BA Primary Education (QTS) with enhanced Special Education Needs focus

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An investigation into Special Educational Needs and Disability practitioners' perceptions of the quality of SEND provision for SEND pupils in mainstream schools.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the quality of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilityprovision in mainstream schools. The effectiveness of current teaching practices within SEND is evaluated, providing insights into how to best to provide for children with SEND. Critical analysis of the current provision available for children with SEND within a mainstream primary school setting, together with an evaluation of practitioner-led suggestions for future strategies and provision, creates a unique potential model for good practice. Although there is much literature, research and policies in and around SEND provision, there is currently a gap in the research undertaken in this area. United Kingdom based primary research concerning current SEND specialist perceptions, thoughts and attitudes towards the existing system appear to be minimal. This research aims to give further insight into this area.

A case study methodology is used as the research intended to produce detailed and in-depth qualitative data from a small sample size. Four SEND specialists (SENCo, KS1 teacher, KS2 teacher and teaching assistant) took part in individual, semi-structured interviews. Results from the study revealed the discovery of four recurring themes: teacher confidence and experience; funding and resources; TA (Teaching Assistant) deployment; and access and inclusion.

The implications of this research was to put the ideas and suggestions into practice with the purpose of improving the quality of SEND provision. The following recommendations were discovered: the need for more specialist training for SEND practitioners in order to increase confidence in teaching children with increasingly more complex learning needs; more specialist resources required which would benefit both teachers and students, aiding children's learning and giving teachers the tools to be able to adapt and differentiate teaching; more frequent external provision and a proposed new structure for assessment of children with SEND. This may take increased funding, coupled with more specialist training for practitioners' to build their confidence. The research also has policy implications with the suggestion of a new system to be put in place to help measure the slower, but significant, progress of children with SEND.

Contents Page

1. Introduction

Inclusion and providing for children with special educational needs and disabilities are both complex and multifaceted areas of study within education, with all individuals involved in these processes striving to ensure that all children's needs are met (Hodkinson, 2016). This educational based research project investigates special educational needs and disability (SEND) practitioner's perceptions of the current quality of SEND provision for SEND pupils in mainstream schools, intending to gain first-hand, valuable insights into staff's perceptions of the general current quality of provision for SEND children. Aiming to extend pedagogical knowledge and understanding in the field of SEND, this research builds upon current understandings of what quality provision for children with SEND is.

This research was chosen due to its relevance to the educational setting. All teachers are required to set suitable challenges for children with SEND within the inclusion statement set out in the national curriculum (DfE, 2013, p. 8). The purpose of providing additional support for children with SEND is to reduce the attainment gap between these children and their peers. This in turn, enables all children to fulfil the high expectations of their individual potential, develop independence and make smooth transitions between the different stages of their education, preparing them for an independent future (Cowne, Frankl and Gerschel, 2015, p. 49). The effectiveness of current teaching practices within SEND will be evaluated, providing insights into how to best provide for children with SEND, and suggesting considerations for strategies and provision directly from teaching staff currently in mainstream schools, creating a potential model for good practice. The aspects of provision include: the content and structure of curriculum and assessment; pedagogy and methods of teaching; resources and organisation of schools (Farrell, 2017, p. 11). Equally, the project holds professional relevance being highly beneficial for future teaching pursuits and having implications for future teaching practices (Carter, 2018, p. 3).

The practices for the education of children with SEND has changed dramatically over recent decades, resulting in new ways of understanding children's needs and organising

appropriate provision (Peer and Reid, 2012, p. 24). Although there is much literature, research and policies in and around SEND provision, there is currently a gap in the research undertaken in this area. United Kingdom based primary research concerning current SEND specialist perceptions, thoughts and attitudes towards the existing system appear to be minimal.

The key research aims and objectives explored are:

- To examine the quality of SEND provision in mainstream schools.
- To critically analyse the provision currently available to children with SEND in mainstream schools.
- To identify successful provision to enable SEND pupils to access the curriculum and make progress in mainstream schools.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, a range of relevant literature, research and theories will be discussed and summarised in relation to SEND practitioners' perceptions of the quality of SEND provision for SEND pupils in mainstream schools. The main issues and arguments around the topic will be investigated, contextualising and highlighting where this research fits within this research field (Sharp, 2009, p. 27; Bell and Waters, 2014, p. 91; Carter, 2018, p. 80; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 360; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 29).

2.1 What do practitioners currently perceive as quality provision in SEND in mainstream schools?

Inclusion is a wide concept and definitions are vague as they vary vastly from many differing perspectives and meanings to various groups or individuals (Glazzard *et al.*, 2015, p. 23; Gedge, 2016, p. 1; Shaw, 2017, p. 293). Not a fixed state, rather, inclusion is seen as a process which takes time to implement (Briggs, 2015, p. 1). In recent years, there has been an increased incentive towards inclusive education, thus, enabling a celebration of the diversity of pupils' experiences and needs as unique individuals, focusing on children's strengths. This has resulted in mainstream schooling being a matter of right and entitlement for all children with SEND (Soan, 2005, p. 25; Hodkinson, 2016, p. 129; Farrell, 2017, pp. 2-3).

SEND provision has moved far from past practices where a single rigid model was used, which expected every child to learn in the same way, resulting in many children with SEND being excluded or forced into segregated schooling (Ekins, 2015, p. 175; Hodkinson, 2016, p. 129). Traditionally, practices looked at what was 'wrong' and how a child with SEND might be 'fixed' (Gedge, 2016, p. 37). Although many special educational needs and disabilities do still require a medical diagnosis, this medical model of disability can lower expectations for pupils, leading to a belief that their future will be uncertain, filled with vulnerability and dependence. Today, society strives for a social model of disability, meaning that it is not the SEND that should be 'treated', but the barriers to their achievement that should be removed

(DfE, 2015; Gedge, 2016, p. 37). These recent trends do not see difference and diversity as a problem, instead promoting understanding and encouragement of all pupils' individuality (Ekins, 2015, p. 174). Messiou (2017) notes that this does not mean that SEND pupils are the sole focus for teachers, as this can undermine the very principles of inclusive education. Teachers must take care when modelling inclusive practice, ensuring participation for *all* students.

Tutt and Williams (2015, p. 41) determine that the school population is becoming increasingly more complex, with more pupils who have very significant barriers to their learning being taught in mainstream classrooms. This could be a result of an increase in children being diagnosed with SEND, new and rarer conditions being identified, and the recognition that children may have co-existing needs. Attendance in mainstream schools can eliminate the stigma associated with special schools, as evidence (Shaw, 2017, pp. 302-303) has pointed to a negative impact of special schools in terms of stigma faced by pupils, parents and teachers. Notwithstanding, there are challenges that need to be overcome in order for full inclusion in mainstream schools to work. For instance, sufficient resources, trained teachers and TAs (Teaching Assistants) , and parental involvement. However, children with SEND merely attending mainstream schools does not necessarily guarantee social inclusion (Peer and Reid, 2012, p. 215). As Shaw (2017, p. 294) suggests, some children may suffer in the current system of including children with SEND in mainstream schools, particularly those whose disabilities are not obvious or visible. For example, through feelings of 'difference', lack of support or bullying. Conversely, cognitivist Vygotsky (1978, pp. 84-131) supports full inclusion, highlighting the value of children's interactions, believing that 'learning is a social process'. When pupils are working collaboratively their learning is assisted by their peers which benefits their growth. This empowers all children, developing their ability to work cooperatively as part of a diverse team. Daniels and Hedegaard (2011, pp. 69-70) agree, stating that children learn and develop best through participation in social practice with their peers, through increasing developmental possibilities.

A school's approach to inclusion depends upon the school's ethos, which in turn creates a teacher's philosophy, attitudes and professional proficiencies. Shaw (2017, p. 301) notes

that staff expertise is crucial to the success of inclusion, to prevent children with SEND experiencing segregation in the mainstream classroom. Ofsted (2018, p. 13) parallels this, confirming that teacher quality is known to improve pupil attainment. Consequently, teacher confidence and experience in teaching children with SEND has a substantial impact on children's learning. Hodkinson (2016, pp. 100-101) reveals that training for the teaching of pupils with ever increasing diverse and complex needs have inhibited the successful implementation of SEND strategies. Tutt and Williams (2015, p. 102) maintains that teacher training has rarely paid enough attention to children with SEND, who on average make up a fifth of the school population, proposing that right from initial teaching training and onwards there is a lack of consistency and coherence about how much time is spent on this important aspect of training. Although the focus of this research is on special educational needs and disability practitioners, it is noted that every teacher is a teacher of children with SEND. All teachers are responsible for having a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs' (DFE, 2011). However, Gedge (2016, p. 23) identifies that many teachers worry about how they will manage to teach *all* children. For instance, worries about a lack of specific skills and knowledge to teach children with SEND in order to give them an appropriate education, as well as balancing the needs of the rest of the class. Current practices (DfE, 2013) put emphasis on having high aspirations for every learner however complex their needs. All teachers must see themselves as accountable for the progress and well-being of every child in their class, including those with SEND (Tutt and Williams, 2015, p. 3).

Cremin and Burnett (2018, p. 553) reveal that as a teacher, the learning process never stops. The complexity of teaching cannot be underestimated. Developing inclusive approaches to facilitate all pupils' learning, while responding to their emotional and social needs, and organising classes of children with limited space and resources, can be challenging. Moreover, approaches that work well for one child or in one context do not necessarily work for others. Likewise, policy and societal changes placing new demands on teachers can have great implications for children. Teachers are constantly evaluating their practice in order to best support children's learning.

Ofsted's recent 'proposal on school funding' report (2018, pp. 7-8) stated that one of the major pressures facing schools was the increasing cost of providing for children with SEND. This could be a reflection of England's current economic climate, with overall funding for schools becoming much tighter (Tutt and Williams, 2015, p. 1). Hodkinson (2016, p. 129) comments that with schools at the mercy of budgetary constraints, achieving the flexibility and responsiveness necessary to accommodate every child's needs can be highly problematic. This results in many pressures for schools in ensuring quality provision for children with SEND.

2.2 What is currently being recommend for SEND pupils in schools?

The SEND code of practice (DfE, 2015) sets out a flexible cyclical curriculum model (Print, 1993, p. 73), which adopts a graduated approach to teaching children with SEND. A four-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review is recommended, in which schools are responsible for adjusting learning for children with SEND. Clear analysis and assessment of pupils' needs is key to developing appropriate individual intervention plans. Any support provided should be chosen to meet the individual needs of each child, based upon interactive learning conversations and reliable evidence of its effectiveness. After reasonable adjustments have been made, teachers should continue to reflect on their efficiency in close conjunction with the child, relevant members of staff, parents and any other external agencies involved (DfE, 2015, pp. 100-102; Gedge, 2016, p. 19-21, Wearmouth, 2017, p. 58; Wearmouth *et al.,* 2018, p. 147). Jones and Welch (2018) emphasise the continual importance of children's voices, reflected in the increase of their involvement in decision making. Although, in practice there may be a lack of real engagement in participations to influence decisions and to have their voices acted on. While constant reviewing processes take time (Print, 1993, p. 74), this is essential in finding the most successful support strategies for children with SEND, aiming to enable them to fulfil the high expectations of their individual potential (Cowne, Frankl and Gerschel, 2015, p. 49). Nevertheless, as Wearmouth (2017, p. 55) notes, additional intervention and support for individuals in schools should not be expected to compensate for lack of effective teaching.

In recent years, the number of TAs working in mainstream schools in the United Kingdom has significantly risen, but there still remains a lack of clarity about the roles that should be

undertaken by these support staff (Webster, Russell and Blatchford, 2016, p. 13; Wren, 2017, p. 4). Although responsibility for the employment of TAs is held by head teachers, it is teachers' responsibility to 'deploy support staff effectively' (DfE, 2011). Traditionally, TAs' supportive role focussed on mainly administrative tasks and preparation of resources in the classroom, however this role has shifted. Recently, TAs are increasingly involved in the direct instruction of both individual pupils and whole classes, particularly working with SEND children. Head teachers have reported that the increased inclusion of pupils with SEND in mainstream schools has been one of the main reasons for employing greater numbers of support staff. TAs have been found to be the primary form of support in place for pupils with SEND within mainstream schools, taking responsibility for the teaching and support of pupils. Although TAs are an invaluable resource for teachers, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge, teachers need to think very carefully about their deployment (Gedge, 2016, p. 58; Wren, 2017, p. 5).

Webster, Russell and Blatchford (2016, pp. 73-75) question the use of TAs deployed to take the role of primary educator for some children with SEND. Teachers' deployment of TAs have implications for their own classroom practice. Teachers should have regular, sustained and focused interactions with all pupils, including those with SEND. Ways in which TAs can add value to teaching in order to help them meet their responsibilities should be considered, questioning withdrawing pupils from the class so that all pupils can remain part of the teaching and learning experience provided in the classroom. Shaw's (2017, p. 294) report parallels this, being critical of mainstream schools in which the main support for children with SEND came from teaching assistants rather than specialist teachers. If TAs assume too much responsibility for planning and teaching of children with SEND, this can have a negative impact on children's learning experiences. Consequently, such pupils may become segregated from the teacher and the curriculum. Although, the use of teaching assistants does help children to access the curriculum, interactions with pupils may be less academically demanding, with the emphasis on completing tasks, rather than ensuring any learning or understanding has taken place. Teachers should not rely too much on solely TA one-to-one work as children may become too dependent. Provision for children with SEND should be from a mixture of adults in a variety of strategies, from one-to-one sharply

focused activities, through to small group work with either teacher or TA, to more independent work (Gedge, 2016, p. 2; Webster, Russell and Blatchford, 2016, p. 23).

Nevertheless, in order to create meaningful and effective provision, TAs need to be given the time to prepare. For instance, ensuring they are provided with the relevant training and given time to plan and prepare. Equally, teachers must ensure that they share feedback and discuss with TAs, building relationships to ensure that they understand what they are being asked to do (DfE, 2011; Cowne, Frankl and Gerschel, 2015, p. 50; Gedge, 2016, p. 67; Webster, Russell and Blatchford, 2016, p. 126).

In order for children to make progress in school they need to develop a confidence in tackling new challenged or ideas and develop independence (DfE, 2011). Children with SEND can become very quickly reliant on adult help in order to start, carry on or complete classroom tasks, and while it may appear that a child has gained a particular skill or a certain piece of knowledge while they are working with support, it can be a very different prospect when they working independently (Gedge, 2016, p. 140).

2.3 How can SEND children successfully access the curriculum?

Parsons and Platt (2017, p. 466) identify that children with SEND are known to experience lower average educational attainment than their peers, and this can have significant long-term effects on their opportunities and outcomes in their future. Legally, schools are required to be responsive to the different needs of each individual, on both an academic and social level (Briggs, 2015, p. 9), set out in national legislation (DfE, 2013; DfE, 2015). Although, in practice this may not always be the case. National teachers' standards (DfE, 2011) require all teachers to differentiate appropriately, with teaching and learning adapted to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Equally, the 2010 Equality Act protects children from direct or indirect discrimination, ensuring that barriers to learning, involvement and attainment are overcome to support all children's success (GEO and EHRC, 2013). The inclusion statement within the national curriculum also ensures that teachers set suitable challenges, so that all pupils are able to study every national curriculum subject (DfE, 2013, p. 8), directing teachers to the 'special educational needs and disability code of practice' (DfE, 2015). This sets out the legal requirements

regarding schooling for all children with SEND (regardless of which school setting they attend), ensuring that 'reasonable adjustments' are made (p. 17).

Recently, Ofsted (2018, p. 9) has reported that head teachers have concerns with the recent curriculum changes regarding how best to resource support to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. Cowne, Frankl and Gerschel (2015, p. 37) question the inclusiveness of the current curriculum, suggesting that if the curriculum content is too narrow and/or teaching methods too singular, this can substantially lower children's self-esteem and learning capabilities, in turn stifling their creativity and motivation. This is especially detrimental for children with SEND. The current overemphasis on testing can also reduce both the balance and breadth of the curriculum overall. Wearmouth *et al.* (2018, p. 40) question many schools' current use of 'ability' grouping. Placing children of perceived similar cognitive/social/emotional abilities in the same group may result in fewer opportunities to learn from one another, which does not reflect the importance of Vygotsky's (1978, pp. 84-131) 'zone of proximal development'.

In order for any child to access the curriculum, the content must be relevant to learners; take into account their developmental age and interests; and be differentiated sufficiently. Historically, differentiation has meant providing completely different outcomes for differing groups, giving children more time to complete work and providing different levels of support for pupils. However, this did not always set sufficiently high expectations. Current trends are beginning to move away from this idea of having completely separate tasks. Wearmouth (2019, p. 273) proposes that differentiation of lesson activities, tasks and resources need to take account of the full range of learning needs among children in the classroom. For instance, if a child cannot work on the same objectives as other children then it is important to choose tasks that are linked to the topic in which the whole class is working. Robinson, Bingle and Howard (2015, p. 154) highlight that this is the very principle of inclusive teaching, ensuring that learning is accessible and appropriately challenging regardless of children's circumstances. Based on the principle of opportunity for all, teachers should positively focus on what provision is available for those children who might otherwise be excluded from mainstream education. Gedge (2016, p. 132) furthers this, adding that whatever the reason a child may make slower progress, for instance due to their

additional needs, they still do make progress. Even though this progress may be harder to track into the current school systems, every progression and even the small steps that a child makes should be celebrated just as much as any other child's progress. Shaw (2017, pp. 302-303) maintains that schools who do provide resourced provision for children with SEND need the freedom to present their data in different ways, as the effectiveness of current systems is being questioned. While it is recognised that progress is a complex concept, Parsons and Platt (2017, p. 467) argue that it could be unreasonable to expect children identified with SEND to make the same rate of progress as similarly abled peers. However, this does not mean that children with SEND who have reached a particular educational level should make less subsequent progress than other children attaining that level, especially if they are receiving additional support.

United Kingdom based research concerning current SEND specialist perceptions, thoughts and attitudes towards the existing system appear to be minimal. This research aims to establish first-hand SEND specialist practitioners' perceptions of the current quality of main stream schooling for children with SEND. In the next chapter, the overall research design will be presented, justifying why this approach has been taken to answer the research question (Thomas, 2017, p. 104).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

The ontological stance of this research aims to discover the multiple existing realities in our social world, specifying the relationship between the world and our human interpretations. Rather than being universal, it is believed that what is 'real' differs across time and context (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 27). These multiple realities are constructed by individuals, resulting in epistemological assumptions accepting that knowledge is developed through a process of interpretation. As all individuals are different and have unique perspectives, the world is seen in different ways. Therefore, this research project allowed for the generation of data with a subjective nature (Coe *et al.*, 2017, p. 16; Thomas, 2017, p. 123; Carter, 2018, pp. 111-114). These assumptions link to my own knowledge and experience in primary school settings, as Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p. 2) highlight the twenty-first century is characterised by multiple discourses. Personally, immersing in school settings is about the holistic experience, therefore, my epistemological stance was to draw upon qualitative methods which sought to understand and portray the participants' own 'truths' and gain in-depth data, grounded in the individuals' feelings and perspectives (Burton and Bartlett, 2009, pp. 21-22). Rather than favouring large quantities of numerical data, the participants' own words were analysed.

Adopting a research paradigm provided me with a shared sense of purpose about what counted as valid and reliable knowledge, enabling reasonable and legitimate ways of obtaining it (Sharp, 2009, p. 5). Due to the ontological and epistemological assumptions, a philosophical stance of an interpretivist paradigm was adopted, maintaining there is no objective reality (Carter, 2018, pp. 111-114). Interpretivism values rich and in-depth data collection methods, recognising that knowledge is everywhere and is socially constructed by individuals in different ways. It is argued that multiple realities exist and what is being researched is context-specific, rendering time and context free generalisations impossible (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 9; Thomas, 2017, pp. 109-110; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, pp. 61-63). Burton and Bartlett (2009, p. 129) accept it is not possible to generalise from personal experience. Consequently, a qualitative research design was adopted, aiming to develop insights into the participants' beliefs, lived experiences and meanings in order to

understand their perceptions of the world; capturing the complexity of multiple truths from the data collected (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 10; Bell and Waters, 2014, p. 17; Denscombe, 2014, p. 17; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 2).

A case study methodological approach was employed, intending to produce detailed, rich and in-depth understanding and data from a small sample case size of one primary school (Denscombe, 2014, p. 19; Coe *et al.*, 2017, p. 114; Thomas, 2017, p. 156; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 14; Yin, 2018, p. 14). Case studies vividly capture naturalistic human reality in the real world by providing unique examples of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly. As each case is unique, it is accepted that there are many variables which can only be understood in the specific context, illuminating subtleties and complexities of topics in each setting (Burton and Bartlett, 2009, p. 63; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, pp. 702-726). However, like all educational research, it is vital that both strengths and limitations of approaches are understood and acknowledged openly (Yin, 2018, p. 5). Subsequently, limitations to case studies arise due to their bounded nature by time and activity, which needs to be clearly identified. This questions the value of single studies due to the difficulty in generalising and cross-checking information. Equally, there are concerns about their selective nature which may not be representative, resulting in the danger of distortion (Bell and Waters, 2014, pp. 19-20; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 37; Carter, 2018, pp. 127-128; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 707; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 14). However, as case studies are so aligned with qualitative research generalisability is not the aim of this methodological approach (Denscombe, 2014, p. 76). Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 202) parallel this, suggesting that generalisation is limited as the purpose is not to generalise the findings outside of the single case study.

3.2 Participants and setting

When choosing participants, four SEND specialist primary school teachers/teaching assistants were selected from one primary school located in Birmingham, England. The sampling method used was non-random sampling. Specifically, convenience sampling was used initially to select the school, which led onto purposive sampling to handpick the four participants based on their particular characteristics in meeting the specific needs of this

research project. The teachers/teaching assistants were specifically chosen as they already had in-depth knowledge and current first-hand experience around the research topic. Choosing this method provided quality information and valuable insights into the research topic from the highly experienced practitioners based upon their professional role, expertise and experience (Denscombe, 2014, p. 61; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, pp. 97-98; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, pp. 423-424). The research setting was an average sized, one-form entry mainstream primary school.

3.3 Method

The research project relied upon the data collection method of individual, semi-structured interviews. Exploring knowledge as generated between humans through conversations, participants talked about their experiences and perspectives, capturing their language in relation to the research topic (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 77; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 932). As Sharp (2009, pp. 73-74) highlights, interviews are a 'conversation with a purpose'.

The four semi-structured interviews took place at an agreed site in school at a mutually convenient time, in a quiet room free from distractions with as little disruption to the participants as possible (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 91; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, pp. 93-96). These aimed to investigate participants' perceptions of the quality of SEND provision for SEND pupils in mainstream schools. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they combined the structure of planned questions to be covered, with the freedom and flexibility to follow up on points as necessary allowing adaptability through probing responses and investigating motives and feelings (Bell and Waters, 2014, p. 145; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 110; Thomas, 2017, p. 206). This provided rich qualitative data, giving real insights into the participants' own perspectives (Burton and Bartlett, 2009, pp. 21-22; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 187). The interviewee's own thoughts, beliefs and ideas was emphasised, gaining depth and richness of data whilst having enough structure to be able to make comparisons (Sharp, 2009, pp. 80-81; Braun and Clarke, 2013, pp. 78-79; Denscombe, 2014, p. 17; Coe *et al.*, 2017, p. 183; Carter, 2018, pp. 142-143). All questions asked were well-planned and carefully thought out, ensuring minimal ambiguity and prompt (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 188; Carter, 2018, p. 143). Nevertheless, semi-structured interviews do

take time, require patience and a particular set of interpersonal awareness and interviewing skills to be successful. Consequently, the interview was piloted which helped overcome this, ensuring that the language and presentation of questions were sufficient (Sharp, 2009, p. 75; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 117; Coe *et al.*, 2017, pp. 186-187).

The use of audio-recording allowed for precise and accurate data, and enabled eye contact to be kept, building a rapport in the face-to-face, direct, natural setting (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 92; Bell and Waters, 2014, p. 149; Coe *et al.*, 2017, p. 185; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, pp. 181-182). Notwithstanding, interviewer influence could have affected participants' responses, questioning bias. This has been acknowledged and steps, such as bracketing, were taken to minimise risks (Carter, 2018, pp. 137-139; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 188).

3.4 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or credibility is a fundamental concept for all research (Wyse *et al.*, 2017, pp. 116-117). Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 290) explore this in qualitative data. Trustworthiness is determined through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The research design is crucial to judging whether to trust the findings, considering ideas such as whether the research utilises a design that is appropriate for the research question and exploring the quality of the data itself for errors in measurement, observation, or recording (Wyse *et al.*, 2017, pp. 210-211). In this research, four semi-structured interviews suited the research questions, giving deep descriptions of the phenomenon under study. Detailed contextual information was provided regarding the research setting. Bracketing was also used, ensuring that the findings truly reflected the participants' views.

3.5 Data analysis

Creswell and Creswell's (2018, pp. 193-194) suggested clear and logical steps for successful data analysis were followed. Firstly, organising and preparing the data. Secondly, reading all data reflecting on overall meanings. Thirdly, coding the data by bracketing it into segments to look at emerging themes. Fourthly, generating a description of themes. Lastly, representing these themes. Carter (2018, p. 197) notes data analysis' purpose - to make

sense of data and draw conclusions which answer the research question; not a single linear process, but a continual progression of going back and forth between stages to refine and improve them.

Raw data was generated through creating interview transcripts from the recordings of each interview. Preparing and organising the data through manual transcription provided important detail and an accurate verbatim record of each interview. As familiarisation with the data is a crucial step in analysing, I chose to transcribe the recording myself so that I could ensure that it was accurate. Also, this enabled any non-verbal aspects, such as hesitations, pauses and volume changes, to be noted down. However, limitations arise with practicalities such as the time-consuming nature of transcribing. Equally, recorded speech was not always clear and valuable insights from speech that took place before the interviews may have been omitted (Carter, 2018, pp. 201-202; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 131; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, pp. 1177-1178).

The data was then sorted and coded, by manually looking for any themes within the responses. Thematic discourse analysis was used, exploring how ideas were constructed by the choice of language used by the participants. Each data item was given equal attention, looking at what was unique and specific; reading and highlighting significant points; annotating transcripts; looking for patterns and then labelling the data into a thematic framework by grouping key themes and putting them into a logical order with main and sub-themes (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 249-287; Carter, 2018, pp. 204-205). Once the themes were established, quotations and examples from the transcripts were selected to illustrate those themes (Thomas, 2017, p. 246). This method was chosen as language is central when focusing on the unique perspectives of participants, placing value on the context of interactions (Coe *et al.*, 2017, p. 265; Thomas, 2017, p. 251; Carter, 2018, p. 200).

3.6 Ethics

Ethical approval for this project was gained from Newman University. The research also abides by the ethical guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) ensuring that 'at all stages of a project from planning through conduct to reporting educational researchers undertake wide consultation to identify relevant ethical

issues'. The best course of ethical practice was ensured as it was recognised that participants have rights. All communications with participants were honest and open, minimising harm and protecting their privacy. As semi-structured interviews were undertaken, the questions asked were carefully selected to limit participant distress (Coe *et al.*, 2017, pp .58-63; Thomas, 2017, pp. 44-45).

All participants had access to the same participant information sheet, ensuring they were fully aware of the nature of the research and that an informed decision was made about whether to take part (Burton and Bartlett, 2009, p. 91; Carter, 2018, pp. 58-59). All participants were not under any pressure to participate and had the right to not take part in the research. The gatekeeper was also given written details of the research in the form of a letter, which included the purpose of the research, proposed methods and involvement of participants (Carter, 2018, p. 58).

All participants were asked for fully informed written consent, ensuring each participant's right to freedom and self-determination (Bell and Waters, 2014, p. 47; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 255). Participants' anonymity will continue to be ensured throughout this dissertation, during and after submission, using numerical coding in place of names, addressing privacy and protection. Equally, participants' confidentiality and anonymity will always be ensured in the future. All participants had the right to withdraw themselves and their data from the research without giving a reason at any point up until two days before the dissertation hand-in date (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, pp. 269-270). They also have the right to read the final completed dissertation.

All data was recorded and stored on a password protected recording device, ensuring participants' confidentiality (Bell and Waters, 2014, p. 49; Thomas, 2017, p. 46; Carter, 2018, p. 54), and transferred onto a computer which was password protected. Any paper copies of transcripts created were stored in a locked briefcase. All data collected will be destroyed 12 months after submission of the dissertation. Only the researcher had access to any data collected, respecting the privacy of participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, pp. 93-95; Coe *et al.*, 2017, p. 61).

Given that the participants interviewed were from a placement setting which I also had prior knowledge of, insider research was considered. This questions whether practitioners can remain unbiased when they may have inadvertently developed previous assumptions, highlighting the importance of reflection and reflectivity in research, as any researcher does not begin as empty vessels. Hence, assumptions, feelings and previous experiences were considered. To overcome this, bracketing was used to help ensure a lack of bias (Bell and Waters, 2014, p. 52; Coe *et al.*, 2017, p. 72).

4. Results

This chapter will provide an overview of the primary research results (Braun and Clarke, 2013, pp. 308-309). In the qualitative findings from the four teaching staff interviews, four main themes emerged in the data set: confidence and experience (need for specialist training; pressure to support all children); funding and resources (restricted budgets; lack of specialist resources; external provision requirements); TA deployment (shift to a more one-to-one role; lack of specialist training), and access and inclusion (increase of children with SEND; SEND children not accessing the curriculum; better structured assessment needed).

Table 1 Special educational needs and disability practitioners' perceptions of the quality of SEND provision for SEND pupils in mainstream schools: first order and second order themes from the semi-structured interview data.

First Order Themes	Second Order Themes
1. Confidence and experience	• Need for specialist training • Pressure to support all children
2. Funding and resources	• Restricted budgets • Lack of specialist resources • External provision requirements
3. TA deployment	• Shift to a more one-to-one role • Lack of specialist training
4. Access and inclusion	• Increase of children with SEND • SEND children not accessing the curriculum • Better structured assessment needed

Table 2 A table to show which themes the participants discussed (1 = theme discussed the most, 4 = theme discussed the least)

Themes discussed	Participant A SENCo	Participant B KS1 teacher	Participant C KS2 teacher	Participant D Teaching assistant
Confidence and experience	3	3	2	2
Funding and resources	2	2	3	3
TA deployment	4	4	4	4
Access and inclusion	1	1	1	1

4.1 Confidence and experience *(emergent themes: need for specialist training; and pressure to support all children)*

Three of the participants expressed that there was need for more specialist training to increase their confidence in using different strategies. Participant A commented 'so I suppose for mainstream it would be maybe offer of support or advice how we could, you know, adapt our setting', '(SEND) might not be necessarily their specialism or something that they wanted to do'. Alternatively, participant A revealed 'within a mainstream setting, I think we are quite lucky here that a lot of staff because we've done a lot of training overtime, they I'd hope they would say they feel quite confident in what they could do to adapt'. Participant B identified 'maybe we need um a little bit more expertise to know exactly what we are doing', 'but I think an expertise is something that we need to watch and to see in place'. Participant D indicated a need for a 'specialist to help me to understand it a bit more, because I've got no training for it. So obviously that's the problem as well', revealing 'I think I wish there was more probably training available, because that's the problem, um we're not geared up'. Participant D continued 'I'm like a mainstream TA so I haven't got the specialism that they need. Um so it's good when you do get those, like today I've had more support', concluding 'I think that sometimes you can probably feel that you are failing them yourself just because you haven't got the relevant training to be able to deal with the situations yourself'.

Participant A and C revealed another emergent theme of staff's pressure to support all children. Participant A suggested 'maybe for staff who are pressured to get results where is

that support gonna go'. Participant C noted 'it's really hard then to split me all of those ways if I don't have support'.

4.2 Funding and resources *(emergent themes: restricted budgets; lack of specialist resources; and external provision requirements)*

A dominant theme across the participants' responses was the restricted budgets for SEND provision. Participant A observed 'they talk about budgets and things coming in but obviously that budget is a notional budget and it goes doesn't it? So you have to really make sure that you're identifying where you can spend the money for those children as well'. Participant B added 'they do get funding but obviously funding is always tight', concluding 'I think really it's just monetary things with SEND children'. Participant C continued 'schools don't get the funding anymore for a lot of the SEND provision that is expected'. Participant D concurred 'resources aren't always available to properly support those children and it's the time constraints for sourcing those resources'.

Another emergent theme was the lack of specialist resources. Participant A suggested 'the ability within school to create based type settings or something like that might be useful', adding 'the provision that they know that they need they're not, you know, facilities aren't there to give them that really', 'but I do think there's a conflict in mainstream between supporting it and having that provision'. Participant B agreed, 'I think probably more resources to do with some of the sensory things and maybe certain rooms that they need', 'also I suppose space restraints, so there's probably not necessarily anywhere to have them in a mainstream school'. Participant C noted 'if we had more than just [child A] with those specific needs that's where it becomes a little bit tricky', revealing 'it's put pressure on schools to actually create an environment that's conducive to their learning'. Participant D discussed 'I just think sometimes we haven't got all the resources like I say before, to best meet their needs', finalising 'I just wish there were more provision'.

Participants A and C examined the effectiveness of external provision. Participant C commented 'we have a lot of input from external agencies. Autism outreach come in. We've got learning support services they come in and also um provide us with reports from very specific learning needs for children'. Whilst participant A observed 'we do have outreach

work and we have got an outreach worker coming in today from a special school. But their capacity is… that's because she's stretched out to the limit as well', 'and a lot of the outside agencies come in once a week at the most and that's not enough really to make a big impact'.

4.3 TA deployment *(emergent themes: shift to a more one-to-one role; and lack of specialist training)*

Participants discussed this theme the least, with all participants stating that the role of TAs has shifted to the majority of their time being spent working with a child a one-to-one. Participant A suggested 'staffing for us has been a huge concern because obviously then if you've got somebody who's a one-to-one um that reduces where else you can use them for interventions'. Participant B explained 'most of the funding goes on the teaching assistant that's with them'. Participant C revealed 'our interventions are carried out by the LSA's, um and they obviously monitor and track the progress'. Participant D, who is a teaching assistant themselves, described their own role in school 'I'm a HLTA in school, but I am supporting a child one-to-one with autism, er every morning'. Participant D also explored the lack of their own specialist training 'I do believe some of these children need specialist um TAs and I'm like a mainstream TA so I haven't got the specialism that they need'.

4.4 Access and inclusion *(emergent themes: increase of children with SEND, SEND children not accessing the curriculum, better structured assessment needed)*

The participants talked about the theme of access and inclusion the most. The majority of teaching staff who were interviewed expressed that there was an increase of children with more complex needs within the mainstream school population recently. Participant A revealed 'in the last year or so in particular it's become more of a concern that we are getting more and more children who are coming into mainstream schools with an EHCP, but a lot of those children have got more complex needs maybe than previously'. The SENCo (Special Educational Needs co-ordinator) (participant A) continued 'but I think it's probably impacted a lot in the last year the level of need that we've had, because there aren't special school places'. Participant C added 'I have 9 children that are SEN which is a huge amount', describing 'we have got 9 EHCP's in our school and bear in mind it's a single form entry that's a huge amount with EHCP'. The year four teacher (participant C) suggested 'I think

because it's very much um, parent choice. Obviously they can choose to have their child in a main stream school and obviously we have to then support those needs'. Participant D highlighted 'our school has got a lot of SEND. I think the trouble is a lot of it is more individual needs', and added 'some have got more extreme needs than others and that's where sometimes I think mainstream school isn't always the ideal, you know situation for them'.

All participants explored how much children with SEND were accessing the curriculum. Participant A stated 'their attainment is always on the whole lower, but they do make progress. I think it's the new national curriculum in going to a system of everybody is expected and those kind of bands aren't necessarily helpful for children with special needs because they're not gonna make'. The SENCo (participant A) continued 'so every year you go into it and this is where you are almost teaching at. And I think some of the new curriculum, some of the strategies almost went away from differentiation slightly, in that it was, you know, you need to try and have high expectations and pitch it so they can all have a go and I think you know people quickly realised that that necessarily didn't work still for certain children'. Participant B noted 'normally most SEND children are probably two years behind anyway so they wouldn't be accessing the national curriculum until they were on it', further commenting that staff use 'ARE which is obviously age-related in school or they are working below it. But I think there are children that actually don't even access that'. Participant C mentioned 'our school, I think have always been very child-centred so we've looked at the child holistically and looked at their needs', 'we've gone down the route of age-related expectations for each year group', 'having said that its still then differentiated to their need'. Participant D commented 'I don't think all children who are SEND will make academic progress', 'although we differentiate lessons individually and make it as inclusive as possible I don't think it's always easy to achieve that'. 'The child I'm with currently doesn't work anywhere near to the year 2 that he should be or even wouldn't be able to access year 1'.

Participants A and B suggested that a better structured assessment system was needed to tackle this attainment gap. Participant A stated 'so I think a lot of schools are in a position it's how do we track them or really track the where they've got to and I think obviously

different schools will be in different'. Participant B agreed, 'maybe that needs to be clarified and we have a proper system that we follow. Maybe they can have their own assessment system that they can follow. I think that's what we haven't got, we haven't got something specific'.

5. Discussion

This chapter will reflect upon the wider implications of the results, looking across the themes and contextualising the research, showing how it fits with, extends or challenges what is already known about the quality of SEND provision in mainstream schools (Braun and Clarke, 2013, pp. 308-309). The discussion will be structured by the themes that emerged.

The interview data provided insights into current teaching staff's perceptions about the current quality of SEND provision in mainstream schools today. The most significant theme that emerged was access and inclusion, particularly the discussion of the increase of children with complex SEND into mainstream school, confirming recent literature and research (Tutt and Williams, 2015, p. 41; Hodkinson, 2016, p. 129; Wearmouth, 2017, p. 50; Wearmouth, 2019, p. 92). Participants A, C and D revealed concern regarding the rise in children with a range of different, more extreme, complex and specific learning needs attending mainstream schools. Participant A noted that the lack of special school places is a contributing factor to this. Participant D suggested that maybe mainstream settings are not the best place for some children's learning needs. Participant C highlighted that fact that parental choice about which school setting their child attends could be a factor which influenced this increase. Now teachers are responsible to cater for children with more and more complex needs (DfE, 2011), therefore, they must adapt to this and remove any potential barriers to learning (DfE, 2015).

Another dominant theme was the fact that children with SEND children not accessing the curriculum, with all participants noting that many children with SEND are working well below the national curriculum expectations (DfE, 2013), far behind their peers. Participant D, explained that differentiation is used (DfE, 2011) but it can sometimes be difficult to do this successfully. Participant A criticised the new national curriculum (DfE, 2013), suggesting the 'expected' learning for each year group moves away from differentiation. If expectations are too high, this will be beyond reach of some children, resulting in them will always being seen as lower. This supports Parsons and Platt's (2017, p. 467) suggestion that it is unreasonable to expect children identified with SEND to make the same rate of progress as

their peers, suggesting that this system needs reviewing. Consequently, participants proposed the need for a more specific structured assessment system for children with SEND. Participants A and B, recommend that there needs to be a more clarified specific structure for assessment to record current needs of children which could explain their slower progress. Mainstream schools struggle measuring progress of children when academically on current systems they may look like they have not made any progress. This affirms Gedge's (2016, p. 132) view on assessment regarding the celebration of progress no matter how slow. Alternatively, participant C suggested that the use of age-related expectations was an effective way to assess children with SEND and aid differentiation.

Teaching staff's confidence and experience also emerged as a dominant theme across all participants' answers. Participant A described their own role of SENCo, stating they have been in the role for many years, suggesting they have a lot of experience and confidence in the field of SEND. As part of the role of SENCo is supporting other staff and addressing their concerns around 'making reasonable adjustments' (DfE, 2015) for children with SEND, this shows a high level of expertise. This confirms Vygotsky's (1978, pp. 84-131) theory on the value of social, meaningful interactions. Equally, participant A suggested that the majority of staff would feel confident to make adaptations and only in the most extreme cases would they seek support from outside agencies. This opposes Hodkinson's (2016, pp. 100-101) view that teacher confidence is an issue that inhibits the successful implementation of SEND strategies. Conversely, participant A does conclude that teachers would benefit from more support, and that advice should be offered on how to adapt mainstream settings in order to meet the needs of all children, as well as more specialist teachers for specific needs within school. Participant B paralleled this, emphasising that maybe staff require more expertise and training, rather supporting Hodkinson's (2016, pp. 100-101) view. Participant B further proposed that training for staff in which they actually get to observe children with SEND in a specialist setting would be beneficial, in order to increase professionals' knowledge and understanding. This highlights an emergent theme of the current need for more specialist training for teaching staff, interlinking with teachers pressure to support all children which was also highlighted as a dominant theme.

Participant C has staff responsibilities in which they support other teachers to by ensuring that they 'differentiate appropriately' (DfE, 2011), suggesting more experience in the field. However, some of the language that participant C, used such as 'challenging', 'more pressure' and 'difficulty', suggested the need for more specialist support. Participant C furthered this asserting there is pressure on teachers to split their time between all children in the class, highlighting a conflict between wanting to provide extra support for children with SEND and also not wanting to neglect the rest of the class. Similarly, participant A concluded that there is a pressure on staff to give support to everyone and plan how to best use time and resources, validating Gedge's (2016, p. 23) exploration of teachers' worries. Participant A also questioned the confidence and expertise of support staff, suggesting they have a lack of specialism for the more specific roles. Participant D, a TA, described their lack in confidence in their own teaching, highlighting that 'sometimes you can probably feel that you are failing them yourself just because you haven't got the relevant training to be able to deal with the situations yourself'. Participant D, explained that gaining positive support from outside agencies helps to increase knowledge and understanding, and as they had no previous training that support really benefited the TA to cater for more specific needs. This conveys the urgent need to more specialist training and resources.

Another dominant theme of funding and resources is presented, which was discussed by all participants highlighting its relevance. Participants confirmed the restricted budget for SEND provision, as highlighted by Ofsted (2018, pp. 7-8). Participant A proposed that there is a current state of change regarding school funding for children with SEND, with participant C agreeing that mainstream schools have a lack of space and funding to provide for rising numbers of children with complex needs. Participant B suggested that funding is essential to provide better provision for children with SEND within mainstream schools, highlighting that a lot of funding is spent on teaching assistants but maybe this money should be spent on other resources. However, Wearmouth (2019, p. 289) challenges this idea as funding in-class support for students is a very expensive option for schools with no guarantee of its effectiveness.

The lack of specialist resources available was also examined. Participants A, B and D were all critical of the current resources accessible, suggesting that more specialist provisions are

required for the increasingly more complex and specific needs of children in mainstream school. For instance, a sensory area or the creation of a based type setting. With pressure being put on schools to create environments which can best support specific needs, there is currently a conflict in mainstream settings between their willingness to support children but lack of the specialist provision needed in order to best support children's learning. On the other hand, participant C was positive about the resources for planning, enabling a range of different targets within one class to be set. Equally, participant C discussed an example of a specific area created for a child which provided more sensory resources, supporting their more specific needs and suggesting quality provision is available.

External provision was explored by participants A and C. On one hand, participant C was very positive about the provision delivered by external agencies, which provided support for specific learning needs and the creation of effective provision and resources. Conversely, participant A was more critical of outside agencies, questioning their availably and suggesting that they need to come into school more often. The SEND code of practice (DfE, 2015, p. 99) states schools should draw upon more specialised assessments from external agencies, however the participants' responses suggest a lack of clarity and consistency in this aspect of provision.

Another emergent theme was TA deployment, however this was talked about the least, suggesting that this theme is not as significant as the others. This is in conflict with Wren's (2017, p. 17) study which concluded that the role of teaching assistants was significantly lacking in clarity. As the participants did not discuss TA deployment as much, this suggests that this is not a significant concern for staff currently. Participant B revealed that a lot of the school's SEND budget was spent on teaching assistants, but questioned the fact that maybe this money would be better spent on other more specific resources for children's needs. On the other hand, participant A described one aspect of their role as SENCo as TA deployment, confirming that TAs are used for specific interventions for several different individual children. Participant A noted there is currently a 'huge concern' with TA deployment, suggesting that with the rise in TAs becoming more one-to-one with specific students, this limits their ability to support a wider range of students. This affirms Shaw's (2017, p. 301) research which notes that if TAs assume too much responsibility for the

planning and teaching of children with SEND, then this will have a negative impact on children's learning experience. As a consequence, this suggests that pupils may become more segregated from the teacher and the curriculum, confirming Webster, Russell and Blatchford's (2016, p. 23) comments.

All participants discussed the shift of the TAs role to a more one-to-one position, confirming both Wren's (2017, p. 5) and Webster, Russell and Blatchford's (2016, p. 23) idea that TAs now have a predominately pedagogical role, interacting directly with individual pupils, specifically those with additional learning needs. Participant C explained how TAs carry out interventions and track and monitor progress of the specific individuals that they are working with. This conveys that teaching assistants are taking the role of primary educator for many children with SEND, seriously questioning the teacher's involvement in their provision (Webster, Russell and Blatchford, 2016, p. 73). However, participant C did describe how the TA that works in their class successfully adapts class planning for a child with a hearing impairment 'and [teaching assistant A] is very good at actually creating things'. Here, the TA's planning was driven by what the rest of the class were doing but at a more suitable level for the child suggesting that they had sufficient expertise to provide quality provision for the child opposing Shaw's (2017, p. 301) research around TAs knowledge. Notwithstanding, as Gedge (2016, p. 13) highlights, it could be tempting to rely on the TA's experience, especially if they have worked with that child for a long time but the class teacher ultimately has the legal responsibility to ensure children's learning needs are met (DfE, 2011). Conversely, participant D (who is currently a teaching assistant) gave a first-hand account of their own roles describing themselves as working one-to-one with a child every morning, later noting that 'I'm like a mainstream TA so I haven't got the specialism that they need'. This highlights another emergent theme of TAs lack of specialist training, confirming Shaw's (2017, p. 294) report that was critical of mainstream schools in which the main support came from TAs rather than specialist teachers. This proposes that in order to provide more quality provision for children with SEND, TAs require more specialist, specific training to meet individuals complex needs.

6. Conclusion

Overall, this research has examined the quality of SEND provision in mainstream schools today. Critically analysing the provision currently available to children with SEND in mainstream schools, it recommends changes to provision which may assist SEND pupils' learning making it highly relevant in the field of education (Carter, 2018, p. 3).

While reviewing current strategies did highlight some very positive aspects of SEND provision, the study has resulted in the following recommendations to further improve its quality:

- Need for more specialist training for SEND practitioners in order to increase confidence in teaching children with increasingly more complex learning needs
- Mainstream schools require access to more specialist resources which would benefit both teachers and students, aiding children's learning and giving teachers the tools to be able to adapt and differentiate teaching
- More frequent external provision
- A new structure for assessment of children with SEND

Although the research provided much depth, it lacked breadth due to the relatively smaller sample size of only four staff members, based in one school setting (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 80). As this was a unique case study, it is accepted that there are limitations due to its bounded nature by time and context (Burton and Bartlett, 2009, p. 63; Bell and Waters, 2014, pp. 19-20; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 37; Carter, 2018, pp. 127-128; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 707; Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 14).

In retrospect, this research could have also benefited from another method which may have supported the research further. The qualitative use of observations could have provided further depth, actually observing strategies' effectiveness in practice.

To further this study on a broader scale, differing schools in different areas of the United Kingdom could have been used in order to investigate if location had an impact on the recommendations and responses from teaching staff regarding the quality of SEND

provision. Equally, the participants could have been broadened to head teachers, school governors or even educational policy makers to discover if their responses would have differed as a result of their unique viewpoints.

The implications of this research would be to put these ideas and suggestions into practice with the purpose of improving the quality of SEND provision, in turn enhancing children's learning. This may take increased funding and specialist resources, coupled with more specialist training for practitioners' to build their confidence. The research also could have policy implications with the suggestion of a new system to be put in place to help measure the slower, but significant, progress of children with SEND. Arguably, this could also have potential benefits for all pupils.

All in all, there is no golden formula for providing quality provision which addresses the special learning needs of all students. Since every child is different and every situation is unique, it is important to consider the needs of each individual child (Farrell, 2012, p. 62-66; Wearmouth, 2017, p. 250).

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