practitioner on the social functioning of children with mild general learning disabilities (MGLD). Following this, the aim, purpose and the significance of the study are outlined together with the research questions. I will then situate this study in terms of how it relates to previous work. Next, a brief outline of the research site and participants is presented together with an examination of the three paradigms which have dominated research in the area of special education. Finally the chapter concludes with a guide to the structure of the subsequent chapters.

Social Implications for Students with SEN in Mainstream Settings

Ireland provides a multi-track approach to the provision for students with SEN comprising a variety of services between special and mainstream school settings. McCoy and Banks (2012) state that approximately 0.5% of pupils with SEN (aged 4-18) attend special schools. Their research indicates that boys with SEN in mainstream settings are more likely not to like school than girls. In addition, McCoy, Smyth and Banks (2012), in their longitudinal study *Growing up in Ireland* highlight significant levels of disengagement among pupils with SEN which they suggest raise issues around inclusion policies at primary level education. Their findings indicate that pupils with SEN in mainstream settings like school less than their TDPs. Moreover, the National Disability Authority (2011), in its *National survey of public attitudes to disability in Ireland,* shows that, in comparison to 2006, there are higher levels of objection raised to inclusive education across all types of disability. Their latest findings indicate a rise (up 13 % from 8% to 21%), "with the greatest difference relating to intellectual disability or autism" (p. 42). Commenting on both findings, Travers (2012) suggests that this poses challenges to schools as "left to their own devices many children with special educational needs can become isolated in school....To counteract this requires intervention policies and practices in schools that focus on understanding learning

disability, making friends and including everyone in games" (p. 129). Koster, Pijl, Nakken, et

al. (2010) and De Boer et al. (2012) also underscore the importance of examining the social

outcomes of inclusion early in a child's education with a view to designing interventions

aimed at preventing children from becoming isolated.

Inclusion: Key Developments in Ireland

According to Ware et al. (2009) the linking of the concept of inclusion with education

in mainstream schools is evident in a number of national and international policy statements

which have influenced the character of SEN provision in Ireland (Department of Education,

1993; Ireland, 2004a; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation,

[UNESCO], 1994). In addition, Minister Martin's 'automatic entitlement' speech

(Department of Education and Science, [DES], 1998) contributed to a change in policy and

provision for students with SEN (Day, 2007; Lynch, 2007; McGee, 2004; Ware et al., 2009).

The number of children with SEN being supported by learning support/resource teachers

(LS/RTs) increased in accordance with the general allocation model (GAM) described in

circular 02/05 (DES, 2005a).[1] Stevens and O'Moore (2009) identify a shift in the placement

of children with MGLD which they attribute to the introduction of the resource teacher and

GAM (DES, 2002, 2005a). Concurring with Travers (2007, as cited in Ware et al., 2009) they

report reduced support for pupils with MGLD following the introduction of the GAM (DES,

2005a); a finding also echoed by Kerins (2011). The shift in placement of children with

MGLD was augmented in 2009 when the DES disbanded 118 special classes for children

with MGLD where they failed to reach a retention figure of nine pupils. The timing of this

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[1] The process of providing resources for individual pupils with SEN following professional assessment, referred to as input funding was replaced with throughput funding (Pijl, 2014) for pupils with high incidence disability such as MGLD and dyslexia. The input model continued for pupils assessed with low incidence disabilities such as moderate GLD, and autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

decision pre-empted the publication of *The research report on the role of special schools and classes in Ireland* (Ware et al., 2009) which revealed that special classes provided an important part of the continuum of educational provision for pupils with SEN. Ware et al. (2009) noted the following advantages pertaining to special classes: (a) facilitation of inclusion within the mainstream class; (b) provision of a 'safe haven' for pupils; (c) a favourable pupil/teacher ratio; (d) enabling pupils to remain in their locality; and (e) flexibility in the organisation of teaching and curriculum provision.

Conversely, Kelly and Farrell (2012), in a small-scale case study involving 11 past pupils of a special class for pupils with MGLD and three parents, reveal that membership of a special class had impacted negatively on pupils because they felt labelled; moreover, it appeared to have influenced and limited the range of choices available to them at post-primary level. Identifying the disconnect between primary and post-primary schools, Kelly and Farrell suggest that this posits questions regarding how the education system in Ireland conceptualises suitable provision for children with SEN, and how this conceptualisation is perceived by relevant stakeholders. For example, how do pupils, parents and teachers interpret the term 'special', and the phrase 'continuum of provision'.[2] Paradoxically their findings reveal that "the role of the special class model of provision facilitated the inclusion of pupils with MGLD in their local primary school on the one hand while simultaneously instigated resistance to inclusion of that same cohort of pupils at post-primary level on the other" (p. 50).

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[2] With reference to the literature the term 'continuum of provision' may inadvertently be confused with the term 'continuum of support' which refers to the three-staged approach in mainstream under the GAM model (DES, 2005a). Continuum of provision refers to the provision across settings which include mainstream settings with/without additional supports; special classes within mainstream settings; special schools; and special classes within special schools. In addition it is important to note that special classes may be referred to as 'units'. For more detail see Ware et al. (2009, p. 26), who cite the Department of Education's (1993) use of the term and list 12 options.

In 2009 the closure of special classes for pupils with MGLD was criticised by a number of commentators (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, [INTO], 2009; Stevens & O'Moore, 2009; Travers, 2009) who argued that this move placed pressure on mainstream schools and limited parental choice. Travers (2009) highlighted the National Council for Special Education's (NCSE) statutory obligation under section 20 (Ireland, 2005a) of the EPSEN Act (Ireland, 2004a), which has commenced, "to ensure that a continuum of special education provision is available as required in relation to each type of disability" (p. 21). He stressed that with this suppression a viable and flexible option of provision was dismissed which could impact negatively on educational provision for pupils with MGLD. He noted that the merit of the special class/unit was readily acknowledged for pupils assessed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Endorsing this position, Ware et al. (2009) maintain that the suppression of special classes for children with MGLD poses "issues in relation to removing one option from the continuum of provision for one particular group of children with SEN while simultaneously increasing availability of that same option for another group" (p. 57).

Norwich and Kelly (2005) make the point that in United Kingdom[3], children with MGLD do not have the same voice for lobbying Government as other areas of special needs. Consequently there is less advocacy on their behalf, less focus on policy and practice, less research interest and less written about them. The MGLD group constitutes the largest category of people with special educational need. Notwithstanding this, debate has arisen as to whether it should rightly be considered a special educational need. More than three decades ago Tomlinson (1982) questioned whether children with MGLD presented educational characteristics which could be identified and assessed objectively using

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[3] It should be noted that the classification of moderate general learning disability in the UK is similar to the classification of mild general learning disability in the Republic of Ireland. See also Stakes & Hornby (2000).

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Tests. Her argument was based on the grounds that as a category this group had a disproportionate number of pupils from 'working class' backgrounds; and that it was socially constructed by the judgements and decisions of professionals about children, rather than it being an innate quality within the child. Acknowledging that this is a poorly defined area of special needs, Norwich and Kelly (2005) highlight speculation which continues to exist as to whether children with MGLD are more like children with sensory difficulties, who have clearly identifiable organic impairments or more like children whose school achievements are below or well below average. They make the point that children with MGLD usually tend to be identified when they begin formal schooling unlike children who have sensory, physical and more severe learning disabilities. This may "indicate that there is something about their difficulties in learning which is specific to the demands made by mainstream school curriculum and teaching" (Norwich & Kelly, 2005, p.3). Although much of Tomlinson's argument was based on issues and frameworks of her time, Norwich and Kelly (2005) make the point that themes similar to those highlighted by her continue to pose challenges for current social policy and practice in education.

Interestingly, the MGLD category has been considered to be a group that is easily included in mainstream settings (Evans & Lunt, 2002). Emphasising that this conclusion is over-generalised given the wide variety within this category, Norwich and Kelly (2005) note that despite the perception that the MGLD category can be accommodated in mainstream settings, many children with MGLD continue to attend special schools. Speculating as to why this is so, they cite Williams (1993) who had suggested a number of years previously that the integration of pupils with MGLD would be the acid test of integration policies. In 1993 Williams noted that even though these children constitute the largest category of SEN their parents were not a strong lobby group; he also made the point that children with MGLD did

not receive the same degree of sympathy as children who had obvious sensory and physical disabilities.

In highlighting the diminishing placement choices for pupils with MGLD and the difficulties associated with addressing their needs, Travers (2012) makes a similar point in relation to Ireland. Indeed children with MGLD do not have a dedicated national association advocating on their behalf, unlike children with other categories of disability such as ASD and Down syndrome who have Irish Autism Action and Down Syndrome Ireland. Under severe budget measures, provision for SEN and English as an additional language (EAL) has been amalgamated under the GAM (DES, 2012a; INTO, 2011). This merging of resources places additional pressure on schools which may further impact on provision for children with MGLD. Under these changes Oakwood School (pseudonym for research site) lost one teacher of EAL in September 2012.[4] As schools are now not permitted to combine GAM and resource hours into full-time posts under this new arrangement (INTO, 2011; Sweeney, 2011), neighbouring schools are obliged to cluster to form full-time teaching posts. This move is likely to result in the erosion of instructional time due to teachers commuting between schools. It reflects a return to previous anomalies linked to the appointment of shared posts of different types, where teachers passed each other on the road as they commuted to provide a service to the same neighbouring schools (Travers, 2006). Moreover, it is important to note that the focus of learning support is on literacy and numeracy attainments (DES 2000). In fact following a decline in Ireland's performance in *The Programme for International Student Assessment* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2009), the DES is actively promoting initiatives aimed at improving

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[4] Oakwood School appealed this decision and was granted a temporary EAL teacher on two successive years (2012-2013; 2013-2014) by the Primary Staffing Appeals Board having met criteria outlined in *Circular 07/2012* (DES, 2012a).

literacy and numeracy levels (DES, 2011a). Travers (2012) argues that, pupils with MGLD "can have very great social skills, oral language and life skill needs that can easily be overlooked, in the drive to cover curriculum content" (p. 128). For these reasons, I am concerned that children with MGLD may not receive warranted additional support in other important areas of the curriculum such as social skill training.

Problem Statement

Research indicates that including pupils with SEN is one of the most challenging developments in educational policy and practice (Ainscow & César, 2006; Allan, 2003; Drudy & Kinsella, 2009; Lunt, 2007; Norwich, 2005). Pijl (2007) reports that TDPs favour friendships with children who do not have SEN, while Flem and Keller (2000) note that children with SEN indicate a preference for playing with other pupils with SEN. An advantage of special schools and classes is the possibility that children with SEN may encounter peers with similar interests and needs, through which genuine friendships may be developed and their self-esteem enhanced. In a survey of 54 principals of special schools and interviews with teachers, students and parents in 10 special schools, Kelly and Devitt (2010) note that an increasing number of pupils aged 12 years and over are leaving mainstream settings for special schools. Findings reveal that parents and children cite difficulties with communication and behaviours of others as barriers to children's social participation in mainstream classes.[5] The concept of community together with interactions between pupils with and without SEN are widely viewed as key characteristics of inclusive education (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Koster, Nakken, Pijl & Van Houten, 2009; Pijl, 2007; Shevlin & O'Moore, 2000). A general aim of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

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[5] Kerins and Day (2012) note that the views of principals and teachers in mainstream schools were not sought by Kelly and Devitt (2010). This raises a number of "issues as the findings are expressed mainly in terms of difficulties experienced by pupils in mainstream schools" (p. 57).

(NCCA) (1999) is "to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others and so contribute to the good of society" (p. 7). Research indicates that including pupils with SEN does not automatically lead to an increase of friendships between these pupils and their TDPs (Koster et al., 2010). Simply attending a mainstream school does not automatically imply that pupils with MGLD are included, although it is an important first step (Irwin, 2008; Kelleher, 2006). Tensions exist between valuing inclusive education as an ideology because of the social benefits it can bring for pupils with SEN and acknowledging a need to move away from inclusive settings because of the social isolation some pupils may experience (Flem & Keller, 2000). Rose (2007a) contends that if the curriculum is to play a part in shaping the future society, opportunities for acquiring key skills that develop self-determination "must be valued as much as an ability to recall subject focused knowledge" (p. 298).

Flem and Keller (2000) report that the greatest challenge to the realisation of inclusion ideology for pupils with SEN, is not academic integration but social integration. Their study suggests that even in an educational system "that strongly values and emphasizes social outcomes, and with educators that accept a policy of inclusion at least partly for social reasons, it can be difficult to achieve positive outcomes for students with disabilities in inclusive settings" (p. 201). Other studies reveal that children with SEN in mainstream classes are less accepted by their peers, are less part of the class network, and experience fewer friendships than their TDPs (Frederickson, 2010; Nowicki & Sandieson, 2002; Pijl, Frostad & Flem 2008). Findings from a study by Pijl and Frostad (2010) indicate that pupils with SEN are in danger of developing low self-concept. Moreover, pupils with poor peer adjustment are considered to be at risk of experiencing difficulties in later life and experiencing marginalisation (Fahey, 2005; Pearl et al., 1998; Wendelborg & Tøssebro,

2010). While acknowledging the importance of teacher support for pupils with SEN in terms of school completion, Pijl, Frostad and Mjaavatn (2014) note that over time pupils with SEN become more dependent on peer support in terms of staying motivated and lessening the risk of school drop-out.

Pijl et al. (2008), exploring the social position of pupils with SEN, reveal that pupils with SEN are over-represented in at-risk categories of being less popular, having fewer friends, and participating less often as group members by a factor of two to three. It should be noted that while this study does not represent a random sample, some degree of over-representation is to be anticipated for pupils with SEN. Research implemented by Koster et al. (2010) indicates that while the majority of pupils with SEN have a "satisfactory degree of social participation" (p. 59), when compared with their TDPs a relatively large proportion of pupils with SEN experience more difficulties in this area. Interestingly, research conducted by Avramidis (2012) revealed that students with SEN had positive perceptions of self-concept and academic performance and were socially accepted by their classmates. In terms of their social position, pupils with SEN were less popular and had fewer friends than their TDPs. However, notwithstanding this, children with SEN had formed a number of positive relationships, were equally likely to be members of a social cluster, and were no more likely to be isolated than their TDPs. Avramidis suggests that results which indicate that pupils with SEN perceive their academic performance in positive terms may be due in part to "improving special provision in mainstream schools, where pupils are appropriately supported in order to meet the individualised learning goals that they are set. This in turn, is arguably reflected in the enhanced academic self-concept observed in this more recent study" (Avradimis, 2012, p. 18).

In Ireland, Drudy and Kinsella (2009) acknowledge that, while it appears significant attempts have been made in a number of schools to address the needs of pupils with SEN, "there is no consistent model of integrated or inclusive practice evident across the majority of Irish schools" (p. 659). Irish schools in general have not undergone the necessary restructuring warranted to address the needs of pupils with SEN. Although a number of statutory bodies underscore a 'rights' based move within legislation, legislation is more 'provider' focused than 'rights' focused. This is evidenced by the phrase 'having regard to the resources available' which appears in all legislation relating to disability, thus restricting individual rights.

My position at Oakwood Primary School, with twenty nine years' experience as a mainstream and special class teacher, and currently a LS/RT,[6] has allowed me observe the growing trend towards the inclusion of students with SEN and in particular children with MGLD. In keeping with the literature, I have noted that the area of social functioning is particularly salient for children with MGLD (Butler, 2009; Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001; Kelleher, 2006; Pijl, Frostad & Mjaavatn, 2011). Special educational needs not only encompass the academic domain, but also impinge on social, emotional, and behavioural aspects of children's lives (Lerner, 2003). Many pupils with SEN do not spontaneously acquire the necessary skills for social functioning, and require explicit social skill training (Vaughn et al., 2003). Teachers have an important role to play in the development of social awareness and understanding and in providing explicit social skill teaching to enhance social relationships between learners (Balfe & Travers, 2011; Ware, Butler, Robertson, O'Donnell, & Gould, 2011). With the suppression of the special class for pupils with MGLD, pupils now

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[6] My teaching experience at Oakwood School comprises fifteen years as a mainstream class teacher, nine years as a special class teacher for children with MGLD and five years as a LS/RT.

receive support under the GAM. Given the limited time available under this model (Stevens & O'Moore, 2009; Travers, 2012) there is a danger that children with MGLD may not receive additional support in the area of social skill training. Children with MGLD may be "included in mainstream schools for their school lives only to be excluded from the mainstream of society as adults" (Hornby & Kidd, 2001, p. 15).

Moreover, in relation to the provision of additional support, I am concerned that targeted learning support/resource teaching time in Oakwood School is being directed towards literacy and numeracy in light of government policy (DES, 2011a) in a drive to raise school-wide attainments.[7] Consequently LS/RTs are providing literacy and numeracy in-class support to all children, in junior classes (junior infants to first class) for considerable periods, under early intervention, regardless of pupil attainment/ability. It is important to note that a number of these children already have attainments ranging from the 50th to the 99th percentile in literacy and maths, [8] while additional provision for children experiencing social difficulties or children at or below the 12th percentile in literacy and numeracy is decreased in the higher class levels. Consistent with Reading Recovery (Clay, 1993), these interventions were successfully initiated in Ireland for Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DES, 2005b), where major cohorts of classes had low attainments. In schools, where this is not the case, it is difficult to justify the provision of additional support for children who already have relatively high attainments and good social skills, at the expense of those who are struggling in terms of social competence and have not as yet attained a functional level in reading and maths. Therefore, following the closure of the designated special class for children with

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[7] Allan (2012) makes the point that the concern of these types of policies include "economic need; emphasis on rapid reform, insistence on the national education system becoming 'world class', as evidenced through international league tables" (p. 4). At the same time as these policies shift and appear to undermine inclusion, Allan makes the point that there are significant legal frameworks underpinning the rights of children to inclusion.
[8] Oakwood School standardised tests results (2012-2013).

MGLD at Oakwood School, I believe it is now time to examine how pupils, previously enrolled in that class are progressing in mainstream classes in terms of their social participation under the GAM/resource teacher model.

Drudy and Kinsella (2009) propose a framework for evaluating the degree of inclusion within schools, comprising: the extent to which all students with SEN from the catchment area of the school are accessing the school; the level of the pupils' social participation within the life of the school; the pupils' learning outcomes; and the quality of educational experience of the pupils. Similarly, Rose, Shevlin, Winter & O'Raw (2010) identify policy, provision, experience and outcomes as key issues pertinent to inclusive education. Having identified an emphasis in the literature on the implementation of policy and the development of provision, Rose et al. highlight a gap in the literature for a clear "focus upon specific aspects of emerging change within education provision" (p. 369). With this in mind, and identifying pupils' social participation as a specific aspect relevant to emerging change within current Irish education provision, the problem that this study addresses is that I am unsure as to whether children with MGLD are socially included in full-time mainstream class settings. Mindful of the importance of other issues pertinent to inclusion which include, policy development, provision of resources, access to curriculum and academic outcomes, [9] this study focuses on the experiences and perspectives of three pupils with MGLD with regard to their social participation in mainstream class settings.

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[9]It is not my intention to detract from the importance of proficiency attainment in literacy and numeracy for pupils with MGLD.

Aim and Purpose

While no assertions are made regarding the children's social participation prior to their transfer to full-time mainstream classes, the aim of this study is to determine if three children with MGLD are currently included in terms of their social participation in full-time mainstream class settings.[10] I examine the perspective and experience of three children, together with those of their parents, teachers, peers and special needs assistants (SNAs), in relation to these children's social participation in the life of the school. Conducted against the backdrop of pertinent policies/legislation (DES, 2005a, 2011a, 2012a; Ireland, 1998, 2004a, 2005b; NCSE, 2011), the purpose of this research is to generate evidence regarding the social participation of three children with MGLD in order to inform policy and practice and advocate on behalf of children with MGLD. An important focus of this study is the perspective and experience of the child. It is anticipated that this study will make a contribution towards understanding how children with MGLD fare in terms of social participation in mainstream class settings.

Significance

Research into the social inclusion of children with MGLD is timely given the NCSE (2011) and DES (2011a) initiatives aimed at the realisation of inclusive schools and improved literacy and numeracy levels. Highlighting a gap in the literature, current Irish research signals the urgency for studies to evaluate the impact of changes made in meeting the needs of pupils with MGLD before further disbandment of the special class model (Stevens & O' Moore, 2009; Travers, 2009; Travers et al., 2010; Ware et al., 2009). In addition, Koster et al.

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[10] I use the term 'full-time mainstream classes' as prior to 2009, in keeping with recommendations by the DES (1999), children with MGLD while enrolled in the special class in Oakwood School were also placed in age appropriate mainstream classes and moved between both settings for different activities. Also in using this term it is not my intention to imply that Oakwood does not currently implement withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes to resource room settings under the GAM/resource teacher model.

(2009) emphasise the need for research to target the social dimension of inclusion, while Nilholm and Alm (2010) underscore the importance of the pupils' experience when they assert that " feelings of belonging, membership and acceptance on behalf of the children are necessary prerequisites in order to talk about inclusive classrooms" (p. 250). In an analysis of what makes children feel included, Balfe and Travers (2011) reveal that children "are more preoccupied with the social aspects of school life than on academic practices" (p. 20). Their findings show that aspects such as playing games together, being included in all activities, having friends and having a positive school atmosphere are important in terms of children feeling included; a finding that also emerged in McCoy and Banks' (2012) study.

In exploring the experiences and perspectives of key participants regarding the social participation of children with MGLD it is anticipated that this study will, in keeping with recommendations made by Ware et al. (2009), present evidence on the capacity of the GAM (DES, 2005a) and the resource teacher service to meet the needs of pupils with MGLD in mainstream classes. It is also anticipated that insights will be gained into inclusive education (Rose, 2007b) which focus on informed and effective provision for children with MGLD by exploring what works best for them (Koster, Pijl, van Houten & Nakken, 2007; Pijl, Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Studies emphasise that friendships/social contact with peers are essential elements for personal growth (Perdue, Manzeske & Estell, 2009; Skårbrevik, 2005; Soodak, 2003). Friendships are important because they give children opportunities to develop important skills and attitudes and because they enhance their quality of life (Meyer et al., 1998, as cited in Soodak, 2003). This study is important because it gains access to children's voices and conveys an understanding of what makes them feel included. Thus it has relevance for policy-makers, parents, schools, teachers and children.

The literature recommends that researchers should involve children to the extent that is possible in the design and interpretation of studies in order to ensure that they benefit directly from participating in research (Department of Children & Youth Affairs [DCYA], 2012; Waldron 2006). As far as I could ascertain, research focusing on pupils with MGLD in full-time mainstream primary classes in Ireland has not yet been conducted in terms of children's social participation. Consistent with recommendations (Stevens & O'Moore, 2009; Travers, 2009; Ware et al., 2009) the NCSE commissioned related research to examine and evaluate how the special class model is meeting the needs of pupils with SEN in mainstream settings. It is hoped that this current study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge pertaining to educational provision for children with MGLD in Ireland.

Inclusiveness demands organisational structures which assist teachers as they develop and change practice (Ainscow, 1996; Wedell, 2008). Whole-school change can only come about as a "development over time of a more generous and flexible way of understanding education" (Gaden, 1996, p. 81). The inclusion movement, grounded in the interaction of the social rights model of discourse, advocates an inclusive education approach whereby pupils with SEN are educated in their local community (O'Gorman, 2007). This study was conducted in light of a commitment to inclusion enshrined in the EPSEN Act (Ireland, 2004a)[11] and is situated within the current national and international trend which seeks to educate pupils with SEN in mainstream settings (Florian, 2005; Meegan & MacPhail, 2006; Peters, 2007; Ring & Travers, 2005; Rose et al., 2010). Consistent with commentators who highlight the need for research to include the voice of the child (Balfe & Travers, 2011; Lewis, 2002; Lewis & Porter, 2007; Messiou, 2008; Mortier, Desimpel & Van Hove, 2011;

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[11] Significant changes in policy and legislation for the education of students with SEN occurred in Ireland in the 1990s; consequently, there were increases in resources for students with SEN (Lodge & Lynch, 2004). Appendix A includes a selection of the legislation underpinning inclusion.

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O'Donnell, 2000, 2003; O'Keeffe, 2009; Rose & Shevlin, 2004; Whyte 2006), this study

actively seeks children's opinions. The study took place in Oakwood School over a twelve

month period and was guided by the following questions:

1. Following their transfer from a special class, do three pupils with MGLD feel socially
   included as full-time members of a mainstream class?

2. Do relevant personnel (including peers) feel that these pupils are socially included in
   the mainstream class setting?

3. Are there factors within the school setting that contribute to children feeling socially
   included or excluded? [12]

Study Context and Participants

The three children central to this study, Damien and Neville (10 yrs) and Mark (11

yrs) have assessments of MGLD. For the first three years of his education Mark was enrolled

in a special class for pupils with MGLD; while Damien and Neville were enrolled in the

special class for the first two years of their education. In keeping with recommendations by

the DES (1999) all three children were also placed in age appropriate mainstream classes,

moving between both settings for different activities. In 2009, following closure of the

special class, these boys transferred to full-time mainstream classes and now have their

additional educational needs addressed under the GAM (DES, 2005a). Under this model,

MGLD is classified as a high-incidence SEN and children with this assessment do not receive

additional resource hours.[13] However, as Damien has a physical disability, he had surgery to

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[12] It is important to clarify that for the purposes of this study that the term 'social inclusion' refers specifically to children's interactions and participation in the life of the school. It is not used in the context of engagement of marginalised groups, for example, the DES (2005b) Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools initiative whereby children at risk of poverty and social exclusion receive additional resources and opportunities to help them overcome disadvantage.

[13] The GAM (DES, 2005a) provides additional teaching support for pupils who have high incidence SEN and children performing at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests of reading or mathematics. Differing pupil-teacher ratios apply depending on: gender, school size, and school designation within disadvantaged

have a brain tumour excised in 2005 and has Sickle Cell Anaemia, he receives three resource

teaching hours (RTH) per week, while Neville and Mark, who both have additional

assessments of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), receive three and half

RTH per week.[14] All children have SNA support. An overview of the participants, who have

been given pseudonyms, is included in Table 1.1.

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areas. Individual applications for additional support for pupils with SEN arising from high incidence disabilities ceased in 2005, while applications for low incidence SEN continued. The new single allocation for high incidence SEN and EAL support from September 2012 is based on the number of classroom teaching posts in each school in the previous school year (DES, 2012a).

[14] Consistent with austerity measures resource hours are currently reduced by 15%; issues pertaining to co-morbidity will be outlined later in the literature review section.

Table 1.1.
Overview of Participants

Name	SEN Category	Class/no of participants	SNA Support	Mainstream Class Teacher	Learning Support/ Resource Teacher	Parent	Weekly RTH (-15%)
Damien Age 10	MGLD & Physical Disability	Fourth	Yes Anna	Elizabeth	Emily	Sheila	3 (2.55)
Neville Age 10	MGLD & AD/HD	Fourth	Yes Sorcha	Nathan	Emily	Ella & Trevor	3.5 (2.975)
Mark Age 11	MGLD & AD/HD	Fourth	Yes Anna	Elizabeth	Emily	Eithne & Liam	3.5 (2.975)
Children's Peer Group		Fourth 50					
Mainstream teachers, LS/RTs & SNAs		Five					
Parents		Five					
Principal		One					

Note. Numbers in parentheses include 15% deduction.

It is important to note that participants include the school principal and the three children's TDPs who number 50 pupils. Initially I had decided not to include peers, however, upon reviewing the literature (De Monchy, Pijl & Zandberg, 2004; Nilholm & Alm, 2010; Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001; Pijl, 2007; Pijl & Frostad, 2010) it became apparent that their participation was essential. The rationale for their inclusion stems from evidence in studies which claims that in comparison to the judgement of their students, teachers overestimate the social participation of pupils with SEN (De Monchy et al., 2004; Koster et al., 2010; Pijl & Hamstra, 2005). This may be attributed to the fact that teachers invest considerable energy into implementing inclusive education and want it to be seen to be succeeding. Nonetheless, teachers are amongst the first to observe pupils' social problems in school. It is necessary to contrast teachers' perspectives with those of their pupils (Pijl et al., 2008) and other relevant personnel in order to gain wide-ranging and informed insight into the pupils' social participation in context. Moreover, as research underscores the importance of the ecological context of children's friendships and the interactivity that leads to the social construction of meaning (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002; Koster et al., 2009; Soodak, 2003), the contribution of peers is crucial.

The promotion of social skills and friendship is one of the main reasons presented by policy-makers, educationalists, and parents when arguing in favour of inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream settings. Thus "the increased interest in the social dimension is most probably explained by the direct link between the main philosophy behind inclusive education and the social participation of students with disabilities" (De Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2012, pp. 379-380). Therefore, it is now time to place the focus on these pupils themselves in order to illuminate their experiences in relation to social participation (Avramidis, 2009a).

Research into Special Education

Research into special education has been dominated by three paradigms: the psycho-medical, the sociological and the organisational (Skidmore 1996). Each paradigm draws on a theoretical framework, functioning within its own implicit epistemology and characteristic level of focus, establishing "a different model of causation of learning difficulties, and proposing a correspondingly different form of intervention" (Skidmore, 2004, p.10). With the psycho-medical perspective the researcher focuses on the individual, and views learning difficulties (LD) as a result of deficits within the child. Proposed interventions, working within this paradigm, usually include diagnostic testing and remediation. With the sociological perspective, the researcher focuses on society and views LD as arising from inequalities in society. Here interventions usually involve political reform of the educational provision and removal of inequitable practices. With the organizational paradigm, the researcher focuses on the institutional level and views LD as arising from deficiencies in ways in which schools are organized. Interventions within this paradigm usually take the form of restructuring of school programmes to eliminate deficiencies within the organisation. Over the past number of years there has been a move from the medical model of disability to the social and organizational model (Ainscow, 2007). Skidmore (1996) proposes an alternative integrated model focusing on all three levels, the individual, society and the organisation. At the level of the individual, attention is focused "on the interactive process of learning, at the societal level on the dilemmas of schooling and the social construction of special educational categories, and at the institutional level on the dialectical analysis of organisations and organisational ambiguity" (Flem, Moen & Gudmundsdottir, 2000, p.1). Lewis (1998) refers to this model as a holistic/constructivist approach. This holistic/constructivist conceptualisation of SEN underpins the approach to research adopted in this study.

Outline of Research

To inform this research, a comprehensive review of the literature was conducted and is presented in the following chapter together with the theoretical framework which underpins the methodology and acts as a lens for analysis in this study. Chapter three outlines the research design and methodology employed to answer the research and justifies its use. Findings are presented in chapter four and discussed in light of the reviewed literature. Further discussion and implications for practice are considered in chapter five together with the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research. This chapter also includes reflections on the research process and considers implications for future policy in relation to provision for pupils with MGLD.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The aim of this study was to determine if three children with MGLD were currently included in terms of their social participation in full-time mainstream class settings. The purpose of this study was to: (a) generate evidence regarding the social participation of three pupils; (b) inform policy and practice; and (c) advocate on behalf of children with MGLD. This chapter is organised into four major sections. The first section outlines the methodology used in the selection of literature. The second provides a definition and discussion of relevant terms pertaining to this research. The third section outlines the theoretical viewpoint adopted by the researcher. The final section outlines factors that impact on the experience of inclusive education for children with SEN; it draws on a selection of pertinent national and international research identified in the literature.[15] Analyses of these recent studies highlight key themes, which have permeated the literature in terms of inclusion and social participation, and provide a focus for this study. Issues, relevant to social participation and documented by the NCSE (2011) are then outlined. To begin with, criteria used for the selection of literature are described.

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[15] Space constraints preclude discussion on the development of national policies underpinning inclusive education; for an overview see: Griffin & Shevlin (2007); MacGiolla Phádraig (2007); McCoy, Banks, Frawley, Watson, Shevlin & Smyth (2014); McGee (2004); O' Gorman & Drudy (2010); Rix, Sheehy, Fletcher-Campbell, Crisp, & Harper (2013); Shevlin, Kenny and Loxley (2008); Travers et al., 2010; Travers, Butler & O' Donnell, (2011); Ware et al., (2009); Ware et al., (2011); Winter & O'Raw (2010).

Selection of Literature

Research was identified using the following key terms: inclusion, inclusive education, inclusive school, special class, mainstream, special education, SEN, MGLD, social participation/inclusion/integration, social competence, social skills, social relations, friendship, experience/perspective/attitude, social awareness/social perception, social meaning, social reasoning, social interaction, and social communication. St. Patrick's College library presented access to a large body of literature, comprising published books, journals and theses at masters' and doctoral levels. Educational search engines/databases such as the American Psychological Association (psychINFO), Education Resource Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) and Elton B Stevens Company (EBSCO) were used to source peer-reviewed journals. Other sources include Travers, Butler, and O'Donnell (2011); National Council for Special Education (NCSE); Department of Education and Skills (DES); and National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) websites. The review is largely confined to the period 1990-2014. In line with the aim and purpose of this research, focus was on literature pertaining to children with SEN, with particular reference to MGLD. The importance of defining relevant terms is well documented (Booth, 1999; Taber, 2007); thus definitions and a brief outline of key conceptions of the study are now presented.

Discussion of Key Concepts and Terminology

Terms central to this study include: inclusion/inclusive education, inclusive school, special class, SEN, MGLD, perspective, experience, attitude, social participation/inclusion/integration, friendship, social competence, social skills, social awareness/social perception, social meaning, social reasoning, social interaction and communication. As all three participants have dual assessments, definitions of AD/HD and physical disability together with issues pertaining to co-morbidity are also outlined.

Inclusion: Inclusive Education and Inclusive Schools

In defining inclusion it is firstly important to clarify the distinction between inclusion and integration (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996; Vislie, 2003). Inclusion focuses on how schools restructure to provide effectively for all pupils as individuals. It is characterised by "the reconsideration and restructuring of teaching approaches, pupil groupings and use of available support for learning" (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996, p.4). Integration focuses on individuals or small groups of students for whom adaptations are made to the curriculum and different work is prepared; it does not alter the organisation and provision of curriculum for all pupils. While there is no consensus in the literature regarding these concepts, there is convergence of opinion regarding who does the adjusting (Nind, 2005). With integration it is the student who adjusts, with inclusion it is the school. It is important to note that inclusion requires a process of complete change in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, and school organization (Nind, 2005; Slee, 2007; UNESCO, 2005).

Although inclusion is frequently mentioned in Irish policy statements, commentators (Sugrue, 2004; Travers et al., 2010; Ware et al., 2009) state that a definition of the term 'inclusion' is not provided in either *The Education Act* or EPSEN Act (Ireland, 1998, 2004a). In the USA, inclusion is generally perceived as addressing the needs of children with SEN in mainstream schools, while in other countries it is sometimes viewed as a reform that embraces diversity among all learners (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). For the purposes of this research, the focus is on pupils with SEN as defined by EPSEN (Ireland, 2004a) and not on wider issues relating to social exclusion which include diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, and gender (Vitello & Mithaug, 1998).

Mindful of the multiple interpretations of inclusion, the definition chosen for the purposes of this study is from Sebba and Ainscow (1996), who view inclusion as a process whereby a school responds to "all pupils as individuals by reconsidering its curricular organisation and provision. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils" (p.4). Citing Ballard (1995), Sebba and Ainscow set aside the notion of an inclusive school and underscore "a process of inclusion that has no limits" (p.3). This observation implies continuous change and infers that schools can continue to develop greater inclusion regardless of their current state. Sebba and Ainscow also note "the clear connections made between inclusion and overall school effectiveness" (p. 4). Their definition of inclusion concurs with definitions by Kinsella and Senior (2008); O'Gorman and Drudy (2010); Equality Authority (2005), DES (2007), and Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006).[16] Based on the Equal Status Acts of 2000 to 2004 (Ireland, 2000, 2004b) the Equality Authority (2005) defines an inclusive school as one that prevents and combats discrimination. It also respects, values and accommodates diversity in relation to the nine grounds of equality legislation,[17] and "seeks positive experiences, a sense of belonging and outcomes for all students across the nine grounds. Outcomes include access, participation, personal development and achieving education credentials" (Equality Authority, 2005, p.1). Similarly the DES (2007) states that:

An inclusive school is characterised by a continuous process of development and self-evaluation with a view to eliminating barriers to the participation of all students in the catchment area. The school's mission statement and the policies and procedures set

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[16]Ainscow, Booth & Dyson. (2006) define inclusion in three overlapping ways " as reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students; as increasing the capacity of schools to respond to the diversity of students in their local communities in ways that treat all as of equal value; and the putting of inclusive values into action in education and society" (p. 297).

[17] The nine grounds are: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

out in the school plan are pivotal in establishing a positive agenda for inclusion. Schools are advised, therefore, to examine and, as appropriate, revise their culture or ethos, values, mission statement, policies, procedures, management style, organisational arrangements, curriculum content, and approaches to learning and teaching with a view to establishing a school climate, curriculum and instructional approach that are fully inclusive (p. 40).

In terms of establishing a positive agenda for inclusion, Oakwood School (research site) appears to embody a number of the characteristics listed above in terms of its policy documents and practices. As a welcoming, supportive and diverse community, it demonstrates a commitment to combating discrimination through its proactive development and review of policies.[18] Furthermore, it states in the school's prospectus that as a community the school endeavours to promote the overall development of all its pupils; seeking to establish values and behaviours which promote the academic, spiritual, social and cultural development of the child within a safe and secure environment. While the ethos of the school is Roman Catholic, children of other religions or none, with diverse cultural backgrounds attend. A quarter of the enrolment comprises minority language students, with twenty-four different nationalities currently represented, the majority of which are of Polish and Nigerian descent. Oakwood has an established tradition of providing both EAL and SEN provision, having received its first EAL teaching post in 2002 and established a special class for children with MGLD in 1997. Since its establishment in 1984, the school has provided support for a number of children with SEN. These disabilities include: AD/HD, ASD, hearing impairment, dyslexia, dyspraxia, severe emotional-behavioural disturbance (SEBD),

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[18] Currently it has a range of 32 policies; see Figure 4.1 for a comprehensive list of pertinent policies/documents.

mild and moderate GLD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, physical disability, Prader Willi

Syndrome, Hurler Syndrome, Down Syndrome and specific speech and language impairment

(SSLI). In addition since the late 1980s, children of the Irish Traveller community have

attended the school. Oakwood also has a very active parent association who meet weekly

during school time to help in a variety of school-related areas.

Interestingly, Ware et al. (2009) question whether the notion of an 'inclusive school'

and 'inclusive education' can be regarded as synonymous. Research suggests that the

meaning of inclusive education is contextual, that is to say that "the meaning will take

different forms in various places depending on the situation" (Florian, 2005, p. 32). Soodak

(2003) contends that above all "philosophically and pragmatically, inclusive education is

primarily about belonging, membership, and acceptance" (p. 328). It must be borne in mind

that "the extent to which a school can be inclusive is determined by the inclusiveness of the

broader education, social and legislative systems in which it operates" (Drudy & Kinsella,

2009, p. 655). For example, in Ireland the entitlement of a pupil with SEN to an inclusive

education is required to be consistent with "the effective provision of education for children

with whom the child is to be educated" (Ireland, 2004a, p. 7). O'Keeffe (2009) maintains that

schools should have a genuine interest in listening to what pupils say. Although this form of

consultation is not currently mandatory for schools to implement, O'Keeffe advocates that all

students receive opportunities to promote greater autonomy.

Informed by the literature and based on my experience as a practitioner I view

inclusion as a policy framework and ongoing process. I see inclusive education as

multifaceted and based on the view that children with SEN "require appropriate education,

which optimizes their life chances as individuals to become full members of society"

(Lindsay, 2007, p. 18). As with Lindsay (2003) I recognise that what is at issue is the interpretation and implementation of inclusion. I recognise that inclusive education may be implemented at different levels: it may encompass different aims, have different motives, embrace different classifications of SEN and offer services in different contexts. Its aims may include the integration of SEN pupils in mainstream classrooms or may reflect changing attitudes towards societal integration. Aims may focus on improved educational attainments and education quality "or on autonomy, self-determination, proportionality, consumer satisfaction or parental choice" (Peters, 2007, p. 118). A number of aims may conflict and lead to tensions as described by Norwich (2008). Motives for inclusion may result from dissatisfaction with existing approaches, from economic and available resource provision, or from a perspective of educational reform. As a practitioner I am open to the view that inclusive education may comprise a continuum of placement options as documented in the literature (Day, 2007; Department of Education, 1993; Norwich, 2008; Rix et al., 2013; Wedell, 2005). This perspective includes a degree of withdrawal to a separate setting and views this "as being inclusive in the sense of making it possible for certain children to engage in learning the same curriculum as other children" (Norwich, 2008, p. 137). Similarly, Warnock (2005, as cited in Norwich 2008), advocates "a learning concept of inclusion, which is about including all children in the common educational enterprise of learning, wherever they learn best" (p. 137). However, in terms of children's friendships and friendship networks, I also remain mindful of Bunch and Valeo's (2004) comments regarding structures and their impact on friendship development: "structures such as grouping and special treatment of students with disabilities acted as barriers to relationships" (p. 65). Congruent with this is the view that in developing responsive practice to society's needs, teachers and schools must be the architects of inclusive schools (Pijl & Frissen, 2009). I concur with the view that, rather than treating schools as 'machine bureaucracies' policymakers should

conceptualise them as professional bureaucracies and grant them a certain level of professional autonomy (Pijl & Frissen, 2009). Having briefly discussed the conceptualisation of inclusive education and inclusive schools, the concept of special educational needs and the model of special class provision are now defined.

Special Educational Needs and Special Class

In this study, the definition of SEN is taken from EPSEN (Ireland, 2004a) which describes SEN as "a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition" (pp. 36-37). Children with MGLD are described as experiencing below-average general intellectual functioning, with difficulties manifesting "in a slow rate of maturation, reduced learning capacity and inadequate social adjustment" (Department of Education, 1993, p. 118). Their needs are not easily defined "due to the multiplicity of factors that can contribute to their learning disability" (NCCA, 2007, p.8). Difficulties may include: delayed conceptual development and difficulties in generalisation; difficulties expressing ideas and feelings; limited concentration and retention; difficulties with motor skills; difficulties with spatial awareness; and difficulties adapting to new situations.

AD/HD is characterised by behaviours "of inattention and/or impulsiveness/hyperactivity that are presented to a degree that significantly interfere with a person's family and peer relations as well as their educational and/or occupational functioning" (Cooper, 2005, p. 125). Difficulties include "response inhibition, poor sustained attention, response preservation, nonverbal and verbal working memory, planning, sense of time, emotion regulation, and to a lesser extent, tasks involving verbal and nonverbal

fluency" (Fisher, Barkley, Smallish & Fletcher, 2005, p. 108). Pupils with AD/HD may

experience difficulties learning social rules or understanding social cues. This in turn may

impact negatively on their capacity to develop friendships (Buckley, Gavin & McNicholas,

2009). While learning disabilities and AD/HD are two discrete conditions, they may coexist

in an individual (Kane, Walker & Schmidt, 2011; Mangina & Beuzeron-Mangina, 2009).[19]

An understanding and differentiation of each disability is important when both are present; it

is important to be mindful of the complexity of the differences and similarities of both

conditions. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that learning disabilities do not cause

AD/HD or vice versa, however, co-morbid AD/HD and learning disability may magnify the

severity of both conditions. Due to a diagnosis of AD/HD Mark and Neville both receive

RTH. Damien receives RTH as he has a diagnosis of physical disability. This diagnosis is

given as Damien has Sickle Cell Anaemia. For the purposes of this study, physical disability

is defined as any physiological disorder or condition affecting one or more of the body

systems (Scoilnet n.d.).[20]

Ware et al. (2009) describe special classes as classes which provide exclusively for

children with SEN, "with the majority of special classes admitting only pupils from a specific

category" (p. 18), while McCoy et al. (2014) describe them as classes "formed primarily for

students with special educational needs which is their main learning environment" (p. 3). The

emphasis on 'main learning environment' is interesting as the DES (1999) introduced revised

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[19] It should be noted that the research by Kane et al. (2011) and Mangina & Beuzeron-Mangina (2009) involved students with learning disabilities including mathematical disorder and reading/comprehension disorder and not students with MGLD.

[20] Damien's medical condition (Sickle Cell) does not currently appear to impact on his everyday physical activities although it has in the past. Sickle Cell Anaemia is a disorder of the blood caused by inherited abnormal haemoglobin. The abnormal haemoglobin causes distorted (sickle-shape) red blood cells which are fragile and prone to rupture. When the number of red blood cells decreases due to rupture, anaemia is the result. The irregular cells can block blood vessels causing tissue damage and organ damage and pain (http://www.medicinenet.com/sickle_cell/article.htm).

procedures for establishing special classes, including teacher-pupil ratio for children with different categories of disability, and reiterated the need for appropriate integration of special class students into mainstream classes. Consistent with DES (1999) policy, the special class as envisioned for the purposes of this study is in keeping with the definition by Ware et al. (2009). Whether or not the special class constitutes the 'main learning environment' depends to a large extent on the needs of an individual child. However it is paramount that the special class model envisioned in this study allows for flexibility, back and forth between the mainstream class setting and the special class setting. Acknowledging the importance of social participation, such a model should aim to keep pupils assessed with MGLD with their TDPs as much as possible. Interestingly, McCoy et al. (2014) underscore the need for schools to be facilitated in creating "greater flexibility in frequency and opportunity for young people to transition into and out of special class settings according to their needs" (p. 19). Moreover, they recommend that the size of special classes in terms of teacher-pupil ratio be allowed to fluctuate according as the need arises.

Prevalence of special classes in Ireland.

In relation to special class provision, recent findings from McCoy et al. (2014) indicate that 7 percent of primary schools and 24 per cent of post-primary schools have at least one special class. [21] Results reveal that 0.5 per cent of primary school pupils are educated in special classes compared to 1.2 per cent at second level. With reference specifically to pupils with SEN, 5.1 per cent are educated in special classes at primary level, compared to 13 per cent at second level. There has been considerable growth with regard to

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[21] A list of special classes at both primary and post-primary levels is available on the NCSE website. Across special classes at both primary and 2nd level, "many students spend most if not all of the school week together as a group. Over half of students attending primary special classes spend most of the week together with an additional 21% spending the full week together" (McCoy et al., 2014, p. 4).

this form of education provision, particularly at second level with over half of special classes being established during 2009-2011. Interestingly, 60 per cent of primary special classes are now designated ASD and represent the dominant form of provision for pupils with such needs in recent years. At second level, ASD classes represent less than one-fifth of special classes and this level shows greater diversity in special class designation than primary level. Classes for pupils with MGLD are located disproportionately in Urban Band 1 DEIS schools.[22] Having discussed a number of issues pertaining to inclusion and special education, definitions related to aspects of attitude and social functioning are now considered.

Attitude, Perspective and Experience

In terms of this study attitude is defined as a multidimensional concept encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. The cognitive component comprises beliefs and knowledge; the affective component deals with feelings and emotional reactions, while the behavioural element relates to actual or intended behaviour (Vignes et al., 2009). Perspective is defined as "a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; a point of view" while experience is defined as "an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone" (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). Perspective and experience are not considered interchangeable, but interpreted, that one's point of view or perspective is perhaps influenced by one's previous experiences. The key issues in relation to social participation are defined now.

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[22] "At primary, DEIS schools are categorised as Urban Band 1 (the most disadvantaged), Urban Band 2 (the second most disadvantaged) and Rural DEIS (the least disadvantaged of DEIS schools)" (McCoy et al., 2014, p. 7).

Social Participation

In order to evaluate social relations, Koster et al. (2009) initially believed that the concepts of social participation, social integration and social inclusion warranted clarification. Having conducted an analysis of 62 journal articles they conclude that all three are used as synonyms within the literature. With this in mind, for clarity they propose 'social participation' as the most suitable term for the social dimension of inclusion. Consistent with the recommendation that research would benefit from using one concept for the social dimension of inclusion (Koster et al., 2009), 'social participation' is the term used predominantly in this study. In providing a rationale for using the term 'social participation' Koster et al. criticise 'social integration' as an outmoded somewhat negative term pertaining too much to integration and argue that "the concept 'social inclusion' might be regarded as a pleonasm as the term 'inclusion' is an extensive concept which logically embraces the social dimension" (p. 134).

To be considered socially integrated pupils are required to be a member of a group, to be socially accepted by peers, to have at least one reciprocal friendship and to be accepted as an equal participant in activities (Cullinan, Sabornie & Crossland, 1992). It must be borne in mind that the quality of social interaction is important (Bayliss, 1995; Frostad & Pijl, 2007; Kelly & Devitt, 2010). Authors (Avramidis, 2012; Drudy, 2009; Siperstein, Leffert & Wenz-Gross, 1997) express concern regarding the quality of peer friendships experienced by children with SEN, which they note tend to be of a caring rather than reciprocal nature. Bayliss (1995) differentiates between symmetrical relationships with equal participant rights and familiar interactions, and asymmetrical relationships where one participant assumes a superior role. Promoting equal and reciprocal relationship between pupils with SEN and their

TDPs is "a complex task which must be based on a knowledge and understanding of the implications of having a learning disability and the alternative possibilities for communication and participation that exist" (Ring & Travers, 2005, p. 53). Moreover, Siperstein et al. (1997) suggest that we cannot assume that reported positive peer relationships and reciprocated friendships have the same meaning for all students. Students may consider each other friends while not exhibiting "the mutual engagement and responsiveness that is considered to be the hallmark of typical friendships. This is not to deny that these relationships are friendships but rather to recognize that peer relationships take varied and qualitatively different forms" (p. 122).

Social participation of pupils in mainstream primary schools comprises four key elements: "the presence of positive social contact/interaction between them and their classmates; acceptance of them by their classmates; social relationships/friendships between them and their classmates, and the students' perception that they are accepted by their classmates" (Koster et al., 2009, p. 135). Acknowledging that their conclusions are based solely on primary education, Koster et al. (2009) maintain that interaction patterns between students encompass the most important factor in terms of assessing social participation because they provide information not only on frequency but also on quality (whether positive, neutral or negative) and communication function (i.e. a request, protest, comment, or assistance). Citing research by Hunt et al. (2002, 2003), Koster et al. (2009) suggest that social interaction between students with SEN and their peers appears to be at the core of social participation. In addition, "friendships, friendship networks, (lasting) relationships, playing together and social contacts are described by researchers as major aspects of social participation" (p. 129).

"Social relations are described as peer acceptance, friendships and participation in the social network" (Frostad, Mjaavatn & Pijl, 2011, p. 86). It is important to note that peer acceptance is a predictor of friendship. Although peer acceptance and friendship are perceived as distinct phenomena, they are related in that they both depend on the construct of liking. Peer acceptance may affect aspects such as children's access to play opportunities and partners, achievement and feelings of isolation or belonging (Ladd, 1990), however the negative effects of low peer acceptance may be minimised by having one reciprocated friendship (Asher, Parkhurst, Hymel & Williams, 1990). It must be borne in mind that "peer acceptance is a unilateral construct that gives information about how a student is seen by other students. Friendship, on the other hand, is a bilateral construct and tells us about mutual liking between students" (Frostad, Mjaavatn & Pijl, 2011, p. 84). Pijl et al. (2008) suggest that young children perceive friends as playmates who share activities. "In mid-childhood shared values and tastes are stressed and from age 12 onwards friendships are described in terms of exchanging secrets, sharing feelings and helping each other deal with problems" (p. 389). It must also be borne in mind that friendship is a voluntary action and that it can cease to exist if either party withdraws (Asher, Parker & Walker, 1996). Its defining components comprise shared interaction, mutual enjoyment and mutual liking (Webster & Carter, 2013).[23] Hence, the parameters of friendship encompass a combination of the expectation and skills of both parties. Examples of pertinent skills include the ability to encode, interpret and reason about social-emotional information (social-emotional comprehension). The research suggests that the extent to which pupils with SEN demonstrate all of the components of friendship warrants further investigation, in order to ascertain if they engage in all three behaviours, albeit possibly to a lesser degree than TDPs (Webster & Carter, 2013).

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[23] Matheson, Olsen & Weisner (2007) list eleven characteristics of friendship (similarity, proximity, transcending context, companionship, reciprocity, mutuality, intimacy, support, trust/loyalty, conflict management, and stability)

In some studies that evaluate the social participation of children with SEN, only one or two of the four key themes are mentioned.[24] Koster et al. (2009) maintain that the importance of each theme may differ for individual pupils. They recommend that each researcher select their own criteria according to their sample. It must be borne in mind that each theme has a different focus. Friendships/relationships encompass mutual friendships, activities of friends and memberships in networks of students while contacts/interactions focus on playing, working, having fun together and being included or excluded from activities. A student's social perception encompasses the student's feelings, such as feelings of belonging to a group and feelings of loneliness, while acceptance by classmates focuses on "classmates taking into account the (im)possibilities of the pupil and their willingness to stand up for the pupil or to assist him or her" (Koster, Timmerman, Naken & Van Houten, 2009, p.214). Key predetermined themes, illustrated in Appendix B, and identified by Koster et al. (2009, 2010) provide criteria for assessing pupils' social participation within this study. The concept of social competence is now considered.

Social Competence

Social competence is defined by Green and Cillessen (2008) as "the ability to meet one's own needs while maintaining positive social relations with others" (p. 161). According to Carman and Chapparo (2012) children are deemed capable of demonstrating suitable social behaviours when they interact with others in a manner that is acceptable to others in that setting. These authors maintain that social competence comprises four interrelated domains:

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[24] (a) The presence of positive social contact/interaction between children with SEN and their classmates; (b) acceptance of children with SEN by their classmates; (c) social relationships/friendships between children with SEN and their classmates, and (d) students' (with SEN) perception that they are accepted by their classmates

- social skills (capacity to initiate and respond to others in an appropriate manner);

- relationships with others;

- age-appropriate social cognition (capacity to problem-solve, decipher and monitor social situations); and

- absence of behaviours associated with social maladjustment (e.g. aggressive behaviour).

Pupils' peer-related social competence linked to emotional regulation and social-information processes is a factor in peer relationship difficulties (Guralnick; 1999, 2006). Children with developmental delays encounter problems in developing peer relationships. Guralnick (1999) posits a conceptual model of children's peer-related social competence which identifies information processing and emotional regulation processes that regulate the progress of social strategies occurring during social tasks. The interactive features of the model, which have particular relevance to this study, are portrayed below in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Model Linking Social Competence and Corresponding Strategies to

Hypothesised Processes
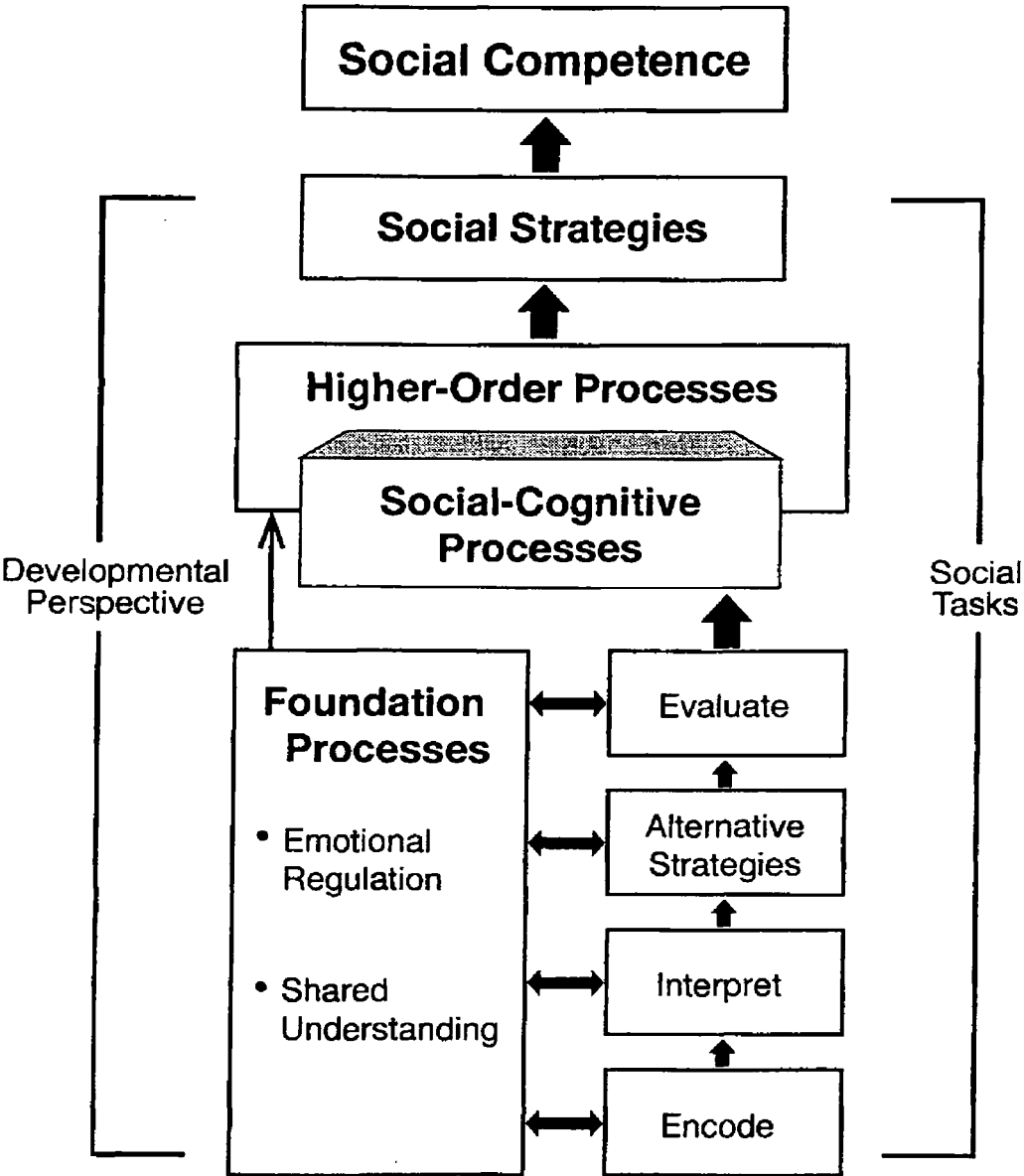
Note. (Adapted from Guralnick 1999, p, 23)

In this conceptualisation the first two processes are identified as foundation processes encompassing emotional regulation and shared understanding. Emotional regulation relates to children's ability to prevent emotional reactions from hindering the appropriate functioning of other processes, while shared understanding relates to mutually agreed upon social roles, social rules and conventions that govern social behaviour. The next level comprises a set of social-cognitive processes; followed by higher order processes, which represents "the over-arching social task recognition, monitoring and goal maintaining (planning) features that characterize social competent functioning" (Guralnick, 1999, p. 22). Delays linked to cognition such as attention, higher order processes, working memory and speed required to respond in social situations with peers can impact negatively on one or more of the four foundation processes (Andrade, Brodeur, Waschbusch, Stewart & McGee, 2009; Guralnick, 1999). Small discrepancies from expected developmental levels and or behaviour difficulties can result in inhibited peer interaction in children with MGLD. Deficits in terms of shared understanding may impact on a pupil's ability to encode cues to ensure that an appropriate "frame of reference exists for the peer entry social task (social-cognitive processes), or emotional regulation difficulties may result in the interpretation of an objectively benign event as a provocative one" (Guralnick, 1999, p. 22). Guralnick's (1999) conceptualisation, bounded by social tasks and developmental perspective, depicts how social strategies will vary and be constrained by the pupil's developmental stage and the social task selected. It is important to note that effective social contacts necessitate a repertoire of social skills which include behavioural inhibition, self-regulation, planning, problem-solving and flexibility (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010).

Nowicki (2003) asserts that pupils with SEN do not have accurate self-perceptions of their social competence; rating it the same as their TDPs despite the fact that they demonstrate deficits in skills. It should be noted that children with SEN have been found to be at risk of being bullied by their peers (Bauminger, Edelsztein & Morash, 2005; Carman & Chapparo, 2012; Luciano & Savage, 2007; Norwich & Kelly, 2005). This increased risk has been attributed to a number of factors including deficits in social competence (Bauminger et al., 2005). Notwithstanding the fact that children with SEN are likely to have at least one reciprocal friendship, their quality of friendship appears to differ from those of their TDPs in terms of closeness, security and social support (Carman & Chapparo, 2012). A further number of related terms are now discussed.

Social Skills, Social Perception and Social Interaction

Bedell and Lennox (1997) maintain that social skills include the capacity to: (a) choose pertinent information from an interpersonal context; (b) employ that information to ascertain appropriate goal-directed behaviour; and (c) implement verbal and nonverbal behaviours that increase the probability of goal achievement and safeguard good relations with others. This conceptualisation implies both cognitive and behavioural abilities. Cognitive abilities comprise social perception and information-processing skills, while behavioural abilities comprise verbal and non-verbal behaviours that execute the decision derived from the cognitive processes (Bedell & Lennox, 1997). There is little consensus in the field of literature in terms of defining social skills. Occasionally, social skills are defined in terms of the description and function of behaviours, for example facial expression and gestures. Such behaviours are commonly referred to as micro-skills or micro-behaviours which combine to form global skills. While some social skills for example intimacy are

attained in close friendships, others for example leadership are acquired in peer-group interaction, implying the importance of both forms (Carman & Chapparo, 2012).

Social perception and information-processing skills include cognitive abilities that enable children to: (a) recognise pertinent and necessary information; and (b) process this information and decide upon appropriate action. Increased interest in the important role of social perception and information-processing skills in the development and maintenance of socially skilled behaviours has resulted in the inclusion of these skills in intervention programmes. Social awareness involves the ability to label the emotions of others from nonverbal cues; social meaning entails the ability to interpret others' perspectives from their language and behaviour while social reasoning involves the ability to reason about social problems (McKown, Allen, Russco-Ponsaran & Johnson, 2013). McKown, Gumbiner, Russo and Lipton (2009) contend that the better pupils perform on assessments of social-emotional learning skill and the more parents and teachers report that they can regulate their behaviour, the more competent their social interactions with others.

Beauchamp and Anderson (2010) define social interaction as a dynamic, shifting sequence of social actions between people who adjust their actions and reactions according to the actions of their interacting partner. As an exchange or encounter with another person, they are interpreted as encounters whereby people ascribe meaning to a situation, interpret others' meaning and react accordingly. Likewise, Kemp and Carter (2002) define social interaction as "communicative exchange (verbal or nonverbal); attempts to direct communication to another individual; joint cooperative activity involving two or more individuals; physical actions deliberately directed towards another individual" (p. 397). A general model proposed by Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey and Brown (1986; Figure 2.2), illustrates the cyclical

relationship between the social behaviour and social information processing employed by interacting partners. Comprising five major units, they suggest that "social interactions begin with a set of social cues, which are conceptualized as a social interaction or task for the child" (p. 3).

Figure 2.2. Social Interaction Model

5
Peer's Social
Behaviour

2
Child's Processing
1 Encoding
2 Interpretation
3 Response Search
4 Response Evaluation
5 Enactment

1
Social Stimulus

4
Peer's
Processing
and Judgement
about Child

3
Child's Social
Behaviour
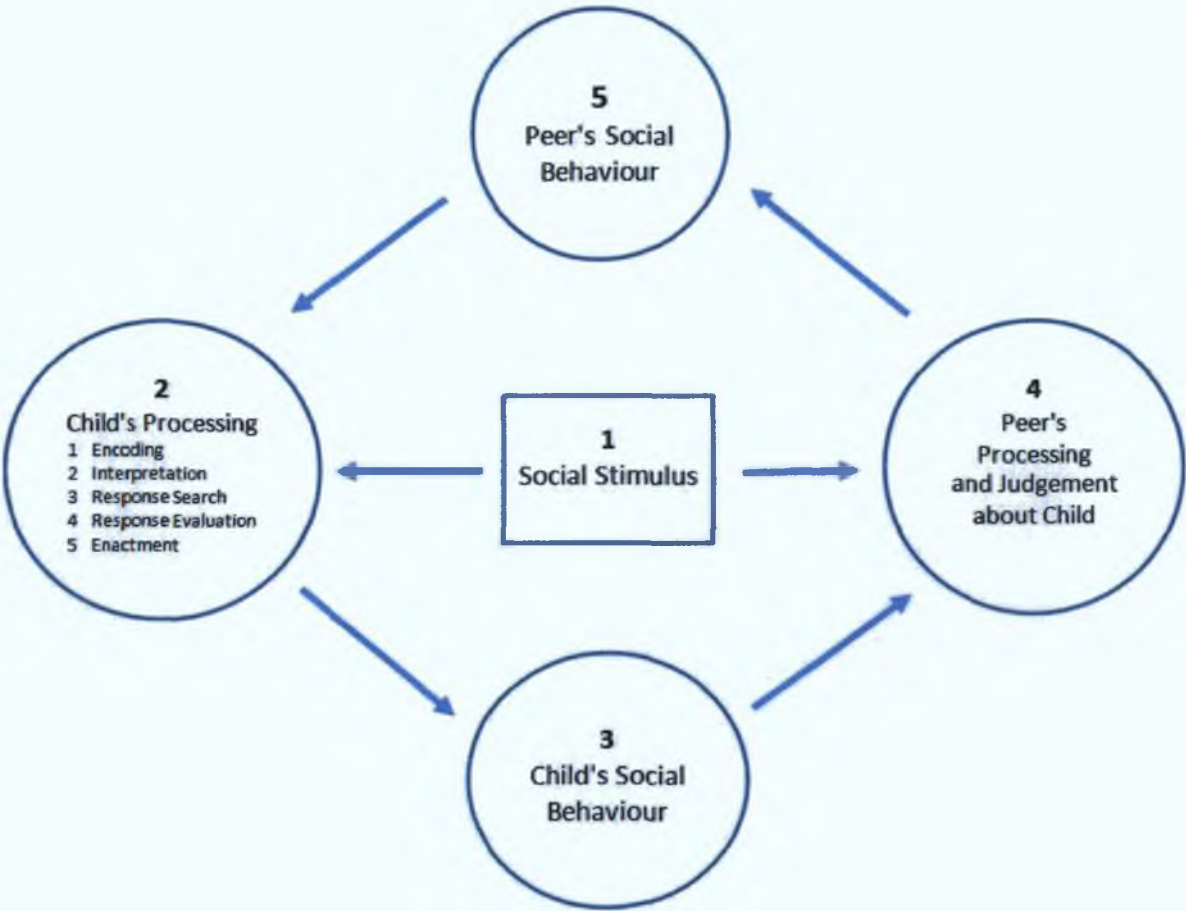
Note. (Dodge et al., 1986, p. 2)

Social Communication and Social Relations

Communication facilitates "the basis by which we experience thought, intentions, and information and thus determines the quality of our social relationships" (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010, p. 49). Children with good linguistic capacity are better able to communicate emotional information and this in turn assists better quality social interaction. Landa (2005) maintains that aspects of social communication such as joint attention, communicative intent, communicative initiation and responsiveness, integration of affect and gesture have tended to be overlooked despite the fact that they impact considerably on children's social acceptance, behaviour and well-being. Language is acquired and used within a social context, hence if children do not understand the social cues provided by others they are likely to breach basic pragmatic rules and encounter challenges in communication. Managing conversation is difficult for children with SEN due to the number of skills simultaneously employed. For example they include: planning form and content, monitoring comprehension of oneself and partner, while also adhering to social rules within specific contexts. Expressive and receptive language skills have definite implications for social interactions as they impact directly on expression and comprehension of the message being communicated (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010). Pragmatic language skills are used daily in our encounters with others and are vital for communicating personal thoughts and emotions. They encompass the social language skills we employ and comprise speech content, delivery, and knowing whether what is said is appropriate to a given context. Children with deficits in this area often misunderstand other's communicative intent and experience difficulties responding appropriately (Hill, 2008). Pragmatics play an important role in "determining context, creating logical sequences, determining the burden of conversation (as in turn taking), and monitoring the appropriateness of utterances" (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010, p. 49). In addition, children who experience difficulties decoding subtle differences in prosody

(pitch, loudness/intensity, intonation, rate, stress, rhythm) are disadvantaged due to its

importance for communicating emphasis, clarification and contradiction of word meanings.

Children who experience difficulties detecting implied meaning through, for example irony,

do "not receive the social cues necessary to respond appropriately and may consequently

breach social rules, leading to socially inappropriate responses and negative peer

interactions" (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010, p. 49). Subtle features of language are

therefore very important in terms of communication and social relationships. An examination

of AD/HD behaviours and pragmatic skills indicates that aspects of this may be particularly

vulnerable to disruption in pupils assessed with AD/HD (Camarata & Gibson, 1999).

Authors maintain that the provision of good role models and role-playing contexts

may support children with poor pragmatic skills and provide an opportunity to practise

appropriate behaviours in context (Vicker, n.d.; Brennan, French & Delaney, 1999).

Acknowledging that the development of positive peer relationships among children is

fundamental, Brown, Odom and Conroy (2001) advocate a staged hierarchy of peer

interaction interventions which affords teachers

> a practical decision-making process for fostering and improving young children's
>
> interactions in inclusive early education programs....Implicit in the proposed hierarchy
>
> is the viewpoint that interventionists should use peer-related social competence
>
> interventions that are only as intensive as necessary to promote interactions (pp. 171-
>
> 172).

Such a pragmatic approach is based on developmentally appropriate practices which

encompass classroom-wide and individual approaches, together with systematic teacher-

based observations to determine whether more intensive interventions are warranted

(Appendix C). Having discussed key concepts pertaining to the research topic, it is now

important to discuss the theoretical framework within which this research is framed. It is imperative that the underpinning theoretical framework be outlined as it provides the analytical lens through which interpretation of data is conducted.

Theoretical Perspective

There are numerous ways of viewing phenomena of educational needs (Ainscow, 1998, as cited in Nilholm, 2006). Perspective underpins what we view, how we interpret it and what actions we take. Assumptions underpinning inclusive policies may be affected by motives which include social, legal, political, financial, educational, and advocatory interests. Thus, mindful that all description represents choices and judgements, it is necessary to state that my perspective is that of a LS/RT, who until the suppression of special classes for children with MGLD in 2009 had been a special class teacher for nine years. The assumptions underpinning my motives in relation to inclusive policy lie predominantly in the social, educational and advocatory domain. In terms of children's learning, I adopt a constructivist perspective, believing that reality is constructed through the interaction of the creative and interpretive work of the mind with the physical world. Explaining this conceptualisation, Paul, Graffam and Fowler (2005) suggest that knowledge is viewed as "a dynamic product of the interactive work of the mind made manifest in social practices and institutions....The inquirer attempts to understand meaning within a given context, seeking a broad range of inputs and interpretations" (p. 46). Congruent with this conception I view children's learning as a socially active process involving others (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002).

Philosophically, in implementing this study I assume a critical realist perspective. Noblit (2005) maintains that "critical ethnography is guided by a central idea that social life is constructed in contexts of power that dominate some in serving the interests of others" (p. 76). Thomas (1993) asserts that the task of the critical ethnographer is to "describe, analyze and open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain. Critical scholarship requires that commonsense assumptions be questioned" (pp. 2-3). Thomas (1993) explains that critical realists endeavour to confront 'taken for granted realities' or levels of experience that present as not warranting further analysis (Schutz, 1972, as cited in Thomas, 1993). In so doing critical researchers seek to illuminate fundamental questions regarding social phenomena often ignored by others. Citing Carspecken (1996), Noblit (2005) argues that critical researchers overcome oppression by revealing and critiquing it. Thus, it is important that critical researchers accept that knowledge itself is interpenetrated with power. Hence, critical theorists must reflect on how their actions in representing people and situations are acts of domination. In so doing critical research turns "its value orientation and epistemological understandings back on itself" (Noblit, 2005, p. 77).

Madison (2004) maintains that ethnographic positionality is fundamental as it forces researchers to recognise their power and biases as they critique the power structures that surround their focus of research. In adopting a critical realist approach of question and critique, I am endeavouring to reveal the dynamics of power and ideology and to critically review the context and social practices under investigation. Thus, it is important that I remain mindful of my moral responsibility in terms of representation and interpretation. Turning the lens reflexively back upon myself, I have five central questions to consider:

- How do I reflect upon and evaluate my own purpose, intentions, and frames of analysis as a researcher?

- How do I predict consequences or evaluate my own potential to harm?

- How do I create and maintain a dialogue of collaboration in my research project between myself and Others?

- How is the specificity of the local story relevant to the broader meanings and operations of the human condition? .

- How–in what location or through what intervention–will my work make the greatest contribution to equity, freedom, and justice? (Adapted from Madison, 2004, p. 4).

Contemplating these five questions, I intend to address how my inherent subjective self "informs and is informed by engagement and representation of the Other" (Madison, 2004, p. 9). In adopting this stance, it is anticipated that insights will be gained which may provide an impetus for change. Having identified the theoretical concepts informing the approach to this study, I will now discuss research practice involving children.

Research Practice with Children

Identifying the growing interest in how research is conducted with children, Waldron (2006) maintains that the traditional model of research that perceives children as "subjects of research with no active role to play beyond the provision of data is being increasingly challenged by methodologies that see research as a collaboration between researcher and subjects" (p. 85).[25] She posits a continuum of children's participation in research beginning with full access to information and progressing to include consultation, participation and collaboration. Figure 2.3 outlines this continuum.

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[25] Is Waldron's use of the word *subject* itself open to critique?

Figure 2.3. Continuum of Children's Participation in Research

Child	Research characteristics	Researcher
As co-researcher Collaborating in every stage of the research, from planning to publication of outcomes. Critical reflection on process of research and identity as researcher	Collaboration in the framing and in the planning of the research process Participating in gathering and interpreting of data Participating in decisions about outcomes	**As co-researcher...** Collaborating in every stage of the research, from planning to publication of outcomes Critical reflection on process of research and identity as researcher
As participant Participating in decision making and/or agenda setting through task-oriented and/or problematizing methodologies	Use of methodologies that provide opportunities for children to create meaningful data Providing opportunities for engaging in decisions around the research and the research agenda	**As facilitator...** Creating opportunities for children to participate in creating meaningful data and in decision making around research process
As contributor Consulted about the process and product but with no decision-making role	Use of methodologies that allow children to share their views and opinions Children consulted about their experience of the research and their views of the research outcomes	**As active listener...** Providing authentic opportunities for children to give their views on research topic and process Listening to children's views on the research outcomes
As research subject... Informed about the process and outcomes	Informed about the purpose and process of the research and their role within it. Informed about each stage in the research including outcomes Given right to withdraw from process at any stage	**As respectful researcher...** Ensuring that children are in a position to give informed consent Valuing children's time and contribution

(Arrow labels, bottom to top: *Access to decision making*; *Participation in decision making*; *Sharing of decision making*)

Note. (Adapted from Waldron, 2006

It is important to note that in terms of research there is a difference

between giving children the opportunity to express their opinions and

giving them a voice in the research process. Implicit in the idea of voice is some

control over decision making and a consultative process, whereas allowing children's

views to be heard does not in itself give children any such role (Waldron, 2006, p.

95).

There is also a distinction between the notion of participation and collaboration. While

participation can involve shared decision-making, it does not involve collaboration in the

overall research design or output. Waldron maintains that the line between the four levels of

information, consultation, participation and collaboration can in practice be somewhat

blurred.

Thus, applying Waldron's (2006) continuum model to this study in terms of the

children's access, participation and sharing in decision making, their role (indicated by the

grey shading) is that of contributor. That is to say they are consulted about the process and

product but have no decision-making role. Consistent with this approach, methodologies that

provide opportunities for the children to share their views and opinions are employed, and the

children are consulted in terms of their experience of the research and their views on its

outcomes. [26] In implementing this study, I adopted the role of active listener, offering

authentic opportunities to the children to express their views on the research topic and

process and listening to their views on the research outcomes. I deliberated as to whether the

children's role would be that of participant or contributor. However, as my intention was to

give prominence to students' voice, in terms of their social participation in the life of the

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[26] It is important to note that, the first level of this model which includes for example the right to withdraw at any stage and acknowledging the value of the children's time and contribution, also applies as you progress up the continuum.

school, I did not want this objective sidelined by focusing on their decision-making in the actual research process. Thus, in coming to this resolution, it is anticipated that this approach will have the capability to engage both the researcher and the children "in a process of critical reflection leading to individual and professional growth" (Waldron, 2006, p. 105). Having defined key terms and outlined the theoretical framework pertaining to this study, related factors/characteristics central to the conception of inclusive education are now discussed.

Inclusive Education

Factors Associated with Successful Inclusion

The National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI) (1994) identified seven factors for the successful implementation of inclusion in a countrywide study in the USA. They include: (a) visionary leadership; (b) collaboration; (c) refocused use of assessment; (d) support for staff and students; (e) funding; (f) effective parental and family involvement; and (g) models and classroom practices that support inclusion. Leadership may come from state leaders, school principals, teachers, families, and board of management members. No one teacher is expected to possess all the expertise needed to accommodate all students. Hence the NCERI underscores the need for collaborative planning and acknowledges the problem-solver and researcher role of teachers. Assessment is intended to build a greater understanding of the student's needs and should include student portfolios and contributions made by their families. Staff development and flexible planning time is highlighted as are supports for students in the form of supplementary aids and services, for example "buddy systems" and specialised programmes such as "Circle of Friends". Funding and parental participation are identified as consistently contributing to successful inclusion. An observation made by Norwich and Kelly (2005) and reiterated by Wilde and Avramidis (2011) is that the characteristics underscored by the NCERI (1994) are "very general and tend

52

to overlook the ambiguity, tensions and complexity of schooling....being descriptions of inclusive schools it remains unclear whether these factors are causal of inclusive development or simply defining characteristics of inclusive schools" (Wilde & Avramidis, 2011, pp. 85-86). In general the literature reveals that there is no single model of inclusion. A number of partnership models include variations of co-teaching and team teaching and activity-based learning approaches such as the use of peer support and tutoring programmes (Nind & Wearmouth, 2006). Dyson, Howes and Roberts (2002) contend that schools embodying an inclusive culture demonstrate a high degree of collaboration among staff, underpinned by joint problem-solving and shared values. They also found that commitments extend to the student and parent body and the wider community and that both national and individual school policy can facilitate or impede the realisation of a school's inclusive culture. Similar results have been found in other research (Ainscow, 1997; Peters, 2002; Thousand & Villa, 2000; Villa & Thousand, 1996) and may also be open to the same criticism. In light of this, Wilde and Avramidis (2011) suggest that recommendations should be interpreted as "levers for change or organisational actions that can move school systems in an inclusive direction" (p. 86).

Parents' attitudes to inclusion.

The reason why children with SEN experience difficulties making and keeping friends is unclear. It is suggested that factors such as teachers' attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002), attitudes of TDPs towards children with SEN (Nowicki & Sandieson, 2002) and attitudes of parents have a role to play. A review of 26 studies by De Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2010) suggests that in general parents "hold neutral to positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools" (p. 177). Parents who are positive towards inclusion transfer their attitudes to their children. Thus, their children may

be more accepting of pupils with SEN. It can be inferred that parents have an indirect effect on the social participation of pupils with SEN; hence promoting positive parent attitude would be "a worthwhile goal for teachers and administrators" (De Boer, Pijl, Post & Minnaert, 2013, p. 841). Although parents' motives for enrolling children with SEN in mainstream schools vary, De Boer et al. (2010) maintain that parents who opt for mainstream settings generally do so because of the possibility of their children being socially included in the peer group.

Peers' attitudes towards peers with disability.

A related review of the literature, based on 20 studies in seven different countries and focusing on students' attitudes towards peers with disabilities,[27] revealed that in general students hold neutral beliefs, feelings and behavioural intentions towards peers with SEN (De Boer et al., 2012). Mindful of the possible consequences of negative attitudes for students with SEN, (low peer acceptance, few friendships, being rejected or bullied) De Boer et al. (2012) identified variables related to students' attitudes towards peers with disabilities. These include: gender, age, experience with and knowledge of disabilities, and parental influence. It is important to note that averages showing neutral scores are derived from data which may encompass considerable variance. Despite the overall neutral score, De Boer et al. (2012) make the point that in actual fact a number of students may hold more positive or more negative attitudes and that even a small group of peers with negative attitudes can make life in school very difficult for a pupil with SEN. Thus, it is important to note that neutral scores also imply a number of pupils with negative attitudes.

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[27] Analysis of studies was conducted under the following headings: (a) attitude of students towards peers with disabilities; (b) variables relating to students' attitudes; and (c) the relationship between student's attitudes and the social participation of peers with disabilities.

In terms of the relationship between students' attitudes and the social participation of

peers with SEN, De Boer et al. (2012) reveal that limited research has been implemented in

this area. Three of the twenty studies analysed supported this relationship with empirical data.

Based on these findings, De Boer et al. (2012) maintain "that it can be carefully concluded

that positive attitudes of peers are important for successful social outcomes of inclusive

education (p. 389). A good starting point for educational intervention is De Boer et al.'s

finding that pupils become more accepting as their knowledge and understanding of peers

with SEN increase. With this in mind, they recommend a focus in future studies on

interventions to improve peer attitudes involving parents. They maintain that within

educational settings information about disabilities (storytelling, books, posters & videos)

could readily be used to foster more positive attitudes among TDPs. In time such approaches

may result in effective intervention whereby pupils with SEN can participate better in

mainstream education. Interestingly a comparison study (between pupils who had experience

of a peer with SEN and those who did not) implemented in a rural county in Ireland found

that children hold positive attitudes towards peers with moderate GLD and that their attitudes

are not negatively impacted by long-term contact (McStay, McGree & Hunt, 2008). The

integrated group in this sample (TDPs and pupils with SEN) comprised 57 while the

segregated group comprised 61. Interestingly, 19% of 57 participants within the integrated

group, who had a peer with moderate GLD in their class for at least four years, reported that

they did not know anybody with intellectual disability. The authors suggest that "the

experience of full inclusion for over four years may have resulted in the perception of more

similarities than differences for some children" (p. 30). They recommend that further research

is warranted to determine if the effects of the strengths-needs model of disability, favoured in

their study, results in more positive effect on peers' attitudes than a deficit model. If this is

found to be the case they suggest that "the former should be employed to support inclusive education in schools and in disability awareness education programmes" (p. 31).

Children's knowledge and experience of disability.

With regard to knowledge and experience of disability, research conducted with 53 primary school children in England revealed that children demonstrate lack of understanding with regard to the complexity of disability (Hodkinson, 2007). Consequently they hold a narrow conceptualisation of how disability is operationalised in society. The same work indicates that primary-age pupils' understanding of disability is based on the medical deficit model and conception of limb incapacity. Findings reveal that children have a very limited understanding of the concept of inclusion and that some children display negative attitudes to disability. Citing Holt (2004), Hodkinson (2007) contends that "schools are porous rather than bounded spaces where children utilise knowledge and experience gained in other contexts in the formulation of negative attitudes to disability" (p. 74). On a more positive note, results reveal that children possess a major ingredient for successful inclusive education in that they appear strongly committed to the principle of equality of educational opportunity. Based upon these findings, Hodkinson (2007) concludes that TDPs should be educated about inclusive education and recommends that further research regarding attitudes and conceptions of disability among children be implemented. The issue of peer attitude is further outlined in this chapter in relation to 'contact hypotheses'.

Teachers' attitudes.

Consistent with Croll and Moses (2000), a synthesis of the literature on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion by Avramidis and Norwich (2002) indicates that even though teachers are positively disposed to the philosophy of inclusion, they do not advocate an absolute inclusive approach to special educational provision. Rather, "they hold differing attitudes about school placements, based largely upon the nature of the students' disabilities" (p. 142). A number of studies reveal that teachers are more negative about including pupils with learning disabilities, AD/HD and other behavioural difficulties. While acknowledging that teachers are perceived as key participants in the implementation of inclusive education, De Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2011) reveal that in a review of 26 studies a majority of mainstream primary teachers held neutral or negative attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. Length of teaching experience is a related variable to teachers' attitudes. Teachers with fewer years of experience held more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with SEN than teachers with more years of experience (De Boer et al., 2011). De Boer et al. (2011) report a clear difference in attitude between teachers with and without experience of inclusive education whereby teachers with experience held more positive attitudes than those without experience. The findings based on teaching experience and experiences with inclusive education appear contradictory, however a possible explanation posited by De Boer et al. (2011) is that teachers may grow 'stale' in their profession and find it difficult to educate students with various types of SEN. It is thus reasonable to suggest that such teachers may be less supportive of inclusion. Teachers who received long-term training in the area of special education also held more positive attitudes towards inclusive education in comparison to those who had no training; a finding that also emerged elsewhere in the research (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007). While there is evidence that teachers' attitudes vary in relation to type of

disabilities it is unclear "to what extent this affects their behaviour, support and willingness to make inclusive education possible" (De Boer et al., 2011, p. 349). In other words no conclusion could be drawn in terms of the effects of teachers' attitudes on the social participation of students with SEN. Interestingly, Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) indicate that, while mainstream teachers in Turkey expressed a desire to learn new skills to accommodate pupils with SEN, they hold negative attitudes towards inclusion. It is important, therefore, to note that the process involved in creating inclusive schools entails changes that may result in resistance and fears, which can undermine the process (Freire & César, 2003). It is crucial that the process is appropriately planned and supported in order to overcome teachers' initial concern. Planning requires "careful and flexible allocation of the available resources based on the severity of needs represented in the inclusive settings" (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002, p. 142). In line with this, Travers (2013) insists that the review of inclusive education commenced in Ireland, must not disturb the delicate structure currently in place.

Factors Involved in the Formation of Friendship

Homophily

In evaluating the social impacts of inclusion in educational settings, Avramidis and Wilde (2009) outline two theories, namely 'homophily' or 'similarity' and 'contact hypotheses'. In the context of research into pupils' social relations, homophily refers to the reported tendency for pupils to choose to associate with similar peers. It is based on different elements of identity, such as age, gender, race, educational attainment, values, interests, and beliefs. Research suggests "that because pupils attributed with significant SEN often lack certain qualities on one or more of the dimensions for homophily, they tend to be excluded by pupils without SEN who in turn flock together" (Guralnick et al., 1995, as cited in Avramidis & Wilde, 2009, p. 325). Referring to the concept of homophily, Male (2007) employs the

term similarity, distinguishing three types: attitude similarity, demographic similarity (e.g. age, sex, socioeconomic status), and similarity in personality. Male contends that similarity is important because: if we like people who are similar to ourselves, there is a good chance that they will also like us; it is easier to communicate with those who are similar; others who are similar may confirm the rightness of our attitudes and beliefs; and it stands to reason that if we like ourselves, we should then like others who are similar to us. According to Male, the similarity hypothesis partly explains why, even in inclusive settings, pupils with SEN are more likely to form friendships with peers who have SEN rather than their TDPs. Aboud and Mendelson (1996) underscore the importance of similarity for children when they are establishing early friendships. This implies that children become friends based on factors which include same-sex preference, sharing similar interests, activities, demographic and personal characteristics. In light of this, De Boer et al. (2012) contend that it is not surprising that in their research they did not identify an effect size on the child-related factors they investigated, namely social behaviour and type of disability. "The difficulties in social behaviour and the type of disability may emphasize the differences between students with disabilities and their peers, resulting in less peer initiative to become friends" (De Boer et al., 2013, p. 841). In keeping with the similarity hypothesis, they note that there appears to be a need for teachers to emphasise the similarities between students with disabilities and their TDPs. Interestingly, findings from Avramidis and Wilde's (2009) study, employing sociometry with 566 children[28] in 7 schools in North England, in which there was a range of disabilities and differing 'tracks' towards inclusion, did not support the homophily theory in relation to pupils with SEN.

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[28] The sample of pupils with SEN consisted of 56 pupils at the School Action stage, 28 at the School Action Plus stage, and 7 with Statements (Avramidis, 2009a).

Contact Hypothesis

Contact hypothesis "refers to the effect of increased interaction on the mainstream pupils' attitude towards pupils they perceive as having SEN" (Avramidis & Wilde, 2009, p. 326). It is suggested that as TDPs get closer to their peers with SEN in mainstream settings, their attitudes become more positive. Avramidis and Wilde (2009) note that researchers (Scheepstra, Nakken & Pijl, 1999) have suggested that the attitude of TDPs can be influenced. Moreover, research indicates that co-operative learning methods foster co-operation between children with and without SEN and have the potential to promote attitudinal changes in both groups. However, it should be noted that Pijl et al. (2008) and Vignes et al. (2009) report that including children with SEN does not automatically lead to increased friendships between them and their TDPs. Moreover, Avradimis and Wilde (2009) note that as the literature contains a number of experimental studies where increasing contact did not produce any attitudinal change, contact hypothesis should be viewed with a degree of caution. Notwithstanding this, they contend that although friendships cannot be engineered, assisting pupils to discover creative ways of forming them should be high on every school's agenda. Having discussed factors associated with inclusion and the formation of friendships, the following section offers an overview of key studies into inclusive education in Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.[29]

Key Studies into Inclusive Education: Ireland, the Netherlands and United Kingdom

In a recent study, based on findings into the inclusion of children with SEN, and analyses of official statistics and reports, Drudy and Kinsella (2009) evaluate the progress made towards an inclusive education system in Ireland. Placing a particular focus on disability, they sought to ascertain whether the unprecedented changes which took place in

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[29]These jurisdictions were selected as authors had conducted key studies relevant to the current study.

Ireland had "resulted in a more inclusive system, an increase in equality, and an increase in inclusive practices in schools" (p. 647). Aspects such as social class, ethnicity and gender were also explored. The investigation involved semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of key informants comprising service providers such as, DES inspectors, school principals and teachers; and service users, namely parents of pupils with SEN and support/advocacy representatives. Reflecting observations made by Shevlin and O'Moore (2000), participants emphasised the educational and social benefits gained from inclusion for pupils with and without SEN. In keeping with other national research (Travers et al., 2010; Shevlin et al., 2008; Ware et al., 2011), they also highlighted the inextricable links between educational inclusion and social participation, stressing the importance of all children receiving their education locally with their peers. While the majority of participants "were reluctant to advocate full inclusion without some qualification, the social rationale for inclusion emerged as a strong theme" (Drudy & Kinsella, 2009, p. 656) as did 'balancing the rights' of students with and without SEN. Identified challenges/barriers include the need for appropriate pre-service education for teachers, ongoing opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD), prompt provision of resources to schools, the development of appropriate home-school partnerships, effectual leadership, and lower pupil-teacher ratios. Significantly, mainstream teachers' attitudes were identified as playing a central role in inclusion.

Another key study, conducted by Travers et al. (2010), examined how a number of schools in Ireland were attempting to overcome challenges/barriers to inclusion. Using a case study design, they examined data across three primary and three post-primary schools. Data comprised: 312 questionnaires, 72 interview transcripts, ten day-long observations, school documents and a selection of student drawings. Key informants within the Irish education

system assisted in selecting the participating schools which were considered to be seeking "to operate as inclusively as possible" (p. viii). The study focused on: minority ethnic students, minority language students and students with SEN. Mindful that the current study is concerned with the latter, and that the sample used was purposive, a number of interesting findings emerged. Results show that barriers to inclusion "point to considerable challenges in relation to the expertise of schools and teachers with regard to assessment and the provision of support services" (p. ix). Discipline related issues posed challenges, as did the implementation of plans when required supports and resources were not forthcoming. Withdrawing pupils for additional support was identified as a barrier to inclusion by teachers, principals and SNAs. Concern was expressed regarding pupils' absences from aspects of whole-class work and life. It was felt that withdrawal resulted in pupils feeling stigmatised, which in turn negatively impacted on their self-esteem.

McCoy and Banks (2012) note that only in recent years has interest been taken in the more subtle aspects of education such as the extent to which children enjoy school, their level of school engagement and social/peer relations. Using data from a child-centred longitudinal large scale study of 8,578 children aged 9, they explored the reasons underlying why children with SEN experienced more dislike of school than their TDPs. Employing a holistic view of the child's day-to-day engagement in school by focusing on the child's homework completion, and their liking of maths and reading they found that children who always come to school with their homework completed, always like studying maths and reading and are significantly less likely to never like school. Their findings reveal that school engagement and enjoyment of school are influenced by the children's social relations with teachers and peers. They also note that "children with SEN, particularly those identified with learning disabilities, face considerable barriers to fully engage in school life" (p. 94). Notwithstanding

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the fact that in terms of policy the primary school curriculum now encompasses an inclusive

education system, McCoy and Banks noted that when they examined how children with SEN

were faring in mainstream settings, there was limited evidence of an inclusive system. In light

of their findings they highlight the need to examine the practical implications of inclusive

education strategies as outlined in the EPSEN Act.

Exploring the social participation of pupils with SEN (grades one to three) in

mainstream primary schools in the Netherlands, Koster et al. (2010) reveal that the majority

of pupils experience a satisfactory degree of social participation. However, when compared

with their TDPs a large proportion of pupils with SEN were found to have a significantly

lower number of friends, to be members of a cohesive subgroup less often, have fewer

interactions with their peers, have more interactions with their teachers, and be less accepted

than their TDPs. To have more teacher interactions could be viewed negatively as they may

occur at the expense of interactions with peers (Koster et al., 2010). Interestingly, although it

was expected that pupils with SEN might have lower social self-perception than their TDPs

because of their lower number of friendships, lower acceptance and lower number of

interactions with classmates; this was not the case. In fact the social perception of both

groups did not differ; a finding which also emerged with Avramidis (2012) and O'Keeffe

(2009). Citing Cunningham and Glenn (2004), Koster et al. suggest that children with a

mental age below seven/eight are incapable of formulating accurate assessments as "they

seem to be positively biased in their self-evaluations" (p. 70). Similarly, Nowicki (2003)

maintains that children with SEN do not appear to have accurate perceptions of social

acceptance. Contrastingly, Bear, Juvonen, and McInerney (1993) suggest that while self-

perceptions of social acceptance among students with SEN may appear more favourable than

peer relations may possibly merit, such self-perceptions do not necessarily indicate social

obliviousness or insensitivity. In fact while a number of students may hold inflated self-perceptions, others may possess the ability to emphasise the positive aspects of their peer relations. It is plausible that they may derive satisfaction from having one close friend while downgrading aspects such as being disliked or ignored by some classmates. Indeed despite a possible bias in young pupils' self-evaluations, Koster et al. (2010) maintain that "it remains important to include students' voices when evaluating inclusion, as they are key figures in the inclusion process" (p. 70).

Contrary to expectations, the findings of Koster et al. (2010) also indicated no significant differences between pupils with various categories of disability in any of the four areas of social participation. This, they maintain may be as a result of the low number of pupils in their subgroups. In light of this they recommend further research encompassing larger subgroups of pupils with specific categories of disability. The findings of Koster et al. (2010) are important as they indicate that pupils with SEN perform significantly less well on social participation than their TDPs. It follows that although social participation is deemed one of the most important outcomes of inclusion, for a significant number of pupils with SEN, optimal social participation is not fully achieved in practice. The contradiction inherent in this situation is noted by the authors who state that "inclusion is promoted because it is assumed to be positive for students with special needs, but we know that for some of these students inclusion might result in negative outcomes (e.g. loneliness, rejection)" (Koster et al., 2010, p. 71). It is unacceptable to note that pupils with SEN have a greater chance of being socially excluded than their TDPs, without doing something about it. Hence, interventions to change this situation are crucial.

Interventions in the past have tended to be aimed purely at pupils with SEN. Koster et al. (2010) believe that both from an educational and pedagogical perspective, interventions involving other participants are required. Parents should be involved as the outcome of inclusion is influenced by the attitudes of the parents of children with and without SEN. Teachers are important also, as the literature indicates that their views are important in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Monsen & Frederickson, 2004). Teachers are well-positioned to make accurate appraisals of pupil's social participation, and observe difficulties early on in play (Koster, Timmerman et al., 2009). Classmates are also important participants in interventions directed at enhancing the social participation of pupils with SEN (De Boer et al., 2013; Frederickson, Warren & Turner, 2005, as cited in Koster et al., 2010). A multi-party approach to interventions should contribute to optimising the experiences of pupils with SEN in inclusive settings (Avramidis, 2009b; Koster et al., 2010).

Koster et al. (2010) maintain that their findings are of concern as they show that pupils with SEN performed significantly less well than their TDPs on three important areas of social participation[30]. Citing the literature (Bagwell, Newcomb & Bukowski, 1998; Parker & Asher, 1978, as cited in Koster et al., 2010), they emphasise that the consequences of negative social experiences in school may be far-reaching, and may lead to maladjustment in later life. However, they caution that their findings require careful interpretation for two reasons. Firstly, although pupils with SEN have fewer friends than their TDPs, the vast majority have one or more friends. This outcome is positive, as having at least one friend may present an emotional support and source of companionship. In addition, the majority of pupils

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[30]The three areas comprise friendship/relationships, contacts/interactions and acceptance by classmates, while social perception of students with SEN did not differ from their TDPs.

with SEN have a positive social self-perception, are accepted and have a reasonable amount of contacts with their peers. Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that we do not know how the pupils with SEN who participated in this study would have fared in special-education settings. The findings may have been similar. For example, Mand (2007) reports that a large proportion of pupils "with behavioural disorders have a negative social position in the classroom and are not liked by peers, not only in regular classes but also in special-education settings" (Koster et al., 2010, p 70). Furthermore, it is important to view these findings in the context of a Dutch society where the change to inclusive education has not long been established. Consequently many schools do not have much experience in terms of including children with SEN, and pupils have limited experience of having peers with SEN in their class (Koster et al., 2010).

In a related study Avramidis (2012) queries claims in the literature which suggest that pupils with SEN are socially isolated and have negative self-perceptions. Investigating the multi-dimensional aspects of pupils' self-concept and their social position within the class network, Avramidis' findings indicate that pupils with SEN have positive perceptions in all assessed domains of self-concept, feel good about their academic attainments, and feel socially accepted by their peers. In terms of their social position he found that pupils with SEN were less popular and had fewer friends than their TDPs. Interestingly, his findings revealed that children with SEN had formed some positive friendships, they were equally likely to be included in social clusters, and were no more likely to be isolated than their TDPs. Avramidis maintains that it is important "to distinguish between the question of the social status of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and that of their social participation" (p.5). Using supplementary evidence from teacher accounts of the nature of interaction and quality of friendship in classes, Avramidis contends "that experiencing SEN alone is not a

determining factor of social isolation and argues that schools should aim at enhancing the self-image and reducing the marginalisation of all pupils regardless of their SEN or non-SEN classification" (p.1). Suggesting that both his quantitative and qualitative findings provide an insight into the dynamics of social interaction between children in mainstream settings, he makes the point that "far from providing unequivocal support for inclusion, they force us to raise the question of what we are trying to achieve with inclusion and whether this study's observed pupil perceptions of self-concept, social status and social participation match our aims" (Avramidis, 2012, p. 17).

In a study using separate social networks of boys and girls, De Boer et al. (2013) explored why students with SEN (AD/HD & ASD) experience difficulties in their social participation. Applying multilevel regression analyses the authors examined which child, peer, and class variables relate to peer acceptance and friendships. Sociometric data from 985 TDPs and 65 students with SEN revealed different outcomes in terms of peer acceptance for both boys and girls with SEN. Results indicated that very few boys and girls nominated a pupil with SEN of the opposite gender as a friend. Findings also revealed that girls with SEN are less likely to be accepted by their same-sex peers when they demonstrate social problems in class such as not getting along with others or complaining about being lonely. Findings showed no difference between girls with AD/HD and ASD, thus suggesting that type of disability is no indicator for peers to accept/not accept girls with SEN. These findings appear to "support the assumption that social behaviour of girls with disabilities is responsible for peer initiatives to become more accepting" (De Boer et al., 2013, p. 840). Conversely, outcomes for boys with SEN indicate that social problems demonstrated by boys with SEN are not deemed important in being accepted by their same-sex peers. In examining whether boys' individual attitudes and the mean class attitude toward boys with disability were related

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to peer acceptance of boys with disability, no relationship was found between the individual attitude of boys and the acceptance of boys with SEN. In fact, findings indicated "that the mean class attitude of boys significantly relates to peer acceptance of boys with disabilities when controlling for the individual attitude (p = .04)" (pp. 836-837). Their findings indicate that boys with SEN are more likely to be accepted when the mean class attitude of boys is higher. In exploring whether girls' individual attitudes and the mean class attitude of girls with disability was related to peer acceptance of girls with disability, De Boer et al. (2013) found "that girls' individual attitudes are significantly related to peer acceptance of girls with disabilities (p = .04)" (p. 838). These findings suggest that girls with SEN are more likely to be accepted by girls with a more positive attitude to disability. Findings indicate that the mean class attitude of girls is not related to the peer acceptance of girls with SEN. From analysis of their findings De Boer et al. (2013) conclude that girls and boys employ different indicators in their peer acceptance. They suggest that girls are motivated by intrinsic and more personal factors while boys tend to be influenced more by the peer group attitude. Consequently they infer that boys might be more motivated by a need for social inclusion and approval.

These findings are of interest to the current study as the key participants are three boys with SEN in a co-educational mainstream setting. De Boer et al. (2013) make the point that despite the differences in peer attitudes, their study indicates that there is a relationship between attitudes and peer acceptance of students with SEN in mainstream primary education. This finding is important as previously it had "only been suggested that positive attitudes of peers result in successful implementation and outcomes of inclusive education" (p. 840). Their findings provide a basis for designing interventions to improve peer attitude which may result in better acceptance of students with SEN. Previous research (Godeau et al.,

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2010) had shown that peer attitudes improved when children learn more about disabilities. In future, interventions should include both "attitude change of peers and improvement of peer acceptance of students with disabilities. Differences between boys' and girls' attitudes should also be taken into account to ensure more effectiveness" (De Boer et al., 2013, p. 840). Factors pertinent to inclusive whole-school organisation are now discussed.

Factors Pertinent to Inclusive Education and Whole-School Organisation

Consistent with O'Gorman (2007), Travers et al. (2010) observed a strong tradition of social, emotional and pastoral care across the six schools in their study. Findings based on children's perspectives of what makes them feel included, highlight the importance of the social aspects of inclusion. Certain curricular areas for example, social, personal and health education (SPHE) were identified as facilitating inclusion. 'Within-child' factors, comprising pupil's ability, characteristics, lack of motivation, lack of confidence, and low self-esteem were identified as potential challenges. This resonates with findings from O'Neill (2007) and Pringle (2008). Pringle investigated the school completion outcomes for 55 pupils with MGLD from a primary school special class, and identified resilience as a protective factor which enabled pupils to complete school successfully. Interestingly, barriers to inclusion identified by Travers et al. (2010) and highlighted by pupils relate predominantly to the social dimension of inclusion. They include bullying, being left out of games, not having friends, negative teacher-pupil relationships, difficulty with work and perceived negative impact of receiving assistance from SNAs. When children were asked what makes them feel included, the most common theme was 'playing games together'. Pupils mentioned that teachers could help them feel included "by engaging in more group activities and by responding to individual needs" (p. xix). Reflecting findings by O'Donnell (2003), pupils indicated that a

positive atmosphere and the social aspect of friendship contributed to their feelings of inclusion.

A key finding reported by Travers et al. (2010) was the use of "innovation and flexibility in models of support and organisation" (p. xiii). The role of factors such as early intervention, flexible timetabling and team teaching strongly emerged together with flexible use of the special class. Principals were identified as using distributed leadership, being supportive of SEN co-ordinators, and having a positive influence on their staff. Likewise, SEN co-ordinators demonstrated vision and willingness to support, lead, and mentor colleagues. School policies were supportive of inclusion, as was the deployment of SNAs and the style of planning/preparation, and resource materials were readily accessible. Other factors included inclusive teaching strategies and methodologies.

In terms of classroom-related variables, De Boer et al. (2013) found that teacher assistants negatively affected peer acceptance of pupils with SEN. This finding is consistent with other research (Giangreco & Broer, 2005; Giangreco & Doyle, 2007; Howes, 2003). In a systematic review of the literature, Howes (2003) examined the impact support staff has in mainstream schools in terms of pupil participation and outcomes. In conclusion he highlights the risk of inadvertently marginalising students with SEN through the provision of isolated support. He highlights the existence of tensions between support staff behaviours which result in short-term effects perceived to represent learning such as being on task, completing coursework and the "potentially negative effect on participation and perhaps on long-term construction of learner identities" (p. 151). De Boer et al. (2013) make the point that although teachers report increased job satisfaction and effectiveness as shown by Blatchford, Bassett, Brown and Webster (2009), it is likely that teacher assistants are deployed to work

mainly with students with SEN, thus reducing the possibility of interaction between students with SEN and their peers. Although there may be other reasons resulting in the negative impact on peer acceptance, it should be noted that simply deploying teacher assistance is no guarantee that pupils with SEN will benefit socially (Symes & Humphrey, 2011). This highlights "the importance for policy-makers to rethink the deployment of support staff for teachers in the future in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities in general classrooms" (De Boer et al., 2013, p. 840).

Framework for Inclusive Education: Social Inclusion

Identifying emotional and physical safety as a fundamental characteristic of school life, the NCSE (2011) highlights the need for all schools to promote pupils' well-being. In addition it maintains that continuous monitoring of children's "attendance, participation, well-being and performance promotes the attainment of each pupil's full potential through personal academic and social goals" (p. 30). In listening to the pupil's voice the NCSE maintains that schools can promote pupil self-advocacy, encourage pupils to express personal experiences and identities and safeguard individual pupil well-being "through an effective pastoral care system with clearly defined roles" (p. 30). The NCSE also contends that students' participation, self-esteem, sense of competence and learning outcomes are ameliorated by curriculum planning for inclusion. Teachers need to maintain and communicate high expectations for all pupils and be "aware of the potential impact of stereotyping for pupils with special educational needs" (p. 32). It is suggested that positive learning experiences result in increased participation, enhanced academic and social skills, and better retention and attendance rates.

Conclusion

The review of the literature on the social dimension of inclusion sought to capture the richness of varying perspectives. In so doing the review places this study within a research context and highlights barriers/challenges inherent in the provision of inclusive education. Acknowledging factors that contribute to inclusive provision it shows that inclusion is perceived as a process which encompasses many changes including curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and personnel. Identifying the inextricable links between educational inclusion and social participation, researchers suggest that parents who opt for mainstream settings generally do so because of the possibility of their children being socially included in the peer group. Indeed, findings based on children's perspectives of what makes them feel included, stress the importance of social participation and friendship. Notwithstanding this, concerns are highlighted in a number of key studies which reveal that barriers to inclusion relate predominantly to the social dimension of children's experiences, for example being left out of games and not having friends. The body of literature and research continues to develop in this area and raises the question of what exactly we are trying to achieve within the inclusion agenda. Mindful of this, the focus of this study is the social participation of three children with MGLD in a mainstream class setting, following their transfer from a designated special class for children with MGLD. Chapter three is specifically concerned with the methodology employed in this study, and this is now outlined.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This study emerged as a response to the literature which identified a need to examine the capacity of the GAM/resource teacher service to meet the needs of pupils with MGLD in mainstream schools. In particular this research examined the perspective and experience of three pupils with MGLD in terms of their social participation in mainstream class settings. This chapter provides an outline of the research approach adopted in this study, together with a rationale for its use. A description of the data collection methods, the piloting procedures, the research participants and research site is also presented. Issues pertaining to researcher bias and reflexivity are discussed together with practical difficulties that emerged during the research process. Data analysis, ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness are also discussed.

Research Site and Participants

The study took place in Oakwood Primary School. Established in an urban setting in 1984, it is a co-educational mainstream primary school with an enrolment of 393 pupils (192 boys, 201 girls). At the time of the study the school had an administrative principal, fourteen mainstream class teachers, six LS/RTs, two EAL teachers, seven SNAs, a secretary and a school caretaker. There were 37 boys and 27 girls receiving learning support under the GAM, while 20 boys and 3 girls were in receipt of low incidence resource hours (DES, 2005a). In addition, 30 girls and 37 boys were in receipt of support for EAL. Research participants comprised three children with MGLD, their mainstream and LS/RTs, their parents, the principal, their SNAs and peers who numbered 50 in total. A purposive sample was selected

as it was necessary to identify children assessed with MGLD, who had transferred to full-time mainstream classes following the closure of a special class for pupils with MGLD. Purposive sampling enables the researcher to focus on individuals and events that illuminate the research questions. Findings related to purposive samples, however, are not transferrable to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Figure 3.1 provides a brief overview of the pupils. Each participant has been given a pseudonym. An outline of the research design together with a rationale for using a predominantly qualitative mixed method case study approach follows.

Figure 3.1. Pupils' Profile

Mark

Mark is an eleven year old boy who at the time of the study was enrolled in fourth class. He has an assessment of MGLD and AD/HD and receives 3.5 RTH weekly. He joined the special class in September 2007 having transferred from full-time mainstream class placement at the end of junior infants. He transferred back to full-time mainstream class placement in 2009 following the closure of the special class for pupils with MGLD. At the recommendation of an educational psychologist he repeated third class. He shares a class with Damien. The class has thirty pupils, four of whom did not wish to participate in the research.

Neville

Neville is a ten year old boy who at the time of the study was enrolled in fourth class. He joined the special class in April 2008 when he transferred from full-time mainstream class placement in junior infants. He has an assessment of MGLD and AD/HD and receives 3.5 RTH weekly. Neville transferred back to full-time mainstream class placement following the closure of the special class for children with MGLD. There are twenty-nine pupils in Neville's class, two of whom did not wish to participate in the research.

Damien

Damien is a ten year old boy who at the time of the study was enrolled in fourth class. He has an assessment of MGLD. He joined the special class in September 2007 when he enrolled in junior infants. In September 2009 he transferred to full-time mainstream class placement. He receives three hours RTH weekly due a physical/medical condition. He had surgery to have a brain tumour excised in 2005 and has Sickle Cell Anaemia. Damien and Mark share the same class.

Research Design

In selecting the methodology, fitness for purpose was a key consideration (Clough &

Nutbrown, 2002; Robson, 2002). Having considered a range of research methods, a mixed

method (predominantly qualitative) case study approach was chosen to best illuminate the

participants' understanding of the key issues pertaining to the research questions.[31] Case

study design is appropriate when researchers require an in depth description of social

phenomenon (Yin, 2012). As relationships and processes within social contexts tend to be

interconnected the case study design is fitting as it offers opportunities to gain "sufficient

detail to unravel the complexities of a given situation" (Denscombe, 1998, p. 31). Yin (2009)

defines case study as "an empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context,

  especially when

- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18).

As it is not always feasible to distinguish between phenomenon and context in 'real-life'

situations Yin contends that other characteristics, such as data gathering and analysis

strategies become part of the technical definition. A case study explores many variables of

interest, relies on multiple evidence sources, and "benefits from the prior development of

theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (p. 18).

Research (Denscombe, 1998; Stake, 1995) suggests that each case should have a

boundary. That is a case should "carry with it some idea of a boundary which is sufficiently

clear and obvious to allow the researcher to see what is contained within the case"

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[31] Appendix D provides an overview of the issues and concerns addressed at the initial stages of the study.

(Denscombe, 1998, p. 38). In advocating that boundaries be identified, Denscombe, (1998) notes the potential:

- to exclude factors occurring outside the boundaries which have a genuine impact on activities, processes and relationships within the case;

- to ignore the things that happen to those involved when they are away from the defined area;

- to have difficulty in dealing with those occasions when outsider factors temporarily intrude on the zone of research (p. 39).

Stake (1995) describes three categories of case study: (a) intrinsic case study where the case itself is of particular interest and the intention is not to learn about other cases or issues but to focus specifically on the case in hand; (b) instrumental case study where the researcher seeks to gain insight into a phenomenon by studying a particular case; and (c) collective case study where a number of cases are jointly studied with each case instrumental in providing insight into the phenomenon under investigation. In keeping with the research questions and applying Stake's classifications, the current study sits within the collective case study category. It comprises three jointly considered instrumental case studies which explore the 'social participation' of three pupils within a real-life context. Mindful that the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Denscombe, 1998; Yin, 2012), the primary focus is the three target pupils in terms of "the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 253). Each case is a single pupil existing within a social setting; relevant personnel and aspects of school structure/organisation (related subtopics) form part of each case as key contextual conditions (Yin, 2006).

In keeping with the aim and purpose of this inquiry, this design provided an efficient approach to understanding qualities of the phenomenon in context. My intention was to explore human behaviour in the context of its naturalistic setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In implementing this study I wanted to uncover concepts and insights from patterns in the data, while at the same time remaining close to the construction of the world experienced by the participants. With an emphasis on qualitative methods, I wanted to understand the setting from the perspective of the participants by looking closely at their words and actions. Case studies facilitate the collection of a variety of evidence including, interviews, observations and documents (Yin, 2009). Moreover, they are readily understood by a wide audience, capturing unique characteristics that might otherwise be overlooked in larger-scale data; however as they are not readily open to cross-checking, "they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 256). In conducting a collective case study I was able to concentrate on a particular phenomenon (children's social participation) in order to analyse and interpret its uniqueness in depth (Bell, 1999; Denscombe, 1998; McKernan, 1996). Yin (2006) advocates this approach when research is focused on descriptive or explanatory questions which seek to ascertain a first-hand understanding of people and events. Employing this approach I sought answers to questions that highlighted the way social experience was created and given meaning; whilst also remaining mindful of the socially constructed nature of reality, the value-laden nature of inquiry and the situational constraints that shape it (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002). As each organization has common and unique characteristics, I wanted to identify these and demonstrate "how they affect the implementation of systems and influence the way an organization functions" (Bell, 1999, p. 11).

Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach and Richardson (2005) maintain that qualitative research produces descriptive information which increases understanding of pupils with SEN, their families and the people who work with them. There are a number of merits in undertaking a qualitative approach which include: (a) focus on depth and detail; (b) focus on specific situations and people; (c) inductive process, and (d) insights gained from focusing on the process and outcomes (Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1988; Patton, 2002). Sociometry added a quantitative element to the study. Its inclusion facilitated triangulation of findings and limited potential biases which may be intrinsic in a single-method approach (Denscombe, 2008). An advantage of quantitative research lies in its "ability to transcend individual differences and identify patterns or processes which can be linked to social structures and group or organizational features" (Robson, 2002, p. 98). As this study examined the social participation of three children, a predominantly qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate form of inquiry; with its focus on exploring in detail, smaller numbers and examples "which are seen as being interesting or illuminating" (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006, p. 64). This study was guided by three research questions:

1. Following their transfer from a special class, do three pupils with MGLD feel socially included as full-time members of a mainstream class?

2. Do relevant personnel (including peers) feel that these pupils are socially included in the mainstream class setting?

3. Are there factors, characteristics/skills that contribute to children feeling socially included or excluded?

Data Collection

Data collection comprised focus group and individual semi-structured interviews,

observations, sociometry, field notes, draw and write investigation, and analysis of school

documentation. Mindful that generalization is excluded due to the purposive sample, detailed

field notes were maintained throughout and rich description included so that meaningful

comparisons could be drawn by others in comparable situations (Cohen et al., 2007; Lincoln

& Guba, 1985). A detailed description of planning procedures is provided in Appendix D.

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the participants and data collection methods implemented.

Table 3.1.

Participants and Methods of Data Collection

Name	SEN Category	Research Instrument
Damien Age 10	MGLD & Physical Disability	Semi-structured interview; four observations; sociometry; and draw & write investigation.
Neville Age 10	MGLD & AD/HD	Semi-structured interview; four observations; sociometry; and draw & write investigation.
Mark Age 11	MGLD & AD/HD	Semi-structured interview; four observations; sociometry; and draw & write investigation.
Children's Peers (50)		Sociometry; two focus group interviews with four peers selected from each of the two classes following initial analysis of sociometry, and draw & write investigation.
Mainstream Teachers (2) SNAs (2)		Two class teachers and two SNAs, linked to each of the three focus pupils with MGLD, select five nominations for each of the three focus pupils in terms of three categories: (a) which pupils are your best friends, (b) with which pupils would you like to do a class project, and (c) who chose me as their best friend.
Mainstream Teachers (2) LS/TR (1) SNAs (2)		Two focus group interviews comprising one mainstream teacher, one LS/RT and one SNA. One group discussing Damien and Mark (separately) and one group discussing Neville.
Parents (5)		Semi-structured interview for three sets of parents (a) Damien' mother; (b) Mark's mother and father together; and (c) Neville's mother and father separately.
Principal (1) School Documentation		Semi-structured interview with school principal, followed by documentary analysis.

Interviews.

Semi-structured interviews involved the three focus children, their parents, and the school principal. Qualitative researchers employ interviews to uncover the meaning structures that people use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds (Hatch, 2002). The interview is a flexible technique used widely in qualitative research to yield rich data. It enables the researcher to gain insight on the participants' perspective of social participation and can provide verification and extension of data acquired from other sources (Breakwell, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002).

Interviews are not without limitation, however. The quality of data can be impacted "by issues of mutual trust, social distance, power, uneasiness of respondents to questions, different meanings attached to words and the subjectivity, bias, control and skills and attributes of the interviewer" (Travers et al., 2010, p. 139). In order to limit these threats, detailed field notes, both reflective and descriptive, were taken immediately after each interview and recorded data were transcribed verbatim and a summary of the transcripts were shown to the participants for member checking (Bloor, 1997; Drever, 1995; Hatch, 2002). In transcribing I was mindful of the challenge to produce accurate, readable and reflexive transcriptions that represented the voices of the participants in a way they wished them to be heard. I was aware that "as transcribers, we need to manage the tension between accuracy, readability, and representation" (Roberts, 1997, p. 170). Being mindful of the dangers of bias and the risk of acquiescence, I avoided leading questions and encouraged participants to seek clarification if they were unsure (Lewis, 2004). In addition I sought to capture the participants' perspectives by using open-ended questions. In seeking to generate answers pertaining to the research, I worded questions clearly, using neutral language (Bell, 1999).[32]

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[32] Appendix E, F, G, & H provide examples of schedules of interview questions.

The interview schedule was used as a frame of reference for the participants' responses and not as a form of restriction in terms of their participation. Probes were used to seek further clarification and generate examples (Cohen et al., 2007; Robson, 2002). In seeking clarification I was mindful of the dangers of suggestive prompts (Lewis, 2004). All interviews were implemented in relaxed settings and commenced with a preamble explaining the aim and purpose of the interview. Interviews were recorded with the consent of all participants.

When interviewing children, I was mindful of the children's communication abilities, and the need for sensitivity in my questioning (Brewster, 2004; Lewis & Porter, 2004). While remaining mindful that children with disabilities may require structured support in voicing their views, I was also cognisant that such support may potentially influence children's responses (Nind, 2008; Lewis, Newton & Vials, 2008). Having read the literature and informed by my experience as a practitioner, I was mindful of the difficulties in accessing children's views. I endeavoured to reflect their views authentically, while acknowledging the limitations and checking that the views expressed were a fair and typical response. As a teacher in the school, I had taught all three children previously and this helped me elicit their views on social participation. Checks were implemented by comparing responses across different contexts using a variety of means such as member checking; asking questions following observations and; field note taking during draw and write investigation (Lewis, 2002). Lewis and Porter (2004) highlight the importance of reciprocity and accessible feedback when they state that "as a minimum, participants should have the opportunity to receive feedback from researchers about the outcomes of the study" (p. 193). Mindful of this underpinning concern, feedback was disseminated to participants in an accessible manner using the following approaches:

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- written feedback for all adult participants in the form of a written summary report;

- verbal feedback for three target pupils and student participants in the focus group interviews; and

- verbal feedback pertaining to the draw and write investigation to all student participants.

Focus Group Interviews.

Focus group interviews are appropriate when researchers want to elicit participants' perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and ideas about a particular topic (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). Patton (2002) suggests that not only is it an effective qualitative data collection technique, but it also incorporates a level of quality control as participants have a tendency to provide checks and balances on each other which illuminate extreme or false views. Acknowledging that there are multiple realities, my intention in employing focus groups was "to understand the multiple constructions of meaning and knowledge" (Robson, 2002, p. 27) in relation to social participation.

It is important to note that the focus group "is by definition an exercise in group dynamics and the conduct of the group" (Millward, 2006, pp. 279-280). Interpretation of data is understood in the context of the group. Groups of four to six are considered manageable when working with children aged between six to ten years (Gibson, 2007; Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell & Britten, 2002). Both Cohen et al. (2007) and Flick (2009) caution against the danger that group dynamics may lead to non-participation by some members and dominance by others. Care was taken to include all members. In order to promote participants' trust and increase the chance of open interactive dialogue I used a child-friendly non-judgemental approach encompassing patience, warmth, respect, active listening and flexibility (Gibson,

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2007). I was mindful when participants did not wish to contribute. Using questions designed

to facilitate openness; I used probing cues, and endeavoured to create an environment

whereby participants were empowered to respond in their own preferred manner. There were

four focus groups; two involving a SNA, mainstream and LS/RTs, and two involving four

peers from each fourth class grouping.[33] The peers were selected in consultation with the

class teachers. The criteria for selection were as follows:

- they had nominated or been nominated by the focus pupils;

- attention to gender balance;

- pupils were willing to participate; and

- additional consent from parents and children for participation in focus group was

  forthcoming.[34]

All interviews took place in my classroom, which is a bright open room with glass-

panelled doors adjacent to the secretary's office. Consistent with Mullen White (2005), other

than the participant(s) and myself, there were no others present during the interview; the

objective being to minimise distractions and maximise neutrality. Mindful of the dangers of

acquiescence, in interviewing the three focus children I sat alongside rather than face to face,

actively listening and encouraging them. At all times I endeavoured to make sure that

meanings were clear. In acknowledging that the views of children cannot be assessed

perfectly, Lewis (2002) suggests that we should endeavour to proceed "with the aim of

reflecting children's views authentically, while acknowledging the limitations" (p. 115).

Informed by my experience as a teacher of pupils with SEN and similar to Mullen White

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[33]Having consulted Damien's and Mark's teachers and SNA regarding whether they wished to discuss both boys at the same time in one slightly longer focus group interview or two shorter interviews, they agreed on the first option.
[34]A second consent form was signed by parents and children for focus group interview. One boy chose not to participate; consequently I invited another peer who consented.

(2005), I was mindful of the characteristics of the focus pupils' responses and confident that they would provide competent witness to their own life experiences.

Observations.

The focus of observations was on the target pupils' interaction and involvement in terms of social participation. Observations facilitate understanding of the context within which people interact. Observing children's behaviour in natural settings is an ecologically valid method for assessing children's social interactions (Elliott & Gresham, 1987). As a direct method of data collection, it has the potential to generate "more valid or authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 396). Observations comprise a permanent record and can supplement data collected from other sources (Robson, 2002; Simpson & Tuson 1995).

Notwithstanding this, a major criticism of observation concerns the extent to which the observer affects the setting under observation (McKernan, 1996; Robson, 2002). Robson (2002) suggests that this may be minimised with multiple site visits, thus allowing participants to become accustomed to the presence of the observer. Further criticisms highlight its time intensiveness and its susceptibility to observer bias (Simpson & Tuson, 1995).

All three pupils were observed individually over time, in four different settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In total twelve observations were made comprising: (a) lunchtime in the playground, (b) lunchtime in the classroom, (c) a physical education (PE) lesson, and (d) a classroom lesson/activity. Observations were conducted using a framework of themes

identified in the literature (Blaxter et al., 2006).[35] This framework supports the commentary of incidents noted during the observations. Immediately following observations, detailed field notes were taken, and validation/clarification sought from the pupils, in the form of the following questions:

- How did you enjoy your lunch break/lesson/activity?

- Who were you with?

- What were you doing?

- What did you like/not like?

- Did you have fun?

As a reflexive researcher I acknowledge that my role in the school may have impacted on the research process. Observer bias was minimised through reflective practice, namely, my reflections and feelings were recorded (hand-written) throughout the study. Limitations concerning the extent to which the observer affected the research setting may have been minimised, due to the fact that I am a teacher in the school and the children were accustomed to me.

Sociometry.

Sociometry is a versatile technique used to describe relationships among individuals in a group. It requires members of a group to make choices regarding other members of the group (Robson, 2002). Adopting the approach of Pijl et al. (2008),[36] this study employed sociometry to examine the social participation of the three focus pupils using peer assessment. This involved a nomination procedure whereby each pupil was required to

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[35] Appendix I provides a qualitative observational schedule.
[36] Pijl et al. (2008) consider peer acceptance, friendships and belonging to an in-class network "as indexes for social position, both independently and in combination with each other" (p. 389).

answer the following three questions: (a) which pupils in class are your best friends? (b) with which pupils would you like to do a class project? (c) who chose me as their friend? Based on free recall within the same class, nominations were restricted to five names (Pijl & Frostad, 2010). A limit was imposed, as otherwise pupils may have suggested endless lists which could potentially include weak relationships. Negative nominations were not sought as I considered this unethical. This, however, limited the possibility of distinguishing between rejected and ignored pupils. As well as nominating their five best friends, pupils were required to write which pupils they would like to do a class group project with and which pupils they thought might choose them as a friend. Each child received a page with their class peer group listed down the side. Children could list any five children from their class group including the children who were not participating (Appendix J).[37] This information was then used to compare the actual number of best friends (i.e. reciprocal choices) nominated. Pijl et al. (2008) contend that discrepancies between categories (a) which pupils are your best friends and (c) who chose me as their friend, particularly in terms of high expectancies and low mutuality in choices, indicate unrealistic self-concept and inflated views of the extent to which children actually have friends in the peer group. The teachers and SNAs in both classes were also asked to write down which five pupils they thought would choose/or be chosen in relation to the focus pupils and the three categories. Their responses were compared to the peer-group and the pupils' own responses. Sociometric data were analysed/displayed using Microsoft Excel and Ucinet 6 software (Borgatti, Everett & Freeman, 2002).

Three indexes were used in analysing the data; the three focus pupils were considered socially included if they were: (a) accepted by their peers, (b) had at least one mutual

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[37] Where children who were not participating in the research were listed, it was noted that these nominations would not be reciprocal, given the circumstances.

relationship and (c) belonged to a subgroup. Friendship was based on a pupil having one or more mutual relationships with other peers in the class.[38] Peer acceptance was operationalised as the number of nominations children received from their peers. Having no nomination was considered a clear sign of non-acceptance in the peer group, while having one nomination did not indicate much acceptance. Group membership was operationalised as at least three peers who had mutually nominated each other as friends in category (a). Consistent with Pijl et al. (2008), target pupils' peer nominations were compared with their peers and having *less than or equal to one* was used as the selection criterion for peer acceptance. Although quite a blunt measure, it is important to note that students "with just one indegree have only been nominated by one peer and are in terms of peer acceptance quite vulnerable for losing peer support" (Pijl et al., 2008, p. 395). However, even if children do not experience high peer acceptance they can still be members of a cohesive group (Farmer & Farmer, 1996, as cited in Pijl et al., 2008). A cohesive subgroup may be described as "subsets of actors among whom there are relatively strong, direct, intense, frequent or positive ties" (Wasserman & Fraust, 1994, as cited in Pijl et al., 2008, pp. 391-392). Being a member of a cohesive subgroup implies a group of at least three peers who have more links with each other than with non-members and who are linked by a path to each other (Pijl et al., 2008). It is important to note that group membership is dependent on reciprocal relationships and peer acceptance. The three indexes for social position/inclusion have much in common.[39] "Pupils' possibilities for forming friendships are limited by low peer acceptance; friendships are a platform for learning social skills and handling close relationships, which in turn are important in acquiring a position in a peer group" (Pijl et al., 2008, p. 401). My years of

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[38] Mutuality requires a reciprocal choice, whereby two pupils choose each other as best friend.

[39] In their study Pijl et al. (2008) used the three indexes to explore the position of pupils with SEN in mainstream settings to infer conclusions on the degree of social inclusion in the peer group. They employed "the indexes for social position of pupils as operationalisations of the concept 'social inclusion'. This seems fair: pupils who are not accepted, have no friends and do not participate in subgroups can be regarded as being socially excluded" (p. 401).

experience of handling issues of a sensitive nature with children informed my approach to

sociometry and I was constantly aware of the need for sensitivity and reflexivity. [40]

Field Notes and School Documentation.

Field notes provide researchers with a record describing the research process, while

also facilitating self-reflection (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). I recorded detailed, accurate notes

in both descriptive and reflective format focusing on points of clarification as well as

reflections on analysis, methods and ethical dilemmas. Detailed note taking facilitated

reflection on potential sources of bias and error and enabled me to record my thoughts for

regular peer debriefing sessions with two colleagues. [41]

Endorsing documentary analysis as a valuable research tool, Yin (2009) suggests that

documents provide stable, exact data. "For case studies, the most important use of documents

is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (Yin, 2009, p. 103). Mindful that

they do not provide evidence of actual current practice (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011; Yin, 2006)

documents pertinent to the area of social participation were scrutinised to corroborate other

evidence. It is important to note that they can uphold "a distinctively documentary version of

social reality" (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011, p. 77). The documents analysed are listed in Figure

4.1.

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[40] It is important to note that obtaining parental/administrative consent to implement sociometric assessments in schools may prove difficult, due to unease regarding the possibility of further social rejection of some children as a result of participating in the assessment. Moreover, effective sociometric assessment, to be valid, requires that the entire group (or almost all of it) be included. It also warrants separate informed consent from the parents of all students in a group (Merrell, 2001).
[41] The points/questions outlined by Madison (2004) and Fielding (2004) formed the framework for my reflexive action throughout.

Draw and Write Investigation.

Research implementing the draw and write investigation technique has become more popular among researchers in education (Mair & Kierns, 2007). It is described as an exploratory, user-friendly, participatory technique which breaks down barriers between the researcher and participants. It is suitable for use with children, "whose views on a range of issues have been marginalised due to their location outside systems of authority, such as education or medicine, that are dominated by patriarchal, professional points of view" (Mair & Kierns, 2007, p. 123). Draw and write technique enables children to voice their opinions and experiences in a manner relevant and sensitive to them as participants. The children reveal as much or as little as they are comfortable with thus eliminating any unnecessary emotional upset (Bradding & Hortsman, 1999). As a teacher I was experienced in working with children and I was therefore confident of noticing any signs of distress or discomfort.

In implementing this approach I distributed pages to groups of approximately six children, inviting them to write and illustrate by drawing, firstly what makes them feel included and secondly what makes them feel excluded in school. In order to stimulate their thoughts and experiences about social participation I posed the following questions:

- What makes me feel part of school?

- What makes me feel left out of school?

The children responded to each question with a drawing. They then expanded on their drawing through writing; further describing and clarifying the picture, and providing a commentary around which I built my analysis. Mair and Kierns (2007) caution regarding potential weakness in this approach whereby drawing content is perceived as having a literal meaning for the research (naïve positivist approach). Similarly, they advise against an

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approach that focuses solely on the descriptive element of the written commentaries (naïve interpretivist approach). In finding a resolution to this dilemma, they "conclude that it is the processes of 'sense-making' involved in the draw-and-write technique, rather than either literal drawing-content or purely descriptive processes, from which insight ought to be derived" (Mair & Kierns, 2007, as cited in O'Brien, Varda-Atkins, Umoquit & Tso, 2012, p. 261). In this way data emerges from the procedure rather than the final product of the method. Issues, such as lack of skill or confidence using materials, may render interpretation difficult in the absence of knowing what the participant intended the stand alone drawing to be. Thus, researchers emphasise the importance of incorporating text and or verbal commentary with the drawing in order to avoid naïve misinterpretation (Darbyshire, MacDougall & Schiller, 2005; O'Brien et al. 2012). Contrary to Prosser (2007), Mair and Kierns (2007) recommend that due to situational uncertainties, descriptions should be taken as the authoritative guide to the drawing. The drawing should not however, be viewed as redundant. Rather, it serves the purpose of collecting additional verbal or text-based information from participants and can be analysed in the light of that information, with the commentary and text used to illuminate it. Vigilance is warranted nonetheless, as "narratives of this type have a tendency to confuse descriptions of phenomena with phenomena themselves" (Mair & Kierns, 2007, p. 123). Describing being healthy, for example, is not the same as being healthy. There is a danger that, draw and write researchers may make inferences from participants' descriptions to their actions, thereby ignoring this distinction in the analysis of data.

In implementing this method, I recorded verbal commentary (hand-written) and recorded detailed field notes. I remained mindful of the interactional complexities of the setting (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Bradding & Horstman, 1999). As my focus of

interest was the underlying sense-making, this intention was made transparent to the participants from the onset (O'Brien et al., 2012). During analysis, data were scrutinised in relation to predetermined and emergent themes. Additional commentary, made during the drawing and recorded, was also included. I was mindful that children may produce data that they perceived are acceptable to the researcher; that children may just be reproducing the dominant views within their cultural setting (Nic Gabhainn & Kelleher, 2002) and that children may experience difficulties with drawing and writing and or identifying and expressing their feelings as is typically the experience of children with MGLD. The work produced was clarified with each child to verify the content and meaning. Each drawing was coded according to content and a matrix was constructed (Appendix K).

Piloting of Data Collection Methods

In keeping with recommendations made in the literature all research instruments underwent rigorous piloting during their development (Blaxter et al., 2006; Robson 2002). Piloting was implemented in order to: (a) ascertain the usefulness of techniques and check that they were appropriate in terms of the research aims and objectives; (b) determine respondents' potential interpretations and reduce ambiguity and confusion; and (c) increase the validity and trustworthiness of the instruments. As it is important to get a representative cohort similar to the research participants, a mainstream teacher, a parent of a pupil with SEN, a SNA, two LS/RTs, a pupil with SEN and a group of five children in receipt of learning support were invited to assist in the piloting exercise.[42] Piloting encompassed: (a) observation, interview and focus group schedules; (b) draw and write investigation; (d) field note recording and documentary analysis; and (c) sociometry. The draft observation schedule was piloted in two contexts (playground, classroom), for approximately twenty minutes. This

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[42] All personnel involved in piloting were unconnected to the actual study.

exercise afforded me an opportunity to test the suitability of the schedule and to develop my observational skills. The importance of optimal proximity/distance to the target pupils, in terms of needing to be nonintrusive while also maintaining a position that allowed full view of all the pupil's interactions and communications, was noted. In both contexts, I had to ensure that children did not perceive me as the supervising teacher on duty. A number of revisions were made to the schedule following piloting, for example I decided to include a commentary of the child's activities.

Four pilot interviews using audio-recording and field notes were implemented: (a) parent of a pupil with SEN; (b) pupil with SEN; (c) focus group of four children; and (d) focus group of three adults. This enabled me to predict the duration of interviews with accuracy, while also facilitating evaluation and modification of my interviewing techniques and performance (Drever, 1995). The importance of explicitly setting the scene and the need to ask probing questions was observed. The need for differentiation in the form of verbal probes was also noted with regard to pupils' ability. A number of adjustments were made relating to the sequencing and wording of questions. Of particular value was the experience gained accommodating the dynamics of the focus group, which lead to the inclusion of a traffic light strategy. [43] I also noted the benefit of using a warm up activity before interviewing the children and field note taking afterwards.

In piloting the draw and write technique I employed both group and one-to-one settings. This enabled me to note the value of having the children close at hand to record their commentaries and interactions. In addition, I was nearby to spell words, when required, and

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[43] I devised a traffic light strategy whereby each participant was invited to move a green cube forward if they wished to contribute, a red cube if they did not and an orange cube if they were undecided. In this way the researcher could monitor participants' input and each person had the reassurance that they would not be placed under any obligation to contribute if they did not so wish.

this appeared to put the children more at ease, facilitating their flow of thought. To test the suitability of documentary analysis in relation to pupil participation I viewed a variety of policies from two other schools. This informed me in terms of what policies to examine at the research site.

Due to the ethical difficulties involved in sociometry, piloting of this method was implemented by proxy. This involved scrutinising a fifth class group of children with their teacher and former teacher, and assigning five friends to each child for each category according to our knowledge of the children's social affiliations/interactions. The possibility that children might compare responses which might result in social or emotional distress was foremost on my mind having implemented this piloting. I noted the importance of emphasising the rule of not discussing their choices. Following piloting, I decided initially to implement this strategy in groups of eight children, using a group warm up activity at the beginning and end of each session. However, having implemented a group approach for the draw and write technique I was concerned that this strategy would further erode class-time for pupils and provide more opportunities to compare responses. Consequently, I implemented the sociometry with both class groups (one class at a time) on the morning of the Easter holidays. The children had little opportunity to discuss their nominations, with a busy morning festive schedule and the prospect of a two week break. Furthermore, I employed extensive warm up/cool down activities with a view to limiting time for comparisons.

Data Analysis

Based on work by Pijl et al. (2008), analysis of sociometric data compared the three indexes for social inclusion: peer acceptance, mutual friendships and belonging to an in-class

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network to the adults' assessment of the three children's social participation and the children's own self-report. The potential for students to provide inflated views of friendships and replies that may "be subject to socially desirable answers resulting in too positive a picture" was acknowledged (Pijl et al., 2008, p. 402). This risk was reduced by including assessments from peers and adults. Attention was also given to whether or not the key participants were accepted as equal participants in activities.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2003). Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within the data. It facilitates the reporting of experiences, meaning and the reality of participants and can be used with numerous theoretical and epistemological approaches. It can be an essentialist or realist method, reporting experiences, meanings and the reality of participants. Alternatively, it can be a constructionist method, examining ways in which realities, meanings and experiences are the result "of a range of discourses operating within society" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). In addition, it can be a contextualist method, positioned between the two extremes of essentialism and constructionism. Such an approach, characterised by, for example, critical realism, acknowledges the ways people make meaning of their experience. It recognises the broader social context impinging on those meanings, while also "retaining focus on the material and other limits of 'reality'. Therefore, thematic analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). It is crucial that the theoretical position of a thematic analysis be made explicit, as any theoretical framework implies a number of assumptions regarding the nature of the data, what in particular they represent in terms of the world, reality and so forth. For the purposes of this study, a contextualist position was

adopted in the analysis of data. The theoretical framework underpinning this study is further developed in chapters four and five.

In keeping with recommendations made by Miles and Huberman (1994) data collection and analysis were interwoven from the start as "a healthy corrective for built-in blind spots" (p. 50). In order to become familiar with the data, and gain a general sense of emerging themes and reflect upon their meaning, I repeatedly read all observation records, field notes, school documents, interview transcripts, sociometry and draw and write records, searching for repeated patterns of meaning. Table 3.2 presents a description of this six stage process.

Table 3.2.

Stages of Thematic Analysis

Stages	Description of Process
(a) Familiarization with Data	Management, organization, transcription, reading and rereading data.
(b) Generating Initial Codes	Systematic coding of complete data set and collation of data pertinent to each code.
(c) Searching for Themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to themes.
(d) Reviewing Themes	Checking if themes work in relation to coded extracts and entire data set; generating a thematic map of the analysis.
(e) Defining and Naming Themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
(f) Producing the Report	Selection of pertinent extracts, final analysis of selected extracts, relating the analysis back to the research questions and the literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis supplemented with tables and figures.

Note. (Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2003)

The procedure comprised a sequence from a descriptive stage, whereby the data were organised according to patterns and themes which were used to distil the findings.[44] "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" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). In keeping with the research questions four key categories were identified in the literature. They include: friendships/relationships; interactions/contacts; experience/perception of pupils with/without SEN;[45] and acceptance by classmates. In scrutinizing data, conflicting information and new emerging themes were sought and systematically examined using a combination of predetermined and emergent category development (Flick, 2009). Mindful of the research questions, all data were analysed and coded for: (a) predetermined themes identified in the literature review, and (b) new emergent themes. In order to strengthen the credibility of the findings, a selection of random samples of analysis were given to the two people implementing reliability checks for independent verification of analysis by comparison. Both parties were in agreement with the analysis implemented. Table 3.3 presents four predetermined themes and subthemes.

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[44]Appendix L provides a checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis.
[45]As the focus pupils' TDPs were participants, it was necessary to include experience/perception of pupils with/without SEN.

Table 3.3.

Predetermined Themes Identified in the Literature

Predetermined Themes	Subthemes	Emergent Themes/Subthemes (to be identified)
Friendships/Relationships	▪ Friendship networks ▪ Mutual friends	
Interactions/Contacts	▪ Playing together ▪ Working together on tasks ▪ Participation in group activities ▪ Acknowledged & unacknowledged initiations ▪ Social isolation	
Experience/Perception of Pupils with/without SEN	▪ Self-perception of peer acceptance ▪ Satisfaction at school ▪ Social self-concept ▪ Self-perception of social competence ▪ Loneliness	
Acceptance by Classmates	▪ Social preference ▪ Social support (behaviours) ▪ Bullying ▪ Social rejection	

Note. (Adapted from Koster et al., 2009)

Ethical Considerations

Permission to implement this research was sought initially from the research committee at St. Patrick's College and then from the school board of management (Appendix M). Having received permission, a letter, describing the research, its voluntary nature, together with assurances that identities would not be disclosed, was distributed and discussed with all participants and parents of all participating children (Appendix N, O, P, Q, R, & S).[46] I emphasised that anonymity could not be completely guaranteed due to the small scale of the study. Participants (and parents) were then invited to give their written consent/assent. In collecting the views of participants it was deemed important that a clear understanding of the aim and purpose of the research be provided and that participants' consent was sought and given freely. As the research involved children with SEN, I was mindful of their cognitive ability and the likelihood of acquiescence. I was also aware of the potential effects of the research on participants. To this end, I had a number of follow-up conversations with parents of the children's peers in relation to the administration of sociometry. Of the peer cohort, six children and their parents chose not to participate. All protocols required by the Research Ethics Committee of St. Patrick's College and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) (Ireland, 2012), in relation to ethical conduct were strictly followed.[47]

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[46] The two people doing reliability checks on data analysis also received plain language statements regarding their proposed participation; having discussed and read these they also signed consent forms.
[47] Appendix T provides a checklist of relevant information pertinent to informed consent/assent.

Researcher Effect and Reflexivity

The literature (Shaw, 2010) highlights the need for researchers to reflect throughout

the research process on how they impact on the research setting. As qualitative research

includes engaging with people's language, and stories/accounts of experiences, the researcher

has a role and responsibility to make sense of this lived experience "in a meaningful way with

a view to learning more about humankind and, often, to effect change, whether that be in

terms of influencing policy and practice or enhancing understanding at an individual or

institutional level" (Shaw, 2010, p. 233). Reflexivity requires the researcher to internalise and

address the implications of their presence in the research. Gadamer (1975, as cited in Shaw,

2010) uses the term 'horizon' to illustrate the notion that each of us has our own assumptions,

convictions and preferences, which make up our schema of understanding. When we

encounter others and our horizons overlap (as in a Venn diagram), we engage in mutual

understanding. Gadamer (1975) asserts that this synthesis of horizons is dependent on the

researcher making him/herself more transparent. Citing Finlay (2003), Shaw (2010) further

elucidates Gadamer's theory:

> Our understanding of 'other-ness' arises through a process of making
>
> ourselves more transparent. Without examining ourselves we run the risk of
>
> letting our unelucidated prejudices dominate our research. New understanding
>
> emerges from a complex dialectic between knower and known; between the
>
> researcher's past pre-understandings and the present research process, between
>
> the self-interpreted co-constructions of both participant and researcher.
>
> Between and beyond... (Shaw, 2010, p. 235).

In being cognisant of our own feelings and expectations we begin to understand the nature of

our inquiry, our personal and professional relationship to it, and to the world of the

participants. In turning the lens upon ourselves, we engage in a dialogue with participants and employ their stories to help review our pre-suppositions and make sense of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Shaw (2010) suggests that when we engage in reflexivity during analysis it "helps us to navigate our way through the participant's account *and* our responses to it. In thinking through our reactions in this way we can bring to the fore our assumptions and the mechanisms that construct those assumptions" (Shaw, 2010, p. 239). In engaging in reflexivity it is important to note that it is not the goal of our research, but a way of researching that makes our investigation more rigorous and enlightening.

It is difficult for case study researchers, as the main instrument of data collection, to explore situations as they naturally occur without any effect arising from their presence (Denscombe, 1998; Flick, 2009). As a researcher-practitioner I experienced a sense of conflict separating my role of teacher/practitioner from that of researcher-practitioner. I was aware that my role as LS/RT and co-ordinator of special education at the research site constituted a particular relationship with the participants, which had potential to distort findings (Cohen et al., 2007). In light of this I remained mindful of the issue of power imbalance and acquiescence throughout the study (Christensen & James, 2000; Lindsay, 2000). To limit such threats, opportunities were offered to verify data by member checking together with reflection and discussion with two independent colleagues on potential sources of bias throughout the research (Cohen et al., 2007). Fielding (2004) maintains that it is important to consider what it means to be a student and what it means to be a teacher. I recorded my reflections and feelings in a reflective section of my notes throughout the study. I based my reflections on a series of six key points:

- resisting re-description in our own interest;
- interrogating the impulse to control;

- questioning the correctness of how we do things now;

- acknowledging our discursive location; and

- facing up to issues of power and the necessity of being open to criticism

(Adapted from Fielding, 2004, pp. 302-304)

This enabled me to reflect critically, and constantly acknowledge and challenge my preconceptions, assumptions and their implications. I participated in a number of debriefing sessions with two independent colleagues (Shenton, 2004). Data were gathered from a number of sources using different methods. In addition, negative case analysis was employed during data analysis. An overview of the research process giving a detailed account of the study is provided in Appendix U.

Trustworthiness

A number of measures were employed to facilitate the generation of high-quality data "that either increase the probability that a judgement of trustworthiness will eventually be achieved or that provide the data that will subsequently be needed to reach that judgement" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 281). In keeping with Creswell's (2003) recommendations, multiple strategies were utilised. They include: triangulation of data collection methods, member checking, peer debriefing, and rich description. Interviews were transcribed accurately and care and attention given to documentary analysis, sociometry, draw and write techniques, the maintenance of field notes, and the completion of observational schedules and commentaries. Care was taken to ensure that children's responses were interpreted in an authentic manner (Lewis, 2002). Table 3.4 provides an overview of these measures.

Table 3.4.

Measures to Establish Validity and Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness Criteria	Measures Employed
Applicability/Transferability: The extent to which findings from one setting may have applicability to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).	Rich descriptions of settings and participants; transparent account of the research process and findings.
Credibility: Incorporating ways that participants can check accuracy of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).	Triangulation of methods; persistent observation; member checks on transcripts; clarity and neutrality of questions; peer debriefing encompassing regular meetings with two independent colleagues overseeing the research in order to: (a) check all themes, (b) challenge researcher's interpretations, (c) propose alternative interpretations, and (d) validate findings.
Dependability: The use of consistent and appropriate methodologies and procedures (Schwandt & Halpern, 1988).	Advice taken from course supervisors at presentation of research proposal and subsequent meetings; research overview plan outlining rigorous operational detail of data collection and analysis procedures; piloting of instruments; detailed field notes; rigorous data analysis; ongoing discussion with thesis supervisors.
Confirmability: The degree/extent to which the research findings are shaped by the participants and not researcher bias, assumptions and preference (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).	Reflect, disclose, challenge and discuss biases/assumptions/preferences through peer debriefing and maintenance of reflective field notes. Detailed overview research plan of the process and findings.

Note. (Adapted from Drudy, 2009; Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2006; Ring, 2001)

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This study sought to establish if three children assessed with MGLD, Mark, Damien and Neville, were included in their mainstream class settings in terms of social participation. Their social participation was explored through observation, interviews, sociometry, draw and write investigation, field notes and school documentary analysis. In implementing this research the three children were considered socially included if they: (a) were a member of a group, (b) were socially accepted by peers, (c) had at least one reciprocal friendship, and (d) were accepted as an equal participant in activities (Cullinan, Sabornie & Crossland, 1992). The following characteristics were sought also:

- positive social contact between these children and their peers;

- social relationships between them and their peers; and

- the pupils' perception of feeling accepted by their peers (Koster et al., 2009).

With the research questions as focus, data were analysed and coded for four broad predetermined themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These themes identified in the literature were: friendships/relationships, interactions/contacts, perception of the pupils with/without SEN, and acceptance by classmates. Each theme contained subthemes. A number of additional subthemes emerged in the analysis. In organising and cross-referencing data to collate emergent themes, disproving themes were also sought and alternative interpretations investigated to challenge the researchers' understanding of the data (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). In light of relevant literature and in answer to the research questions, this chapter provides a report and discussion of findings from the multiple sources of data. Following a comprehensive analysis of the data, findings are presented thematically and according to the

research questions. Findings related to questions one and two are discussed together; the themes are as follows:

Theme One: Friendships/relationships;

Theme Two: Contacts/interactions; and

Theme Three: Experience/perception of pupils with/without SEN

Findings related to the third research question are organised under the following themes:

Theme Four: Acceptance by classmates;

Theme Five: Social support behaviours;

Theme Six: Social communication;

Theme Seven: Structural and organisational supports;

Theme Eight: Social development and academic development; and

Theme Nine: Adult (teacher/SNA) pupil relationship.

Themes and subthemes related to research questions one and two are outlined in Table 4.1.

1. Following their transfer from a special class, do three pupils with MGLD feel socially included as full-time members of a mainstream class?

2. Do relevant personnel (including peers) feel that these pupils are socially included in the mainstream class setting?

Themes and subthemes related to question three are outlined in Table 4.2.

3. Are there factors, characteristics/skills that contribute to children feeling socially included or excluded?

Table 4.1.

Themes and Subthemes Related to Research Questions One and Two

Predetermined Themes	Subthemes	Emergent Themes/Subthemes
Friendships/Relationships	Friendship networks	
	Mutual friends	
Interactions/Contacts	Playing together	
	Working together on tasks	
	Participation in group activities	
	Acknowledged & unacknowledged initiations	Social-emotional comprehension: ▪ *Encode & interpret body language* ▪ *Respect personal space* ▪ *Ability to modify behaviour* Knowledge and understanding of game rules
	Social isolation	
Experience/Perception of Pupils with/without SEN	Self-perception of peer acceptance Satisfaction at school	What makes me feel left out: ▪ *Being left out of group/games* ▪ *Name calling*
	Social self-concept Self-perception of social competence Loneliness	What makes me feel included: ▪ *Games with friends* ▪ *Participation in regular school activities*

Note. (Adapted from Koster et al., 2009)

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Table 4.2.

Themes and Subthemes Related to Research Question Three

Predetermined Themes	Subthemes	Emergent Themes/Subthemes
Acceptance by Classmates	Social preference	Knowledge & experience of disability; Peer attitude: ▪ *Tolerance* ▪ *Understanding* ▪ *Acceptance of difference*
	Social support (behaviours)	Empathy & restorative skills; Social communication: ▪ *Pragmatic language skills* ▪ *Facilitative strategies* Structural & organisational supports: ▪ *Friendship stop & drama club* ▪ *Individual workstations & coloured bibs for football* ▪ *Student forum* ▪ *SNA attendance at individual education programme (IEP) meetings* ▪ *SNA briefings of pupils' needs* ▪ *School policies and ethos* Adult (teacher/SNA) pupil relationship; Social development & academic development
	Bullying Social rejection	Name calling

Note. (Adapted from Koster et al., 2009)

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Extracts from the data in the form of participants' quotations are incorporated to illustrate and support key features of the themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data were analysed and discussed in collaboration with two colleagues who reviewed a selection of the data independently [48] and were in agreement with the themes identified. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the analysis process. It should be noted that the stages interconnected on an ongoing basis. This chapter concludes with an overview of the theoretical influences and summary of the findings.

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[48] Interviews & draw and write

Figure 4.1. Overview of Analysis Approach

Research Questions

(a) Following their transfer from a special class do Mark, Damien and Neville feel socially included as full-time members of a mainstream class?
(b) Do relevant personnel feel that these children are socially included in the mainstream class setting?
(c) Are there factors/characteristics that contribute to children feeling socially included or excluded?

↓

Draw & Write Investigation (53 participants)

(a) What makes me feel part of school?
(b) What makes me feel left out at school?

↓

Sociometry (57 participants)

(a) Which pupils are your best friends?
(b) With which pupils would you like to do a class project?
(c) Who chose me as their friend?

↓

Observations (12)

Four settings with each pupil (a) Lunch in playground, (b) Lunch in classroom, (c) PE, and (d) Social Environmental Scientific Education lesson.
Neville (4)
Damien (4)
Mark (4)

↓

Interviews (12)

Martin (Principal)
Nathan, Sorcha, Emily (Neville's teachers & SNA)
Elizabeth, Anna, Emily (Damien & Mark's teachers and SNA)
Harry, Keith, Hannah, Tara, (Neville's peers)
Evan, Harold, Yvonne, Hilda, (Mark & Damien's peers)
Luke & Eithne (Mark's parents)
Sheila (Damien's mother)
Ella (Neville's mother)
Trevor (Neville's father)
Neville
Mark
Damien

↓

School Documentation/Policies

Three Year Development Plan	Special Needs Education
Enrolment	Literacy
Assessment	Assistive Technology
Standardised Test Results	WSE Report, (DES, 2014a)
Music Policy & Descant Recorder Examination Results	Attendance
Anti-Bullying	Administration of Medication
School Self-Evaluation	Code of Behaviour
School Web-Site	Mark, Damien & Neville's IEPs
SPHE	

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The next three sections consider issues pertaining to questions one and two:

1. Do three pupils with MGLD feel socially included as full-time members of a mainstream class?

2. Do relevant personnel (including peers) feel that these pupils are socially included in the mainstream class setting?

Findings pertaining to research question three are then outlined.[49]

Theme One: Friendships/Relationships: Friendship Network and Mutual Friendship

Friendships, friendship networks, lasting relationships, playing together and social contacts are described as major aspects of social participation. In order to be deemed a friendship, relationships should comprise shared interaction, mutual enjoyment and mutual liking. In light of this and mindful that sociometry may present a more negative view of a child's social participation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2005, as cited in Pijl et al., 2008), data analysis began by exploring peer acceptance, mutual friendships and belonging to an in-class network in terms of:

- sociometry;

- adult's assessment of the pupils' friendships during interview;

- pupils' self-report during interviews;

- draw and write investigation;

- researcher's observations;

- field notes; and

- school documentation.

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[49] It should be noted that there was some overlap of themes pertaining to the three research questions, e.g. contacts/interactions, peer acceptance, and knowledge and understanding of disability.

For the purposes of sociometric analysis, the nominations of fifty-three pupils, two teachers and two SNAs were entered on matrices for three categories: (a) which pupils are your best friends? (b) with which pupils would you like to do a class project, and (c) who chose me as their friend? (Appendix V). Each participant was required to make five nominations. Whilst pupils' subjective experience of their social participation was considered important, I was also keenly aware that children can give inflated views of the number of friends they have and that their responses may be subject to socially desirable responses (Pijl et al., 2008). In terms of sociometry, friendship was operationalised as a reciprocal choice, whereby two pupils nominated each other as best friends. Similar to Pijl et al. (2008), the question pertaining to friendship, category (a), was framed in terms of an actual situation (which pupils are your best friends?), while the questions for categories (b) and (c) were phrased in terms of preference/supposition (with which pupils would you like to do a class project? Who chose me as their best friend?). Peer acceptance was operationalised as the number of nominations children received in relation to categories (a) and (b).[50] Having no nomination was considered a sign of non-acceptance, while having one nomination did not indicate much acceptance. Less than or equal to one was used as the selection criterion. Being a member of a group was operationalised as a set of at least three individuals who had reciprocated friendship as evidenced by mutual nominations received in category (a). The reciprocal criterion for friendship makes it a stronger index when compared to peer acceptance. Reciprocity presupposes a nomination, without which you cannot have friendship. Moreover, group membership is based on reciprocated relationships, and without three reciprocated nominations for friendship, pupils are not deemed part of a cohesive subgroup (Pijl et al., 2008). Attention also focused on whether the target pupils were accepted as equal participants in activities. In addition to the children's own nominations, the class

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[50]It was felt that category (c) focused more on children's social self-concept.

teachers and SNAs nominated five peers on behalf of Mark, Damien and Neville for each category. Data were correlated in relation to the three focus children. Given the scope of this exploration, findings pertaining specifically to their peers were not central to this study; hence results relating to them are not reported in detail. Tables 4.3 to 4.10, together with Appendix V and Figures 4.2 and 4.3 provide an overview of nominations made by participants in relation to each of the three categories.

Table 4.3.

Elizabeth's Class: Category (a) Which Pupils are your Best Friends?

Mark, Damien, Peers and Significant Adults' Nominations					
Ellen	Yvonne	Beatrice	Eleanor	Omar	Evan
Yvonne+	Ellen	Beatrice	Nora	Eva	Evan
Yolanda	Beatrice	Alice	Eva	Yasmine	Nora
Ronan	Leon*	Harold	Evan	Xavier	Omar
Elaine	Hilda	Eleanor	Rachel	Alice	Yasmine
Graham	Evan	Omar	Xavier	Nollaig	**Mark**
Eleanor	Rachel	Elaine	Ellen	Fiona	Yasmine
Xavier	Evan	Omar	Nollaig	Niall*	Graham
Beatrice	Yvonne	Ellen	Yolanda	Yasmine	Nicole
Alice	Yasmine	Beatrice	Yolanda	Yvonne	Ellen
Eamon	Michael	**Mark**	**Damien**	Omar	Nollaig
Yasmine	Alice	Ellen	Beatrice	Eva	Yolanda
Fiona	Ivy*	Yasmine	Ellen	**Mark**	Eva
Damien	Eamon	Yvonne	Ellen	Graham	Omar
Harold+	Ronan	Omar	Evan	Graham	Nollaig
Rachel	Elaine	Hilda	Eleanor	Eva	Helen
Nora	Eva	Yvonne	Evan	Beatrice	Omar
Mark	Eamon	Declan*	Niall*	Xavier	Graham
Nollaig	Niall*	Omar	Harold	Xavier	Evan
Hilda+	Elaine	Rachel	Eleanor	?	?
Nicole	Eva	Yvonne	Ellen	Yasmine	Hilda
Eva	Ellen	Beatrice	Nora	Omar	Rachel
Omar	Harold	Evan	Xavier	Nollaig	Ellen
Helen	Rachel	Beatrice	Eva	Nora	Fiona
Evan+	Omar	Xavier	Graham	Harold	**Mark**
Michael□	Eamon	Leon*	Nicole	**Mark**	Niall*
Anna Damien's SNA	Graham	Omar	Harold	Yvonne	Xavier
Elizabeth Damien's Teacher	Omar	Graham	Yvonne	Harold	Alice
Elizabeth Mark's Teacher	Michael	Eamon	Harold	Evan	Niall*
Anna Mark's SNA	Michael	Niall*	Evan	Graham	Eamon
*Ivy**					
*Leon**					
*Declan**					
*Niall**					

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupils and their related incidence of reciprocity. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN, + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview. The question mark denotes that this participant did not nominate a peer for this category.

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Table 4.4.

Nathan's Class: Category (a) Which Pupils are your Best Friends?

Neville, Peers and Significant Adults' Nominations					
Rose	Elicia	Molly	Angela	Rita	Elsie
Elsie	Rose	Rita	Molly	Elicia	Angela
Hannah+	Elicia	Ben	Eric	Angela	Mary
Xowie	Ned	Harry	Eoin	Ian	Nigel
Nina	Rose	Rita	Molly	Elsie	Tara
Ned	Harry	Xowie	Simon*	Ben	Earl
Noel□	Xowie	Nigel	Eoin	Ian	Earl
Elicia	Molly	Elsie	Rita	Rose	Aisling
Nigel	Ian	Earl	Xowie	Noel	Eoin
Dominic	Nigel	Noel	Earl	Eoin	Leo*
Tara+	Rose	Molly	Aisling	Nina	Amanda
Amanda	Nina	Rita	Leo*	Molly	Aisling
Ben	Fred	Ned	Simon*	Eoin	Eric
Eric	Leo*	Fred	Dominic	Xowie	Ben
Rita	Elsie	Elicia	Molly	Rose	Angela
Fred	Ben	Leo*	Simon*	Ned	Eoin
Harry□+	Ned	Xowie	Keith	Noel	*Sorcha*
Earl	Ian	Eoin	Nigel	Noel	Nevin
Molly	Elicia	Ian	Rose	Rita	Aisling
Aisling	Mary	Rose	Elicia	Angela	Tara
Eoin	Nigel	Xowie	Ian	Noel	Earl
Ian	Earl	Nigel	Eoin	Noel	Xowie
Keith+	Ned	Harry	Nigel	Eoin	Noel
Neville	Eric	Earl	Xowie	Nevin	Leo*
Nevin□	Eoin	Nigel	Earl	Ian	Noel
Angela	Mary	Aisling	Elicia	Rose	Tara
Mary	Angela	Aisling	Elsie	Elicia	Rose
Sorcha *Neville's SNA*	Eric	Leo*.	Nevin	Dominic	Nigel
Nathan *Neville's teacher*	?	?	?	?	?
Leo*					
Simon*					

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupil. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN ; + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview; the question mark denotes that Nathan did not make a nomination for this category. Sorcha (SNA) supports Neville, Harry & Nevin.

Table 4.5.

Elizabeth's Class: Category (b) With which Pupils would you like to do a Class Project?

Mark, Damien, Peers and Significant Adults' Nominations

Ellen	Yvonne	Beatrice	Omar	Evan	Eva
Yvonne+	Ellen	Beatrice	Nora	Evan	Eva
Yolanda	Beatrice	Alice	Eva	Yasmine	Nora
Ronan	Leon*	Harold	Evan	Declan*	Nollaig
Elaine	Hilda	Eleanor	Rachel	Yasmine	Beatrice
Graham	Evan	Omar	Xavier	Nollaig	**Mark**
Eleanor	Yvonne	Nicole	Ellen	Elaine	Eva
Xavier	Evan	Omar	Nollaig	Niall*	Graham
Beatrice	Yvonne	Ellen	Nora	Yolanda	Yasmine
Alice	Yasmine	Beatrice	Yvonne	Yolanda	Ellen
Eamon	Declan*	Evan	Michael	**Mark**	Xavier
Yasmine	Yolanda	Beatrice	Alice	Eva	Ellen
Fiona	Yvonne	Ellen	Nora	Eleanor	Rachel
Damien	Evan	Omar	Nollaig	Xavier	Yvonne
Harold+	Yvonne	Ivy*	Leon*	Eamon	Alice
Rachel	Alice	Graham	Hilda	Fiona	Eleanor
Nora	Evan	Ellen	Omar	Leon*	Beatrice
Mark	Eamon	Declan*	Hilda	Nora	Beatrice
Nollaig	Niall*	Ronan	Omar	Xavier	Graham
Hilda+	Elaine	Nora	Ivy*	Yolanda	Beatrice
Nicole	Beatrice	Eva	Yolanda	Ivy*	Ellen
Eva	Yvonne	Ellen	Nora	Eleanor	Rachel
Omar	Harold	Evan	Xavier	Ellen	Nora
Helen	Ivy*	Eva	Beatrice	Yolanda	Graham
Evan+	Ellen	Omar	Xavier	Niall*	Graham
Michael□	Leon*	Niall*	Omar	Declan*	Harold
Elizabeth *Damien's Teacher*	Yvonne	Ellen	Omar	Alice	Harold
Anna Damien's SNA	Yvonne	Ellen	Nora	Graham	Omar
Anna Mark's SNA	Yvonne	Hilda	Michael	Niall*	Graham
Elizabeth Mark's teacher	Michael	Yvonne	Evan	Eamon	Niall*
*Ivy**					
*Leon**					
*Declan**					
*Niall**					

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupils and their related incidence of reciprocity.

The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN, + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview.

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Table 4.6.

Nathan's Class: Category (b) With which Pupils would you like to do a Class Project?

Neville, Peers and Significant Adults' Nominations

Rose	Molly	Elsie	Elicia	Angela	Rita
Elsie	Rita	Rose	Elicia	Angela	Molly
Hannah+	?	?	?	?	?
Xowie	Eoin	Ian	Nigel	Ned	Noel
Nina	Rita	Molly	Rose	Elsie	Tara
Ned	Xowie	Harry	Simon*	Ben	Earl
Noel□	Ian	Xowie	Earl	Nevin	Ned
Elicia	Molly	Elsie	Rita	Rose	Mary
Nigel	Ian	Earl	Xowie	Noel	Eoin
Dominic	Eoin	Keith	Nina	Xowie	Angela
Tara+	Eoin	Nigel	Molly	Earl	Nina
Amanda	Dominic	Elsie	Fred	Elicia	Eoin
Ben	Ned	Xowie	Eoin	Dominic	Simon*
Eric	Xowie	Elsie	Leo*	Nigel	Eoin
Rita	Elsie	Elicia	Molly	Rose	Angela
Fred	Ben	Simon*	Ned	Rose	Eoin
Harry□+	Ned	Xowie	Noel	Earl	Ian
Earl	Ian	Noel	Nevin	Eoin	Nigel
Molly	Ian	Earl	Amanda	Rose	Aisling
Aisling	Mary	Angela	Rita	Molly	Elsie
Eoin	Nigel	Leo*	Ian	Xowie	Ben
Ian	Earl	Nigel	Molly	Angela	Noel
Keith+	Ned	Leo*	Dominic	Harry	Noel
Neville	Leo*	Nigel	Dominic	Noel	Harry
Nevin□	Eoin	Nigel	Earl	Ian	Noel
Angela	Mary	Elsie	Eoin	Aisling	Elicia
Mary	Angela	Elicia	Rita	Aisling	Elsie
Sorcha *Neville's SNA*	Eric	Leo*	Nevin	Dominic	Nigel
Nathan *Neville's Teacher* *Leo** *Simon**	?	?	?	?	?

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupil. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN; + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview; the question mark denotes that this participant did not nominate a peer for this category.

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Table 4.7.

Elizabeth's Class: Category (c) Who Chose me as their Best Friend?

Mark, Damien, Peers and Significant Adults' Nominations

Ellen	Eleanor	Yvonne	Yasmine	Beatrice	Ivy
Yvonne	Ellen	Beatrice	Alice	Yasmine	Eva
Yolanda	Beatrice	Alice	Eva	Yasmine	Nora
Ronan	Harold	Leon*	Evan	Xavier	Omar
Elaine	Hilda	Rachel	Eleanor	?	?
Graham	Nollaig	Harold	Xavier	Declan*	**Mark**
Eleanor	Rachel	Elaine	Ellen	Beatrice	Yvonne
Xavier	Evan	Eamon	Nollaig	Niall*	Harold
Beatrice	Yvonne	Ellen	Nora	Yasmine	Yolanda
Alice	Yasmine	Yolanda	?	?	?
Eamon	Michael	**Mark**	Omar	***Damien***	Evan
Yasmine	Alice	Beatrice	Yolanda	Eva	Ellen
Fiona	Rachel	?	?	?	?
Damien	Nollaig	Yvonne	Graham	Omar	Evan
Harold	Ronan	Omar	Evan	Xavier	Nollaig
Rachel	Hilda	Eleanor	Elaine	?	?
Nora	?	?	?	Evan	Eva
Mark	Eamon	Niall*	Xavier	Fiona	Eva
Nollaig	Niall*	Eamon	Harold	Graham	Ronan
Hilda	Elaine	Rachel	Eleanor	?	?
Nicole	Fiona	Eva	Yasmine	Hilda	**Mark**
Eva	Ellen	Nora	Beatrice	Rachel	Omar
Omar	Evan	Xavier	***Damien***	Nollaig	Ellen
Helen	Ivy*	Eva	Rachel	Eleanor	Nora
Evan	Graham	Omar	Xavier	Declan*	Harold
Michael	**Mark**	Niall*	Evan	Eamon	Declan*
Anna *Mark's SNA*	Michael	Niall*	Fiona	Hilda	Eamon
Elizabeth *Mark's* *Teacher*	Michael	Eamon	Niall*	Harold	Evan
Elizabeth *Damien's* *Teacher*	Omar	Graham	Yvonne	Ellen	Alice
Anna *Damien's SNA*	Graham	Yvonne	Omar	Ellen	Alice
Ivy*					
Leon*					
Declan*					
Niall*					

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupils and their related incidence of reciprocity. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN, + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview; the question mark indicates that this participant did not make a nomination.

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Table 4.8.

Nathan's Class: Category (c) Who Chose me as their Best Friend?

Neville, Peers and Significant Adult's Nominations

Rose	Angela	Elsie	Molly	Elicia	Rita
Elsie	Rita	Rose	Elicia	Angela	Molly
Hannah+	?	?	?	?	?
Xowie	Ned	Harry	Eoin	Nigel	Ian
Nina	Tara	Hannah	Aisling	Amanda	Mary
Ned	Xowie	Simon*	Harry	Ben	Earl
Noel□	Xowie	Ian	Eoin	Earl	Nigel
Elicia	Molly	Elsie	Rose	Mary	Hannah
Nigel	Xowie	Earl	Noel	Eoin	Ian
Dominic	Leo*	Nevin	Mary	Eoin	Noel
Tara+	Rose	Molly	Nina	Aisling	Elicia
Amanda	Hannah	Rita	Rose	Aisling	?
Ben	Fred	Ned	Eric	Eoin	Simon*
Eric	Leo*	?	?	?	?
Rita	Elsie	Rose	Nina	Elicia	Molly
Fred	Ben	Dominic	Eric	Eoin	Amanda
Harry+□	Ned	Xowie	Leo*	Keith	Dominic
Earl	Ian	Noel	Nevin	Eoin	Nigel
Molly	Elicia	Rita	Rose	Tara	Elsie
Aisling	Mary	Angela	Tara	Hannah	Amanda
Eoin	Nevin	Simon*	Noel	Nigel	Xowie
Ian	Earl'	Nigel	Xowie	Noel	Eoin
Keith+	Harry	Ned	Dominic	?	?
Neville	Earl	Eoin	Ian	Harry	Dominic
Nevin□	Earl	Eoin	Nigel	Ian	Noel
Angela	Mary	Rose	Elicia	Aisling	Tara
Mary	Aisling	Angela	Tara	Hannah	Elsie
Sorcha	No-one	No-one	No-one	No-one	No-one
Neville's SNA					
Nathan	No-one	No-one	No-one	No-one	No-one
Neville's					
Teacher					
*Leo**					
*Simon**					

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupil. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN; + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview; the question mark denotes that this participant did not nominate a peer for this category.

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Results revealed that in general, girls nominated girls and boys nominated boys; however there were a number of cross-gender nominations. Mark nominated Hilda, Nora and Beatrice for category (b) and Fiona and Eva for category (c), while Damien nominated Yvonne and Ellen for best friend category and Yvonne for categories (b) and (c) also. [51] Three girls nominated two boys for best friend category while a further five girls nominated one boy (Figures 4.2 & 4.3). Both Michael and Omar nominated one girl for best friend category. Category (b) received the highest number of cross-gender nominations (32). Neville made no female nominations however he did list two girls as friends during interview and was observed playing with one in the playground. Nominations are consistent with literature on social relationships which identifies a predominance of children's same-sex preference when establishing friendships (De Boer et al., 2013).

Mark

In terms of peer acceptance, mutual friendships and belonging to an in-class network Mark scored best of the three focus pupils. Findings reveal that he has two reciprocated nominations, Eamon and Graham for category (a) and Eamon for categories (b) and (c). In addition he was nominated by Evan, Michael and Fiona for category (a) and by Nicole for category (c). It is noteworthy that he received two nominations for category (b) with which pupils would you like to do a class project; this appears to imply that Eamon and Graham accept him as an equal participant. Using the selection criteria, *less than or equal to one,* Mark is considered accepted by his peers. Having only two reciprocated friendships, Mark did not meet the criteria for group membership within sociometry, as this required a set of at least three individuals with reciprocated friendships. However, four of his peers did not

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[51] Adult participants speak at length about Damien's fixation on Yvonne, Ellen and Graham. His teacher reveals how lately he has begun to fixate on Graham whom he nominated for category (a) and (c).

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participate in the study and, as Mark nominated two of these (Declan & Niall) for category (a), and Anna his SNA and Elizabeth his teacher nominated Niall on his behalf, it is plausible that Mark may have additional reciprocated friendships within his class. Furthermore, since Mark listed Evan, Michael, Fiona and Nicole[52] among his friends during interview and was also seen engaging positively with three of these peers during observation, group membership cannot be ruled out. Moreover, Harold referred to Mark as a very good friend, during the focus interview and Elizabeth (Mark's Teacher), also nominated Harold as Mark's friend.

Damien

Although Damien, had one reciprocated friendship (Eamon), he is not considered accepted by his peers under the selection criteria set. Neither is he considered a group member. It is important however, to note that Asher et al. (1990) contend that the negative effects of low peer acceptance can be minimised by having one reciprocated friendship. Further, Damien's self-report, as evidenced in interview (he lists nine boys as friends), is that he has a number of friends. Observations indicate that although he is oftentimes in the presence of his peers in a playing context, he tends to play in parallel by himself without engaging directly with others. Comments made by Emily (LS/RT) concur with these observations. *"I give them time to play at the end of the session, he very often, most of the time he won't actually play with the others, he just gets something to play with by himself".* Emily makes the point that Damien appears content playing alone and that he is not socially excluded by the others in her resource group.[53] I too noted that there were occasions during observations when he remained apart; as with O'Keefe's (2009) findings, this did not appear to be a source of concern or anxiety for him. Sheila his mother recounts that, at home he

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[52] Three of whom nominated Mark for best friend category.
[53]Bossaert, Colpin, Pijl and Petry (2012) underscore the distinction between aloneness and loneliness. "Aloneness is associated with a pleasant, positive and sometimes desirable situation, loneliness is not" (p. 1889).

likes to play imaginative games alone with his toys. This finding is congruent with literature which identifies a lower level of socially interactive play with peers and higher level of socially isolated play in relation to certain categories of SEN (Kopp, Baher & Brown, 1992, as cited in Cook & Oliver, 2011; Guralnick, 2006). In conversing with Damien, he demonstrates no sense of isolation or rejection. From observation, he appears quite content to experience friendship on the periphery. O'Keeffe (2009) underscores the importance of 'proximity' for pupils with SEN and posits the notion that children with SEN experience a sense of inclusion in the social atmosphere. He also suggests that the experience of being surrounded by people their own age is oftentimes a missing part in their everyday lives. This appears to be the case, as Sheila (Damien's mother) states there are no children his age in their neighbourhood.

Neville

Neville received no nominations which implies non-acceptance by peers under the criteria set for sociometry. It is important to note that Sorcha (SNA) and Nathan (teacher) did not nominate a peer who may have chosen Neville as a best friend.[54] In conversation, both Nathan and Sorcha indicated that they believed no-one would have nominated him for this category. However comparable to Mark, two boys from Neville's class did not participate and since both Sorcha (SNA) and Neville nominated one of these peers (Leo) in two categories, it is plausible that this boy may have nominated Neville. It is important, therefore, to remain circumspect regarding Neville and Damien's position in terms of peer acceptance (Damien) and reciprocated friendship (Neville). Moreover, as with Koster et al. (2010) I do not know how the focus pupils would have fared had they remained in the special class, or

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[54] Indeed Nathan stated that he had difficulty nominating a peer for the other two categories also. In this respect he differed from Elizabeth and Anna, and Sorcha (to a lesser extent), in that they made nominations for their respective target pupils for categories (a) & (b).

indeed had they attended a special school. In light of previous research based on pupils' own perceptions regarding social participation (Bear, Juvonen & McInerney, 1993; Koster et al., 2009; O'Keeffe, 2009), caution is warranted in attempting to draw conclusions in this area. Indeed, Hurley-Geffner (1995) raise the possibility that children with SEN may not form the same types of relationships as those found between TDPs. Moreover, Webster and Carter (2013) suggest that the degree to which pupils with SEN demonstrate all three components of friendship (shared interaction, mutual enjoyment & mutual liking) warrants further investigation to ascertain if these children employ a balance of these actions, but to a lesser degree than their TDPs. During interview, Neville listed seven friends, two of whom were girls and was observed playing with two of these peers at break time. Of note is that two of his listed friends also have AD/HD. This could be interpreted as supporting homophily theory (Avramidis & Wilde, 2009), however as the three pupils sit together, it might equally be related to proximity (Matheson et al., 2007) and or shared access to SNA support (Sorcha).

Neville's parents Ella and Trevor state that Neville does not say much at home about school however, he mentions Eric frequently. Trevor states that Neville *"believes anything that Eric tells him. Everything comes back to Eric. So it seems he's very fixed on Eric for some reason, I don't know why....They do distract each other a lot. And they can interfere with each other's education"*. Nathan and Sorcha both report that Neville's interaction with Eric often ends in discord, which has been an ongoing pattern for a number of years. Ella observes that he tends to play with younger children in the neighbourhood, while Trevor comments *"it's hard to know if, how many friends he does have in school really"*.

Focus Pupils and Peer Cohort

As nominations for Neville's class roster, and Mark's and Damien's class comprised a limited number (29 and 30 pupils respectively), I made a deliberate choice not to implement statistical analyses in commenting on social position within each class. Moreover, as there were four other pupils assessed with SEN (dyslexia, ASD, & AD/HD) in the combined peer cohort, I did not make comparisons between the focus pupils and their peers in terms of pupils with and without SEN. In making this decision I was also mindful that English was not the first language for twenty of the participating peers. Notwithstanding this, by including Ucinet 6 software (Borgatti et al., 2002) to map the social network structures of Elizabeth's and Nathan's class for best friend category in visual format (Figures 4.2, 4.3), it was possible to determine a number of interesting points. An adherence to gender was immediately reflected. There were however a number of inter-gender nominations for best friend category. Namely, eight in Elizabeth's class and four in Nathan's class. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 provide a helpful visual overview of the target pupils' social position within their class for the friendship category within sociometry. As it was not always possible to determine reciprocity of choices given that the arrow heads indicating reciprocity at the end of some links are obscured by pupils' names, Tables 4.9 and 4.10 document the reciprocated nominations. Overall findings reveal that 9 pupils had a maximum 5 reciprocated nominations; 8 pupils had 4; 14 pupils had 3; 7 pupils had 2; 9 pupils had 1, and 6 pupils had none (Hannah, Dominic^, Amanda^, Fiona^, Nicole & Neville^).[55]

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[55] It is important to note that figures pertaining to reciprocated friendships relate to category (a). Also, it should be noted that pupils labelled with the ^symbol nominated at least one pupil who did not participate in the study. This impacted reciprocity.

Figure 4.2. Social Network Structure for Elizabeth's Class (Mark & Damien) for Best Friend Category

Note. This symbol * indicates that this pupil did not participate.
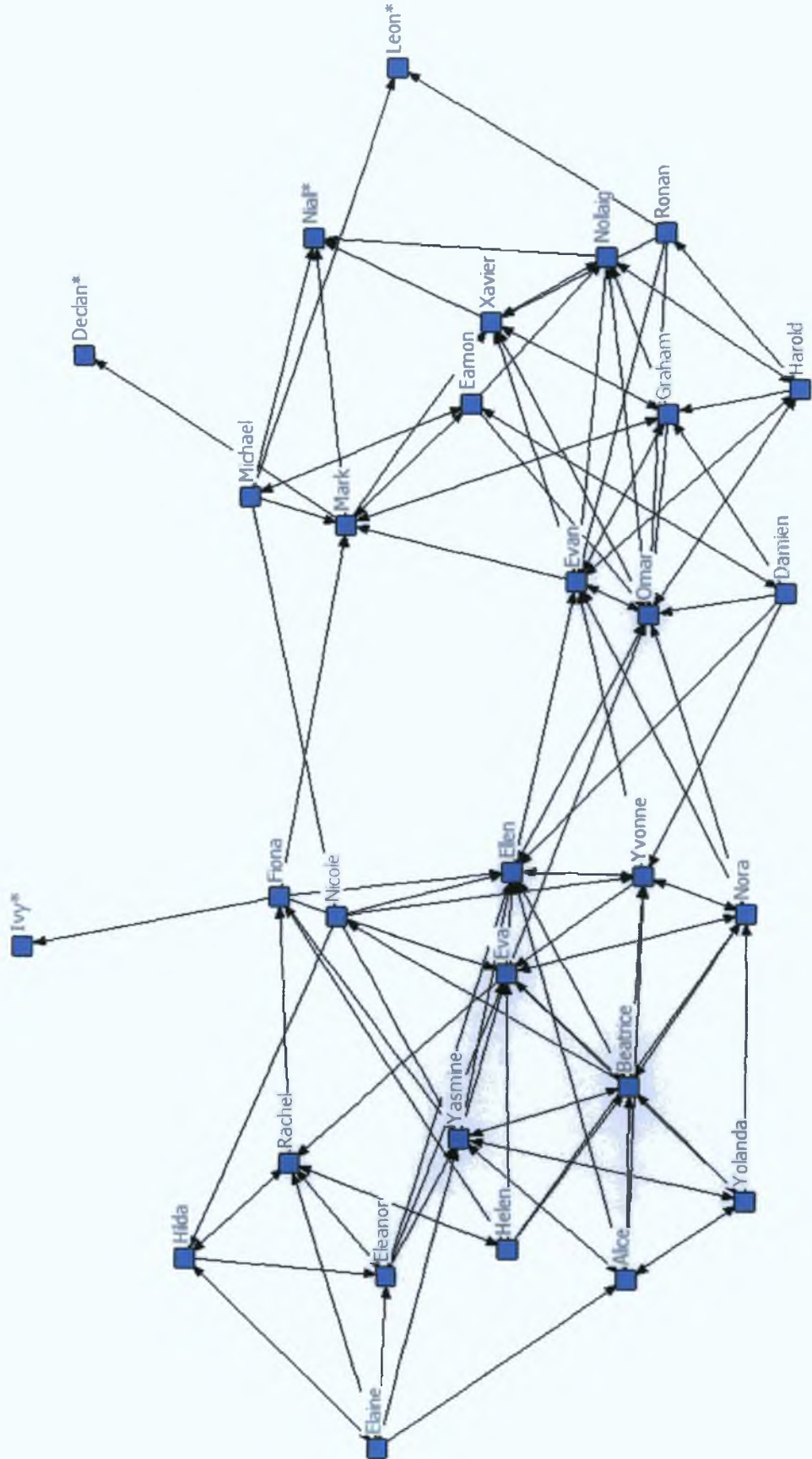
Figure 4.3. Social Network Structure for Nathan's Class (Neville) for Best Friend Category

Note. This symbol * indicates that this pupil did not participate.
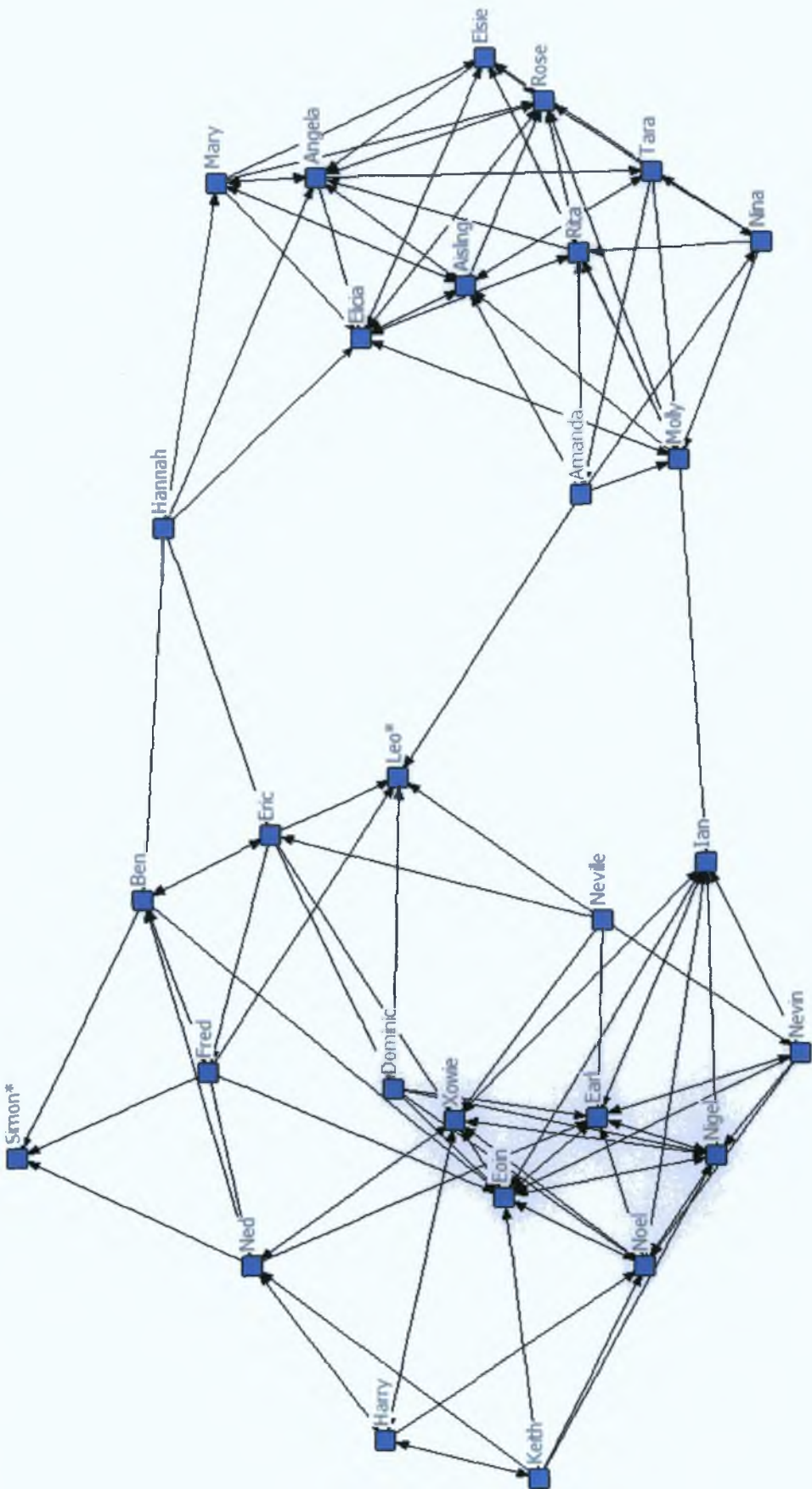
Of particular note was Neville's and Hannah's position in terms of lack of nomination for best friend category (Figure 4.3, Table 4.4). Indeed, their position was particularly stark when compared to the number of reciprocated nominations Eoin and Rose received in the same class cohort for this category (10, 9 respectively). While Neville received no peer nominations whatsoever, Hannah did at least receive five nominations for category (c) who chose me as their friend? (Table 4.8). She nominated five peers for best friend category (two boys and three girls, Table 4.4), but struggled to complete categories (b) and (c) leaving them blank (Table 4.6 & 4.8).

With the exception of Neville and Hannah, and four other pupils (Fiona, Nicole, Dominic & Amanda), findings indicate that the remaining 47 pupils all had at least one reciprocated nomination for best friend category. While similar to Damien and Helen, seven other pupils (Eric^, Nevin□, Nina, Keith^, Ronan^, Fred^ & Michael^□)[56] had just one mutual friendship, their position differed from Damien and Helen in that they met the criteria for peer acceptance. Since Nevin, Nina, Keith, Ronan, Fred and Michael had at least one other nomination for category (b) and Eric had three nominations for category (a), they all met the criterion for peer acceptance in terms of sociometry. Damien and Helen did not however.[57] It is of interest to note that while Damien and Helen each received just one best friend nomination, their nomination was reciprocated (Table 4.9 & Appendix V). This is a positive outcome and illustrates the distinction between being popular and having friends as documented by Pijl et al. (2008).

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[56] It is important to note that (a) Keith had joined the class three months previous to the implementation of sociometry; (b) Michael had an assessment of ASD; and (c) Nevin had an assessment of AD/HD.
[57] Less than or equal to one was the selection criterion for peer acceptance. This criterion applied to categories (a) & (b).

Table 4.9.

Elizabeth's Class: Individual Pupils and Reciprocated Friendships

Individual Pupil	**Named Reciprocated Friends**				
Ellen	Yvonne	Beatrice	Eleanor	Omar	
Yvonne+	Ellen	Beatrice	Nora		
Yolanda	Beatrice	Alice	Yasmine		
Ronan	Harold				
Elaine	Hilda	Eleanor	Rachel		
Graham	Evan	Xavier	**Mark**		
Eleanor	Rachel	Elaine	Ellen		
*Xavier^*	Evan	Omar	Nollaig	Graham	
Beatrice	Yvonne	Ellen	Yolanda	Yasmine	
Alice	Yasmine	Yolanda			
Eamon	Michael	**Mark**	**Damien**		
Yasmine	Alice	Beatrice	Yolanda		
*Fiona^*					
Damien	**Eamon**				
Harold+	Ronan	Omar	Evan	Nollaig	
Rachel	Elaine	Hilda	Eleanor	Eva	Helen
Nora	Eva	Yvonne			
Mark^	**Eamon**	**Graham**			
*Nollaig^*	Omar	Harold	Xavier		
Hilda+	Elaine	Rachel			
Nicole					
Eva	Nora	Rachel			
Omar	Harold	Evan	Xavier	Nollaig	Ellen
Helen	Rachel				
Evan+	Xavier	Graham	Harold	Omar	
*Michael□^*	Eamon				
*Ivy**					
*Leon**					
*Declan**					
*Niall**					

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupils and their related incidence of reciprocity. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN, + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview. Participants labelled with^ nominated at least one peer who did not participate, thus reciprocity was not possible in these incidents.

Table 4.10.

Nathan's Class: Individual Pupils and Reciprocated Friendships

Individual Pupil	Named Reciprocated Friends			
Rose	Elicia	Molly	Angela	Rita	Elsie
Elsie	Rose	Rita	Elicia		
Hannah+					
Xowie	Ned	Harry	Eoin	Ian	Nigel
Nina	Tara				
*Ned^*	Harry	Xowie	Ben		
Noel□	Nigel	Eoin	Ian	Earl	
Elicia	Molly	Elsie	Rita	Rose	Aisling
Nigel	Ian	Earl	Xowie	Noel	Eoin
*Dominic^*					
Tara+	Aisling	Nina			
*Amanda^*					
*Ben^*	Ned	Eric	Fred		
*Eric^*	Ben				
Rita	Elsie	Elicia	Molly	Rose	
*Fred^*	Ben				
Harry□+	Ned	Xowie	Keith		
Earl	Ian	Eoin	Nigel	Noel	Nevin
Molly	Elicia	Rose	Rita		
Aisling	Mary	Angela	Tara	Elicia	
Eoin	Nigel	Xowie	Ian	Noel	Earl
Ian	Earl	Nigel	Eoin	Noel	Xowie
Keith+	Harry				
*Neville^*					
Nevin□	Earl				
Angela	Mary	Aisling	Rose		
Mary	Angela	Aisling			
*Leo**					
*Simon**					

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupil. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN, + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview. Participants labelled with^ nominated at least one peer who did not participate, thus reciprocity was not possible in these incidents.

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The overall individual pupil nominations for both class cohorts encompassing categories (a) and (b) for peer acceptance are listed in Tables 4.11 and 4.12. The highest number of nominations (21) was received by Ellen and Eoin. Contrastingly, Neville^ and Hannah had none, while Damien and Helen^ had just one. These four children in terms of sociometry did not meet the criterion set for peer acceptance. Ronan, Michael□ ^, Amanda^ and Keith, received two nominations and met the criterion set for peer acceptance as did Fiona^, Nicole, Eric^ and Fred^ who received three nominations. However, as illustrated by the symbol^, a number of these pupils nominated non-participating peers and consequently their nominations could not be reciprocated. Notwithstanding this, it is concerning that there are a number of pupils who, in terms of sociometry alone, appear relatively vulnerable with regard to peer acceptance. Their scores highlight the need for social interventions programmes to be implemented on a regular basis in school.

Table 4.11.

Elizabeth's Class: Nominations for Peer Acceptance Categories (a) & (b)

Individual Pupil	Nominations Category (a)	Nominations Category (b)	Total Nominations
Ellen	10	11	21
Yvonne+	6	8	14
Yolanda	3	6	9
Ronan	1	1	2
Elaine	3	2	5
Graham	5	5	10
Eleanor	4	4	8
*Xavier^*	6	6	12
Beatrice	8	11	19
Alice	3	4	7
Eamon	3	2	5
Yasmine	7	4	11
*Fiona^*	2	1	3
Damien	**1**	**0**	**1**
Harold+	4	3	7
Rachel	5	3	8
Nora	4	8	12
Mark^	**5**	**2**	**7**
*Nollaig^*	5	4	9
Hilda+	3	2	6
Nicole	2	1	3
Eva	8	7	15
Omar	11	8	19
Helen	1	0	1
Evan+	9	9	18
*Michael□^*	1	1	2

*Ivy**
*Leon**
*Declan**
*Niall**

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupils. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN, + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview. Participants labelled with^ nominated at least one peer who did not participate, thus reciprocity was not possible in these incidents.

Table 4.12.

Nathan's Class: Nominations for Peer Acceptance Categories (a) & (b)

Individual Pupil	Nominations Category (a)	Nominations Category (b)	Total Nominations
Rose	9	6	15
Elsie	5	9	14
Hannah+	0	0	0
Xowie	8	8	16
Nina	2	2	4
*Ned^*	5	6	11
Noel□	8	8	16
Elicia	8	6	14
Nigel	8	8	16
*Dominic^*	1	4	5
Tara+	3	1	4
*Amanda^*	1	1	2
*Ben^*	1	3	7
*Eric^*	3	0	3
Rita	6	6	12
*Fred^*	2	1	3
Harry□+	3	3	6
Earl	8	8	16
Molly	7	8	15
Aisling	6	3	9
Eoin	10	11	21
Ian	7	8	15
Keith+	1	1	2
Neville^	**0**	**0**	**0**
Nevin□	2	2	4
Angela	6	7	13
Mary	3	3	6
Leo*			
Simon*			

Note. Bold is used to indicate target pupil. The symbol*indicates that this pupil did not participate in this study; □ indicates that this pupil has SEN, + indicates that this pupil also participated in a focus group interview. Participants labelled with^ nominated at least one peer who did not participate, thus reciprocity was not possible in these incidents.

Interestingly, Harry, a focus group participant who has an assessment of dyslexia and AD/HD, nominated Sorcha (SNA) for best friend category even though she was not listed on the class roster (Table 4.4).[58] The theme of adult (teacher/SNA) pupil relationship emerged and is discussed later in this chapter. Interestingly, neither Mark nor Damien nominated each other as friends despite the fact that they share the same class, are supported by Anna (SNA) and Emily (LS/RT) and have previously attended the special class for pupils with MGLD. This contrasts with Neville who lists the two pupils with SEN who sit near him in class, and are also assisted by Sorcha (SNA). A surprising finding to emerge was that, unlike a number of their TDPs, Neville, Mark and Damien demonstrated no difficulty nominating children for all categories. Difficulties were evident for nine of their peers across the three categories, particularly category (c) who chose me as their friend? (Table 4.7, 4.8).[59]

It is important to note that in comparison to teachers' judgements, in terms of assessing the social participation of children with SEN, sociometry is based on a larger group of participants (peers) who have no professional dedication to the social inclusion of pupils with SEN (Pijl et al., 2008). The negative peer sociometric assessment, of Damien for example, when compared to Elizabeth's and Anna's nominations for him, raises the possibility that teachers/adults may tend to overestimate the social participation of pupils with SEN, which in turn may possibly result in them not intervening to promote peer interaction and friendships in the classroom setting (Pijl et al., 2008). In light of this, as with Pijl et al. (2008), this study uses sociometry as a reference point with respect to this issue.

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[58] It should be noted that nominations made by adults on behalf of target pupils and Harry's nomination of Sorcha (SNA) were not included in Ucinet dataset (Figures 4.2 & 4.3).
[59] As Keith had just enrolled in the school during mid-December, I did not include him as experiencing difficulties in terms of nominating peers as sociometry was conducted only three months after his enrolment.

The theme of friendship permeated the draw and write investigation. It played a major role in how the participants felt about school. Contrary to O'Keefe's (2009) findings, it was of note that while Neville and Mark both listed peers with SEN as friends they also listed a number of TDPs. This may be linked to the fact that the focus pupils in this study had mild GLD while the pupils in O'Keeffe's study had moderate GLD. From observations, interviews and focus groups, it did not appear that TDPs excluded or isolated pupils with SEN. Without specifically referring to the concept of SEN, the TDPs demonstrated a degree of awareness and acceptance of disability. There were few examples of the focus children experiencing negative interaction with the exception of a number of incidents involving name calling/teasing. The issues of name calling, awareness and acceptance of disability, are further outlined later in this chapter. In listening to the 'voice' of the three pupils, their narrative contained references to friendships, participation and positive contact with their peers, indicating that they were all of the view that they have friends; their view is represented faithfully in this study. The next section considers issues regarding contact/interactions.

Theme Two: Contacts/Interactions

The theme of contact/interactions emerged strongly throughout the study and is illuminated through a series of examples involving children's interactions in the context of playing and working together. [60] Of particular note is the subtheme 'acknowledged and unacknowledged initiations' which was perceived in terms of the presence/absence of mutual positive outcomes following contact/interactions for all parties concerned (Table 4.1).

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[60] Another related area is the issue of 'communication clarity and exchange of information' (Gottman 1983) which emerged as a theme i.e. a barrier to peer contact/interaction. This issue is discussed later.

Initiations encompassed social-emotional comprehension which in turn contained a number of further subthemes outlined below.

Social-Emotional Comprehension

Neville and Damien, as evidenced by interviews, experienced difficulties during interactions which tended to result in the absence of mutual positive outcomes for themselves and others.[61] Concern was expressed by adult participants in terms of deficits in Neville's and Damien's ability to: (a) encode and interpret the emotion and body language of others; (b) respect others' personal space; and (c) modify behaviour in response to social cues (Table 4.1). This is particularly relevant in the context of the current study as the field of research indicates that nonverbal signals regarding emotion are found in facial expression, posture, gesture, tone of voice, and distance in personal space. Consequently, during social interactions, perception, recognition and identification of facial expressions/emotions are salient to social reciprocity (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010; McClure, 2000). Indeed, Baker and Donnelly (2001) maintain that all too often children's deficits are viewed as the cause for unsuccessful friendships and interactions. This perspective is in danger of contributing to an unsupportive environment which in turn sets pupils up for failure. Cautioning against an individualist approach to improving social experiences, they recommend interventions such as peer tutoring which is socially productive as it involves peer contact and interaction. Formal and informal approaches should be underpinned by dedicated school policy, aimed at addressing social issues.

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[61] Participants did not refer to Mark in relation to social-emotion deficits however they did highlight his tendency to involuntary movements and sporadic sounds such as whistling and belching, which for the most part did not appear to impact on his peer contact/interactions.

Encode and interpret emotion and body language.

Elizabeth, Damien's class teacher, states:

> *he makes a point of shouting hello at me and he will keep saying hello*
>
> *teacher, good morning teacher until I answer him; I mean it could be*
>
> *totally inappropriate I could be speaking to another adult or anybody*
>
> *and he'll keep saying it until I answer him.*

Emily and Anna concur and make the point that when Damien is not acknowledged he gets quite anxious. Likewise, Keith (TDP) observes in relation to Neville: *"Yeah, he keeps on touching you everywhere. Like that, I don't think he realises but he always does it with Eric, but Eric could get like really angry and start hitting him and all and pushing him around"*. Similarly, Harry (peer with dyslexia & AD/HD) comments that Neville believes everything is a game. If you ask him to stop he keeps doing it. *"He thinks a lot of stuff is games and then Eric hitting him and pushing him, he thinks that they're playing like a game of pretend ... and it's actually not great"*. As evidenced by participants' recounts, findings indicate that Neville and Damien's difficulties inhibit peer and adult interaction. These results echo the work of Lipton and Nowicki (2009) who maintain that body language is directly related to social perception and impacts how an individual responds in relationships and social contacts. Results underscore a need for ongoing targeted intervention with regard to this issue.

Respect personal space.

Emily, Neville's resource teacher, describes how in the presence of two teachers conversing, rather than waiting to one side, Neville looks from person to person following what is being said with no awareness that maybe he should not be part of the conversation. Notwithstanding the fact that Neville demonstrates good listener speaker relationship, his

behaviour implies that he experiences difficulties generalising and discriminating which social behaviours are appropriate in specific contexts (Gresham et al., 2001). Sorcha and Nathan concur with Emily regarding Neville's difficulties in this area. Similarly, Elizabeth describes Damien's difficulties in terms of social interaction with Yvonne (TDP). *"The touching, saying things repeatedly, after being asked, the child saying, don't do that and then if that child isn't in he will focus on her best friend [Ellen]because she's associated with that person "*. Comparable to Neville the issue of invasion of personal space has been an ongoing difficulty for Damien and was repeatedly highlighted by a number of participants. In interpreting the participants' recounts, there is evidence to suggest that this issue impacts negatively on the boys' social interaction and reciprocity and that it too requires targeted intervention.

Ability to modify behaviour in response to social cues.

Participants expressed concern regarding fixations that Neville and Damien display in relation to specific peers. Neville tends to seek contact with Eric while Damien seeks contact with Yvonne, Ellen and Graham. The class teachers and principal report that the four TDPs find this somewhat overwhelming; occasionally discord ensues. Martin, the school principal, comments:

> *Damien fixates on certain children, he doesn't understand that they need their personal space; and he doesn't understand that you know, you don't get into peoples' faces when you want to talk to them, you need to keep a sort of distance or when people get sort of annoyed or angry, he doesn't see that you know, maybe it's time to stop talking and move away, he can't read into facial expressions or body language.*

Elizabeth reports that while peers generally afford Damien numerous opportunities to modify

his behaviour they have requested her to intervene on their behalf on numerous occasions.

Martin recounts that he has had parents complaining and asking him, as principal, to

intervene. *"Even claims of bullying, which you know I disputed at the time, I said the child*

doesn't understand because of his fixation, not because he was actually trying to upset

another child".

As far as I could ascertain the issue of intense interest in peers is not documented in

the literature. One area which mirrors this phenomenon is that of circumscribed interests

which represents a focused special interest, characteristic of children with ASD (Klin,

Danovitch, Merz & Volkmar, 2007). The focus and pursuit of circumscribed interests have

been found to impact the activities of children with ASD (Timmins, 2014). The teachers and

principal report that the parents of peers have expressed grave concern regarding the issue of

peer fixation; consequently there are plans to remix both class groups with a view to

dissipating this problem. [62]

There was consensus among teachers, SNAs and peers that Neville and Damien do

not demonstrate the ability to modify their behaviour in response to social cues. Both pupils

experience difficulties encoding, interpreting, selecting strategies and evaluating the

effectiveness of these strategies (Dodge et al., 1986; Guralnick, 1999). Martin (principal)

maintains that it is essential that schools provide social skills interventions whereby

appropriate behaviours related to social-emotional comprehension are developed explicitly, in

particular for children with SEN. This he contends would enhance peer interaction and

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[62] Both classes were subsequently remixed at the end of the academic year 2012-2013.

friendship networks among all children.[63]The findings in this study are in keeping with previous research (Dodge et al., 1986; Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010; Guralnick, 1999, 2006; Pijl, Frostad & Minnaert, 2011) which affirms that the ability to employ social functions is an important skill to facilitate pupils' social participation. Furthermore, deficits in this area raise the possibility of social difficulty. Beauchamp and Anderson (2010) maintain that children experiencing difficulties in this area attract negative peer outcomes which impact in turn on their social interactions. The social skills pertinent to Neville and Damien are documented in the literature in terms of social awareness, social meaning and social reasoning (McKown et al., 2009, 2013). Findings in relation to contacts/interactions are important in that they highlight the need for teachers to make explicit the subtleties and nuances of social conventions for children with SEN (Jordan, 2005; Westwood, 2003). They . also underscore the need for intervention. Addressing social-emotional deficits in pupils with SEN warrants careful assessment (Lipton & Nowicki, 2009; Warnes et al., 2005). Numerous authors have drawn attention to the need for interventions to be implemented in social contexts. Issues pertaining to social intervention are outlined later in this study.

Knowledge and Understanding of Game Rules

The issue of understanding and adhering to the rules of games, (football & chasing) emerged as a difficulty for all three focus pupils. Mark's parents, Eithne and Liam, report that after years of Mark trying to assimilate football rules, his neighbourhood friends have suggested that he play in the goal where the rule of not handling the ball does not apply. Elizabeth states that when a number of Mark's close friends, who are not interested in

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[63] Wight & Chapparo (2008) provide a teachers' skillstreaming checklist on friendship making skills while Warnes, Sheridan, Geske, and Warnes (2005) outline a contextual approach to the assessment of social skills.

football are absent, he joins in the game which he might otherwise avoid if they were present. This suggests that structured games, such as football, may be employed to facilitate social participation for pupils such as Mark. Likewise, Damien, as evidenced in interview, is capable of listing the rules. He knows who to ask and what to say when he wants to join a game. However Elizabeth reports that he has difficulty playing appropriately as demonstrated by his attempts to retrieve the football by grabbing his opponents.

Sorcha (SNA), Emily (LS/RT) and Ella (Neville's mother) maintain that Neville is interacting much more with his peers now than he did when he initially started school. However, both Nathan (teacher) and Sorcha remark that as Neville's peers are getting older it is becoming more apparent that Neville does not follow the rules. This annoys his peers, while Neville believes that they are at fault and complains to Nathan. Emily contends that Neville finds it difficult to distinguish between what is important enough to report and what does not need to be told. She asserts that he does not understand how children draw up rules for their games, particularly if the rules change during the game:

He's still going by the previous rules so he comes running up to teacher that they are cheating, which is one of his favourite words, and that annoys the other children and it also makes it harder for him to join in the game in the first place.

This scenario resonates with Carman and Chapparo (2012), and Norwicki (2003) who maintain that children with SEN encounter significant difficulties "untangling a constantly changing environment of social interactions" (p. 185). Neville's position is impacted by the fact that he cannot join in effectively because it annoys his peers that he is not following the rules. Furthermore, it annoys them when he reports minor incidents to the teacher and he himself gets upset because he thinks his peers are cheating. Emily suggests that one possible explanation for Neville's behaviour is that children are encouraged to report disagreements to

the teacher when they are in infant classes. This policy is aimed at preventing further escalation and affording the teacher opportunities to mediate. However, it appears that Neville has not progressed beyond this strategy. Emily states: *"when they are older we tell them if something happens to annoy you, don't react, tell teacher; others have worked out what needs to be told and what doesn't, and that there are things they can work out themselves"*.

When asked if it is wrong to report incidents to teacher, Hannah suggests that it could be that Neville wants to get his peers in trouble. Harry maintains that this is what Eric does to Neville when Neville is annoying him: *"he goes over to Sorcha [SNA] and then Neville gets in trouble, and he gets [placed] out by the wall and Eric smiles at Neville when he's walking by"*. One can appreciate how confusing it is for pupils with MGLD to understand that reporting to the teacher is perceived as a provocation and is frowned upon on one hand and is the correct procedure on the other, depending on the context. Findings also indicate that TDPs experience difficulties adhering to rules. Harold commented in the draw and write investigation: *"I do not feel part of school when I am disqualified from football because Omar and Evan cheat"*. Beauchamp and Anderson (2010) maintain that biases in attribution, such as tendencies to perceive intentions as hostile, for example Neville's comment: *"they are cheating"*, can account for antagonistic behaviour which has obvious connotations for social function. Emily expresses the view and Martin concurs that: *"we're expecting them [TDPs] to accommodate him maybe more than it's natural to them, because they're expecting him to understand rules in the same way as they do"*. This is an important finding as it highlights the possibility that teachers assume a greater level of understanding and knowledge and or experience of disability on the part of TDPs than is the case. It raises

questions regarding the conceptualisation of disability and how a school deals with this,[64] if

indeed at all. It underscores the need for a dedicated social issues policy as outlined in

previous work (Travers et al., 2010). There is agreement in the research that successful

inclusion is reliant on the promotion of greater knowledge and understanding among TDPs,

(Carter, Cushing, Clark & Kennedy, 2005; De Boer et al., 2012; Hodkinson, 2007; Ring &

Travers, 2005; Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1998). It is important to note the current primary

school curriculum (NCCA, 1999) places a strong emphasis on the social domain of children's

learning in terms of collaborative and active learning. Increasingly, children are being

required to participate in group-learning situations as social interaction permeates all aspects

of school life (NCCA, 1999). Findings in the current study also signal the need for educators

to extend pupils' knowledge with regard to conceptualisation of disability and to introduce

intervention programmes aimed at promoting understanding and acceptance of difference

among all children. The requirement for the implementation of peer support interventions

encompassing all school activities is a recurring theme. There is evidence to suggest that

semi-structured games such as football and chasing can facilitate entry into play for children

with SEN who otherwise might remain on the periphery. Adding to other findings in the

literature (Fennell, 2008) the current study underscores the need for the teaching of rules to

all children, not only to help children with SEN assimilate them in context but also to assist

TDPs in extending levels of tolerance, acceptance and understanding of the difficulties

experienced by others (Carman & Chapparo, 2012). Drawing on my experience as a

practitioner I suggest that assimilation of the rules could be facilitated through regular

repeated practice. Although Avramidis (2010) indicated that boys with SEN (behavioural

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[64] *The conceptualisation of disability encompasses the three levels: individual, group/society and organisation; as a teacher I do not explicitly discuss disability with children, rather I tend to rely on parental attitudes and appropriate teacher and peer modelling and attitudes, assuming that this will suffice. However, it appears that a more direct approach is necessary. This point is documented in the literature (Ring & Travers (2005).*

issues) tended to be perceived as rule breakers, findings here suggest that rules were not intentionally broken; rather altercations arose as a result of difficulties experienced in terms of understanding and assimilating rules.

Theme Three: Experience/Perception of Pupils with/without SEN

What Makes me Feel Left out at School

In relation to what makes me feel left out of school (Appendix W), the majority of responses in the draw and write investigation highlight the issue of being left out of games and not having friends. In answer to this question, Mark drew a picture of himself chasing with his friends, with the caption: *"I don't ever get left out"*. Likewise, Damien, as evidenced by his response: *"I love going to swimming; I went deep under the pool"*, did not appear to entertain the concept of being left out. His response also raises the possibility that he did not fully understand the question. Neville on the other hand, acknowledged feelings of isolation/rejection as evidenced by his response: *"at the swimming pool Eric and Niall tell me to go away; I feel left out. I tell the teacher and he says he will watch them"*. Feelings of isolation/rejection were also expressed by TDPs as demonstrated by Nigel who lists the following: *"being left out of groups; not being allowed play the games your friends are playing; and if your friends are playing chasing, people ignore you"*.

Equally, Amanda expressed feelings of rejection when raising the issue of name calling: *"I feel left out when people make fun of me and when I am not allowed play"*. Figure 4.4 illuminates Amanda's response. Similarly, Mark, Nevin and Keith also report incidents of name calling.[65] Mark recounts two incidents of name calling; one when he repeated third

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[65] Nevin has an assessment of AD/HD while Keith is a (TDP)

class: *"I don't like talking about that; I don't like eh ...I never tell anyone I got held back".*

He states that he reported the name calling to his teacher; he intervened and it ceased. Eithne, Mark's mother, expressed concerns regarding the issue of bullying. It emerged as an area of concern for her in terms of his interactions with others. Likewise, Elizabeth (teacher) spoke of potential influences older more 'street-wise' children might have on him: *"to do things that he probably shouldn't do; wouldn't be right but he wouldn't know that they are not correct.... He likes to be everybody's friend; he wants to play with everybody".*

Neville does not report name calling however, I witnessed Eric repeatedly calling him a baby during the lunchtime observation in the classroom (Appendix X). Verbally aggressive behaviour is a form of bullying, documented in the research (Kerins & Day, 2012; Travers et al., 2010). While, there is no suggestion from the findings that very serious bullying exists, nonetheless there is evidence of low-level bullying behaviour; a finding that also emerged in Travers et al. (2010). The findings of the current study reiterate the need for comprehensive proactive anti-bullying programmes to be proactively implemented in schools and for the mandatory recording/tracking of incidents to be conducted with stringent adherence to recent guidelines (DES, 2013a).[66] Pupils with MGLD and their TDPs need to be supported in how to problem-solve the issue of bullying. Bullying and isolation/rejection are linked to acceptance by classmates, which encompasses issues of tolerance and acceptance of difference; these concepts are discussed further in relation to theme four.

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[66] The tracking of all incidents, stipulated in the current anti-bullying document (DES, 2013a) will be a difficult area to navigate in relation to pupils like Damien and Neville who have focused interests on particular peers. I believe they do not deliberately intend to bully; their actions are inadvertent (see Martin's comments). The need for differentiation within this policy in terms of pupils' intent and understanding (pupils' with SEN) and the interpretation and implementation of differentiation, is an area that may prove problematic for parents, teachers and pupils alike.

Figure 4.4. Amanda's Depiction of What Makes Me Feel Left Out in School
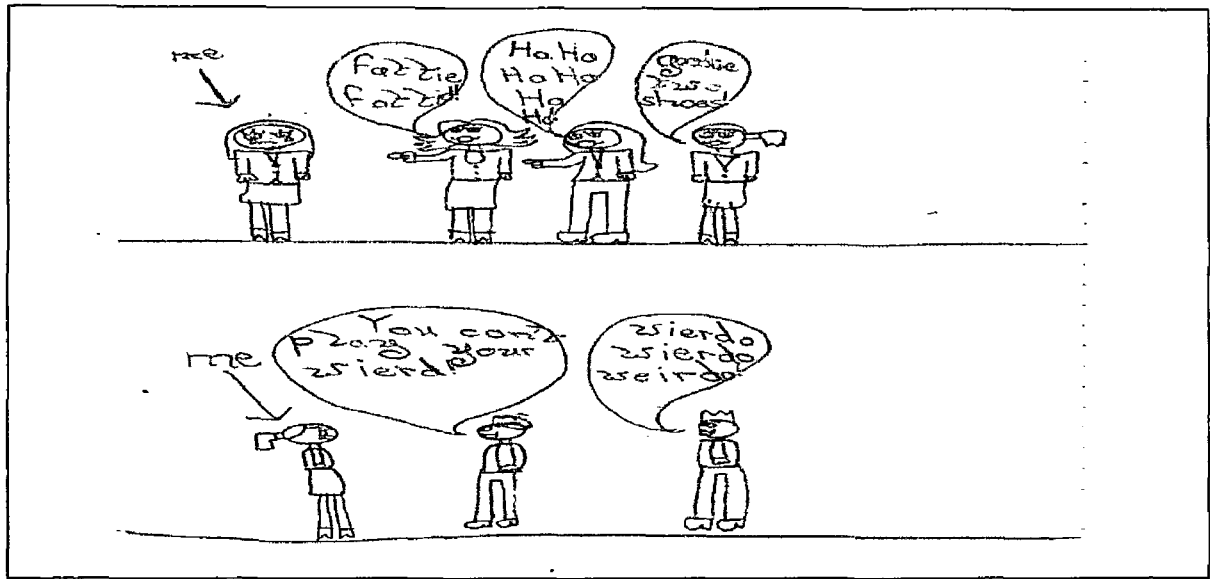
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What Makes me Feel Part of School

As with previous literature (Koster et al., 2009), the theme of playing together

emerged in the current study as important for children to feel socially included. Other aspects

in the current study include participation in curricular activities (maths, art & school choir),

kind teachers, acceptance by classmates, and loyal friends who provide social support

behaviours. Damien described feeling part of school as reading and playing soccer. His

depiction of these activities in Figure 4.5 demonstrates the simplicity of his text and drawing.

Simplicity permeates the draw and write responses of all three focus pupils; this was

particularly evident when contrasted with the more sophisticated work of their TDPs.

Sheila, Damien's mother reiterates Damien's enjoyment in terms of school outings

and playing. She recounts how prior to his surgery *"he excluded himself from playing and*

was showing some autistic behaviour. [67] *Now I see that he participates a lot, now he loves*

playing with the girls". She describes how when waiting in the car before school she is very

happy to hear him exclaim: *"okay, I'm going; my friends are here"*.

Mark feels included doing activities which include football, chasing, maths and

playing with his friend Michael, who also has SEN (Figure 4.6). Elizabeth (teacher) states

that Mark engages quite well in class and is able to interact with his peers, with a lot more

ease than Damien.

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[67] When he was six Damien had surgery to have a brain tumour excised.

Figure 4.5. Damien's Depiction of What Makes Him Feel Part of School

me reading the book
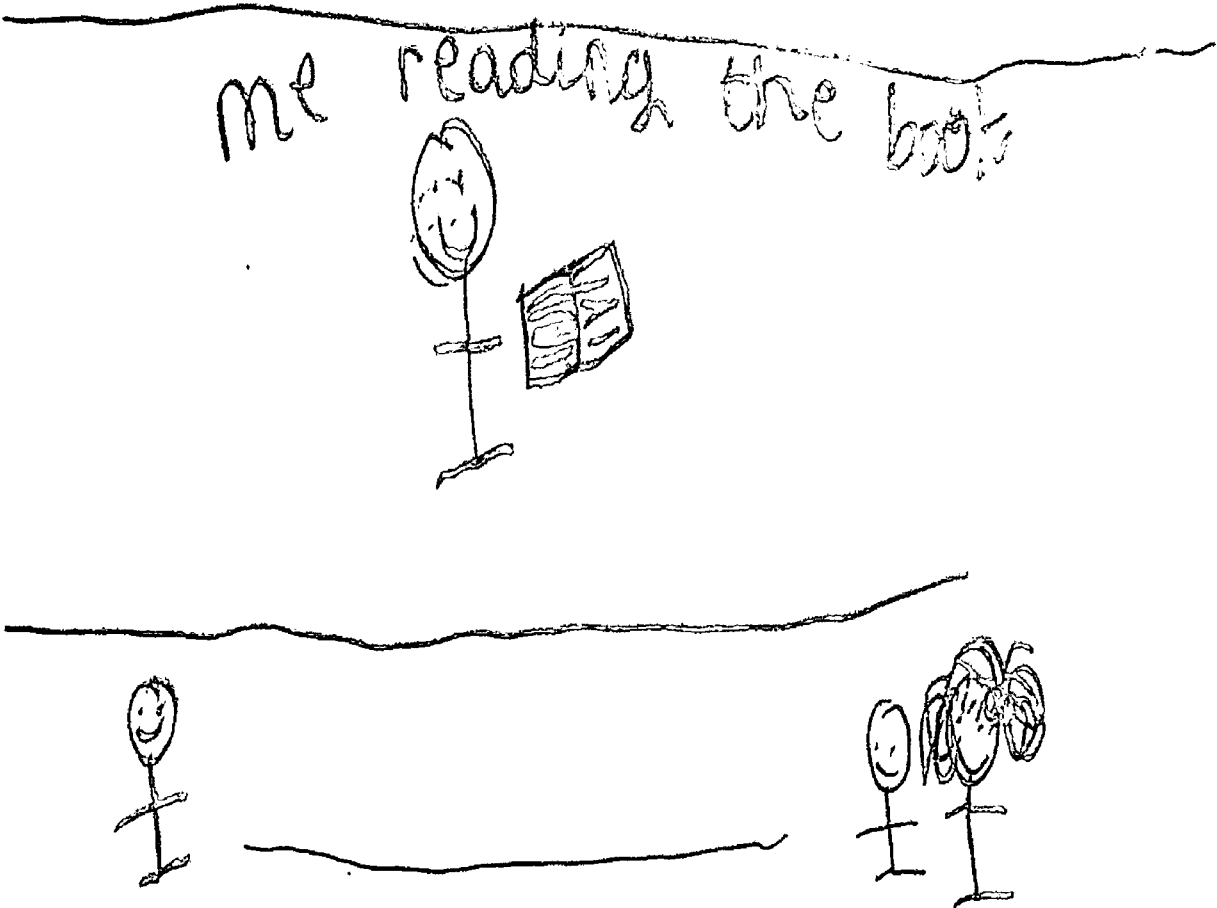
Figure 4.6. Mark's Depiction of What Makes Him Feel Part of School
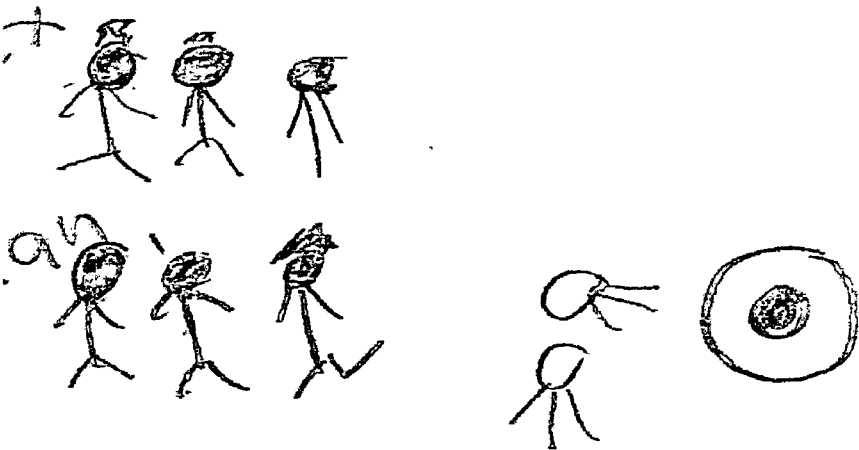
Neville feels included when he paints and plays with his friends Eric and Leo: *"that's me playing on yard with my friends guns"*. Note his sentence structure (Figure 4.7); his intended meaning is: 'that's me playing guns with my friends'. Despite some concerns expressed by participants regarding the focus pupils' social interaction, it is important to note that, congruent with O'Keeffe (2009), all three boy's self-perception is that they are included in school. In listening to their narrative, I note that they all derive much satisfaction from social outings and from participation in regular school activities with their peers. This is an important finding as it illuminates how these three pupils view themselves in terms of social participation. Their enjoyment of shared activities was also reflected in the accounts of significant adults. Themes one, two and three demonstrate the important role played by the target children in providing insider knowledge pertaining to their social participation. Having addressed research questions one and two, the themes/subthemes pertaining to research question three[68] are now outlined (See Table 4.2).

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[68] Are there factors that contribute to children feeling socially included or excluded?

Figure 4.7. Neville's Depiction of What Makes Me Feel Part of School
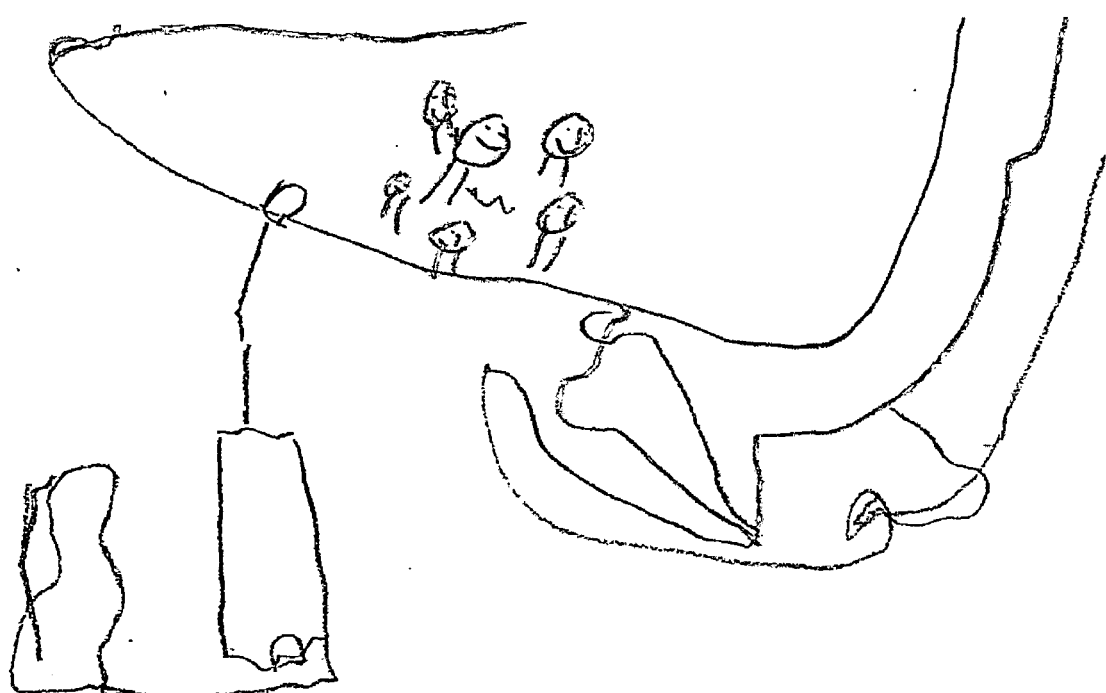
thats me playing on yard
with my ~~first~~ friends
guns

paints
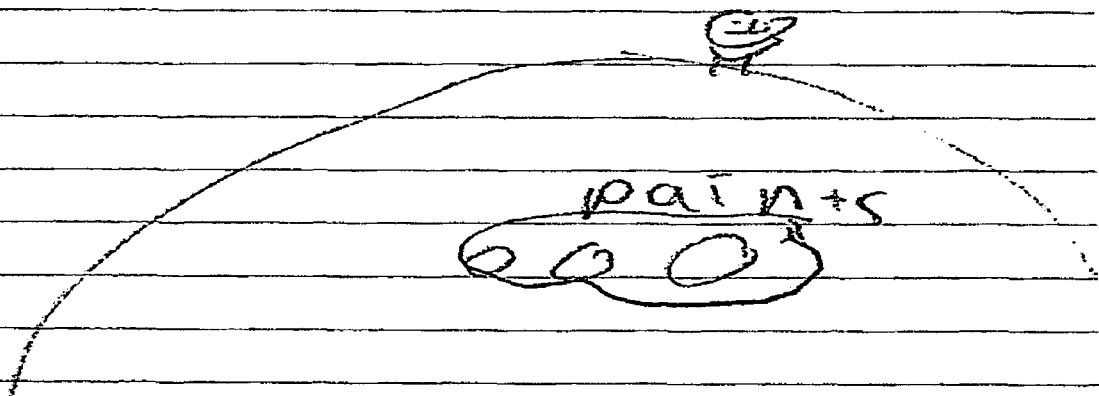
Theme Four: Acceptance by Classmates

Knowledge and Experience of Disability

In the absence of a reciprocal friend to offer support there may be an increased risk of bullying (Hodges et al., 1999, as cited in Avramidis, 2012). Consistent with this increased risk, Sorcha (SNA) and Nathan (teacher) mention that Keith, a pupil new to the school and new to Neville's class, has begun to tease Neville. Sorcha maintains that Keith is aware of Neville's difference and talks about it to his peers. Emily (LS/RT) makes the point that Keith has not grown up with Neville and so the difference may appear quite stark to him. She asserts that whereas the others have always accepted Neville's difference and while in some ways the difference has become greater, in other ways it has lessened in that the level of activity due to AD/HD has reduced comparatively over the years. Nathan and Sorcha concur that it is plausible that because peers have grown up with Neville they have always had to accommodate him and are accustomed to his needs; whereas Keith may have encountered other children with SEN, he has not had to accommodate Neville. In keeping with previous findings (Avramidis, 2012; De Boer et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 1998), Emily suggests that if Keith has a tendency to tease others, Neville is an obvious candidate. This finding suggests that knowledge and experience of pupils with SEN is pertinent and that limited experience with peers is likely to affect peers' attitudes and acceptance of pupils with SEN. Results linked to observations appear to support previous research which suggests that child-child interaction is far more demanding, unpredictable and complex than the child-adult context, with deficits experienced by children with SEN far more likely to impact negatively on peer interaction (Guralnick, 1999).

Peer Attitude: Tolerance, Acceptance and Understanding of Difference

Interestingly, Nathan (teacher) and Martin (principal) both talk about the natural skill

of some peers to accept and accommodate children with SEN. Highlighting the importance of

attributes such as tolerance, acceptance and understanding, Martin suggests that while a

number of children are naturally accepting and tolerant, others require assistance in the

promotion of these qualities. He contends that teachers lead by demonstrating these traits and

in so doing promote all children regardless of their abilities or disabilities. He also maintains

that these are difficult constructs for children to comprehend and that there has to be an

element of fairness demonstrated in how children experience them. Both Emily and Martin

contend that if pupils experience teachers or peers employing these behaviours a number of

them will naturally adopt a similar approach; not all children will, and those who do not

require help and encouragement. Moreover, Martin and Sorcha (SNA) believe that children's

levels of tolerance and acceptance of pupils with disability are linked to parental attitudes and

the up-bringing they experience at home. Martin believes that this strongly influences how

children demonstrate compassion and come to accept difference. His viewpoint resonates

with De Boer et al. (2013) who maintain that parental attitudes relate to the attitudes of their

children. Thus it appears that parents have an indirect effect on the social participation of

children with SEN. In keeping with De Boer et al. (2013), findings in the current study

suggest that the promotion of positive attitudes among parents is a worthwhile goal for

educators to pursue in terms of facilitating inclusion and influencing peer attitudes.

Acknowledging the important role parents have in inculcating these attributes within

their children's repertoire of social behaviours, Martin reiterates the need for a dedicated

proactive social issues policy, highlighting the fact that the school is lacking in this area. The

need for such a policy promoting tolerance, acceptance and understanding of difference, is an important finding. It has support in the literature (Baker & Donnelly, 2001; De Boer, Pijl, Minnaert & Post, 2014; NCSE, 2011; Stevens & O'Moore, 2009; Travers et al., 2010). The fostering of these qualities/attributes currently form part of the SPHE and religion programmes. However, it is questionable as to whether these constructs are indeed teachable.[69] Warnes et al. (2005) contend that "the complex nature of these behavioral constructs aligns closely with the innate qualities of an individual's character, rather than discrete behaviours typically assessed for or taught in social skill training" (p. 183). As the promotion of these qualities does not lend itself to discrete steps, interventions such as modelling and role play may not suffice (Warnes et al., 2005). Nonetheless, from a practitioner perspective I contend that interventions incorporating dialogue may at least aim at ameliorating children's predisposition towards these qualities. It is important to note that researchers have underscored the need for further investigation regarding "the relationship between attitudes and the acceptance and friendships of students with disabilities" (De Boer et al., 2013, p. 833). Earlier studies implemented over the past decade described peer attitudes towards children with disabilities but ignored the question as to whether attitude actually relates to the social participation of pupils with disabilities. Significantly, De Boer et al. (2012) established that "positive attitudes of peers are important for successful social outcomes of inclusive education" (p. 389). In keeping with this De Boer et al. (2013) advocate that "future intervention studies should aim to include both aspects: attitude change of peers and improvement of peer acceptance of students with disabilities" (p. 840).

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[69] The concept of understanding is discussed as part of the 5th and 6th class Alive-O Roman Catholic religion programme (Veritas, 2004). Understanding is considered one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, received during the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Findings in this study suggest that the formulation of a dedicated social issues policy, encompassing input from parents, pupils and school staff, would be an important first step in ameliorating pupil attitude in the hope that this may positively influence peer acceptance. Results underscore the need for a targeted school intervention programme linked to peer-mediated interaction. De Boer et al. (2012) advocate a focus in future studies on interventions involving information about disabilities (storytelling, books, posters & videos). This may lead to enhanced acceptance of pupils with disabilities. As boys and girls differ in their attitude to pupils with SEN, De Boer et al. (2014) recommend that when implementing intervention these differences be taken into account in order to achieve stronger effectiveness. Likewise in the current study parental involvement is also recommended due to the link between the attitudes of parents and the attitudes of their children.[70]

Theme Five: Social Support Behaviours

Empathy and Restorative Skills

Empathy is an important attribute in terms of social interaction/contacts. Research (Caldarella & Merrell, 1997; Pijl, 2007) underscores awareness of others in the development of peer relationships. In terms of within-child factors that contribute to children being socially included, a number of participants highlight Mark's ability to empathise. Emily comments that he is very conscious of the feelings of others. *"It upsets him if other people are upset"*. Harold, Mark's TDP, defines empathy as the ability to *"picture the other peoples' feelings"* while Lipton and Nowicki (2009) describe it "as an emotional resonance or a capacity for experiencing the emotions of another person" (p. 105). Despite Mark's ability to empathise,

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[70]At the time of this research Oakwood had 23 pupils assessed with low incidence disability, and a number of other pupils at stage 3 of the assessment process for emerging/existing SEN (DES, 2005a). From my personal reflections I now identify a gap in my practice with regard to addressing pupils' knowledge and experience of disability. My strategy to date has been reliant on modelling. I now see a need for a whole school approach in collaboration with parents, colleagues and TDPs.

he reports difficulties in terms of restoring friendship following discord.[71] He recounts his angst following conflict with his friend Michael, who has ASD. Mark describes Michael as a confidant and states that they offer each other social support;[72] however, he also reports that Michael calls him names occasionally. Moreover, he outlines his distress when classmates 'pick on' Michael. *"I say stop, but they won't listen to me. They just keep annoying him. Michael gets a bit annoyed, he starts calling people names. He says idiot, stupid"*. Mark also reveals that Michael calls him an idiot. Mark states that he does not call Michael names in return. *"I just say I always want to play with him, so...okay just be like that then"*. He admits that he finds it difficult to re-establish their friendship and regularly seeks assistance from Elizabeth or Anna; demonstrating his ability to distinguish serious incidents which require adult intervention, in contrast to Neville.

Mark's parents and peers also recount Mark's tribulations in terms of his friendship with Michael. This finding echoes Guralnick (1999) who maintains that children with SEN exhibit "an unusually difficult interactive style during conflicts (e.g. predominance of negative and absence of conciliatory strategies; lack of responsiveness during conflict episodes)" (p. 21). The situation is compounded as Michael and Mark have SEN. Interestingly Harold outlines how he and other TDPs also experience conflict in their daily lives and how they too experience difficulty reaching resolution. Parker and Asher (1993) make the point that disputes are common in children's close friendships. However, they emphasise that a distinction should be drawn between the level of discord pupils experience and the manner with which these arguments are resolved. It is the ability to resolve conflicts speedily and harmoniously, not the ability to evade conflict completely, that differentiates

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[71] Neville and Damien also experience conflict as evidenced by reports and observation.
[72] Michael was observed offering social support to Mark during lunchtime observation on the yard.

close peer relationships from peer relationships. The amount of conflict experienced by children "and the ease and readiness with which conflict is resolved represent, therefore, somewhat distinct dimensions" (Parker & Asher, 1993, p. 612). Findings in the current study reveal the need for conflict resolution skills (including perspective-taking) to be promoted and developed among all children. This intervention could also help target the issue of name calling. An intervention akin to restorative practice, described by Fives, Keenaghan, Canavan, Moran and Coen (2013) may help in this regard, as this approach incorporates issues of voice encompassing: individual, group/society, and organisation.

Theme Six: Social Communication

Pragmatic Language Skills

The theme of social communication encompasses two subthemes: pragmatic language skills; and facilitative strategies. Social communication posed challenges for the three focus pupils as evidenced by observations, pupil interviews and teachers' reports. The three children demonstrated difficulties with clarity, in terms of pronunciation, volume, rate and fluency. In addition, deficits in pragmatic language skills impacted negatively on their communicative intent during peer and adult interaction. Difficulties were noted in terms of responding to and giving information, taking turns, introducing and maintaining topics, making relevant contributions to discussion, requesting clarification, adjusting language based on context, understanding humour and using appropriate strategies to gain attention. Elizabeth comments in relation to Damien, that she was unsure as to whether it was due to learning difficulty or disengagement in class that he made random statements unrelated to the discussion topic. She reports that although he loves to be involved in class work, he has very little understanding of what it entails. *"Occasionally he will join groups but will be on the*

outside looking, listening....and the groups would have been very good at telling him what to do and what to write, but he just wasn't engaged". Both Emily and Anna concur.

Similarly, during observation Mark's responses were occasionally tangential. He struggled to remain on topic when he tried to elaborate, and demonstrated difficulty using appropriate sentence structures. Although he found it challenging to generate ideas, he demonstrated an awareness of his audience and attempted adjustments. Having made a contribution to the class discussion *"crops"* he then proffered *"growing your own vegetables"* and turned to his partner Ivy, and remarked *"she [Elizabeth] didn't understand me when I just said crops"*. Mark's attempts at adjustments imply that he monitors listeners' uptake, and has an awareness of the listener speaker relationship. Although he was observed waving his hands impatiently or perhaps enthusiastically, to gain Elizabeth's attention, he was also observed affirming Ivy when she made suggestions for their collaborative task. Furthermore, he demonstrated an emerging ability to prompt his recall through self-questioning techniques during interview: *"who else do I play? I play with Eamon most of the time"*.

Despite Sorcha's (SNA) gentle reminders/prompts, Neville experienced difficulties attending to and remaining on task during classroom observation. Notwithstanding the fact that he demonstrated a more extensive vocabulary and better sentence construction than Mark or Damien, his 'staccato-like' manner of delivery inhibited listeners' uptake. He enjoyed being a participant and his delight was apparent following his reading of a short passage for his peers: *"he smiled when he had finished and turned to Sorcha, possibly for affirmation [field notes]"*. As a result of Sorcha's prompts and redirection, Neville's random contributions were curbed. In observing Neville in the group, it was difficult to ascertain if

Sorcha's presence acted as s barrier between Neville and his peers. His constant movements

and distractibility possibly warranted an adult presence close-by. Irish research (Kerins,

2011), involving pupils with MGLD, revealed that teachers in special schools expressed

concern regarding the level of learned helpfulness demonstrated by a number of children with

MGLD, who had transferred from mainstream settings. In Kerin's study, teachers in special

schools reported that it took time to get pupils engaging in tasks without constant adult

supervision. Concern was also expressed that the social development of pupils with MGLD

had been negatively impacted by the constant presence of SNAs. Identifying similar findings,

Tews and Lupart (2008) emphasise that the importance of student self-determination should

not be overlooked. While there is no direct evidence to indicate that this applies to the current

study, it is an issue that warrants close monitoring as all three boys are transferring to special

schools for their second level education.[73]

Nathan (teacher) maintains that Neville loves to participate in class activities: *"though

he might produce a bit of laughter from the rest of the class with what he says"*. The issue, in

terms of the current study, is not so much the cause or origin of the focus children's random

unrelated contributions, so much as their potential to impact negatively on the children's peer

acceptance and social participation. Research indicates that children's poor social

communication skills limit communication and social participation (Carman & Chapparo,

2012; Franke n.d.; McKown et al., 2009). Moreover deficits in social communication impact

on children's social acceptance, behaviour and well-being (Landa, 2005). While there is no

direct evidence to suggest that the focus pupils' peer nominations were affected by deficits in

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[73] It should be noted that all three sets of parents have indicated that their child will be transferring to a special school for post-primary. Resonating with research (Kelly & Devitt, 2010; Kerins & Day, 2012; Mullen White, 2005) it appears that this may be related to the view that the special school structure is more appropriate for pupils with MGLD in terms of post-primary and class size.

communication, the possibility remains that this may be a contributing factor, particularly in relation to Neville and Damien. Albeit that the three pupils report high levels of satisfaction within school, findings underscore a need for targeted intervention to address the area of social communication in order to further enhance the boys' social participation and affiliation with the peer group.

Facilitative Strategies for Social Communication

Despite Mark's efforts to monitor and regulate his spoken contributions in class, he did occasionally answer impulsively. His difficulties in the area of language also presented a number of challenges for me during interview. I found it difficult to ascertain his communicative intent as his narrative occasionally lacked cohesion and grammatical structure. [74] Transcription of his interview, proved challenging, due to difficulties with speech-sound production, rate and fluency. This could have impacted on his ability to get his message across successfully. Had I not observed Mark firstly playing on the school yard, I would have had difficulty understanding his account of games and his naming of peers, even though the names were familiar to me. During interview, as with Damien and Neville, it was necessary to ask a number of probing questions to seek clarification and facilitate information exchange. My experience as a teacher informed me in this regard.

The importance of peer support was a recurring theme across interviews and observations. As evidenced during classroom observation and interview, Mark warranted a capable partner to adapt, recast or prompt his contributions. During classroom observation this role was assumed by Ivy (TDP). In facilitating Mark's participation, she was observed

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[74] Mark has attended a limited number of specialised speech and language therapy sessions over the years.

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employing an approach, similar to approaches adopted by SNAs (Logan, 2006; O'Neill, 2010). From my experience as a teacher, I note that not all TDPs demonstrate Ivy's enabling style or level of skill in this area. Ivy and Mark collaborated well; Ivy assuming the more demanding role of scribe while Mark, supported by Ivy, reported to the class.[75] Prompting, recasting and expanding are strategies recommended in the literature for enabling children to construct information for presentation to new listeners. Such strategies enable children to grow in "understanding of themselves as competent informants" (Mc Gough, 2012, p. 240). To this end Mark was observed smiling his gratitude to Ivy for having facilitated his participation. The evidence suggests that Mark enjoyed the lesson; when Ivy stated they had finished Mark responded: *"that was cool".*

In contrast, Damien and his partner, Eleanor (TDP), did not exhibit the same easy, companionable interaction during observation. Although they shared a common space, and formed a peer dyad, there was little interaction or engagement between them. Their dyad did not resemble the compatible collaboration of Ivy and Mark, despite the fact that both pairings occurred concurrently during the same lesson.[76] Damien appeared passive and inattentive; however in his own mind I suspect he felt very much a participant. Exhibiting no understanding of a humorous incident enjoyed by the class and teacher, he appeared involved in imaginative play, daydreaming, smiling to himself, content to handle objects on his table (eraser, pencil & ruler). Interestingly, when I enquired at the end of the lesson what he had been doing, he replied *"responsibilities, respect and business and everything"*. It is notable that he used a number of key words pertinent to the task, his understanding, however was questionable. He stated that he had had fun, and when asked what in particular he had

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[75] The class assignment involved answering questions about maintaining a safe clean environment.
[76] I observed Mark (and Ivy) for the first twenty minutes and then observed Damien (and Eleanor).

enjoyed, he replied *"I was just answering questions and that's about it"*. This is significant as he was not observed making verbal contributions despite Elizabeth's differentiated questioning and scaffolding. Damien's perception, however, reveals a very different perspective, indicating a level of participation and satisfaction that was not overtly apparent to the adults present. I spoke to Elizabeth and Anna afterwards and they were in agreement with my perception that Damien had not contributed verbally. This resonates with findings by Koster et al. (2010) who assert that pupils with a mental age below seven/eight are incapable of formulating accurate assessments as "they seem to be positively biased in their self-evaluations" (p. 70). Nonetheless Damien's perception is significant in that it provides a level of insight which was not apparent to me as observer and which illuminates how he himself perceives his lived experience. This finding endorses previous research (O'Keeffe, 2009).

Both Anna and Emily maintain that it is difficult to sustain Damien in conversation. Unlike Mark, he does not attempt to develop and maintain a topic. Emily (LS/RT) reports that *"Damien will just say what he wants to say irrespective of how you'll reply. He doesn't really, have conversational skills per se, unlike Mark"*. Reiterating what Elizabeth stated earlier, she makes the point that it may not necessarily be a social issue, but more a language/learning difficulty. To illustrate this point Elizabeth states that *"to join people's games and get peoples' attention, Damien will pull them to get their attention instead of trying to look to get them to look at him or call their names"*. Anna (SNA) maintains that *"there are times though when he knows not to; I think there are certain people as well that he won't do it with. I think people who may not have as much time for him as others in the class"*. This observation is interesting as it suggests that Damien has a certain level of awareness of others' receptiveness to his initiations. Moreover, it suggests that his approaches may have some egocentric origins. Highlighting "the interplay between the fields of child

development and developmental disabilities" (Guralnick, 1999, p. 21), Anna makes the point

that Damien does not listen intently to others; he just likes to do his own thing.

As a researcher and teacher of children with SEN, I was very mindful of the issue of

communication when interviewing the three pupils. Thus, I employed a deliberate probing

strategy, akin to mediated talk (Ní Bhroin, 2012), for the purposes of facilitating

communication. This strategy helped determine the speaker's intent. [77] However as

demonstrated by Eleanor (Damien's partner), TDPs do not readily employ facilitative

strategies when paired with peers with SEN; indeed from my observations, children's desire

for action, particularly in the playground, overrides any notion of clarifying communicative

intent through probing, prompting, recasting and positive reinforcement. In contrast to

Damien and Neville, Mark was observed assuming the role of reporter in his collaborative

setting, while Ivy his TDP demonstrated her key role and skill in facilitating his reports and

participation. Using mediated talk to facilitate the social participation of pupils with SEN is

not, from my experience, commonly within the skill-set of TDPs; a point that Emily (LS/RT)

and Martin (principal) also make when they state that we are expecting too much of the

TDPs. The finding in relation to Ivy and Mark is important as it demonstrates how a skilled

peer can support the participation of a pupil with SEN. It highlights the need for explicit

development of communicative skills on two levels. Firstly to equip pupils with SEN to

impart their message with clarity, and secondly to enable TDPs to develop higher order skills

to support and facilitate participation. Results echo Koster et al. (2009) who emphasise the

benefits derived from peer social support behaviours/structures. Consistent with Carman and

Chapparo (2012), these findings underscore that social competence and peer social support

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[77] This strategy, though time consuming, worked well for these purposes but did pose a certain degree of interruption and may have inhibited the participant's flow of thought occasionally. I was mindful that my intention was to probe and not prompt.

behaviours are increasingly important for social and learning purposes. Findings indicate that, in terms of social communication, TDPs require a particular skill-set in order to provide social support to pupils with SEN. Such transactional processes (McGough, 2012) necessitate focused intervention (Sperry, Neitzel & Engelhardt-Wells, 2010). Interestingly, Carter et al. (2005) report higher levels of social interaction when pupils with SEN work with two TDPs as opposed to one.

Theme Seven: Structural and Organisational Supports

Consistent with O'Keeffe (2009) this study found that there was a lack of organisational structures in place to promote friendships and participation for children with SEN. Mirroring previous research, this role was informally undertaken by SNAs. O'Keeffe makes the point that balancing the promotion of social interactions for pupils with SEN and the role of SNA represents a major challenge for schools. The need for teachers and other staff to facilitate and support friendship development is a priority within the context of inclusive education (DES, 2014b; NCSE, 2011; Travers et al., 2010). The current study suggests that there is also a role for TDPs in this regard. Martin, (principal) acknowledges that there is a lack of coherent policy underpinning the promotion of social participation and friendship within the school. Consistent with Baker and Donnelly (2001) he makes the point that as children's experiences are affected by a wide variety of factors, there is a need for a more formal school policy to address social issues over and above the special needs education policy, and the SPHE and Alive-O religion programmes. Such a proactive policy would guide professional practice regarding the social needs of pupils with SEN. Baker and Donnelly (2001) assert that "to be effective, a socially oriented policy must reciprocally support school ethos, administration, staff, community, parents and students" (p. 81). Davis and Watson (2001) describe this type of inclusive practice as a nuanced multi-level approach. They

contend that inclusion can only be achieved "when policy decisions are built on disabled

children's own lived experiences as articulated directly to policy-makers or as collected with

empirical studies" (p. 685).

Notwithstanding the fact that the school is described as an inclusive school (DES,

2014a) and that a distributed leadership style conducive to inclusive settings is in place,

analysis of school documentation reveals that Oakwood has not yet commenced formal

engagement in the inclusion audit process (NCSE, 2011). The importance of having

formalised systems of social support in schools has been documented in terms of the

inclusion process in Ireland (Stevens & O'Moore 2009; Travers et al., 2010). A possible

reason why a formal audit has not commenced may be linked to the competing policy

requirements stipulated in relation to literacy and numeracy initiatives, school self-evaluation

and the implementation of a monitored three year improvement plan (DES, 2011a, 2012b).

Shevlin, Kenny and McNeela (2002) note that while government policy favours the inclusion

of pupils with disability in mainstream settings, "there is little evidence of planning at a

systematic level to facilitate this process" (p. 159). Policies (DES, 2011a, 2012b) prioritising

the review and improvement of literacy and numeracy attainment levels, together with the

implementation of a school self-evaluation and three year plan, appear to have eclipsed the

inclusion audit at Oakwood. With an emphasis on standardised tests, it appears that these

policies may have overlooked the presence of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes;

consequently there is no formal record of the focus pupils' performance required or

forwarded to the DES (2012c).[78] Findings point to a need for reflection on current practice

and the formulation of a structured organisational "response to the educational challenges that

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[78] Standardised tests are unsuitable as a measure of the three focus pupils' attainments; i.e. previous experiences have shown that these tests are too difficult for the pupils to attempt. Consequently they do not sit them; thus no record of their attainment is requested or forwarded to the DES.

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inclusion may bring" (NCSE, 2011, p. 11). The commencement of auditing in line with NCSE (2011) guidelines has particular relevance for research question three in relation to Oakwood.

A number of examples/suggestions aimed at enhancing the social participation of pupils with MGLD, and proposed by participants are now outlined. They include:

- a friendship stop and drama club;

- individual workstations and coloured football bibs;

- a student forum;

- SNA attendance at individual education programme meetings;

- SNA briefings of pupils' needs; and

- school policies and ethos.

Friendship Stop and Drama Club

Anna and Sorcha suggested the setting-up of a designated friendship stop on the school playground. This would act as a meeting-point for pupils with no playmates. It was proposed that a rota of older pupils could monitor the stop, with a view to including children who were experiencing difficulties initiating peer interactions. Sorcha states *"I know in another school they have a stop, and the children run to the stop. It's amazing...they enjoy the fact that if they've no one to play with they just run to the spot and someone always comes"*. There was consensus among teachers and SNAs that this intervention would be particularly effective for younger children. In terms of other suggestions, Eva (Neville's mother) proposed the idea of a drama club to help children develop communication skills and self-confidence. In the interim, this proposal has been implemented and Neville attends weekly drama classes.

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Individual Workstations and Coloured Bibs for Football Teams

It is of note that the three target pupils identified formal academic activities as examples of when they feel socially included. In an attempt to reduce extraneous stimuli and assist pupils in concentrating on their work, Nathan (teacher) suggested that a number of individual workstations be placed in classrooms. Sorcha emphasised that Neville found this form of intervention beneficial as it enabled him to focus more keenly on his work. Nathan suggested that TDPs might also wish to avail of these when they require a quieter workspace. Individual workstations are endorsed in the literature as an intervention for pupils with ASD (Coyle, 2011).[79] Indeed, these stations could also facilitate cooperative-learning endeavours and peer-mediated interventions.

In terms of adhering to the rules of football, Harry suggested that the school provide a set of coloured bibs for each class playing football during lunch. In implementing this simple strategy, also documented by the NCSE (2011), Harry maintains that Neville would more easily recognise his teammates and not tackle them.

Student Forum

Both Harry and Yvonne proposed a student forum, similar to a focus group setting, whereby pupils would be afforded the opportunity to discuss different aspects of school life. Yvonne (TDP) states that *"like today I'd never known what their [other pupils in the focus group] opinions had ever been"*. There was consensus among the children in terms of the importance of gaining insight into others' opinions. All pupils expressed satisfaction with the focus group process and requested that such a forum be held regularly. Importantly, this

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[79] This approach is promoted by such programmes as the Treatment of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) (http://teacch.com/).

finding reflects Article 12 of *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*

(UNCRC) (1990) which enshrines children's right to express opinions in all matters affecting

them. If implemented this could inform the social issues policy and lead to more enlightened

practice. Consistent with Lundy's (2007) model for conceptualising Article 12, this forum

could encompass the four key interrelated elements:

- space;
- voice;
- audience; and
- influence.

Space representing the fact that children should be afforded the opportunity to express their

views; voice implying that children must be facilitated in the expression of their views;

audience, that their views must be listened to and heard; and influence that their views must

be acted upon appropriately. Linked to a previous finding, a student forum could provide an

opportunity for dialogue regarding children's conceptualisation of disability. Research (Kelly

& Farrell, 2012; Motherway, 2012; O'Keeffe, 2009; Shevlin, Kenny et al., 2002; Prunty,

DuPont & McDaid, 2012) highlights the potential benefits that result from accessing the

views of pupils with SEN in terms of service provision. While Prunty et al. (2012)

acknowledge concerns expressed in relation to accessing the views of children in terms of the

rights agenda, the literature suggests that such a forum would provide potential to enhance

the quality of school experience for children. The process of obtaining children's views could

be facilitated through use of resource materials published by the *Office of the Ombudsman*

for Children (Herron, Kealy & McCarthy, 2010). In keeping with this finding, the DES

(2014b) has directed that the views of the pupil with SEN, be obtained when reviewing the

level of access to SNA support in schools. This is an important first step in terms of accessing

the views of pupils.[80] Reflecting the literature, my teaching experience heightens my

awareness of the difficulties in terms of assessing the views of pupils in the context of the

rights agenda. I predict that benefits would accrue from careful attention to planning and

comprehensive piloting of procedures and protocols prior to implementation.

SNA Attendance at Individual Education Programme Meetings

A further example, forwarded in terms of facilitating the participation of pupils with

SEN, was the suggestion of formally including SNAs in the process of IEP meetings. This

proposal was made as it was felt that SNAs were not always fully aware of the

needs/requirements of the children on their caseload. There was a perception that attendance

at meetings with the class teacher, LS/RT, parents and clinicians including psychologists,

psychiatrists, and occupational and speech therapists would help address this problem.

Analysis of the special education school policy identifies an absence of procedure and agreed

protocols in relation to IEP meetings at Oakwood. While Bergin and Logan (2012) document

the absence of some team members due to difficulties relating to the process, the NCSE

(2006) suggest that the process should "maximize participation and increase dialogue" (p.

19). Endorsing this suggestion, the DES (2014b) has recently outlined a number of associated

support tasks that SNAs could undertake with the agreement of the principal and class

teacher. These include liaison with mainstream teachers, LS/RTs and principal, attending

meetings with parents, the special education needs organiser (SENO), psychologists, "or

school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal" (p. 7).[81]

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[80] It will be interesting to note if the inclusion of the pupils' voice with regard to this issue will lead to a
greater presence of pupils with SEN at IEP meetings. It is important to note that the pupils at Oakwood School
do not attend IEP meetings currently. Resonating with O' Keeffe (2009) and Prunty (2011), it was noticeable
that the absence of SNAs at IEP meetings was highlighted in this study (next subtheme) while the absence of
pupils was not.
[81] The centrality of the class teacher in relation to educational responsibility for pupils with SEN is underscored
by the wording "with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal". Consistent with previous

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From my experience (14 years) of working with children assisted by SNAs, I have noted that there is much confusion in relation to the role of SNAs; for example some parents, and indeed teachers, view the role as encompassing a teaching element. Parents and people in the general public (e.g. some politicians) tend to confuse the role of LS/RT and SNA and interpret them as interchangeable. The fact that parents appear to view the SNA's role in a teaching capacity is not surprising, as researchers have documented incidents whereby it is the SNA who interacts with pupils with SEN and functions as their teacher (Broer, Doyle & Giangreco, 2005; Giangreco & Broer, 2005). Consequently, I suggest that in order for this proposal to be implemented effectively, the role of the class teacher, LS/RT and SNA would warrant clearly defined parameters, which are understood by all. In addition this initiative would require mutually agreed formalised structures for meetings and targeted whole-school professional development for those involved. Bergin and Logan (2012) maintain that professional development "must first be provided for teachers as they, to a certain extent, control the degree to which the IEP process is implemented in the schools" (p. 377).

SNA Briefing of Pupils' Needs

Another related proposal was that at the commencement of each academic year, teachers and SNAs would meet for a briefing of the needs of each pupil they support. Acknowledging that this would be time-consuming, Sorcha (SNA) states that *"sometimes, it's not made aware to you what a child's condition is. I feel that everyone should get together... and be aware of the child's needs"*. Consistent with DES policy (2014b), this

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publications, e.g. (Ireland, 1998; DES, 2000) class teachers have primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in their class including pupils with SEN.

suggestion could be implemented as part of the personal pupil plan, which focuses on the development and review of a care plan for pupils with SEN.

Sorcha also suggests that in the event whereby a class teacher is absent, the SNA could be given the responsibility of informing the substitute teacher of the pupil's needs. This suggestion, if implemented may, however raise concerns that elements of a pupil's individual needs/medical history might be too widely disclosed. It would certainly warrant parental and student consent/assent with clearly defined parameters regarding exchange of information. Skär and Tamm (2001) report that a number of children/adolescents in their research perceived telling all about themselves to new and unfamiliar people as an invasion of privacy. Notwithstanding this, Logan (2006) and the DES (2011b) suggest that further consideration is warranted with regard to the role of SNAs as a support for children with SEN to ascertain how best to get maximum benefits from their supportive role. Causton-Theoharis and Malmgren (2005) recommend that SNAs be trained as facilitators to enable interactions between TDPs and pupils with SEN. Indeed, Broer et al. (2005) contend that this role is pertinent to mainstream teachers and LS/RTs, while this study suggests that there is also a role for TDPs. Consistent with the idea of a facilitative role for the SNA, the DES (2014b) have directed that SNAs may now provide access for pupils with sensory disabilities in terms of peer interaction/contact and curriculum participation. This change has been stipulated regarding "pupils who have a hearing impairment and who communicate through sign language....Care support may also assist to ensure that such students do not experience social isolation and exclusion due to an inability to communicate with staff members and peers" (p. 13). This has particular relevance to the current study as there is evidence to suggest that due to the communication difficulties pupils with MGLD experience, they are in danger of low

peer acceptance.[82] This raises the question as to why the facilitative role of the SNA does not include other categories of SEN. Notwithstanding the narrow parameters stipulated, it is of note that the DES (2014b) acknowledges a facilitative role for SNAs. This move warrants further investigation in terms of social participation for all pupils with SEN. It also poses questions regarding equality of educational access and participation for all children with SEN (NCSE, 2011, 2013).

School Policies and Ethos

In terms of pupils with SEN, Nathan (teacher) highlights the fact that the school holds three formal parent-teacher meetings each year in which pupils' progress is discussed. In his first year teaching he reports that he finds this process very beneficial. The fact that school policy dictates three parent-teacher meetings for pupils with SEN arguably illustrates a particular perspective on and commitment to inclusive education. Reflecting the literature (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Carrington, 1999) there was a perception among participants that it was the ethos/philosophy of the school, more so than any specific formal policy that underpinned Oakwood's inclusive approach to education. Despite lack of engagement in the inclusive education audit process (NCSE, 2011), analysis of Oakwood's policy documents reveals that as a school it has a strong commitment to special education, supporting the principles of inclusiveness, particularly in relation to the enrolment of pupils with disability or other special educational need. The enrolment policy underscores equality of access and participation, together with parental choice and respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society. The school mission statement declares that

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[82] This may also apply to pupils with ASD, as researchers have documented impairments in terms of: (a) social-emotional understanding, (b) areas of communication, and (c) flexibility in thinking and behaviour (Jordan, 2005).

Oakwood endeavours to create a warm secure environment for all children with a view to equipping them with the necessary skills to live a full and useful life as an adult in society. The school code of behaviour underpins the need for positive communication and collaboration between all partners (DES, teachers, parents, pupils). The music policy underscores the aim of nurturing the child's self-esteem and self-confidence through participation in musical performance. It also dictates that activities be differentiated to meet the needs of pupils and that shared response and music-making celebrate the individual difference of each child. Consistent with views expressed by Martin (principal) regarding pro-social activities, analysis of Oakwood's music examination results with the Royal Irish Academy of Music, reveal that two boys assessed with MGLD achieved honours in grade one descant recorder while attending the special class for pupils with MGLD. [83] Acknowledging the distributive leadership style of the principal, it is of note that the DES (2014a) describes Oakwood as an inclusive school. Analysis of documents reveals that policy and ethos go hand in hand as evidenced by Eva, Neville's mother, in her comments regarding school and home collaboration:

> *I think he's getting good; I think he's come a long way from when he first came to school, and then he didn't interact with any kids at all and couldn't do a full day. He had to be sent home at half eleven. It wasn't a great time for him at all, he hated school; you worked hard in school to turn him around and we worked hard at home too, to try and get him just going to school. So I think he's come a long way.*

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[83] It should be noted that, as the teacher with responsibility for music in the school, I was involved in the formation of the music policy and teaching of recorder. My experience as a SEN teacher and theoretical viewpoint may have influenced the drawing up of aims in this policy. Nonetheless, the literature underscores the onus on schools to recognise and accommodate differences between pupils in formulating and implementing school policy (McBride, 2002; Travers et al., 2010).

Everything is good; school has been very helpful, especially his SNAs. I know he still has difficulties but I think he's come a long way.

Pupils in the focus group were also positive in relation to the inclusive ethos of Oakwood School. For example Harry states that *"the teachers are nice and they're not mean or anything. We do a lot of activity; our principal does a lot of stuff to the school, like Homework Club, Rainbows and Monday Club"*. As well as specific activities that teachers individually do to promote inclusion, there was a perception among the adult participants that the general ethos of the school has always been, one of inclusion. Emily states that *"be they special needs children, EAL children, Traveller children, even when we had the special class, they were always very much included in mainstream classes as well"*. In terms of teachers' attitudes, Martin, (principal), comments that *"our inclusive policy as a school, really affected me as a young teacher because I saw that we can overcome these challenges if we have the right attitude"*. Martin states that Oakwood has a high percentage of pupils with SEN due to the inclusive and welcoming nature of the staff and general philosophy of the school. Comparing Oakwood to other primary schools that may not be as welcoming in terms of pupils with SEN, Martin makes the point that there is a fine line between being a special school and a mainstream school. *"At what point do you become a special school [as opposed to a mainstream school] because we have so many children with difficulties"*. He speculates as to whether a school could become overstretched in terms of high in-take of pupils with SEN, particularly in the context of ever-reducing resources due to the current economic downturn. He notes that there may come a time when inclusive schools stretch their resources to a point that it becomes impossible to accommodate pupils' needs. He states that he would be very hesitant to stop accepting pupils with SEN.

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I think that would be extremely detrimental to our school; but just you have to look,

it's a balance, it's a very fine line between catering appropriately for the children we

do have and being inclusive and welcoming of any other children that come along.

As the special education team (SET) co-ordinator in Oakwood, I note that for the

academic year (2014-2015) there are at least eleven children with SEN enrolled;[84] four are

from outside the school catchment area, which suggests that their parents have chosen

Oakwood over their local school. The needs of these incoming pupils include ASD, SSLI,

moderate GLD, dyspraxia, SEBD and hearing impairment. This raises the question as to

whether other schools are forgoing their obligation to enrol pupils with SEN. Interestingly,

with reference to professional reports and the provision of resources for incoming pupils, the

DES (2014b) states that in future it is anticipated that all primary school children will have

commenced school before application for additional support is made. A policy of delaying

the introduction of provision for children with SEN, though possibly intended to make the

allocation of resources equitable (NCSE, 2013), may initially place obstacles in the way of

the inclusion process and become a concern for teachers and schools.[85] Allan (2012), in

commenting on the inclusion process within Europe, states that the most pressing problems to

be rectified are the competing policy demands associated with provision, which is currently

fragmented. Pijl and Frissen (2009) maintain that policymakers may require teachers to take

responsibility for all pupils in their care "but it is essential that teachers know they are not on

their own. Once teachers feel that, they are more likely to develop negative attitudes towards

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[84] These are pupils whose parents have disclosed that their children have been assessed with a low incidence disability. From my experience as SET co-ordinator I note that parents do not always disclose this information at the enrolment stage, in case a school might decline the child, particularly if they live outside the school catchment area.

[85] It appears that the provision of resources for pupils with low incidence disabilities may be moving to a throughput model (Pijl, 2014) in line with NCSE (2013) recommendations. A working group, established by the Minister of Education, explored a new model for the allocation of additional teacher supports for pupils with SEN (DES, 2013b; Humphreys, 2014; McCoy et al., 2014; NCSE, 2013).

inclusive education and this 'infects' their colleagues as well" (p. 373). Mindful of NCSE

(2013) recommendations, it is crucial that this does not occur within the Irish context and that

the process is appropriately planned and supported in order to overcome any concerns

teachers may have. Travers (2013) maintains that:

> inclusive education has been shown to be a fragile process of balancing challenges
>
> and needs on the one hand with adequate support services on the other. If this
>
> balance is tipped over it has negative consequences not only for the child with special
>
> educational needs but for other children in the class, teachers and parents (*Irish*
>
> *Independent*, June 26).[86]

Martin (principal) makes the point that the staff of Oakwood has always been very

conscious of children's needs, and endeavoured to identify and address needs early. *"We*

have a very good early intervention policy that identifies the children with difficulties at an

early stage in their education; which I feel also is a policy that benefits". Consistent with

DES directives (2005a), the staged approach to meeting the additional needs of pupils with

emerging/existing SEN in the school is outlined in the special education school policy. In

terms of a continuum of provision for pupils with MGLD, Martin states that he would like to

see the return of the special class as he feels that children with MGLD *"are the forgotten*

children in many ways". Martin's concern that Oakwood may become overstretched in terms

of high in-take of pupils with SEN is an important finding. It is particularly pertinent in

relation to children with MGLD who are not in receipt of additional resource hour teaching.

This finding resonates with Kerins (2011) who reported that children with MGLD were no

longer prioritised for psychological assessment as the outcome would not result in additional

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[86] The new model has recently been drafted (NCSE, 2014) and stakeholders have been invited to comment and forward their suggestions.

resource allocation. Pringle (2008) asserts that these pupils, "arguably among the most vulnerable of the schooling population, need firstly to be identified and secondly, to be monitored as a group, separate and distinct from the general school-going population" (p. 56). Acknowledging that there are advantages under the GAM to resources without a label, Travers (2012) maintains that disadvantages also exist as without identification the needs of pupils with MGLD can become hidden and ignored which does not imply that their requirements are any less critical. He makes the point that these children "have no lobbyists, interest or PR pressure groups, no celebrity backed fundraising, coffee mornings, gala dinners, balls, campaigns and marches. They depend on us to speak up and safeguard their needs" (Travers, 2012, p. 128).

Legislation (Ireland 1998, 2004a) represents a move towards a rights-based policy framework which is likely to be favoured by parents and advocacy groups.[87] However, a rights-based approach privileges parents who are aware of their rights and have the available knowledge and resources to pursue them (Tisdall & Riddell, 2006).[88] As children with MGLD/borderline MGLD are overrepresented in socioeconomic disadvantaged areas (McCoy et al., 2014; Mittler, 2000; Tomlinson, 1982), it is likely that these children and their parents could become further disadvantaged by a rights-based policy framework. Policy-makers should consider this. Findings in the current study reveal that the special class model is perceived as an important part of the continuum of provision for pupils with MGLD. This echoes previous research (Kelly & Farrell 2012; O'Keeffe, 2009; Ware et al., 2009). In light of the fact that the special class for pupils with MGLD in Oakwood was disbanded due to the

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[87] The caveat 'having regard to the resources available' must be borne in mind which appears in all legislation relating to disability, thus restricting individual rights.

[88] Tisdall & Riddell (2006) suggest that policy formation can create "categories and eligibility requirements that include some children while excluding others. They create various forms of rights and duties, which differ on who has 'voice' and claiming powers, who can enforce the rights and duties, and how enforceable they are" (p. 367).

requirement for a minimum of nine pupils, I welcome the recent recommendation made by McCoy et al. (2014) that "special class sizes be allowed to fluctuate over time, allowing deviation from published pupil-teacher ratios where required" (p.5). Clough and Nutbrown (2002) refer to initiatives such as these as 'turning up the volume' on the depressed or inaudible voice (p. 71).

Theme Eight: Social Development and Academic Development

In terms of participants' views regarding the relative importance of social and academic development, there was a perception that, notwithstanding the need for academic development, social development was possibly more important in terms of Damien, Neville and Mark's education. Concurring with Stella (Damien's mother) and Eva (Neville's Mother), Emily (LS/RT) maintains that in general terms both academic and social development go hand in hand. She makes the point that it is of little benefit if a pupil is academically brilliant but cannot get on with others. Similarly, a pupil could be very sociable however he/she still requires a functional level of academic knowledge to progress in life. Interestingly, while asserting that social development is more important, Trevor (Neville's Dad) expresses concern in terms of secondary school and academic development:

> *it is a bit of a worry sending him on to a special secondary school you know. We did*
>
> *kind of hope that, I don't know if that was too much of a hope, that he'd come around*
>
> *a bit, that he'd accelerate a bit quicker than he has and that he'd be able to go to a*
>
> *mainstream secondary. That's kind of a worry like towards the future; where will*
>
> *that leave him you know when he finishes secondary school? Will he be able to get on*
>
> *to university or whatever?*

In terms of social development Emily suggests that one of the differences between Neville and his TDPs is that, even though the school is teaching SPHE and social skills in a general way, there are a number of social skills other children pick up, but Neville requires explicit teaching. Nathan (teacher) concurs stating that social skills require something akin to an academic approach in the way they are developed. Emily highlights this dilemma in terms of Neville's social participation, stating that he does not absorb social skills the way other children do. However, not all other children absorb social skills without explicit teaching either. Deficits in Neville's social skills *"are not necessarily because of the AD/HD or the MGLD, because there have been other children in the school previously with MGLD who had very good social skills"*. Emily maintains that Neville experiences difficulties in applying specific social skills and then generalising them to other contexts. This takes a long time and necessitates explicit teaching in the home, classroom, and resource setting with teachers, parents and SNA giving him the same advice, the same instruction and opportunities for distributed practice (Feeney & Dupont, 2012). These findings indicate that programmes to develop and foster social skills need to be a central part of intervention for pupils with MGLD, both at an individual and class level.

Elizabeth (teacher) asserts that it depends on the individual child as to whether the teacher emphasises academic or social development. *"When it comes to academic development there are some children that are only going to learn so much, and it's more important for them to learn social skills, life skills to help them survive, especially when they get older"*. Emily (LS/RT) agrees, however she goes on to state that for some children with SEN both are important, as academic work can lead to socialisation. Citing the example of Mark, who although he lags behind his TDPs academically, Emily suggests that:

if he can do something that they are doing I think it helps him, even if social needs are more important, if he can be developed even a little academically, it can help with socialisation because it can help him feel more part of the group.

She maintains that Mark feels more included when he is doing some multiplication and division like the others, rather than if he were doing totally separate work. She emphasises that even if he could do some of the work his TDPs are doing, he might learn at a faster pace and develop academically and this could help him socially. This is an important finding as it underscores the importance of collaborative teaching and group learning strategies/methodologies, promoted by the NCCA (1999) and NCSE (2011) in relation to good practice and inclusive education.

In relation to Damien, the consensus among the teachers and SNAs was that although it did not appear to perturb him when he was engaged in different work to the class, he liked to feel part of it; whether he participated or not. Elizabeth (teacher) comments that *"he likes to think he is part of it; whether he participates in it or not, that's a different question all together".*

While acknowledging that each child requires academic knowledge to get on in life, Martin (principal), consistent with Neville's Dad and Mark's parents, contends that social development is more important. He concedes that for certain children it is difficult to achieve both. Notwithstanding this he comments that children that have skills *"in the physical areas, in sports, even though they've got MGLD, seem to thrive in the social area because they have that thing, that connection with their peers, they have something that their peers look up to them for".* Recalling two past pupils with MGLD who had sporting prowess, he recounts how the other children looked up to them. Their sporting talent enhanced their self-esteem and

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widened their social network. He contrasts this with pupils with MGLD who do not have

sporting or musical skills and makes the point that in order to gain peer status and access to

peer networks, pupils need something: *"a musical instrument or whatever way to get in that*

door...I have seen the benefit of children with academic difficulties, how they can develop

socially through just using football". [89] This is an important finding and it resonates with

Avramidis (2009b) who maintains that "teachers' attention should be placed on facilitating

the development of pro-social characteristics, such as leadership and sportsmanship, within

cooperative and team-building activities" (p. 22). Echoing Avramidis, both Martin and Emily

contend that having SEN alone is not a causal factor why some pupils become isolated in

their class setting.

Theme Nine: Adult (Teacher/SNA) Pupil Relationship

Findings reveal that the principal, teachers and SNAs all demonstrated a keen interest

and knowledge of the three focus children, as evidenced by the manner in which they made

informed observations regarding the boys' school life. Teachers and SNAs were also noted

attending to the pupils' needs during observations. This finding was endorsed in the

documentary analysis (DES, 2014a). Elizabeth (Mark & Damien's teacher) stated:

> *in classroom we involve them in as much as we can...we don't force things on them,*
>
> *but if they would like to take part, you'd also encourage them that there are certain*
>
> *things that they really love to take part in.*

Anna (SNA) stated: *"we're always very conscious of them on the yard that they are not left*

on their own...that they're definitely included in everything". Emily, (LS/RT) makes the point

that adults in the school have always been very proactive in including children *"who might in*

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[89] These are the two pupils with MGLD who received honours in grade one descant recorder
examination with the Royal Irish Association of Music (RIAM).

other circumstances be excluded, be they EAL children, traveller children, special needs children". In terms of knowledge of the pupil, Emily demonstrates a deep understanding of Mark's preferences in learning. She recounts how she has noticed lately that he is starting to follow much more when she is using the I-pad, picking out words and reading parts of sentences when she reads to him. He also listens very carefully and is motivated to take part in discussion. Acknowledging the relative quantity and quality of information he has gleaned through listening and discussion with other children, she states that he very much wants to participate in listening and discussion *"about the story or about what we are doing. Now it will also be other discussions about other things going on as well and he's willing and able to join in a group, in that sense"*. These observations regarding Mark's relative strengths have informed her teaching approach and strategies to accommodate his learning needs and interests. His relative strengths in this area also serve to further illuminate Mark's more developed social skill, when contrasted to Damien and Neville, in terms of social interaction/participation in class discussion, friendships and peer acceptance.

Regarding SNA pupil relationship, Anna and Sorcha were seen attending to the needs of the boys during observations. Anna arranged for Mark and his friend Michael to sit on chairs in a quieter area of the playground following an incident whereby an older boy had inadvertently bumped into Mark. Likewise, Sorcha intervened and appeased a group of children engaged in an altercation following Neville's inability to adhere to the rules of a chasing game. Having settled the disagreement she withdrew discretely. The facilitative nature of the SNA role is endorsed in the literature (Skär & Tamm, 2001). In their work with students with restricted mobility, Skär and Tamm (2001) conclude that assistants are key people in the daily lives of students with SEN, in terms of providing practical support and enabling students to participate in activities with their peers. Echoing findings in the current

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study and consistent with previous research (Giangreco, Edelman & Broer, 2001; Tews & Lupart, 2008), the DES (2014b) now acknowledges a facilitative role for SNAs, though only in relation to pupils with sensory impairments.

A related example in terms of SNA pupil relationship was Harry's nomination of Sorcha as his friend (sociometry).[90] Interestingly, Skär and Tamm (2001) suggest that in terms of providing a sense of security, continuity in relationship between pupil and assistant is important, provided pupil and SNA get on well together. Congruent with research (Broer et al., 2005; Kerins, 2011), I note that SNAs assume a role akin to protector, friend and mother figure. Skär and Tamm (2001) make the point that in terms of friendship, this child-adult relationship is asymmetrical in nature, as the adult has more deciding rights. They suggest that since reciprocated friendship is characterised by mutual feelings of appreciation, which occur spontaneously through free choice, the SNA child relationship does not constitute a mutual relationship. Furthermore, it is a working relationship whereby one party is remunerated for their participation. Broer et al. (2005) posit the notion that when a pupil perceives a SNA as a friend, it is possible that this pupil has an insufficient network of age-appropriate relationships with his peers. However this does not appear to be the case in the current study, as Harry had three reciprocated nominations for category (a) which pupils are your best friends; one reciprocated and two unreciprocated nominations for category (b) with which pupils would you like to do a class project; and three reciprocated and one unreciprocated nominations for category (c) who chose you as their friend. The fact that Harry nominated Sorcha as his friend implies that he perceives her as someone who looks out for him pastorally; it speaks to the centrality of the adult child relationship in this educational setting.

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[90] Harry has an assessment of AD/HD and dyslexia and receives SNA support from Sorcha.

The centrality of the adult (teacher/SNA) pupil relationship is an important finding. What is notable in relation to this finding is that pupils with MGLD do not usually qualify for additional supports (LS/RT & SNA), however as Damien, Neville and Mark have co-morbid disabilities (physical & AD/HD) they qualify. This issue is endorsed in the literature as Kerins (2011) found that parents of pupils with MGLD, who were in receipt of RTH and SNA support, expressed more positive views regarding their children's experience in mainstream schools than parents whose children did not have additional supports. Findings in this study underline the essential nature of support from LS/RTs and SNAs in terms of social participation and raise questions regarding the provision for pupils with MGLD not in receipt of additional RTH and SNA support. Further investigation is warranted regarding this in light of current evidence. Results underscore the need for pupils with MGLD to be assessed to guarantee that they have access to support services if warranted, since formal diagnosis is required to access certain levels of provision.

With regard to SNA pupil relationship it is of interest that researchers (Broer et al., 2005; Causton-Theoharis & Malmgren, 2005; Rose, 2000; Skär & Tamm, 2001) have found that the presence of SNAs can interfere with peer relationships. Broer et al. (2005) contend that the presence of a mothering figure may deny typical opportunities for pupils with SEN to develop peer relationships and a sense of self, which they maintain is central to social-emotional maturation. Skär & Tamm (2001) found that occasionally peers played more actively with an SNA instead of a child with restricted mobility, while Causton-Theoharis and Malmgren (2005) assert that without adequate training, assistants can inadvertently isolate pupils with SEN from their TDPs. Acknowledging that a more clearly defined role for SNAs is warranted, Rose (2000) makes the point that "there are occasions when intervention may have a detrimental effect through a reduction of opportunities for interaction with other

pupils or the class teacher" (p. 191). Congruent with Tews and Lupart's findings (2008), the recent DES (2014b) publication underscores the importance of schools ensuring that "the presence of SNA support does not create over dependency, act as a barrier or intermediary between the student and class teacher or contribute to the social isolation of students by creating a barrier between the students and his/her peers" (p. 15). Kerins (2011), while acknowledging the protection provided for pupils by the SNA from bullying or teasing by classmates, identifies difficulties arising from SNA support in terms of pupil dependence. Research suggests that a critical component of schooling is the establishment of peer relationships and identity together with the development of independence (Broer et al., 2005; Tews & Lupart, 2008). While there is no direct evidence of the focus pupils' over dependence on SNA support in terms of the current study, it is important to remain cognisant of this potential drawback as Mark, Damien and Neville progress from primary to post-primary education.

Summary of Findings

In line with research questions one and two, the aim of this research was to determine if three children with MGLD were included in terms of their social participation in full-time mainstream class settings. Implementing this study I examined the perspective and experience of three focus children, together with the perspectives of their parents, teachers, peers and SNAs. Results relating to questions one and two were discussed under the following themes:

- friendship/relationship;

- contacts/interactions; and

- experience/perception of pupils with/without SEN.

Findings pertaining to the third research question were discussed in relation to:

- acceptance by classmates;

- social support behaviours;

- social communication;

- structural and organisational supports;

- social development and academic development; and

- adult (teacher/SNA) pupil relationship.

Notwithstanding some concerns expressed by participants regarding the focus pupils' social

interactions, findings reveal that the three boys felt included in school life. Interestingly, none

of the three demonstrated any difficulty nominating friends for sociometry. Indeed their

narrative was permeated with references to friendships and interactions with peers. While all

Damien's nominations were within the TDP cohort, it is notable that Mark and Neville listed

friends both with and without SEN. Undeniably all three children derived much satisfaction

from social outings and participation in regular school activities. What emerged strongly in

relation to feeling included was the theme of playing together. The focus pupils' enjoyment

of shared activities was reflected in reports by relevant adults; overall there was consensus

among adult participants that the three pupils were socially included. A word of caution is

warranted however given the negative sociometric assessment received by Damien and

Neville in terms of friendships and peer acceptance. It is important to note that

teachers/adults may overestimate the social participation of pupils with SEN. In light of this,

findings underscore the need for schools to monitor and actively promote social participation,

peer interaction, and friendships as a matter of routine.

In terms of peer acceptance, mutual friendships and belonging to an in-class network,

Mark scored best of all three focus children. This may be related to the difficulties

experienced by Neville and Damien in relation to social-emotional comprehension. In terms of social reciprocity, the need for social skills programmes was emphasised with a view to modifying Neville and Damien's behaviour in response to social cues. The requirement for teachers to make explicit the subtleties and nuances of social conventions for children with MGLD also emerged. Evidence points to a need for targeted intervention to foster social skills. Such programmes need to be a central part of intervention for pupils with MGLD, both at an individual and class level. Interventions encompassing elements of peer-mediated instruction/interaction are recommended. Indeed, looking at the number of mutual nominations, it is of interest to note that along with Neville there were five other pupils who did not receive a mutual nomination. In addition, nine children including Damien appeared somewhat vulnerable in that they had just one mutual nomination for best friend category. Moreover, four pupils, Neville, Hannah, Damien & Helen, did not meet the criterion set in terms of sociometry for peer acceptance. Notwithstanding the fact that nine pupils had at least one mutual friendship and stood to gain the potential benefits ensuing from this (Asher et al., 1900), there were a number of pupils who in terms of sociometry alone appeared relatively vulnerable. In light of this, it is essential that schools routinely monitor and promote social participation through peer-mediated intervention programmes on a regular basis.

While feelings of isolation/rejection, such as being left out of games, were expressed by TDPs, Neville was the only focus pupil who acknowledged that he occasionally experienced feelings of rejection/isolation. The issue of understanding and adhering to the rules of games (football & chasing), emerged as a concern for all three pupils. Findings reveal that rules were not intentionally broken; problems arose from difficulties assimilating the rules. Results indicate that semi-structured games could usefully be employed to facilitate social participation during recess periods. In keeping with the need for formalising social

supports, findings identify a need for teachers to support pupils with MGLD in assimilating and consolidating game rules. Experience using rules could be developed through repeated targeted practice with incidental reminders routinely given as children go out to play.

There was evidence of low-level bullying behaviour (name calling) and concern was expressed regarding the potential influences of older more 'street-wise' children on a pupil with MGLD. This finding underscores the need for comprehensive proactive anti-bullying programmes incorporating the tracking of incidents with stringent adherence to recent guidelines (DES, 2013a). As evidenced by reports and observation in this study, pupils with MGLD and their TDPs need to be taught problem-solving strategies with regard to dealing appropriately with bullying incidents and conflict. Empathy and restorative skills emerged as important in terms of successful peer interaction. Findings indicate that children require a particular skill-set to resolve arguments and discord. It is an area of particular need for pupils with SEN, and warrants explicit intervention. Restorative practices may be of benefit in this regard as they provide a holistic approach encompassing the individual, group/society and organisation level.

Peers' knowledge and experience of pupils with disability is important, as findings suggest that limited experience is likely to affect peer acceptance. Furthermore, evidence suggests that teachers assume greater levels of understanding and knowledge of disability on the part of TDPs than they may actually possess. It appears that teachers may have idealistic expectations of TDPs, requiring them to make habitual allowances for pupils with SEN without first providing them with appropriate development on how to become socially responsive peers.[91] Results identify a need for educators to develop children's

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[91] The term' socially responsive peer' is attributed to Brown et al. (2001).

conceptualisation of disability. They also reveal that children's levels of tolerance and acceptance of pupils with disability are linked to parental attitudes and the up-bringing children experience at home. As children's experiences are affected by a wide variety of factors, there is a need for a coherent formal school policy to address social support and related issues. It is envisaged that such a policy would guide professional practice regarding the social needs of pupils with SEN, encompassing the role of all school personnel: school staff, parents and peers. In terms of national policy this study points to the lack of attention given to the development of children's conceptualisation of disability and highlights the need for its immediate inclusion.

Albeit that the three focus children indicated high levels of satisfaction within school, findings underscore a need for targeted intervention to address their needs in social communication. Such intervention is necessary in order to further enhance the focus pupils' social participation and affiliation with the peer group. There is evidence to indicate that a skilled peer can support the participation of pupils with SEN. In line with this, findings underscore the need for explicit development of communicative skills on two levels: firstly to equip pupils with SEN to impart their message with clarity, and secondly to enable TDPs to develop higher order skills to support and facilitate peer participation. Results reveal that TDPs require a particular skill-set in order to provide social support to pupils with SEN in terms of social communication. Using skills akin to what Ní Bhroin (2012) describes as mediated talk, this study demonstrates that a competent TPD can support the participation of a pupil with MGLD. This is particularly pertinent as social competence and peer social support behaviours are increasingly important for pupils' social and learning purposes (NCCA, 1999).

A number of proposed strategies/practices were identified as being potentially beneficial in terms of contributing to pupils' feelings of being included. They comprise: a friendship stop to support friendship networks on the playground; a drama club to build pupils' confidence; individual workstations (quiet spaces) in classrooms to promote uninterrupted work; and coloured bibs to help pupils distinguish between football teams at playtime. Other suggestions include SNA involvement in IEP meetings and formal briefing sessions with SNAs to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding care needs of pupils with SEN in their care. In line with Article 12 (UNCRC, 1990), the establishment of a student forum was proposed; this would give voice to the student body. Pupil insights regarding social participation have potential to inform both policy and practice. Thus, it is important that they are afforded an opportunity to express their opinions consistent with Lundy's (2007) model of: space; voice; audience; and influence.

Analysis of school documentation indicates that Oakwood has as yet, not engaged formally in the inclusion audit process (NCSE, 2011). Findings reveal that this process is necessary in order to formulate structured organisational responses to the challenges inherent in inclusion. Despite the delay in engaging formally in the NCSE audit, results indicate that in general, Oakwood is an inclusive setting. In terms of accommodation for pupils with SEN, there is evidence to suggest that as an inclusive school it may be in danger of overstretching its resources due to high in-take of pupils with SEN. This finding signals the necessity of achieving balance in terms of provision and has implications for the proposed model of support (NCSE, 2014). Likewise, concerns were raised that as a group, the diverse needs of pupils with MGLD are in danger of being overlooked in terms of DES policy (2005a, 2012a). Findings underscore the important role played by special classes for pupils with MGLD, in forming part of the continuum of provision. Results point to an imbalance in the provision of

resources for pupils with MGLD, with pupils receiving RTH and access to SNA support where they have diagnosis of a co-morbid disability. However, as pupils with MGLD may no longer be prioritised for psychological assessments, co-morbidity of disability, if present, may not always be identified.

A number of participants highlight the need for SNAs to be present at IEP meetings. It is surprising that despite the regularity and frequency of such meetings, there is no established procedure and agreed protocol for meetings in Oakwood School. Moreover, there is a lack of formal structures to facilitate the dissemination of information to SNAs regarding the children they assist. SNAs and teachers play an important role in facilitating pupils' social participation. What is significant in this context is that pupils with MGLD do not usually qualify for additional adult supports unless, like Mark, Neville and Damien they have a co-morbid diagnosis. Due to the difficulties pupils with MGLD experience in terms of social communication, and danger of low peer acceptance, this study raises questions as to why the facilitative role of the SNA (DES, 2014b) has not been extended to include access to peer interaction for pupils with MGLD also.

There was a perception that, notwithstanding the need for academic development, social development was possibly more important in terms of pupils with MGLD. While participants agreed that both forms of development go hand in hand, findings also underscore the need for teachers to facilitate the development of pro-social qualities/skills, such as those gained through participation in sport and music. Evidence suggests that skills developed in these areas enhance peer status and widen pupils' access to social networks. Having discussed the findings of this study it is important to situate these findings within the theoretical framework, which acted as a lens for analysis.

Theoretical Influences and Data Analysis

A theoretical framework of critical realism underpinned the methodology and shaped how data were analysed and interpreted in this study. As a researcher-practitioner I acknowledge that the real world is complex and stratified into various layers and that social reality encompasses "individual, group and institutional, and societal levels" (Robson, 2002, p. 39). Thus, a holistic/constructivist conceptualisation of SEN encompassing the: individual, group/society, and organisation was drawn upon. In adopting a realist position I sought an understanding of how the policy of inclusive education was serving three pupils with MGLD in terms of their social participation in school life. As a realist I sought explanations pertaining to the mechanisms at work in this setting.

> Understanding the mechanisms at work and the contexts in which they operate
> provides a theoretical understanding of what is going on which can then be used to
> optimize the effects of the innovation by appropriate contextual changes, or by
> finding alternative ways of blocking mechanisms, or even by changing the innovation
> itself so that it is more in tune with some of the contexts where positive change has
> not been achieved (Robson, 2002, p. 39).

The first research question focused on the three target pupils, in relation to how they felt in terms of their social participation in the life of the school. The second research question focused on the perspectives of other significant personnel (including peers) in terms of the three boys' social participation and participation in general. Lastly, the third research question had as its focal point the mechanisms at work within the context of the school. In analysing the data, I endeavoured to critically review the area of social participation in terms of the three focus pupils' lived experience. In representing the views of the focus pupils, I was mindful that, as a critical realist, my actions were in fact, acts of domination. In light of this I employed ongoing reflective practice, encompassing both Madison (2004) and

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Fielding's (2004) key points/questions to explore my intentions and actions. This process is outlined in the final chapter.

Following systematic analysis, findings comprised nine dominant themes. Notwithstanding the valuable contribution of significant adults and peers, central to this investigation was the lived experience of Mark, Neville and Damien. In adopting a critical realist stance the tenet of giving voice to the child was central in terms of how they perceived their lived experience. Mark, Neville and Damien constructed evidence through their own experience and as a researcher-practitioner I joined in that activity with them. The methods employed allowed this to happen. Commensurate with previous Irish research (Kelly & Farrell, 2012; Motherway, 2012; O'Keeffe, 2009), this study demonstrates that pupils with SEN can speak with authority about their lived experience. Acknowledging that a range of views can be valid in different ways, in representing the voice of the child and taking note of perspective, it was evident that the three boys felt included in terms of social participation in the school. This was an important message to convey. However, the fact that the three boys felt included does not imply that there were not areas within the setting that require improvements. In adopting the critical realist approach, I hope that questions and criticism have provoked reflection and offered information on how mechanisms and structures operate within school that impact on children's social experiences. I anticipate that this study will act as a catalyst to bring about improvements for pupils with MGLD. In the final chapter, the methodology and conduct of the study are reviewed, conclusions and implications are drawn and suggestions for further research are made.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications for Policy and Practice

The aim of this study was to determine if three children with MGLD were included in terms of their social participation in full-time mainstream class settings. The study was designed with a view to: (a) generating evidence regarding the social participation of three pupils; (b) informing policy and practice; and (c) advocating on behalf of children with MGLD. The chapter opens with a reflection on the theoretical framework, research design and process, and includes a critique of the methodology adopted in terms of suitability. A reflection on my experience as a researcher-practitioner follows and the limitations of the study are then outlined. Following this, the main conclusions are stated and implications for policy and practice identified. The chapter concludes with a number of suggestions for future research.

Reflections on the Theoretical Framework

The predominately qualitative approach adopted in this study was shaped more precisely by a critical realist position. Adopting this theoretical lens, I explored the mechanisms operating in the world, in an endeavour to widen my "experiential capacity to see, hear....develop and act upon value commitments in the context of political agendas" (Thomas, 1993, p. 2). To achieve a reflexive viewpoint I turned the frame of analysis back on myself to look subjectively at how I was positioned (Chiseri-Strater, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In so doing, I acknowledge my predisposition towards an integrated holistic/constructivist model with its focus on the three levels: individual, group/society and

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organisation. In acknowledging the interactive process of learning, with its focus on

participation, I also acknowledge my belief that change in teaching approaches and

organisations made to cater for students with SEN, can also be beneficial for their TDPs

(Ainscow, 2007). For a number of years education has worked from the premise that special

needs result from deficits within the individual pupil. In a holistic/constructivist approach we

now have the opportunity "to develop the resources that exist both with respect to the pupils

and the school" (Flem, Moen & Gudmundsdottir, 2004, p. 96).[92] Congruent with this

theoretical stance the three research questions encompassed the three levels: individual,

group/society, and organisation. I anticipate that the insights gained in this research catalyse

change, moving from *what is* to *what could be* (Thomas, 1993; Madison, 2004).

Reflections on the Research Design and Process

A predominantly qualitative case study approach was employed to yield a deep

understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny. The study was set against a backdrop of

research and policy presented in the literature chapter. Central to the focus of this small-scale

study was the perspective and experience of the three target pupils. Their experience was

further illuminated by the insights of other relevant stakeholders, including their peers. The

principle of voluntary participation was adhered to at all times. In selecting a case study

design, my intention was to give a comprehensive account of the focus children's experience

in terms of their social participation. This approach facilitated the use of a variety of data

sources, enabling 'multiple realities' of the situation to be revealed. Yielding a rich picture of

the children's views and experiences, the study sought depth rather than breath (Lincoln &

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[92] Having reflected on my position in terms of my viewpoint I am somewhat perplexed and
disappointed that my perspective is still influenced to an extent, by the deficit model of disability with its focus
on the individual.

Guba, 1985). The methods of data collection complimented the research aim and purpose, generating rich and illuminating data. A number of conclusions, outlined later in this chapter, are drawn in relation to the overarching theme. Firstly however, I will discuss the effectiveness of the methodologies employed in the study.

Observations and Interviews

As this study focused on the real world context of three pupils, observation, in a variety of settings, provided first-hand experience of the social environment in which the focus pupils co-exist with their peers. Observation played an important role in clarifying the pupils' narrative. Interviews were constructive, as they facilitated confirmation of what had been observed while at the same time yielding additional information related to the overarching theme. In addition, focus group interviews provided an effective means of collecting data from a significant number of participants, while also facilitating a cross section of views and connective discourse to be obtained. There was richness to the group process which Clough and Nutbrown (2002) describe in terms of spoken thoughts stimulating other thoughts, and ideas crafted, expressed and re-expressed. Probing questions proved an effective means of obtaining in depth insights that further illuminated the phenomena under investigation. Moreover, data from observations and interviews were cross-referenced with other collection methods in order to enhance the rigour of the research, reduce threats to trustworthiness, and provide an accurate and authentic interpretation of the data.

Draw and Write, Sociometry, Field Notes and School Documentation

In implementing draw and write investigation, the children's writing proved productive in providing description and clarification of the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, as English was not the first language of twenty of the peer cohort, the drawings

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provided an extra layer to their written contribution. Both sociometry, and draw and write facilitated active participation of the wider cohort of children; this was important as they form the social context pertaining to the overarching theme. The efficacy and simplicity of these two methods allow them to be used in everyday practice. Furthermore, sociometry provided a reference point (Pijl et al., 2008) signalling the possibility that teachers/adults may tend to have more positive views on the friendship network of pupils with SEN. This is an important point to note as it underscores the need for social-based interventions at a time when there is an onus on teachers to improve literacy and numeracy scores in line with government policy (DES, 2011a, 2012c). In line with these stipulations, there is a danger that teachers might inadvertently overlook the area of social skill functioning and development.

In implementing this research the aim of including documentary analysis and field notes was to corroborate and augment evidence gathered from other methods. However, it must be borne in mind that no matter how official school documentation is, it does not provide evidence of practice. Field notes provided me with a personal log and helped me to remain self-reflective throughout the research process (Appendix Y).

Reflections on Data Analysis

In an endeavour to identify repeated patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006), data analysis comprised ongoing interactive engagement with the data during and after the data collection process. Reminiscent of Shaw (2010), I took time to reflect on the mechanisms informing my search/judgement in order to explore the process in detail. In so doing, researcher bias was addressed through reflective note taking, negative case theory, and ongoing discourse with two colleagues who independently reviewed the data.

A very time-consuming element of the analysis was the transcription and member checking of the twelve interviews. However though laborious, this staged process enabled me to become familiar with the data. Initially having repeatedly listened to recordings, I transcribed the interviews by hand and then typed the transcriptions on computer. Following this I carefully summarised each transcription and gave a copy to participants (Appendix Z).[93] I then arranged meetings with participants. My intentions were two-fold: firstly to maintain dialogue with the participants and secondly to determine if there were any amendments warranted regarding my interpretation. Participants were in agreement with my summaries and returned them to me for safe keeping.[94] The gathering and collating of other data was equally time-consuming as my preference was to conduct the analysis of qualitative data by hand using a computer but not a software programme. The process of assigning pseudonyms to the peer cohort was also time-consuming, requiring meticulous attention to detail (memory & recording) on my behalf. The fact that, as a teacher in the school I knew the pupils before assigning pseudonyms was invaluable; this helped me remember to whom the assigned pseudonym related. Conducting analysis by hand, though slow and laborious, enabled me to become completely immersed in, and familiar with the data.

Personal Reflections: Struggle for Researcher's Voice

My position in the study, as a researcher-practitioner, member of staff, and co-ordinator of the SET, was both a strength and a limitation. Access to the research site and participants was facilitated, because I was known in the school. Pupils were accustomed to my presence and this possibly reduced reactivity during observations (Robson, 2002). On the

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[93] In the case of children I read the summary for them and discussed each element in detail. Having summarised Damien and Sheila's interviews I did not get the opportunity to carry out a member check as Damien, who lives a distance from Oakwood, transferred to a special school two years earlier than intended in keeping with advice from the principal of the special school.

[94] One teacher intended to return the summary having brought it home to read. However, due to an oversight, the summary was not returned. Having given two gentle reminders I did not pursue this.

other hand, participants may have tended to respond more favourably in my presence and children may have acquiesced. Mindful of this I noted personal reflections and observations on an ongoing basis throughout. The views articulated by participants, together with the consistency of other data observed and analysed, support and corroborate the authenticity of the findings.

As a researcher it is important to bear in mind the potential for harm; hence ongoing reflection is imperative. During the study there were times when I was torn between my role as researcher and my position as teacher in the school. These occasions occurred mainly during observations and pertained to incidents where I would typically intercede as a teacher. One example occurred when Eric called Neville 'a baby' and insisted that this behaviour was acceptable when Neville protested. Neville appealed to me to intervene; the researcher in me wanted to continue observing while the teacher in me yearned to intercede. Fortunately Sorcha, (SNA) was nearby and she did so. On another occasion, I was observing Neville and his peers playing, when their game became a little rough. Again I wanted to intervene; fortunately the supervising teacher noted the problem and resolved the issue. During a third observation Noel spoke very unkindly to Neville, demanding that he get out of his way as he was blocking his view of a basketball match. Again I had to suppress the inclination to request Noel to communicate his message in a more appropriate manner.

Similarly, during interviews with the children, I had to remain mindful that my role was that of researcher. As a result of ongoing reflection and evaluation of my own purpose, when interviewing I constantly reminded myself that my intention was to probe and not to prompt, to clarify and not extend, to listen and not teach. Furthermore, when scrutinizing the data, I critically appraised my interactions; if there was any doubt that I may have blurred the

boundary between probing and prompting, I did not include that section of data for analysis. Likewise, when Neville's Dad Trevor asked me a number of questions at the end of his interview, (in my role as SET co-ordinator), I concluded the interview, turned off the recording device and spoke with him.[95]

Similarly, while conducting draw and write investigation, I constantly endeavoured to remain a neutral observer; ever mindful of the value of the pupils' time and contribution, when a pupil began to distract others, as a teacher I yearned to intervene. Indeed, when one pupil commented negatively on another girl's drawing, and upset her, I did. Knowing both children, and having spoken to their parents prior to the research, I was in a position to support both girls and help them reconcile. Interestingly, in the sociometric element of the study both pupils nominated each other as friends, commensurate with Parker and Asher (1993) who maintain that disputes are common in children's close friendships.

The tensions and conflict inherent in the role of researcher-practitioner are important to document as they underscore the need for reflexivity and illuminate issues that may not be readily apparent when commencing research. They also serve to distinguish the difference between the role of reflective practitioner and role of reflective researcher-practitioner; one important difference being that the remit of the reflective practitioner is to inform and improve practice while the reflective researcher-practitioner has a wider remit, encompassing general policy and practice. To my knowledge, these tensions are not widely documented within the field of Irish research.

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[95] Trevor's concerns were in relation to Neville's transfer to second level school, the choice of school and his prospects thereafter for third level education.

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Ultimately, while endeavouring to be reflexive in my approach regarding issues such as power relations, I experienced conflict struggling to aptly situate my voice in the research. However, having reflected upon this at length, and discussed it with my research supervisors, I finally came to the realisation that there was a place for my voice, providing I clearly delineated my theoretical perspective and disclosed my 'researcher-practitioner self' when contributing. Since all of us bring "values, morals and knowledge bases" (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, p. 70) to our research it is unrealistic to separate ourselves from our research. My contribution was informed by my personal life experience and years teaching at the research site. In choosing to position my voice, a major concern was the risk of introspection and self-indulgence (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002). Furthermore, I was concerned that the focus would be removed from the key participants. Issues of voice and 'researcher self' are directly related to the interpretation of voices in all research and have implications for research design and report. As a critical realist, I endeavoured to represent and foreground the voice of the focus pupils, while maintaining my 'researcher self' voice in the background.

The children's insights added an important dimension to this research; involvement in this study has instilled in me a new knowledge that will help me build on my work as a reflective practitioner. This research has been a personal endeavour, relevant to my professional life as I taught pupils with MGLD for nine years in the special class at Oakwood. The most important findings for me as a practitioner include:

- the pupil's ability to give witness to their lived experience;

- the centrality of social interaction and friendship in relation to pupils feeling included; the need to develop peer knowledge and conceptualisation of disability; TDPs' potential to support the social participation of pupils with MGLD; and

- the possibility that teachers may have idealistic expectations of TDPs in terms of requiring them to habitually make allowances for pupils with SEN with no direct support.

These valuable insights will remain foremost in my future practice.

It must be borne in mind that is unacceptable to note that students with SEN have a greater chance of being socially excluded than their TDPs, without doing something about it (Koster et al., 2010). Thus, in keeping with my commitment to the Research Committee at St. Patrick's College, specifically section 3.8 of my research ethics form, I have made arrangements to work with the focus pupils' parents, LS/RTs, teachers, SNAs and peers to implement a social skills intervention for the coming academic year (2014-2015). The intention is to design, deliver and assess a social skills programme with music performance on the glockenspiel as a channel to promote social participation in a social context. The proposed intervention will include Mark and Neville (Damien moved school) and a small number of peers. De Boer et al. (2014) contend that a multi-party approach to interventions should contribute to optimising the experiences of pupils with SEN in inclusive settings. The methods and findings of this current study can be employed to guide further inquiry into the numerous influences on social participation that exist in mainstream settings. However, in considering the findings, the limitations pertaining to this study must first be acknowledged.

Limitations

In reviewing the findings of this research the reader needs to bear in mind its limitations. Firstly, this is a small-scale study involving a purposive sample. Results are limited to time and place; since the sample was drawn from a small number of students, parents, SNAs and teachers, generalisation to the wider population is not possible (Cohen et

al., 2007). Mindful that pupils with MGLD cannot be considered a homogenous group, it is plausible however that the findings of this study may be applicable in comparable settings. Characteristics of the participants and setting were made explicit, so that meaningful comparisons could be made by others in comparable situations (Cohen et al., 2007). The extent to which results are applicable to other settings is thus largely based upon the reader's understanding of similarity and applicability to their own circumstances.

Secondly, with regard to sociometry involving peer nomination, it is important to note that the strength and quality of relationships identified were not taken into account. This limitation was minimised by the qualitative data provided by key participants together with observations, field notes, and draw and write investigation. Furthermore, since sociometry is limited to the social network of the classroom, it does not take into account that pupils may have friendships with children in other classes.

Thirdly, while rigorous measures were applied to counteract threats to trustworthiness, the fact that a relationship existed between the researcher and the participants prior to the study may further inhibit potential transferability of the findings. No research is value-free, and as such pure objectivity is unattainable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Nonetheless, the study yielded rich data and the checks and safeguards to demonstrate rigorous research have been outlined and a detailed research record included. The study would have been improved by the participation of three other pupils with MGLD who had attended the special class at Oakwood when it was disbanded in 2009. However, as these pupils had transitioned to secondary school it would have meant gaining access to two other schools. Furthermore, as two of the pupils were completing their Junior Certificate School Programme (NCCA, 2010); I decided not to pursue this.

I suggest that, notwithstanding the issues listed above, these findings add to the small growing body of research pertaining to pupils with MGLD in Ireland (Butler, 2009; Core & Prunty, 2012; Irwin, 2008, Fahey, 2005; Feeney & DuPont, 2012; Kelleher, 2006; Kelly & Farrell, 2012; Kerins, 2011; Pringle, 2008; Stevens & O'Moore, 2009). It provides new information including the perspective of pupils with MGLD, and the perspectives of other relevant personnel, in terms of social participation in the mainstream setting. Arising from the findings, it is possible to identify some implications for practice that apply to Oakwood and which may also resonate in other educational settings. While the findings from this study cannot be generalised to other students with MGLD in mainstream schools, they serve to further exemplify the factors inherent in making sure that students with MGLD feel socially included in mainstream class settings. A number of conclusions were drawn from the findings in light of the reviewed literature. These conclusions are now discussed.

Conclusions

This study has explored the experiences and perspectives of pupils with MGLD, together with perspectives of other relevant personnel, with specific reference to social participation in a mainstream setting. As this research is based upon a small purposive sample, it is important to note that any conclusions drawn are tentative. Notwithstanding this, the themes derived from analysis reflect issues that are congruent with national and international research generally. Arising from the overall findings it can be concluded that all three boys feel socially included in school life. Children, both with and without SEN feel included when they are playing games together. Children derive much satisfaction when they are involved in everyday activities with their peers. Pro-social characteristics, such as those gained through participation in sport and music, (leadership & sportsmanship within co-operative & teambuilding activities) play an important role in facilitating social participation

and access to peer networks for pupils with MGLD. Social functioning, including social communication, is a critical area of development for pupils with MGLD; with appropriate intervention practices central to its development. It is concerning that there are a number of pupils both with/without SEN who, in terms of sociometry alone, appear relatively vulnerable with regard to peer acceptance. Their scores reiterate the centrality of regular social intervention programmes in schools.

Findings indicate that socially responsive and competent TDPs can facilitate the participation of pupils with MGLD in the everyday life of the school. However, in order to achieve this, TDPs require targeted intervention to develop the relevant skills. Greater focus on the development of pupil knowledge and experience of disability is pertinent in relation to peer acceptance of children with SEN. Pupils require developmentally appropriate intervention with regard to the conceptualisation of disability. Findings indicate that teachers may have idealistic expectations of TDPs in terms of requiring them to become socially responsive without receiving explicit support. Due recognition, consideration and intervention regarding this crucial aspect of inclusive education is warranted. Since children's social experiences are affected by a wide variety of factors, there is a need for a coherent policy to guide practice at school level. Taking steps to further structure the school in terms of inclusion warrants ongoing engagement with decision-making processes such as those outlined by the NCSE (2011). Interventions incorporating parental support and involving peer support are important, specifically as parental attitudes impact on children's attitudes. Proactive anti-bullying programmes and interventions fostering conflict resolution skills among all students, particularly pupils with SEN, are critical. It is possible that inclusive schools (in the context of ever-reducing resource supports) may overstretch their resources, due to a high intake of pupils with SEN. The special class for pupils with MGLD is an

important resource and should not be overlooked in terms of the continuum of provision. Findings raise questions as to why the facilitative role of the SNA in relation to pupils with sensory issues (DES, 2014b) has not been extended to include pupils with MGLD.

A number of simple strategies/approaches for supporting pupils' social participation at school level are proposed. These include: (a) friendship stops and drama club; (b) individual workstations and coloured football bibs; (c) yearly SNA briefing sessions with teachers regarding the needs of pupils with SEN; (d) SNA attendance at IEP meeting; (e) attention to social participation in the formulation/implementation of school policies and ethos; and (f) the establishment of a student forum to give voice to the student body. Meaningful consultation with pupils regarding their education is an important goal for educators to pursue. Pupils demonstrated their readiness and ability to voice their opinions in this study. Indeed as partners in inclusive education, their participation requires careful nurturing in order to include their valuable insights. This study has shown that inclusive practice is a task for all partners, not least of all the DES, parents, peers and school staff. To this end there is a need for the formulation of guiding protocols in the implementation of IEP meetings. This study has generated a number of implications that are of interest to policy-makers and practitioners alike. The implications are discussed now, together with research directions derived from this study.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study have implications for policy and practice with regard to the social participation of pupils with MGLD in mainstream settings. While the study focused on pupils with MGLD, findings may also have implications for personnel with an interest in the education of students with SEN. Implications are organised under the following headings: (a) school level; (b) national policy level; and (c) CPD.

School Level

- Structures and resources need to be in place to promote the social participation of pupils with MGLD. Structural changes are warranted at the level of whole-school and whole-staff. In line with this, a special duties post (DES, 2014c) could be assigned with responsibility for overseeing changes required in schools. It is recommended that schools commence formal engagement in the NCSE (2011) inclusive audit process with a view to formulating a structured organisational "response to the educational challenges that inclusion may bring" (NCSE, 2011, p. 11).

- Formulation and implementation of a coherent social issues policy to guide professional practice in relation to the social needs of pupils is warranted. Work on this policy would complement schools' strategic planning for inclusion, commensurate with NCSE guidelines (2011).

- There is a need for schools to develop children's conceptualisation of disability in order to promote a climate of tolerance, acceptance and understanding among all pupils. As boys and girls differ in their attitude to pupils with SEN, these differences should be taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions.

- It is suggested that schools regularly monitor and promote the social participation of pupils with MGLD. Together with academic activities, programmes to develop and foster social functioning need to be a central part of intervention for pupils with MGLD, both at an individual and class level. Collaboration with peers and parents is important in order to achieve stronger intervention effectiveness.

- In line with DES (2013a) policy, proactive anti-bullying interventions, which foster the development of skills relevant to conflict resolution and perspective-taking, are

essential in schools. Programmes such as restorative practice could usefully be explored as a means of helping pupils deal appropriately with issues related to bullying and the enhancement of positive learning communities in schools.

- In fostering social participation, schools should pay particular attention to the area of social communication on two levels: firstly to assist pupils with MGLD to convey their narrative with clarity, and secondly to develop within TDPs, the more complex skills that are required to support the inclusion of pupils with MGLD.

- It is recommended that teachers assist pupils with MGLD in the assimilation and consolidation of rules of games with a view to facilitating positive peer contacts/interactions. The provision of visual resources, such as coloured bibs during playtime, would benefit pupils who experience difficulties distinguishing between competing teams.

- It is recommended that teachers promote the development of skills pertinent to pro-social activities. Findings from this study suggest that opportunities to interact socially occur naturally through participation in sporting and musical activities. Findings reveal that participation in these areas increases access to friendship networks, peer contacts, and helps enhance pupil self-esteem and peer status.

- It is recommended that schools explore ways of giving voice to students in keeping with Article 12 (UNCRC, 1990). Moreover, aspects pertaining to pupils with SEN, for example attendance at IEP meetings, and parameters regarding the dissemination of information pertaining to pupils with SEN, could usefully form part of this consultation process.

National Policy Level

- Pupils' perspective has the potential to inform and challenge education policy and practice. Cognisant of this and in line with Article 12 (UNCRC, 1990), there is a need for the DES to issue guidelines to schools regarding appropriate practice for pupil consultation.

- It is recommended that the DES acknowledge the social needs of pupils with MGLD with a view to widening the social facilitative role of SNAs (DES, 2014b) to include pupils with MGLD.

- In line with the statutory obligation under section 20 (Ireland, 2005a) of EPSEN (Ireland, 2004a) to provide a continuum of support provision, the special class model for pupils with MGLD should not be overlooked. Findings reveal that increased levels of support for schools in the implementation of the GAM are warranted where inclusive schools are in danger of overstretching their resources due to a high intake of pupils with SEN.

Continuous Professional Development

- The development of TDPs' knowledge pertaining to the diverse aspects of disability warrants professional development in terms of schools/teachers fostering successful inclusion and a climate whereby diversity is valued. Teacher in-service pertaining to best practice with regard to developing children's conceptualisation of disability is warranted.

- Formalising agreed-upon structures with participants would facilitate collaboration in the area of planning for SEN provision. There is a need for CPD with regard to devising protocols for IEP meetings. Moreover, schools should explore ways of

providing CPD regarding the co-working, complimentary roles of teachers and SNAs in SEN provision.

Areas for Future Research

This study is limited by the small-scale of the research. Notwithstanding this, it provides valuable insights regarding social participation and pupils with MGLD in mainstream setting. As with many studies it raises a number of questions for follow-up research. The questions raised suggest a number of directions for future research and these are now suggested.

- A future comparative study with a similar school, involving pupils with MGLD, who do not receive additional help in the form of SNA and LS/RT, would be informative and would add to the findings of this study.

- There is a need for future research to explore ways that teachers might help pupils with MGLD develop their skill-set in pro-social, cooperative and team-building activities such as music and sport.

- Consistent with the issue of student voice and pupil involvement in SNA review (DES, 2014b; Prunty, 2011), future research exploring pupil attendance and meaningful participation in the IEP process is warranted.

- Given the potential for peer-mediated tutoring, peer-mediated talk in terms of facilitating social participation among pupils with SEN in mainstream settings could usefully be explored.

- There is a need for future research to explore differentiation within the anti-bullying policy (DES, 2013a) to take account of pupils with SEN.

- As concerns emerged that teachers may have idealistic expectations of TDPs, it is imperative that future research explore this issue; together with the related issue of assisting children (both with and without SEN) in developing a conceptualisation of disability.

- In keeping with findings from De Boer et al. (2012) further research would illuminate the dynamics of the relationship between attitude change of peers and the improvement of peer acceptance. Future intervention research should also aim to include these two aspects.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study demonstrated the capacity for children with MGLD to give witness in terms of their social participation in the life of the school and highlighted the important role played by them in providing insider knowledge for educationalists and policy makers. The child-friendly methodologies employed in this study facilitated pupil engagement and participation. Of particular note in terms of methodologies, was the documented implementation of sociometry and draw and write investigation. Informed by my years of experience as a reflective practitioner handling issues of a sensitive nature with children, I recorded detailed description of these approaches so that that my work would inform future research involving children and thus make a practical contribution to the field of knowledge. In terms of sociometry alone, it is of note that there are a number of pupils (including TDPs) who appear relatively vulnerable with regard to peer acceptance. Their scores highlight the need for social interventions programmes to be implemented on a regular basis in schools. This study also highlighted the potential for teachers to assume greater levels of knowledge, understanding and experience of disability, on the part of TDPs, than may actually be the

case. In line with this finding, this study emphasises the need for teachers to develop children's conceptualisation of disability. [96] This key element of inclusive education is notably absent in terms of Irish policy and warrants immediate consideration. Linked to the previous point, this study demonstrated that a competent TDP, using skills akin to what Ní Bhroin (2012) describes as mediated talk, can support the participation of a pupil with MGLD. Arising from this, the current study underscores the need for targeted intervention encompassing high-order social skills for TDPs in order to enable them to become socially responsive. With regard to resource provision, this study revealed that a school, such as Oakwood, was in danger of overstretching its resources due to a high intake of pupils with SEN. This finding emphasises the need to achieve balance in terms of provision and has implications for the proposed model of resource allocation (NCSE, 2014). Finally, this study documented the tensions inherent in the role of researcher-practitioner and outlined the struggle to locate the researcher's voice while also endeavouring to advocate on behalf of children with MGLD, in keeping with Travers' inspirational keynote speech (2012).

Concluding Comment

In adding to the knowledge base in terms of social participation in the mainstream setting, this study is significant in that it focuses on children from the largest category of SEN. A significant outcome of this study is the conclusion that pupils with MGLD feel included when they are playing games and interacting with peers in both social and academic settings. This study is important in that the centrality of the student voice is up-held; their insider knowledge and lived experience is appreciated and acknowledged. Pupils both with and without SEN demonstrated a readiness and ability to critique and comment in terms of

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[96] Both children with and without SEN.

their experiences in school life. This study indicates that their contribution warrants formal recognition. The literature shows that while the requirements of international law exist, children's views are not consistently or reliably included in educational decision making. Building on previous research (O'Keeffe, 2009; Prunty et al., 2012), this study underscores the need for educators and policy-makers to "listen and provide real opportunities for students to express their views and be actively involved in matters affecting them" (Prunty et al., 2012, p. 35).

A further contribution, made by this research, is that it provides evidence that socially responsive peers can facilitate the social participation of pupils with MGLD. It also signals a gap in practice in relation to the inclusion of pupils with MGLD in terms of schools developing children's conceptualisation of disability. Findings show that greater focus is warranted on the development of pupil knowledge and experience of disability in terms of promoting peer acceptance and affiliation to the friendship networks.

Social functioning, including social communication and pro-social activities such as those experienced in music and sport, are crucial areas of development for pupils with MGLD. The literature continues to highlight the critical importance of these areas. Having reiterated the importance of social functioning for these children, it is imperative that CPD for the teachers in the participating school be facilitated through future research in this area. To this end, I intend working with a number of the participants in this study (focus pupils, TDPs, parents, teachers and SNAs) to design, implement and assess an intervention programme. While acknowledging limitations in scope and sample size, this study was conducted in the hope that it would offer a modest contribution to the literature on the inclusion of pupils with MGLD. The study afforded insight into the lived experience of three

pupils with MGLD in terms of their social participation in the mainstream school setting. Findings obtained should be employed to frame a context that promotes social participation for pupils with MGLD.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Legislation Underpinning Inclusive Education in Ireland

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Appendix B: Predetermined Themes
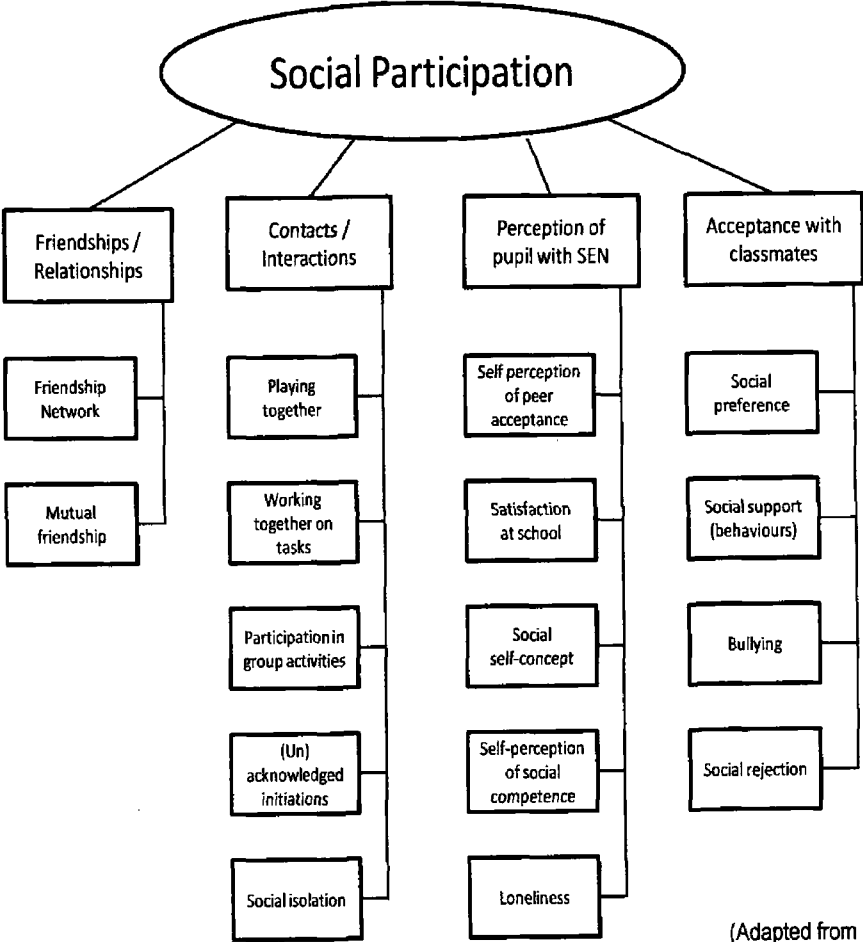
(Adapted from Koster et al., 2009)

Appendix C: Hierarchy for Promoting Young Children's Peer Interactions

Note. (Adapted from Brown et al., 2001)

Improved Peer Interactions and Peer-related Social Competence

Explicit Social Skills Training

Social Integration Activities

Naturalistic Interventions

Friendship Activities

Incidental Teaching of Social Behaviors

Classroomwide Interventions

Affective Interventions to Influence Attitudes

Developmentally Appropriate Practices
and
Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs with Socially Responsive Peers

Appendix D: Planning Process

What is the topic of my research?	*Inclusion, in terms of the social participation of children with MGLD who have transferred to full-time mainstream classes following the closure of a designated special class for pupils with MGLD*
Why have I chosen this topic?	Previous research (the literature) *National: Ware et al., (2009); Travers, (2009); Travers et al. (2010), Stevens & O' Moore, (2009), Rose et al., (2010); Drudy & Kinsella, (2009; O'Donnell, (2003) etc.* *International: Koster et al. (2007, 2009); Pijl, (2007); Pijl, Frostad & Keller, (2008);Pijl, & Hamstra, (2005); Flem & Keller, (2000), etc.* Professional relevance (my current work)... *Having taught pupils with MGLD, in a designated special class which disbanded in 2009, I am unsure as to whether children with MGLD are included in terms of social participation as full- time members of a mainstream class.* Other reasons (such as...) *My colleagues (school principal, SET, parents, mainstream class teachers, SNAs) also want to explore/ascertain the children's experiences & views.*
Are my reasons good enough?	Yes, because *The literature shows that physical integration alone does not automatically result in more social contacts/friendships for pupils with SEN. Also the literature suggests that children rate social participation high in terms of feeling included.* No, because... *Not applicable (NA)*
What are my research questions?	*1) Following their transfer from a special class, do three pupils with MGLD feel socially included as full-time members of a mainstream class?* *2) Do relevant personnel (including peers) feel that these pupils are socially included in the mainstream class setting?*

	3) Are there factors within the school setting that contribute to children feeling socially included or excluded? Are there more? *Possible questions that were deleted include...* *a) What are mainstream and special educators' perceptions of their role in providing social supports to students with MGLD?* *b) What social support strategies do key personnel report using in supporting students with MGLD in facilitating relationships with peers with and without disabilities? (Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001).* *As the study progresses others may arise or revisions may be required in relation to the questions above.*
Where do these come from?	(Literature, practice, other?...) *Literature & reflective practice and the need to inform policy & practice in this area. Also the need for children with MGLD to have a voice; advocacy on their behalf*
Can I justify the research questions? How can I do this?	*Highlighting a gap in the literature, current Irish research signals the urgency for studies to evaluate the impact of changes made in meeting the needs of pupils with MGLD before further disbandment of the special class model (SCM) (Stevens & O'Moore, 2009; Travers, 2009; Travers et al., 2010; Ware et al., 2009). Koster et al. (2009) highlight the need for research to target the social dimension of inclusion, while Nilholm and Alm (2010) underscore the importance of the pupils' experience when they assert that " the feelings of belonging, membership and acceptance on behalf of the children are necessary prerequisites in order to talk about inclusive classrooms" (p. 250).*
Where will I do the research?	*Urban Irish co-educational primary school, (my place of employment).*
Have I negotiated access? How?	*Will seek permission from BOM & principal,*
When will I do the research?	*Data collection and initial analysis Sept 2012-June 2013;*

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	Analysis of data and report writing ongoing July 2013-September 2014 *September 2014 Preparation for presentation etc.*
Is my timetable realistic?	*Yes, I think so, revisions may be necessary as work progresses. I am unsure at the moment as to whether the data collection time frame is sufficient, similarly with other sections*
What methods will I use to investigate the research questions?	*Mixed method approach using sociometric assessments, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, observations, draw & write investigation, and documentary analysis.*
How can I justify these methods?	*Qualitative research generates evidence which can be used to inform special education policy and practice; it produces descriptive information which increases understanding of pupils with SEN, their families, and people who work with them. Sociometric techniques provide a quantitative element to the research; which facilitates data collection from personnel in the school and the children's peers and provides triangulation of findings. In choosing strategies for data collection, fitness for purpose was considered (Robson, 2002). Hence, focus group/semi-structured interviews, observations and sociometric assessments were employed.*
(a) What are the ethical considerations? (b) How will I address these?	*(a) Access, outlining description of research consent/assent, voluntary nature and identities not revealed, power imbalance, acquiescence, proposed participants (i.e. three children) may not wish to participate. I may need to ask two children with MGLD who have transferred to two second level schools to participate in research.* *Difficulties/logistics associated with getting consent from parents of peer group in both classes for sociometric assessment.* *(b) Letter to principal & BOM, plain language statement of proposed research, meet potential participants & discuss proposed research, letters of informed consent/assent, reassurances regarding voluntary nature, confidentiality, be mindful of power imbalance, listen & acknowledge voice of all participants etc. Adhere to St. Patrick's College Research Committee and DCYA ethics protocol and follow advice of supervisors.*
Is there anything I need to rethink?	The topic? The method? The timetable? The location? *At the moment no, but supervisors, colleagues and research field notes/diary will help me reflect on all of these points*

(a) Do I need to revise the research questions? (b) Are they clear? (c) Are they researchable?	*(a) Not at the moment, but it's a possibility* *(b) They warrant feedback from supervising committee and colleagues at thesis proposal presentation. Also, piloting of instruments will help confirm/determine any necessary revisions, etc.* *(c) Yes, I think so, I await feedback from supervisors and colleagues; piloting will inform this issue also.*
Where have I got to in my research?	*Thesis proposal upcoming, awaiting further feedback from supervising committee and colleagues who will be present at thesis proposal presentation*
What is my first/next step?	*Prepare slides and notes for thesis proposal presentation on 17th May 2012 and await further feedback from supervising committee and colleagues at presentation.*
What help do I need?	*Advice from experienced researchers, other Ed D students, books & articles etc. Read theses from previous two Ed D cohorts which are relevant to my research, in terms of topic or methodology design etc.*
Who do I ask for help?	*Supervisors, course director, colleagues, fellow students, students who have completed Ed D programme, friends...*

Note. (Adapted from Clough & Nutbrown, 2002)

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Appendix E: Interview Questions for Children with MGLD and Children in the Focus Groups

Preamble

- Good morning,
- Do you remember I spoke to you before about feeling part of school and how sometimes we might feel left out? Do you remember I asked you then to help me with my project about how children feel about being part of school?
- Today I am going to ask you some questions about this. If you do not understand the question, you can ask me to explain it further to you? You can ask me questions if you want to.
- If you do not want to answer the question that is alright, you do not have to.
- Do(es) you/everyone understand what I have said so far? Can I have a thumbs up/down, or to the side, as a signal to show me?
- I want to record what you say using this tape recorder, is that okay with you? This will help me to listen later to hear what you said. It will help me to understand.
- Are you okay with the fact that I am going to record what you are saying?
- Can I have a signal to show me?
- We are going to start with this ice-breaker. Do you know what an ice-breaker is?
- Ice breaker-I sets up the rhythm, clapping both palms on my knees and then both hands together X 4

Fe....Fe (echo)
Fe fi....Fe fi (echo)
Fe fi fo ....Fe fi fo (echo)
Veesta....Veesta (echo)
Com a la , com a la, com a la Veesta .... (echo)
Oh, no no no no na veesta.... (echo)

Eni meeni deci meeni oo ah la deci meeni....(echo)

Beep diddly oden boden boo scdooth dahten....(echo).

Now we will start the questions

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about school? Probe...

2. Are there things you like about school? Probe...

3. Are there things you do not like about school?

4. What do you like to do at break time? Probe...

5. What do you not like to do at break time? Probe...

6. Who do you play with at school? Probe...*

7. Who are your best friends? Probe ....*

8. Some people think that children can get left out in school; what do you think? Can this happen? Probe...

9. If yes, is there anything the school and teachers can do to help? Probe.....

(*Questions 6 &7 are for target children only)

Wind-down

- Is there anything else you would like to say?
- Are there any questions I should have asked you?
- Thank you for your help
- We will finish with our song.

Note. (Adapted from Skårbrevik, 2005; Travers et al., 2010)

Preamble

- Greetings
- Review the aim of the interview and how it relates to the participant.
- Request permission to record the interview and remind the participants that the interview will be recorded with their permission.

1. Tell me about Mark/Neville/Damien (M/N/D) during playtime and lunch breaks?

   Probe....

2. Tell me about M/N/D during class time? Probe....

3. I am interested in M/N/D's engagement with others. Can you tell me about this?

   Probe...what about outside school? What about children from other classes?

4. Tell me about other children's engagement with M/N/D? Probe....

5. I am interested in your views on social participation and what you feel it implies. Please elaborate...It may help to give an example.

6. There are different views regarding the importance of academic and social development. Some people think that academic development is more important, others feel social participation is more important. I am interested in your views on this area.....please elaborate

7. Are there any policies in your school that contribute to successful inclusion of children with MGLD? Please elaborate; probe... do these policies include/focus on children's social participation?

8. Can you suggest any policies or practices the school could implement to facilitate greater social participation for children with MGLD? Probe....

Wind-down

- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Are there any questions I should have included?
- Thank you for your co-operation and support.

Appendix G: Interview Questions for Parents

Preamble

- Greetings
- Review the aim of the interview and how it relates to the participant.
- Request permission to record the interview and remind the participants that the interview will be recorded with their permission.

1. I am interested in your views on children's social participation and what you feel it implies. Please elaborate...It may help to give an example.

2. There are different views regarding the importance of academic and social development. Some people think that academic development is more important, others feel social participation is more important. I am interested in your views on this area.....probe

3. Do you feel that your child is included in terms of social participation? It may help to give examples:

4. From your experience do you think that your child feels socially included in this school in terms of having friends to talk, work and play with? It may help to give examples:

5. What is it about this school that your child likes or dislikes?

6. Is there anything the school could do to improve your child's experience?

Wind-down

- Is there anything else you would like to say?
- Are there any questions I should have asked you?
- Thank you for your help.

Appendix H: Interview Questions for School Principal

Preamble

- Greetings
- Review the aim of the interview and how it relates to the participant.
- Request permission to record the interview and remind the participant that the interview will be recorded with their permission.

1. I am interested in your views on social participation and what you feel it implies. Please elaborate...It may help to give an example.

2. From your experience what facilitates the social participation of children with MGLD? Probe, it may help to give examples....

3. In your experience are there factors which impede the social participation of children with MGLD? Probe...

4. There are different views regarding the importance of academic and social development. Some people think that academic development is more important, others feel social participation is more important. I am interested in your views on this area......please elaborate

5. In your view are there any policies in your school that contribute to successful inclusion of children with MGLD? Please elaborate

6. In your view are there policies in your school that impede successful inclusion of children with MGLD? Please elaborate,

7. Can you suggest any policies or practices the school could implement to facilitate greater social participation for children with MGLD?

Wind-down

- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Are there any questions I should have included?
- Thank you for your co-operation and support.

Appendix I: Observational Schedule

Pupil: Damien   *Date: 27th February 2013 Place: School Yard   Duration: 20 minutes*

Contacts/interactions	Frequency*	Duration*	Name of people*	Outcome *	Detailed running Commentary & Sketch: *Damien ran to*
Playing together					*Evan and put his arm around Evan's shoulder. They both spoke; then Evan walked over to me to say hello as he had been with me for*
Working together on tasks					*the draw and write investigation yesterday. Then Damien walked over to Omar. He placed his arm around Omar's shoulder and both*
Participation in group activity					*talked and smiled and continued to walk with Damien's arm around Omar's shoulder. A lot of chatting and smiling. Eamon came over*
Acknowledged Initiations					*and joined them; the three form a triangle smiling and chatting. More children join the group including Mark and Harold. They*
Unacknowledged Initiations					*form a big cluter with each child placing one foot forward in circle to do a countdown to see who would be chosen to be the 'catcher' in a game of chasing. Anna (Mark and Damien's SNA) walked over to*
Social isolation					*check everything was okay. She kept a certain distance and did not interfere with proceedings. Eight children in all in this cluter/group on the grass.*

Note. (*Where applicable; definitions of terminology such as 'social isolation' will be included (Adapted from Koster et al., 2009).

Appendix J: Sociometry Nomination Form

Which pupils in class are your best friends?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

With which pupils in class would you like to do a class project

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Who chose me as their best friend?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

My Name is: _____

(Names of Peers listed down right hand column on original document but not included here for

purposes of anonymity).

Appendix K: Sample of Draw & Write Matrix

Participants	What makes me feel left out in school (Write & Draw1) Elizabeth's & Nathan's Classes	Categories/ Codes/ Themes
Nicole:	Unable to do a cartwheel I never really get left out because my best friends ask me to play with them every day	**Contacts/interactions:** -When I am unable to do what others can do *lack of participation in group activities due to inability to do the action* **Perception of pupil: satisfaction at school:** -I never really get left out ·
Yolanda:	When friends go off on purpose	**Contacts/interactions: social isolation:** -When friends purposely move away
Ellen:	When people leave me out of games	**Contacts/interactions: social isolation:** -Being left out of games
Rachel:	When people are talking in private When people don't count me in their games When I am in a fight with my friends When my friends have secrets about me and will not tell me	**Contacts/interactions: social isolation:** -When people are talking in private **Contacts/interactions: social isolation:** -Being left out of games **Contacts/interactions: <u>disagreements:</u>** -When I am in a fight with my friends **Contacts/interactions: social isolation:** - When my friends have secrets about me and will not tell me

Appendix L: A 15-point Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis

Process No.	Criteria
Transcription 1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding 2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
Coding 3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
Coding 4	All relevant extracts for all [sic] each theme have been collated.
Coding 5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
Coding 6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis 7	Data have been analysed - interpreted, made sense of - rather than just paraphrased or described.
Analysis 8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
Analysis 9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic.
Analysis 10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
Overall 11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report 12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
Written report 13	There is a good fit between what you claim you did and what you show you have done – i.e. described method and reported analysis are consistent.
Written report 14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
Written report 15	The researcher is positioned as active in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'.

Note. (Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96).

Appendix M: Letter and Consent Form for the School Board of Management Explaining Research Proposal

Dear Chairman

I am undertaking a doctorate of education degree (Ed. D) at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin. As partial fulfilment for this degree I am currently preparing a research study on the experiences/perspectives on the social dimension of the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in an Irish primary school, following their transfer from a special class designated for children with mild general learning disabilities (MGLD).

I hope to carry out this research with three pupils assessed with MGLD, their parents, their mainstream and special education teachers, their special needs assistants (SNAs) and their peers. Through my research I hope to conduct one interview with the school principal, two group interviews involving mainstream and special education teachers and SNAs, individual interviews with the three pupils assessed with MGLD, individual interviews with their parents and two group interviews with four of their peers. I also intend implementing sociometric assessment with the fourth groups and six observations of the three children in different settings over time. I also intend conducting documentary analysis of the school's special education policy in terms of the social dimension of inclusion and the children's drawings of what makes them feel included and what makes them feel excluded.

I would like to audio-record and transcribe the interviews with the interviewees' permission. I will show participants transcript copies for verification. I will analyse all data pertaining to the research and ask two independent colleagues to check my interpretations and conclusions for validation.

I am writing to ask for the Board of Management's permission to implement this study in Oakwood School (pseudonym) with the proposed participants and using the methods described above. All participants will have the option to withdraw should they so wish.

If my request is granted, I can assure you that the information received will be treated as confidential. On completion of my research, I will provide a verbal and written summary of my findings to the school principal. To protect confidentiality neither the school nor participants will be identifiable in this research, or any publication arising out of it, as pseudonyms will be used throughout. It is important for you to realise that as the research is with a small group it is impossible to protect full anonymity. Confidentiality of information can only be protected within the legal limits of the law. All the information I collect will be stored securely and archived according to the policy of the college.

Yours sincerely,

Martine Butler

Consent Form: Oakwood School Board of Management

I _____

The principal of

_____ on behalf of the

Board of Management would like to formally grant permission to Martine Butler to conduct

the above outlined research. I understand that the research will include all of the following

methods:

- Observation of three pupils in school.

- Interviews with three pupils.

- Interviews with the school principal, the three children's parents, teachers, SNAs and

  peers to gain their perspectives and insights into the children's social

  experiences/participation in school.

- Documentary analysis of school policies and children's drawings relating to social

  participation in the school.

- Sociometric assessment of social participation involving the three children and their

  peers in fourth class.

Signed _____

Appendix N: Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent Form for Parents of the Three Children Participating in the Research Study

Dear............

I am undertaking a doctor of education degree (Ed. D) at St. Patrick's College and am currently preparing research on the experiences/perspectives on the social dimension of the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in an Irish primary school, following their transfer from a special class designated for children with mild general learning disabilities (MGLD). The lead investigator/supervisor of my research is Dr. Anna Logan and she is contactable at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. For my research I hope to work with pupils who have transferred from the special class in 2009, their teachers, their parents, the special needs assistants (SNAs) and their peers. I would like you and your child to participate in this project. It is important for you to realise that you and your child are under no obligation to participate in this project. Taking part is voluntary and both you and your child can withdraw at any time should he or you so wish. If you choose to take part I intend conducting an individual interview with you and your son regarding your son's friendships and social participation at school level. I also intend asking your son to draw a picture of what makes him feel included and what makes him feel excluded. I will ask him to name the peers that he likes to play with and do school projects with. Lastly I intend carrying out observations of your son during class and play time in terms of his social interaction. Taking part in this project will not present any risks to you or your child. Your son's interview will last approximately fifteen minutes and your interview will last approximately forty minutes. The data will be used for future educational presentations. I intend submitting an article, based on the project, to a peer-reviewed journal in the future. No identifying information will be included in this article or in the thesis. To

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protect confidentiality neither the identity of the school, the adult participants or the children will be identifiable. No records will be kept with real names. Pseudonyms will be used at all times to protect identities. All the information I collect will be stored safely in a locked cabinet according to the policy of the college. It is important for you to realise that as the research is with a small group it is impossible to protect full anonymity. Confidentiality of information can only be protected within the legal limits of the law.

If you have concerns and wish to contact an independent person please contact: Dr. Anna Logan, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. I would be grateful if you would please read the following and circle Yes/No to each question.

Yours Sincerely,

_____

Martine Butler.

Informed Consent Form for Parents of Children Participating in

Research Study Title: Experiences and Perspectives on the Social Dimension of

Inclusion of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in an Irish Primary School

(PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO TO EACH QUESTION)

Have you read the plain language statement?   Yes/No

Do you understand the information provided?   Yes/No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study?   Yes/No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?   Yes/No

Will you ask your child for his permission to be included in this research?   Yes/No

Are you aware that confidentiality of information can only be protected within

the legal limits of the law?   Yes/No

Are you aware that all the information I collect will be stored safely in a locked cabinet?

Yes/No

Do you grant permission for Martine Butler to examine reports held by the

school that relate to your child's social development?   Yes/No

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been

answered, and I have a copy of the consent form. Therefore, I consent for both myself and my

son to take part in the research project.

Participant's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____**Date:** _____

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Appendix O: Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent Form for Parents of Children in Fourth Class Participating in the Research Study

Dear............

I am undertaking a doctor of education degree (Ed. D) at St. Patrick's College and am currently preparing research on the experiences/perspectives on the social dimension of the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in an Irish primary school. The lead investigator/ supervisor of my research is Dr. Anna Logan and she is contactable at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

For my research I hope to work with pupils who have transferred from the special class in 2009, their teachers, their parents, the special needs assistants (SNAs) and their peers. As a peer of children who have transferred from the special class I would like your child to participate in this project. It is important for you to realise that your child is under no obligation to participate in this project. Taking part is voluntary and your child can withdraw at any time should s/he or you so wish. If you choose to allow your child to participate I intend asking your child to draw a picture of what makes him/her feel included in school and what makes him/her feel excluded. I also intend asking your child to write down the names of children they like to spend time with either playing or doing school work. I also intend doing a short group interview with a small number of children (approximately 4) about the theme of friendship and participation. Taking part in this project will not present any risks to your child.

The information I collect will be used for future educational presentations. I intend submitting an article, based on the project, to a peer-reviewed journal in the future. No identifying information will be included in this article or in my thesis. To protect confidentiality neither the identity of the school or the children will be identifiable. No records will be kept with real names. Pseudonyms will be used at all times to protect identities. All the information I collect will be stored safely in a locked cabinet according to the policy of the college. It is important for you to realise that as the research is with a small group it is impossible to protect full anonymity. Confidentiality of information can only be protected within the legal limits of the law. If you wish to discuss this project further, I can arrange a meeting with you at the school.

If you have concerns and wish to contact an independent person please contact: Dr. Anna Logan, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. I would be grateful if you would please read the following and circle Yes/No to each question.

      Yours Sincerely, Martine Butler

CONSENT FORMS FOR PARENTS OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN IN FOURTH CLASS

(PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO TO EACH QUESTION)

Have you read the plain language statement?   Yes/No

Do you understand the information provided?   Yes/No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study?   Yes/No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?   Yes/No

Will you ask your child for his permission to be included in this research?   Yes/No

Are you aware that confidentiality of information can only be protected within

the legal limits of the law?   Yes/No

Are you aware that all the information I collect will be stored safely in a locked cabinet?

                                                                               Yes/No

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been

answered, and I have a copy of the consent form. Therefore, I consent for child to take part in

the research project.

Participant's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix P: Statement and Informed Consent/Assent form for Focus Children

Participating in Research (to be read in the presence of parent)

I am in college studying very hard this year. I have some school projects to do and would like your help. I want to do some work with you about having friends and playing and working with them. I want you to draw pictures of what makes you feel part of school and what makes you feel left out of things. I want to talk to you about who you like to spend time with in school, during work and play. I also want to see you playing at lunch time and at other times, for example P.E time.

You do not have to help me if you do not want to and you can stop at any time. You can ask questions and I will explain the project. All our work will be kept safe. I will give you pretend names when I am doing the project so people will not know which boy I am writing about. I will then give my school project to my college teacher. She will put it in the school library.

Child's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix Q: Plain Language Statement for Teacher/SNA Participants Explaining the Proposed Research

Dear Colleague

I am undertaking a doctor of education degree (Ed. D) at St. Patrick's College and am currently preparing research on the experiences/perspectives on the social dimension of the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in an Irish primary school, following their transfer from a special class designated for children with mild general learning disabilities (MGLD). The lead investigator/ supervisor of my research is Dr. Anna Logan and she is contactable at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

For my research I hope to work with children who have MGLD, their parents, their teachers, their special needs assistants (SNAs) and their peers. I would appreciate your involvement. It is important for you to realise that you are under no obligation to participate. Taking part is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time should you wish. Should you choose to be involved you would have to commit a certain amount of time to participate in a short group interview. I would like to audio-record this interview with your permission. The interview will last approximately forty minutes. It is anticipated that participating in this research will not present any risks to you. It is hoped that the research will inform policy and practice and enhance special education provision for children with MGLD.

The data will be used for future educational presentations and submission to a peer-reviewed journal. No identifying information will be included in this study. To protect confidentiality neither the identity of the school or the participants will be identifiable in this thesis or any publication arising from it. No records will be kept with real names. Pseudonyms will be used at all times to protect both the identity of the school and participants. All information collected will be archived according to college policy. As the research is with a small group it is impossible to protect full anonymity. Confidentiality of information will be protected within the legal limits of the law. If you have concerns and wish to contact an independent person please contact: Dr. Anna Logan, Special Education department, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. I would be grateful if you would please read the following and circle Yes/No to each question.

Yours Sincerely,

Martine Butler.

Informed Consent Form for Teachers/SNAs Participating in Research

Research Study Title: Experiences/Perspectives on the Social Dimension of the Inclusion of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in an Irish Primary School.

(PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO TO EACH QUESTION)

Have you read the letter explaining the research study?   Yes/No

Do you understand the information provided?   Yes/No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study?   Yes/No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?   Yes/No

Are you aware that confidentiality of information can only be protected within

the legal limits of the law?   Yes/No

Are you aware that all the information I collect will be stored safely in a

locked cabinet?   Yes/No

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered, and I have a copy of the consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in the research project.

Participant's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix R: Statement and Consent Form for Children Participating in Research in Fourth Class

I am in college studying very hard this year. I have some school projects to do and would like your help. I want to do some work with you about having friends and playing and working with them. I want you to draw pictures of what makes you feel part of things in school and what makes you feel left out. I want to talk to you about who you like to spend time with in school. I will ask you to write down the names of people you like to spend time with during play and work time.

You do not have to help me if you do not want to and you can stop at any time. You can ask questions and I will explain the project. All our work will be kept safe. When I am writing up my project I will not use real names of people. When I am finished I will give my school project to my college teacher. She will put it in the school library.

Child's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness:_____

Date: _____

Appendix S: Letter and Consent Form for Parents of Fourth Class Pupils involved in Focus Group Interview

Dear Parents and _____

In addition to the help _____ has given me with my research project by writing and drawing pictures about feeling part of school and having friends, I would like to invite _____ to take part in a short focus group interview.

The focus group interview will consist of four children (two boys and two girls). It will take about twenty minutes and we will talk about what it means to be part of school. If you have any queries about the focus group please contact me at the school and I will explain my project. _____ does not have to help me if he/she does not want to.

Yours Faithfully,

_____

Martine Butler

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered. Therefore, I consent for _____ to take part in this group.

Child's Name _____

Parents' Signature_____

Child's Signature_____

Date: _____

Appendix T: Participant Information Form and Consent Form Checklist

IASSID (2003) proposed that a participant information form and consent form checklist should be on institutional/organisational letterhead and should include the following: (Both of these forms can be found in the *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*—see Dalton and McVilly, 2004):

1. The short, plain-language title of the project.

2. A brief, plain-language statement of the project aims and potential benefits. The statement should acknowledge if the project is being conducted to meet the requirement of a qualification, e.g. a university degree. Also, any sponsorship of the project by government or non-government organisations should be acknowledged.

3. The names and contact details of those responsible for the project, including those with overall administrative responsibility and those with local responsibility.

4. The name(s) and contact details of the authority(s) who has/have approved the project.

5. A description of what the participants are expected to do, where they should be expected to participate and over what period of time. This description should include acknowledgement of any audio or video recording that could be involved in either research activities or date collection.

6. A clear statement of any potential risks or discomfort for participants or those with whom they live, work or socialise. Information about how any adverse events will be addressed.

7. A clear statement of any potential benefits to participants and any possible limitations to these benefits (e.g. for the duration of the project), including any compensation for their participation or costs they might incur as a consequence of their involvement in the research.

8. Details of how data is to be collected, stored and later destroyed or preserved. Details of how the privacy and confidentiality/anonymity of participants are to be maintained. Also, any limitations on the maintenance of confidentiality and/or circumstances where information might need to be disclosed to a third party (e.g. reporting any disclosure of abuse).

9. Details of how the findings are to be disseminated, including how the confidentiality of individual participants is to be maintained. Also, a statement of how participants will be advised and/or can find out about the findings other than through the peer-reviewed literature. Information about whether and how individuals can gain access to data to assist with their usual support or treatment.

10. A statement guaranteeing the participants' right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason or in any way having an adverse consequence for them personally (e.g. the cancellation or alteration of any support service and/or treatment they would ordinarily receive).

11. A statement that the person has been given a signed copy of the Participant Consent Form.

12. Contact details of an independent authority to whom participants can direct any inquiries or concerns that they may have about their involvement in the project. The independent authority should be readily accessible at a local level. However, contact details for the principal ethics committee should also be included.

13. A signed statement (by the person or legal guardian) that the participant has read, or had read to them, the Participant Information Sheet (which they can keep for their own records), that they understand what participation in the project involves and that they agree to participate on the understanding that they can withdraw their consent at any time without prejudice to their usual services and/or treatment.

14. The Participant Consent Form should also provide for the consent of a 'Legal Guardian' or 'Person Responsible', where the person is unable independently to provide informed consent — for example, in the case of a person whose disabilities limit their decision-making capacity, or a minor (Note: the age of consent varies between jurisdictions and across cultures). The reason why someone other than the participant is signing the form should be documented (e.g. the person did not understand the consent process or was not deemed legally competent). In such circumstances, the relationship between the participant and the person providing the consent should be detailed. There should be a clear statement that the person providing the consent on behalf of the participant does so without any inducement or likelihood of personal gain as a consequence of providing consent. Also, there should be a clear statement that even though someone else signed the Participant Consent Form, if the participant does not provide assent to proceed (i.e., they protest or choose not to comply with the procedure), their participation will cease immediately.

15. Pages on any Participant Information Sheet or Participation Consent Form should be clearly numbered in the format 'Page 1 of 2', etc.

Retrieved from: http://www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/232F61AE5397A93D802576650052

Appendix U: Overview of Research Process

Date	Action	Purpose	Description of Action	Participants
January 2012	Meeting with school principal	Discussion of possible research project	We discussed proposed project based on the social participation of three pupils with MGLD who had transferred from special class in 2009. Discussed duration of research fieldwork: approximately 12 months, spanning the academic year 2012-2013.	-Principal & Researcher
February 2012→	Ongoing work on thesis proposal	To develop a thesis proposal, develop problem statement and conduct literature review. To investigate possible research design and data collection methods.	I worked on thesis proposal and draft chapters one & two of thesis. I reviewed various methods of data collection and recorded research progression.	-Researcher
March/April 2012	Ongoing work on thesis proposal. Ongoing work on research ethics form; draft plain language statements & informed consent forms	To develop a thesis proposal, develop problem statement and conduct literature review. To investigate possible data collection methods & outline/discuss ethical	I worked on thesis proposal in conjunction with drafting outline of chapters one, two and three of research project. I worked on ethics form and collaborated with my colleagues and supervisors regarding this. Recorded research progression.	-Researcher, Ed. D students, tutors & supervisors

		considerations and consent etc.		
May 2012	Presentation of thesis proposal to colleagues and staff of St. Patrick's College.	To receive feedback from faculty members and colleagues.	I presented thesis proposal and received feedback from a number of people present in terms of my thesis proposal and ethics requirements.	-Members of staff -Ed. D colleagues -researcher
June 2012	Ongoing work on feedback from thesis proposal. Submitted my research ethics form to St. Patrick's College.	To receive ethical clearance from St. Patrick's College to proceed with proposed research.	Ongoing work on feedback from thesis proposal presentation and I submitted my research ethics form to St. Patrick's College. Recorded research progression.	-Researcher
July 2012	Having received ethical clearance with regard to my proposed research I continued with ongoing work on chapters one & two (also drafting outline sections for chapter three which included exploration of possible data	To determine the body of pertinent literature related to the proposed research. Also work on definitions and terminology pertaining to the proposed research.	Ongoing work on draft chapters one, two & three.	-Researcher

Date	(collection methods)			
August 2012	Ongoing work on draft chapters one & two. Also investigation on possible data collection methods and consent forms & letters	To determine the body of pertinent literature related to the proposed research. Continue work on definitions and terminology pertaining to the proposed research.	Ongoing work on draft chapters one, & two. Preparation of numerous plain language statements and informed consent forms for distribution to proposed participants upon receipt of formal clearance to conduct the proposed project from school BOM.	-Researcher
Sept. 2012	Meeting with principal	To formally seek board of management (BOM) permission	We discussed proposed project, I delivered a written description of proposed project and sought formal permission from the BOM (written letter). Record research progression.	-Principal and Researcher
Oct. 2012	Individual meeting with class teachers, resource teachers, and SNAs (verbal permission from principal to do so)	Outline project and informally raise the possibility of my colleagues' participation in the research, subject to written formal permission from the BOM etc.	It was decided (principal & researcher) that I should meet my colleagues and raise the possibility of their voluntary participation in research project. I outlined the proposed research project and stressed the voluntary nature of the research. I also spoke to school principal and invited him to participate. Record research progression.	-Class teachers (Elizabeth & Nathan, -LS/RT (Emily), -SNAs (Sorcha & Anna), -Martin & researcher
Oct. 2012	Received BOM clearance to conduct study.	To receive written formal permission from BOM to	I received formal permission to conduct the research from BOM. It was decided that I would contact parents of focus pupils and distribute plain language statements regarding	-Principal, researcher.

	Meeting with principal followed by individual meetings with parents of three focus pupils and the pupils themselves (Formal permission from BOM to do so).	conduct research. Discuss contacting the parents and children (potential participants). Organise meetings with parents and pupils.	proposed research. I would invite parents and their children to participate. I met the parents of the focus children first and explained the project; I distributed plain language statements and received signed consent from all parents. I then met the three focus pupils and in the presence of their parents I read out the plain language statement. I suggested that the children bring home their letter and consent forms and discuss their possible participation with their parents that evening. All three children returned signed consent forms. Ongoing reflections regarding proposed research. Record research progression.	-Trevor, Eva, Neville, researcher. -Liam, Eithne, Mark, researcher. -Sheila, Damien, researcher.
Oct. 2012	Individual meetings with principal, class teachers, LS/RT, SNAs and two proposed people to conduct reliability checks on data analysis (Helena & Nelson).	To present plain language statements and consent forms and formally invite colleagues to participate in research project (also proposed people to do individual reliability checks on data analysis).	All colleagues consented to participate in research project and returned signed informed consent forms in due course. Ongoing reflections regarding proposed research. Record research progression.	-Elizabeth & researcher. -Nathan & researcher. -Emily & researcher. -Sorcha & researcher. -Anna & researcher.

Date	Activity	Purpose		Participants
				-Martin & researcher. -Helena (reliability check) & researcher. -Nelson (reliability check) & researcher.
Nov. 2012	Meeting with two fourth class groups.	To explain research to focus pupils' peers. To facilitate question & answer forum. To distribute plain language statements and invite children to discuss the proposed research with their parents that evening. To request the return of forms indicating pupils' and parents' decision regarding children's participation.	I explained the project, distributed plain language statements, read letters for pupils and asked them to discuss their possible participation in the research with their parents. I stressed the voluntary nature of the project. I asked the children to return the forms indicating their wishes as soon as possible. Ongoing reflections regarding proposed research. Record research progression.	-Elizabeth, Anna, researcher and 30 pupils including Damien & Mark. -Nathan, Sorcha, researcher and 29 pupils including Neville.
Nov. 2012	Follow-up visits to both fourth classes;	To determine if I would have sufficient pupils	I reminded the pupils about the need to return the forms; I stressed the voluntary nature of the research. I distributed additional letters and forms as some pupils/parents had	-Elizabeth, -Anna, -researcher and

Date	Action	Purpose	Details	Participants
	reminding the children about the need to return forms indicating either yes or no decisions	participating in sociometry, & draw & write investigation. Also to ensure the return of all forms, which were returning at a very slow pace.	mislaid the original documents. I explained that any parents who wished to meet me to discuss the study were very welcome to do so in the next couple of weeks. This coincided with the school formal parent/teacher meeting for the general cohort of pupils (including pupils with SEN) which are usually held in November. Ongoing reflections regarding proposed research. Record research progression.	-30 pupils including Damien & Mark. -Nathan, -Sorcha, -researcher and -29 pupils including Neville.
Dec. 2012	Submit progress report to supervisors.	To give progress report of where I was in relation to gaining consent from potential participants etc.	Ongoing reflections regarding proposed research. Record research progression.	-Researcher
Dec. 2012/Jan 2013	Ongoing follow up phone calls and individual meetings with parents of fourth class pupils and pupils themselves where warranted.	To explain the nature of the research and stress the need to indicate a yes or no answer in terms of participation.	I explained the nature of the proposed research and invited the parents and their children to return the forms indicating their wish; I stressed the voluntary nature of the research. I distributed additional forms where warranted. By the middle of January I had the final number of pupil participants (53). Six pupils (two pupils from Neville's class and four pupils from Damien & Mark's class) had indicated that they did not wish to participate. In total, fifty peers (and their parents) consented, plus the three focus pupils with MGLD. I had sufficient number of pupils for sociometry and draw & write. Ongoing reflections regarding proposed research. Record research progression.	Numerous meetings with parents & pupils.

	Piloting of observation schedule.	To test suitability of observational schedule.	I piloted my observation schedule on the school playground/ classroom with three learning-support children who were not involved in the research. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research. Record research progression.	-Researcher and three pupils in the context of classroom and playground.
January 2013	Piloting of interview schedules.	To test suitability of interview schedules, practise interview skills and determine how best to audio-record interview, i.e. volume control and placing of recording device for optimum results in terms of clarity, volume etc.	I conducted interviews with two teachers, one SNA, and a parent of a child with SEN (not involved in the research project) to ascertain suitability of interview schedules. I also conducted individual and focus group interviews with children with/without SEN to determine the suitability of interview schedules for children and to get an approximation of the duration of the interview. I also took field notes following the interviews and reviewed them. The LS/RT gave me feedback on my interview skills (she suggested that I allow sufficient wait time/pacing, reminded me to have drinking water available). Record research progression.	-LS/RT, class teacher & SNA -parent of pupil with SEN -pupil with SEN (not involved in the research project) -Five pupils in receipt of learning support (focus group)
January 2013	Piloting of draw & write investigation.	To test suitability of draw & write investigation.	I implemented draw & write investigation with children with/without SEN to determine the suitability of this for children, and to determine how I would implement it in terms of numbers of pupils per sitting, i.e. group setting or	-Pupils with/without SEN (not involved in the research project) who are on my case

Date	Milestone / Task	Purpose	Description	People
			one-to-one etc, how to group the children, alphabetically or according to personalities etc. Ongoing reflections and discussions with Ed. D colleagues regarding aspects of the research. Record research progression.	load in Oakwood School
January 2013	Piloting of sociometry.	To test suitability of sociometry for pupils.	Due to ethical difficulties involved in sociometry, piloting of this was implemented by proxy; in collaboration with the current and previous teacher of a fifth class grouping, we completed sociometric choices for each pupil to determine the suitability of sociometric assessment for such a cohort. This fifth class group included pupils with SEN. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research Record research progression.	-Two class teachers & researcher
January 2013	Submit draft copy of chapter one & two to supervisors	To receive feedback regarding introduction and literature review chapters	I submitted both chapters Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research Record research progression.	-Supervisors & -researcher
January 2013	Received feedback from supervisors regarding chapter one & two		I read feedback and had ongoing communication with my supervisors. Ongoing reflection regarding aspects of research. Record research progression.	

January 2013	Develop proposed time frame for field work & submit to supervisors; work on chapter three ongoing.	To gauge the scope of the work and viability/feasibility of same. To aid planning and the implementation of the research etc.	I submitted a time frame to supervisors as an aid/guide for planning. Ongoing work on draft chapter three. Record research progression.	-Researcher
February 2013	Piloting the analysis of policy documents of a number of schools (not involved in research project).	To test suitability of documentary analysis in relation to pupil participation etc.	As policies are available on school websites, I viewed the scope of documents available in two schools. This informed me in terms of what policies to examine in research site. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research and discussions with Ed. D colleagues.	-Researcher
February 2013	Interview with school principal	To conduct interview with school principal and gather information regarding the area of social participation of children with SEN.	I conducted the interview with the principal in my classroom and made an audio-recording of the interview with the principal's consent. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards and listened at length to the audio recording. I started ongoing transcription of the interview. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research Record research progression.	-School principal & -researcher
February 2013	Draw & write investigation	To conduct draw & write with groups of approximately six pupils during the	I conducted draw & write with the pupils in groups of six during the month of February/March in my classroom, with	Groups of approximately six pupils at a time.

		month of February and beyond. To observe pupils and take field notes; to implement initial analysis on pupils' contributions, looking for patterns & themes etc.	the exception of the focus pupils which took place in LS/RT's (Emily's) room. I observed the pupils and recorded field notes during and after each sitting. I worked with the focus children first in the LS/RT's room with two other pupils who attend Emily for resource teaching. Ongoing reflections & communication with supervisors regarding aspects of the research. Record research progression.	-Researcher & -Emily (accompanied the focus children) -Supervisors
February 2013	Observation 1 Damien (school playground)	To observe Damien in school playground and gain insights into his social participation/contact with peers.	I observed Damien in the school playground. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Damien afterwards in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not. I read and reread field notes, made observations/comments in margin; reflected on the research process and noted reflections. I communicated with supervisors and Ed. D colleagues in terms of my progression.	-3th & 4th classes. including Damien -two SNAs -teacher on yard duty supervision & -researcher -communication with supervisors & colleagues
February 2013	Observation 1 Mark (school playground)	To observe Mark in school playground and gain insights	I observed Mark in the school playground. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Mark afterwards in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not.	-3th & 4th classes including Mark. -two SNAs

		into his social participation.	I read and reread field notes, made observations/comments in margin; reflected on the research process and noted reflections	-teacher on yard duty supervision -researcher -communication with supervisors & colleagues
February 2013	Submit draft chapter three (methodology)	To get feedback on draft work to date	I submitted draft methodology chapter	-Supervisors -researcher
February 2013	Ongoing work on chapter one & two	To edit chapters one & two; seek clarity of thought, direction and description.	I implemented any necessary revisions to chapter one & two. Ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research.	-Researcher
March 2013	Receive feedback regarding chapter three	Implement any necessary changes in light of feedback regarding the writing up/reporting of draft chapter three.	Ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research. Also continue draw & write investigation in groups of six	-Researcher
March 2013	Observation 1 Neville (school playground)	To observe Neville in school playground and gain insights into his social participation.	I observed Neville in the school playground. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Neville afterwards in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not.	-3th & 4th classes including Neville. -two SNAs -teacher on yard

Date	Activity	Purpose	Process	Participants
			I read and reread field notes, made observations/comments in margin; reflected on the research process and noted reflections. I communicated with supervisors and Ed. D colleagues in terms of my progression.	-researcher
March 2013	Observation 2 Neville (Classroom break)	To observe Neville in classroom during lunch break and gain insights into his social participation	I observed Neville in classroom during lunch break. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Neville afterwards in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not. I read and reread field notes, made observations/comments in margin; reflected on the research process and noted reflections.	-Neville's class peers -Sorcha (SNA) -Researcher -occasionally the teacher on supervision duty
March 2013	Observation 2 Damien (Classroom break)	To observe pupil in classroom during lunch break and gain insights into his social participation	I observed Damien in classroom during lunch break. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Damien afterwards in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not. I read and reread field notes, made observations/comments in margin; reflected on the research process and noted reflections.	-Damien's class peers -Anna (SNA) -Researcher -occasionally the teacher on supervision duty
March 2013	Conduct sociometry with both fourth classes	To conduct sociometry and observe pupils	I conducted sociometry with both classes and observed the pupils. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research. Record research progression.	-class teacher -SNA -researcher

Date	Activity	Purpose	Process	Participants
March 2013	Ongoing reading and recording of field notes (& reflections) and listening to audio recording of principal's interview. Initial data analysis in terms of observation, draw & write and sociometry.	To get a feel for the themes and patterns that were emerging and to become familiar with the data.	I read and reread field notes, made observations/comments in margin; reflected on the research process and noted reflections.	-Researcher -Ongoing communication with supervisors & -Ed. D colleagues
April 2013	Conduct interview with Damien	To conduct interview with Damien and gain insights into his social participation	I conducted the semi-structured interview with Damien in my classroom. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I listened and re-listened to audio-recording and slowly began to transcribe interview in due course. Record research progression.	-Damien -researcher
April 2013	Conduct interview with Mark	To conduct interview with Mark and gain insights into his social participation	I conducted the semi-structured interview with Mark in my classroom. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I listened and re-listened to the audio-recording and compared it to Damien's interview. Ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research.	-Mark -researcher
April 2013	Conduct interview with Neville	To conduct interview with Neville and gain insights into his social participation	I conducted the semi-structured interview with Neville in my classroom. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I listened and re-listened to the audio-recording and compared it to Damien & Mark's interview.	-Neville -researcher

			Ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research.	
April 2013	Observation 2 Mark (Classroom break)	To observe pupil in classroom during lunch break	I observed Mark in classroom during lunch break. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Mark in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not. Ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research. Record research progression.	-Mark and his class peers -Anna (SNA) -researcher -occasionally the teacher on supervision duty
April 2013	Observation 3 Neville (P. E.)	To observe pupil during P. E. lesson	I observed Neville during P. E. lesson. I recorded field notes afterwards and spoke to Neville in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not later that day.	-Neville and his class peers -Sorcha (SNA) -researcher -class teacher
April 2013	Following initial analysis of data collected to date and in consultation with class teachers, I intend to invite a number of the focus group children's peers to participate in focus group interview. Also	In consultation with class teachers: to select eight children to participate in focus group interviews and gain their informed consent and consent from their parents.	I distributed plain language statements to the eight proposed pupils and asked them to discuss their possible participation in the focus group with their parents. I stressed the voluntary nature on their participation. One pupil declined. Following consultation with the class teacher I invited another pupil to participate and he consented as did his parents. I gained consent from eight pupils (four boys & four girls); and parental consent for all eight. Ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research. Record research progression.	-Nine pupils (peers of Neville, Damien & Mark). -Nathan -Elizabeth -communication with numerous parents via letter and phone calls and face to face meetings.

	distribute plain language statements regarding participation in focus group and gain informed consent from parents of the eight children and the children themselves.			
April 2013	Ongoing reading and recording of field notes (& reflections and recording of reflections). Work on observation notes. Initial data analysis & initial drafting of chapter four.	To become familiar with data and determine themes & patterns. To implement ongoing data analysis.	Reading and rereading of data. Initial analysis of data; ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research.	-Researcher
May 2013	Observation 4 Neville (class lesson)	To observe Neville during a class lesson	I conducted the observation of Neville during a class (social educational and scientific education) lesson; I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Neville in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not later that day; ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research. Record research progression.	-Neville & his class peers -Sorcha (SNA) -researcher

				-class teacher
May 2013	Observation 3 Damien (P. E.)	To observe pupil during P. E. lesson	I observed Damien during P. E. lesson. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Damien afterwards in terms of whether he had enjoyed himself; ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research. Record research progression.	-Damien's class peers -Anna (SNA) -Researcher -class teacher
May 2013	Observation 3 Mark (P. E.)	To observe pupil during P. E. lesson	I observed Mark during P. E. lesson. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Mark in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not later that day; ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research.	-Mark & his class peers -Anna (SNA) -Researcher -class teacher
May 2013	Focus group interview with Neville's peers	To conduct focus group interview with Neville's peers and gain insights into their thoughts on social participation	I conducted focus group interview with Neville's peers. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards; ongoing reflections regarding aspects of research. Record research progression.	-Harry -Keith -Hannah -Tara & researcher
May 2013	Focus group interview with Mark & Damien's peers	To conduct focus group interview with Mark & Damien's peers and gain insights into	I conducted focus group interview with Mark & Damien's peers. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research. Record research progression.	-Harold -Evan -Yvonne, -Hilda & researcher

		their thoughts on social participation		
May 2013	Interview with Ava (Neville's Mam)	To conduct interview with Neville's mother and gain insights into her thoughts on social participation	I conducted interview with Ava; I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research; record research progression.	-Ava -Researcher
May 2013	Interview with Trevor (Neville's Dad)	To conduct interview with Neville's father and gain insights into his thoughts on social participation	I conducted interview with Trevor; I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Trevor -Researcher
May 2013	Interview with Eithne &Liam (Mark's Mam & Dad)	To conduct interview with Mark's parents and gain insights into their thoughts on social participation	I conducted interview with Mark's parents, I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research; record research progression.	-Eithne -Liam -Researcher
May 2013	Interview with Sheila (Damien's Mam)	To conduct interview with Damien's mother and gain insights into her thoughts on social participation	I conducted interview with Sheila. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research; record research progression.	-Sheila -Researcher

Month	Activity	Aim	Reflection	Participants
May 2013	Ongoing work on chapter three & four; listening and re-listening to audio-recording of interviews; ongoing transcription of interviews	Edit & refine work	Reflection and ongoing editing.	-Researcher
June 2013	Observation 4 Mark (class lesson)	To observe Mark during a class lesson	I conducted the observation of Mark (S.E.S.E lesson). I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Mark in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not later that day. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research; record research progression.	-Mark & his class peers -Anna (SNA) -Researcher -class teacher
June 2013	Observation 4 Damien (class lesson)	To observe Mark during a class lesson	I conducted the observation of Damien during a S.E.S.E lesson, I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. I spoke to Damien in terms of what he had being doing and whether he had fun or not later that day. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research; record research progression.	-Damien & his class peers -Anna (SNA) -Researcher -Class teacher
June 2013	Focus group interview with Nathan, Sorcha, & Emily	To conduct focus group interview with Neville's teachers and SNA and gain insights into their thoughts	I conducted focus group interview with Neville's teachers & SNA. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Nathan -Sorcha -Emily

Date	Activity	Description	People
	on social participation		-Researcher
June 2013	Focus group interview with Elizabeth, Anna & Emily	To conduct focus group interview with Mark & Damien's teachers and SNA and gain insights into their thoughts on social participation	I conducted focus group interview with Mark & Damien's teachers & SNA. I recorded field notes immediately afterwards. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research; record research progression.	-Elizabeth -Anna -Emily -Researcher
June 2013	Ongoing work on chapter three & data analysis. Listening and re-listening to audio-recordings of interview. Search for patterns and themes. Ongoing transcription of interviews.	To become familiar with the data-set and note the patterns & themes that emerged throughout.	Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research; record research progression.	-Researcher
July/August 2013	Ongoing transcription of interview recordings & typing of hand written transcription on P.C.	To become familiar with the data-set and note the patterns & themes that emerged throughout. To transcribe interview	I transcribed interview audio-recordings and took notes of themes and patterns; ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	Researcher

Date	Activity	Purpose	Description	Responsible
		audio-recordings, longhand and typed		
Sept/October 2013	Ongoing transcription of interview recordings & typing of hand written transcription on P.C.	To become familiar with the data-set and note the patterns & themes that emerged throughout. To transcribe interview audio-recordings, longhand and then type on P.C.	I transcribed interview audio-recordings and took notes of themes and patterns; ongoing reflections on aspects of the research. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	Researcher
November 2013	Made summaries of interview transcriptions for member checking with interviewees.	To make summaries of interview transcriptions for member checking with interviewees.	I made summaries of interview transcriptions for member checking with interviewees. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research. Record research progression.	Researcher
November 2013	Ongoing work on summaries of transcriptions of interviews for member checking.	To show summaries of interview transcriptions to Wilson (reliability checker) and ask him to verify summaries before member checking with interviewees.	Wilson read through the interview summaries of transcriptions and verified their content in relation to transcriptions. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research. Record research progression.	Researcher & Wilson

Date	Activity	Purpose	Description	Who involved
November 2013	Member check with participants	To member check with participants and implement any changes.	I member checked with all participants with the exception of Sheila & Damien, as Damien had moved schools during the summer period. Participants were in agreement with summaries. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Researcher and all participants with the exception of Sheila & Damien.
November 2013	Having consulted my supervisor on the matter I made a summary of Yvonne's individual contribution to focus group interview for Yvonne's parents as they had expressed interest in this.	To inform Yvonne's parents regarding her contribution to the focus group interview.	I sent a copy of the summary home with Yvonne for her parents to read and they returned it directly having read it. Record research progression. Ongoing reflection on research.	-Researcher -Supervisor -Yvonne -Yvonne's parents
November 2013	Progress report to supervisors. On-going work on data analysis. Note taking; search for patterns & themes.	To become familiar with the data-set and note the patterns & themes that emerged throughout. Ongoing data analysis and discussion and drafting.	Submit progress report to supervisors. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Researcher -Supervisors
November 2013	Review/revisit areas in the field of	To determine the field of literature in terms of themes	Ongoing review of the literature and editing/redrafting of literature chapter where warranted. I submitted a draft of	-Researcher & supervisors

Date				
	research/literature as they emerge in data. Submit beginnings of draft chapter four on findings to supervisors	emerging in the data. To include any additional relevant literature in the literature review in light of these emerging themes. Get feedback from supervisors regarding draft chapter four	chapter four (findings) to supervisors. Received feedback from supervisors regarding draft chapter four. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	
December 2013	Ongoing work on data analysis. Noting & recording; search for patterns & themes.	To determine the field of literature in terms of themes emerging in the data. To revise the literature review in light of these emerging themes.	Ongoing review of the literature and editing/redrafting of literature chapter where warranted. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Researcher
Jan. 2014	Ongoing work on data analysis; note recording; search for patterns & themes. Submit further draft chapter four to supervisors	To receive feedback regarding data analysis and reporting of findings	I submitted further work on draft chapter four and received feedback from supervisors. Ongoing analysis work and reflections on aspects of the research.	-Researcher& supervisors

February 2014	Ongoing work on data analysis, note recording; search for patterns & themes.		Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Researcher
February 2014	Reliability checks with Helena & Wilson. Submit further work on draft chapter four to supervisors; also submit timeframe for next section of work.	To determine if Helena & Wilson were in agreement with data analysis.	A number of points were discussed in conjunction with the reliability checkers. Received feedback from supervisors Ongoing reflections and work on data analysis and other aspects of the research in light of feedback.	-Helena -Wilson -Nathan -researcher
March 2014	Ongoing work on data analysis. Report work in progress to researchers		Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Researcher
April 2014	Discuss RG4 form with supervisors & discuss draft time-frame for completion		Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-Researcher & supervisors

Date	Task	Purpose	Description	Researcher & Supervisors
May 2014	Submit summary of findings section	To receive feedback on this section of my work.	I submitted a section on summary of findings to supervisors and received feedback in light of this.	Researcher & Supervisors
May 2014	Submit first beginnings of draft chapter five	To receive feedback on outline of draft chapter five	Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	Researcher & supervisors
May 2014	Reliability checks with Helena & Wilson	To determine if Helena & Wilson were in agreement with ongoing data analysis.	Ongoing reflections and discussion with Helen & Wilson on aspects of the research	-Helena & researcher -Wilson & researcher
June 2014	Helena & Wilson read the draft report		Ongoing reflections and discussion on aspects of the research	-Helena & researcher -Wilson & researcher
June 2014	End of June submit draft e-copy of thesis report to supervisors; followed by soft bound copies (3rd July).	To receive feedback regarding draft thesis and determine what revisions/edits are necessary.	Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-researcher

July 2014	Feedback from supervisor	To correct, edit and refine written report	I received feedback regarding thesis report. Ongoing reflections and review on research.	-Supervisors -researcher
August 2014	Work on references	To correct, edit and refine written report	Ongoing work on references, citations, figures, appendices etc. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-researcher
August 2014	Work on appendices	To correct, edit and refine written report	Proof-reading and ongoing revisions of thesis. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-researcher
August 2014	Work on table of contents		Work on table of contents and abstract. Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-researcher
September 2014	Proof read & arrange layout of chapters	To correct, edit and refine written report	Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-researcher
September 2014	Final revisions of thesis report for submission to college		Ongoing reflections on aspects of the research	-researcher

September 2014	Supervisor reading final draft report before formal submission		Supervisors & researcher
October 2014	Editing in light of feedback from supervisors; formal submission of thesis to college for examiners.		-Supervisors & researcher

Appendix V: Sample Sociometry Matrices

Nathan's Class Category A

	Rose	Elsie	Hannah	Xowie	Nina	Ned	Noel	Elicia	Nigel	Dominic	Tara	Amanda	Ben	Eric	Rita	Fred	Harry	Earl	Molly	Aisling	Eoin	Ian	Keith	Neville	Nevin	Angela	Mary	Leo*	Simon*
Rose	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Elsie	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hannah	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xowie	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nina	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Ned	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Noel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Elicia	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nigel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Dominic	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tara	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Amanda	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Ben	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Eric	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rita	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Fred	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Harry	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Earl	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Molly	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Aisling	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eoin	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ian	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Keith	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Neville	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
Nevin	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Angela	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Mary	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leo*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Simon*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	9.00	5.00	0.00	8.00	2.00	5.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	2.00	3.00	8.00	7.00	6.00	10.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	6.00	3.00	0.00

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Nathan's Class Category B

	Rose	Elsie	Hannah	Xowie	Nina	Ned	Noel	Elicia	Nigel	Dominic	Tara	Amanda	Ben	Eric	Rita	Fred	Harry	Earl	Molly	Aisling	Eoin	Ian	Keith	Neville	Nevin	Angela	Mary	Leo*	Simon*
Rose	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Elsie	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Hannah	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xowie	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nina	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ned	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Noel	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Elicia	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Nigel	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dominic	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tara	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Amanda	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ben	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Eric	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rita	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Fred	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Harry	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Earl	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Molly	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Aisling	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Eoin	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ian	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Keith	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Neville	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Nevin	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Angela	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Mary	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Leo*																													
Simon*																													
Total	6	9	0	8	2	6	8	6	8	4	1	1	3	0	6	1	3	8	8	3	11	8	1	0	2	7	3		

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Nathan's Class Category C

	Rose	Elsie	Hannah	Xowie	Nina	Ned	Noel	Elicia	Nigel	Dominic	Tara	Amanda	Ben	Eric	Rita	Fred	Harry	Earl	Molly	Aisling	Eoin	Ian	Keith	Neville	Nevin	Angela	Mary	Leo*	Simon*
Rose	Nathan's	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Elsie	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Hannah	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xowie	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nina	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ned	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Noel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Elicia	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nigel	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dominic	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Tara	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Amanda	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ben	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Eric	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Rita	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fred	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Harry	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Earl	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Molly	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Aisling	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eoin	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Ian	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Keith	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Neville	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nevin	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Angela	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Mary	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leo*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Simon*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	7	5	5	6	2	4	6	6	6	4	5	3	2	2	4	1	4	6	5	5	10	6	1	0	3	4	5		

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Elizabeth's Class Category A

	Ellen	Yvonne	Yolanda	Ronan	Elaine	Graham	Eleanor	Xavier	Beatrice	Alice	Eamon	Yasmine	Fiona	Damien	Harold	Rachel	Nora	Mark	Nollaig	Hilda	Nicole	Eva	Omar	Helen	Evan	Michael	Ivy*	Leon*	Declan*	Niall*
Ellen		1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yvonne	1.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yolanda	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ronan	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Elaine	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Graham	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eleanor	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xavier	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00		1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Beatrice	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Alice	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00		1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eamon	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00		0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yasmine	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00		1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fiona	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Damien	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
Harold	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rachel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nora	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mark	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Nollaig	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hilda	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00		1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nicole	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00		0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eva	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Omar	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Helen	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00		1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Evan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Michael	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Ivy*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
Leon*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00
Declan*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Niall*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total	10.00	6.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	6.00	8.00	3.00	3.00	7.00	2.00	1.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	2.00	8.00	11.00	1.00	9.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

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Elizabeth's Class Category B

	Ellen	Yvonne	Yolanda	Ronan	Elaine	Graham	Eleanor	Xavier	Beatrice	Alice	Eamon	Yasmine	Fiona	*Damien*	Harold	Rachel	Nora	*Mark*	Nollaig	Hilda	Nicole	Eva	Omar	Helen	Evan	Michael	Ivy*	Leon*	Declan*	Niall*
Ellen	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yvonne	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yolanda	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ronan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Elaine	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Graham	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eleanor	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Xavier	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beatrice	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Alice	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Eamon	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Yasmine	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
Fiona	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Damien	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Harold	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Rachel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Nora	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Mark	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nollaig	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Hilda	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nicole	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Eva	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Omar	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Helen	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Evan	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Michael	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Ivy*																														
Leon*																														
Declan*																														
Niall*																														
Total	11	8	6	1	2	5	4	6	11	4	2	4	4	0	3	3	8	2	4	4	3	1	7	8	0	9	1			

Elizabeth's Class Category C

	Ellen	Yvonne	Yolanda	Ronan	Elaine	Graham	Eleanor	Xavier	Beatrice	Alice	Eamon	Yasmine	Fiona	Damien	Harold	Rachel	Nora	Mark	Nollaig	Hilda	Nicole	Eva	Omar	Helda	Evan	Michael	Ivy*	Leon*	Declan*	Niall*
Ellen	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yvonne	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yolanda	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ronan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Elaine	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Graham	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Eleanor	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xavier	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Beatrice	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Alice	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eamon	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yasmine	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fiona	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Damien	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Harold	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rachel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nora	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mark	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Nollaig	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Hilda	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nicole	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eva	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Omar	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Helen	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Evan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
Michael	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Ivy*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leon*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Declan*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Niall*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	6.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	6.00	6.00	3.00	4.00	6.00	2.00	2.00	5.00	6.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	0.00	7.00	6.00	0.00	8.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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Table a: Category (a) Which Pupils are your Best Friends

						Theme: friendships/relationships: have at least one mutual friend (to have at least one reciprocal friendship), to be a member of a group, to be socially accepted by peers,
Mark	Eamon	Declan*	Niall*	Xavier	Graham	Eamon & Mark share reciprocal friendship; Graham & Mark have reciprocal friendship, N.B Declan* and Niall* did not participate so they may have listed Mark. *Due to number of nominations it appears Mark is socially accepted by peers.*
Elizabeth Mark's teacher	Michael	Eamon	Harold+	Evan+	Niall*	Elizabeth reiterated Eamon and Niall* as a friend of Mark's; also Elizabeth chose Michael as a friend for Mark as did Michael himself even though Mark did not.
Anna Mark's SNA	Michael	Niall*	Evan+	Graham	Eamon	Anna reiterated Graham & Eamon as friend for Mark. Also Evan+ and Michael even though Mark did not list them, Anna also listed Niall*as did Mark.
Graham	Evan+	Omar	Xavier	Nollaig	**Mark**	Graham & Mark have reciprocal friendship
Eamon	Michael	**Mark**	**Damien**	Omar	Nollaig	Eamon & Mark have reciprocal friendship; also Damien & Eamon have reciprocal friendship
Evan+	Omar	Xavier	Graham	Harold+	**Mark**	Mark mentioned as friend of Evan+ although Mark did not nominate Evan+. He does mention Evan during interview and is observed playing on the yard with him
Michael	Eamon	Leon*	Nicole	**Mark**	Niall*	Mark chosen as friend of Michael although Mark did not nominate Michael. Michael and Mark both play together on the yard. Mark lists Michael as a friend of his during interviews, although they do sometimes have arguments and experience difficulties repairing/re-establishing the friendship when this occurs.

Damien	Eamon	Yvonne+	Ellen	Graham	Omar	Eamon & Damien reciprocal friendship. Interesting to note that Damien and Mark do not nominate each other despite spending a lot of time in the resource class together and sharing their mainstream class, SNA and both having Eamon as a mutual friend. *Damien has a reciprocal friendship, he may consider himself a member of a group and socially accepted by his peers; his teacher and SNA reiterated a number of his choices, although only Eamon nominated him. Interestingly neither his teacher nor SNA nominated Eamon as a friend.*
Damien's SNA	Graham	Omar	Harold+	Yvonne+	Xavier	Anna reiterated Damien's nominations of Omar, Yvonne+& Graham; these children did not nominate Damien.
Elizabeth Damien's teacher	Omar	Graham	Yvonne+	Harold+	Alice	Elizabeth reiterated Damien's nominations of Omar, Yvonne+& Graham. However, it is of interest that none of these children nominated Damien.
Neville	Eric	Earl	Xowie	Nevin	Leo*	Neville received no nominations. N.B. it should be noted that Leo* did not participate; he may have nominated Neville. Neville received no nominations as a friend; one of his nominations did not participate in the study so it is possible that he may have chosen Neville. It is possible that Neville considers himself a member of a group. [his SNA reiterated three of his choices], and that he considers himself socially accepted by his peers (see Neville's interview).
Sorcha Neville's SNA	Eric	Leo*	Nevin	Dominic	Nigel	Sorcha reiterated Neville's nominations of Eric, Nevin and Leo*.
Nathan Neville's teacher	?	?	?	?	?	Nathan did not speculate regarding who Neville might have chosen as a friend or who might have chosen Neville as a friend. Nathan stated that he really felt no-one would choose Neville as a friend. He appears keenly aware of Neville's position.

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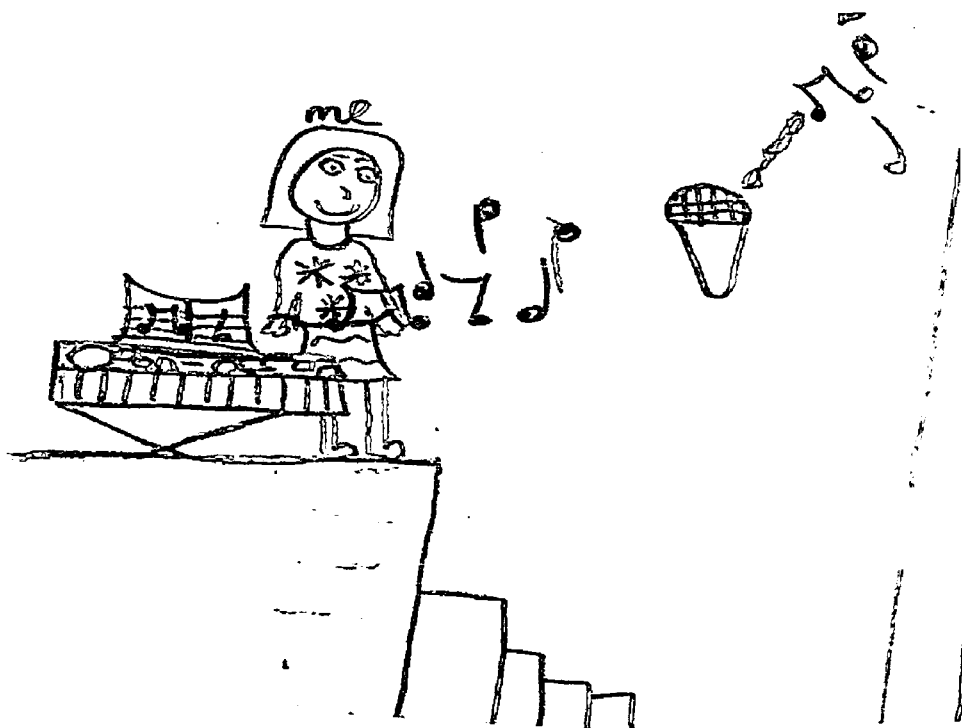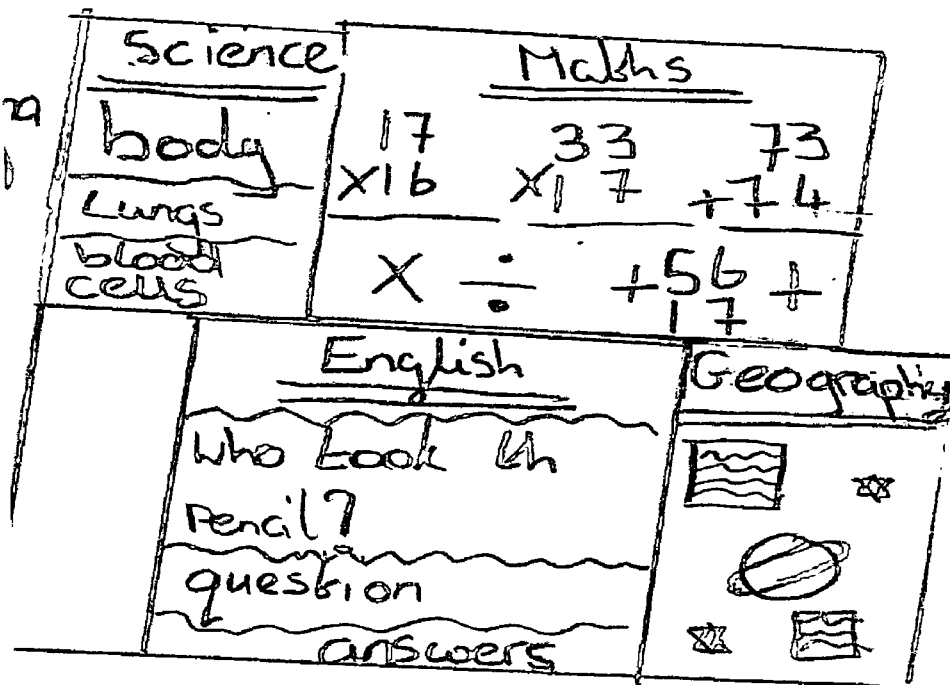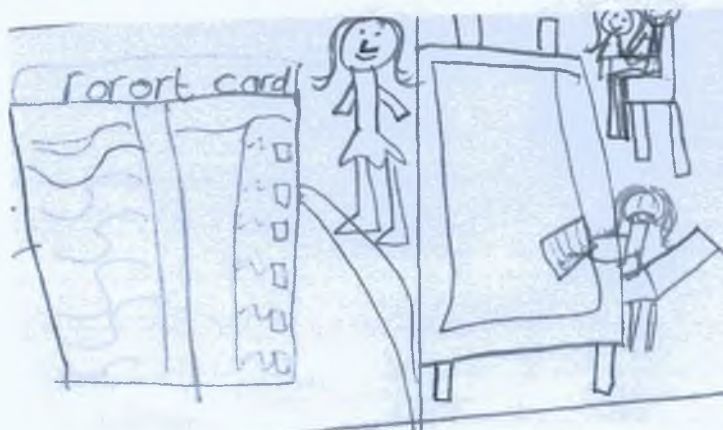I feel left out of school when I ask my friends can I play and they say no.

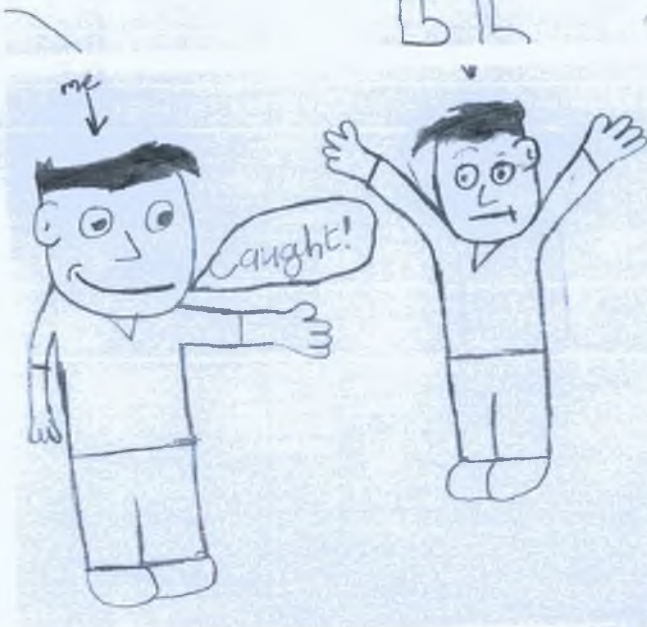Things that make me feel
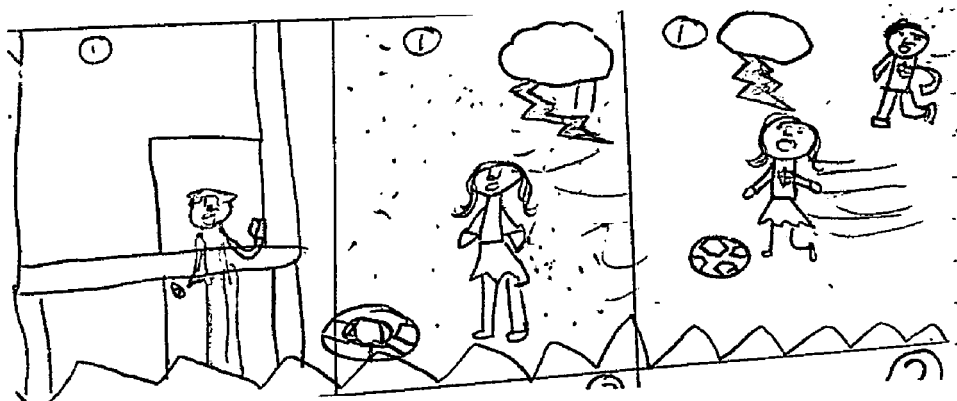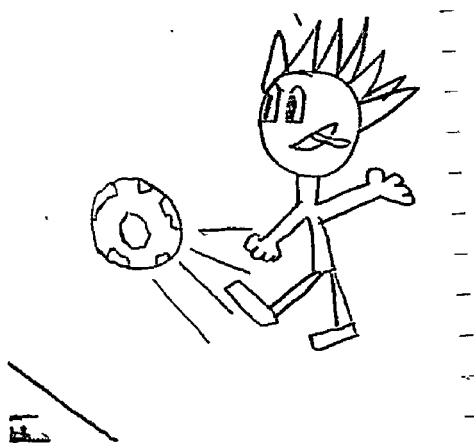left out of School

Things that make me
feel left out in school

Friends

me

Things that make me feel part of school

Friendship

Happieness

Friendship is somthing that makes me a part of school because I have very loyal friends.

Happyness makes me a part of school because when I am happy it make life easier.

Appendix X: Example of Name Calling Noted during Observation

This observation took place within the context of lunch break in the classroom. Neville was sitting with a group of peers, Eric, Ned, Ben and Keith. The boys were building a tower with cylinders of varying sizes and Neville was a spectator. When the tower inevitably fell, Neville, in response, hit his forehead with his hand and then hit his forehead against the tabletop. From my perspective, Neville had not knocked the tower however Eric was cross with Neville and uttered: *"Will you stop!"* Neville then picked up one of the cylinders and with a wide expansive gesture placed it on the table. Eric responded with: *"We sit beside each other...you sit over there."* This I interpreted to imply that Neville should not be sitting where he was but in his own seat away from the group. At this stage Neville's SNA intervened. Eric reported that Neville: *"keeps going on like that, knocking down our tower."* It did not appear to me that Neville had knocked the tower, however when he was replacing the cylinder he did place it down firmly. A few moments later Neville picked up Eric's drink-bottle and Eric responded with: *"No, no, baby, that's bold. Give me back that."* He then tugged Neville's tie placing it outside his v-neck school jumper. When Neville objected to being called a baby, Eric stated: *"I can call Ned a baby; he doesn't mind; look -baby! Baby! He doesn't mind."* At that juncture Keith called upon Sorcha, Neville's SNA, to intervene. Sorcha suggested a game of chess instead at the back of the class. Shortly after that I observed Neville chatting with Eric while Eric arranged Neville's tie correctly. Within a short period I then observed Keith holding the cylinders just out of Neville's reach, teasing him to reach and get them. Neville then turned and appealed to me to intervene on his behalf. At this point I stopped observing and asked the teacher on duty to intervene by which time Eric and Neville were both laughing and appeared quite content.

Appendix Y: Sample of Field Notes

Damien now standing to one side, Mr. Doyle (Damien's teacher from the previous year) comes out on yard to bring a group of children over to the green across the road for running practice [these children have competed in running trials and have been picked to represent the school in an athletics' competition]. A group of children are following a bigger boy who is going out to running practice. Damien follows with the group to the school gate. The group includes Mark, Eamon, Evan; Damien changes direction and walks up along by the grass patch walking alone. He goes in towards the school railing; he watches the running on the green, standing on the grass at the wall and railing. He then walks over towards a group of boys on the grass; they watch a group of girls doing aerobics. Then Damien initiates a mild wrestle with Evan on the grass; it was a friendly tussle. Damien took off his cap [he has a medical condition which warrants him keeping warm; some days he has to stay in with the SNA due to his condition in a supervised room]. He re-joins the group and leaves almost immediately and wanders around alone. He walks beside the girls; then he goes over and wrestles Omar from behind; it's a bit rough. Damien looks towards the supervising teacher to see if she is watching, possibly to see if she will intervene ...

Appendix Z: Extract from Focus Group Interview with Mark and Damien's Peers

Harold: I cannot keep myself together. I heat up really quickly but then I cool down. So I mean I might yell for about a minute and then stop, and just forget about it.

Me: And would the other person forget as well?

Harold: Well it depends who you are talking about,

Me: What's your favourite game Evan out on the yard?

Evan: Me? Probably Gaelic

Harold: Sometimes we play Gaelic and then sometimes we play soccer

Me: But you decide before hand? So Gaelic is your favourite one

Evan: Yeah, and football would go after. I don't really like playing Bull Dog's Charge because, just it annoys me when people I catch just go *"no I'm not on, I'm not on,"* I don't really like that so that's when I stop playing and I like to be on my own for a while.

Me: So everybody wants to be the last person caught?

Evan: Yeah

Harold: No, then you're on. Well most of the time some people make it far and some people get caught in the first few minutes. Sometimes if I make it real far then I just get myself caught.

Me: Then you're not the last person to be on

Harold: You get to run for a long time but then you are not on; but would you call that cheating?

Me: No, I'd say, calling, that's called playing cleverly.

Evan: I don't like the way anytime you're picked to be on, a bunch of other people go *"ah I'll be on, I'll be on with you"* and just go and get themselves caught literally;

because I like to be on my own, because I like to play my own catching people and having a go on my own, I don't like when other people go to *me "ah I'll be on with you, I'll be on with you"*. Yeah and there's a boy in my class called Graham and every time I'm on Graham would run up behind me and touch me and go *"I'm on now with you"* and I don't really like that. Well I like learning new things so as I go into secondary I could get to know even more things. I like the principal and all the teachers. The way they're very nice and PE and all that. And there are fun days and school tours and sport's day.

Harold: I'm not that fond of learning. Well I like learning but not the actual doing it. It depends on what you're learning about, something really interesting in history, like for example we're reading this book called "Across the Divide".