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Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

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Hayley Marie Armstrong

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ABSTRACT

This is a single site qualitative case study to investigate how inclusion is understood, and put into practice in one classroom within a school that has inclusive values. The focus classroom, Room 2, is a new-entrant/year one classroom. The participants included the principal, the class teacher, the teacher aide, the ORS funded teacher, a child with high needs on the ORS scheme and her mother and four peers from the class (ORS refers to the Ministry of Education's "Ongoing Resourcing Scheme" for students with 'High and Very High Needs'). The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is inclusion understood by the various participants?
2. What are the values and practices in the classroom and the wider school that are associated with inclusion?
3. How do children experience a classroom that focuses on being part of an inclusive school community?

Social constructionism was used as the theoretical framework to explore the participants' understandings and experiences. Data were gathered through observations, semi-structured interviews, and archival data. The emerging themes were identified and linked back to the research questions.

The findings show inclusion was understood to be welcoming and teaching all children, not just those with disabilities, reflecting the diversity with the wider community. The values and practices associated with inclusion included building a sense of community, clear values, caring relationships between children, staff and families and good collaborative practices. The children experienced the classroom as a safe positive place, where they helped each other and enjoyed learning. There were also some tensions between the values and practice identified that may inadvertently contribute to students with disabilities being perceived as different.

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I would like to acknowledge the school and the participants for their generous and valuable contributions to this research. It was a pleasure to spend time in Room 2 and I felt the welcoming nature of the school and class in person. I also wish to thank my thesis supervisors, Jude MacArthur, and Wendy Holley-Boen for the guidance, support and positivity throughout this research. Finally, a thank you to my family and friends who have been supportive throughout this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how inclusion is understood, and put into practice in one classroom within a school that has inclusive values. It focuses on a student with a disability (and considered to have high needs under the Ministry of Education's Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS)), the class teacher, teacher aide, the child's mother, class peers and the school principal to understand inclusion as it is experienced by the various participants, and as it is played out in the school's policy documents, and daily practices.

Background and Justification for the Study

Inclusive education has become a dominant issue in almost every country, with education for diverse learners moving from segregation towards inclusion (Mitchell, 2010). The New Zealand Government's *Success for All* policy states all schools should be inclusive by 2014. All students should be able to attend their local schools and be welcomed into a positive, inclusive environment (Ministry of Education, 2011). This focus is admirable, although it can be argued that the policy as yet does not necessarily reflect what is happening in New Zealand schools and classrooms. Recent reports from the Education Review Office and the Human Rights Commissioner indicate a number of schools remain unprepared or reluctant to include children with high needs (Education Review Office, 2010, 2013; Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Government policies promoting inclusive education may not be enough; as Annan and Mentis (2013) argue, the beliefs and values educators hold may be more relevant than laws and policies regarding education.

Lewis and Porter (2007) note all stakeholders should have their views represented to enable a situation to be more fully understood. There has traditionally

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been more focus on the voices of professionals and parents (Watson, 2012) but giving children a voice can provide first-person perceptions of effective teaching, benefitting the individual child and wider society (Landsdown, 2011; Robinson & Michael, 2010). Listening to the differing views of those involved in inclusive education can help schools in their journey towards inclusion (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006).

Developing positive models of successful classrooms, schools and communities that share their strategies with others is a critical step towards more inclusive education (Porter, 2008). This study aims to add to the knowledge base about inclusive classrooms, in the hope that the findings may help to support teachers and schools as they develop more inclusive school communities. This study will explore the perspectives and experiences of participants associated with one classroom within a school that is perceived by the community to be inclusive. The title of this thesis, *Inclusion through different eyes*, reflects my desire to explore inclusion through the various perspectives of teachers, teacher aides, the principal, parents, a student with a disability, and students without disabilities. In this regard, the research aims to build a holistic picture of the experience of inclusion, and to understand the barriers to inclusion, as the principal and teachers work to apply their school's values in practice.

My Background and How I am Positioned in this Study

Researchers' beliefs and opinions influence their research decisions, including what they study, who they include, how they collect data and how this is understood (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This may be particularly important for qualitative research where there is a focus on finding meaning in the data. Qualitative researchers' own experiences and attitudes will shape how the data is interpreted, both limiting and facilitating how they read the data (Willig, 2012).

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I worked as a primary school teacher in private schools in Bangkok, Thailand. These schools frequently excluded children with disabilities unless the child's parents would pay to have a full-time teacher aide with them. I perceived the New Zealand education system to be very inclusive. However, when I began visiting classrooms as part of my Postgraduate studies in Educational Psychology, I noticed a huge difference in how children with disabilities were included in various schools. This prompted me to take up inclusion as a research topic, to see how a school that was welcoming to all children approached this issue and how it was understood by various participants.

Throughout this report, I refer to myself in the first person. This is in line with the qualitative nature of the study, where the researcher is not considered separate from the object being researched (Koch & Gitchel, 2011) and to show my accountability as the researcher (Aguinaldo, 2004). I have generally referred to the person before the disability, to acknowledge the individual first and disability is seen as one quality of the individual person (Carrington, MacArthur, et al., 2012; Graham & Macartney, 2012; Keeffe, 2007). When I am referring to a document that specifically uses the term 'disabled people', such as in the New Zealand Disability Strategy, I have retained this term to keep with the original meaning. 'Disabled people' is used by the disability community to emphasise that disability is socially constructed. People have impairments not disabilities and are only disabled when society creates barriers for people with impairments (Carrington, MacArthur, et al., 2012; Minister for Disability Issues, 2011).

The Organisation of this Thesis

Chapter 1 provides an overview of this study and a rationale for why it was conducted. Chapter 2 reviews literature that is relevant to the focus of this study and provides a background context for the research. There is an overview of inclusion, a

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summary of discourses that are used to understand disability, and a review of education in Aotearoa New Zealand as it relates to children with disabilities. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and procedures used in the study to collect and analyse the data. Chapter 4, the results section, is written without reference to the literature to provide the reader with a clear picture of the people, the setting, and events. Chapter 5, the discussion, links the results back to the literature and the research questions. Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter that explains the overall thesis, makes recommendations and discusses the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

What is Inclusion?

There are multiple ways of understanding inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2006; Morton & Gordon, 2006; UNESCO, 1994, 2009). These may vary within a country or even a school (Black-Hawkins, 2010; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Interpretations of inclusive education have historically related to children with disabilities being physically present at schools, but more recent understandings refer to the capability of schools to include and teach a wide range of students and to value diversity in the student group. Diversity may include ethnicity, socio-economic background, language, cultural heritage, gender, 'special needs', giftedness, disability, illnesses, and minority populations (Alton-Lee, 2003; UNESCO, 2005).

Contemporary approaches to inclusive education reflect a shift away from the idea of responding to the needs of small groups of children, towards a focus on the rights of all children to attend their local school and on improving the whole school environment for all students (Black-Hawkins, 2010). Most importantly, the right to education for all children, including children with disabilities are enshrined in United Nations Conventions, including the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 1989) and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989). The *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 1989) specifically addresses the rights of children and young people with disabilities to attend their local school and to receive an inclusive education. New Zealand, as a signatory to these conventions, has an obligation to show that these rights are being met.

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Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner explain inclusive education is “focused on the presence, participation and achievement” of all children (2013, p. 6). Inclusion is also seen a continual process to reduce all forms of exclusion and discrimination, increase the participation of everyone and value all students equally (2011). The *Salamanca Statement* from the world conference on ‘special needs’ is one of the most important documents on inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2013). It describes an inclusive school as one that allows all children to learn together by providing a continuum of supports and different teaching methods to meet the needs of students who may have a range of difficulties and differences. It goes on to say inclusive schools are “the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all” (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix). For this reason, one cannot understand inclusion without first exploring the attitudes and practices that contribute to on-going exclusion.

Exclusion and exclusive attitudes and practices.

It is not only children with disabilities who are excluded from education (UNESCO, 2009). Schools historically excluded students who did not meet certain standards; these young people entered the unskilled labour force. Education has been compulsory since the 1877 Education Act, and inclusive education is promoted in New Zealand and internationally, but schools may still exclude children using different means (Mitchell, 1999; Slee, 2007). For instance, in New Zealand there are still schools with ‘special’ classes or units (Hornby, 2011; Mitchell, 1999). There may be barriers to their participation in social or academic activities such as school outings or physical education activities (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Some children spend significant periods of time withdrawn from their class or working in isolation with a teacher aide (Education Review Office, 2013; Rutherford, 2012a).

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UNESCO (2009) attributes continued exclusion to a combination of a lack of information, discriminatory attitudes, and negative systems. A lack of information is the basis for most arguments against inclusion. This includes beliefs around regular classroom teachers not having received adequate training, or ‘special’ education teachers using specific strategies and procedures that regular teachers are unaware of (Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2008; Chiner & Cardona, 2012; Mitchell, 1999). Florian (2008) argues regular teachers have the knowledge and many of the necessary skills, but may lack confidence. Discriminatory attitudes also seem to be correlated with teachers who have little or no experience of teaching children with disabilities and less overall training (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2010).

Institutional discrimination is when people are disadvantaged due to a trait such as race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, impairment or religion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). New Zealand has a dual education system which includes both ordinary local schools and separate ‘special’ schools, which may lead to a view that there are different separate groups of children, those requiring expert interventions at ‘special’ schools and ‘normal’ children who attend regular schools (Ainscow et al., 2013). It has been argued that using disability or other simplistic categorisations as criteria to classify students contributes to exclusion (Harma, Gombert, & Roussey, 2013; Slee, 2007). Categorisations are often used to determine who receives interventions or extra resources. These may be for a particular child, such as a child with Down Syndrome or groups of children such as ethnic-minority children. While this may be well-meaning, it does not allow for the complexity of diversity, and reinforces a deficit view of certain children, or groups (Ainscow, Conteh, Dyson, & Gallannaugh, 2010). Labels overlook the complexities of a student’s life, their strengths and personality; this can lead to reduced expectations and narrowed

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opportunities. These are often the students who could benefit the most from others having high expectations for them (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Graham & Macartney, 2012; Keeffe, 2007; OECD, 2014). It may also lead to children without a label being overlooked (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

Insufficient resources are another issue that may be raised by teachers or schools as a reason to exclude some children (Chiner & Cardona, 2012; Lilley, 2014). The provision of additional resources may support schools to include and teach a child with a disability. But, Topping (2012) suggests resources are not always the solution and additional resources, if not applied carefully, can lead to further exclusion. Particularly, if funding is used for teacher aide support, there is a risk that teachers' roles and responsibilities are ignored and children with the highest level of need will have the least time with the class teacher (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown, & Martin, 2007). This arrangement may lead to lower achievement for those students who have disabilities (Blatchford, Russell, & Webster, 2011). The allocation of resources or funds are usually linked to the level of impairment, highlighting the deficit as opposed to focussing on abilities and strengths (Slee, 2009).

Developing inclusion

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2011) states that children need to be both physically present and participating at school. For the participation to be meaningful and educationally effective, the school needs to be a safe and supportive environment that values diversity. Teachers create a learning environment based on their beliefs and actions (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Classroom teachers who view children with disabilities as their responsibility tend to be the most effective teachers for all students (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009). This may be due to beliefs about learning, knowledge and the nature of ability. Access to evidence,

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information and participating in professional development can help teachers develop inclusive practices (Ainscow et al., 2013; Bourke, 2006). To explore new ways of being inclusive, teachers need the support of the school's management team to enable them to try methods within their classes and the wider school. Successful developments can then become part of the structure of the school (Black-Hawkins et al., 2008).

The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) is a systematic approach to inclusion that has tools schools can use to self-assess their progress in school policy, culture and practice. All staff, parents and students are encouraged to contribute to an inclusive development plan with the aim of increasing the participation for everyone involved with the school community. A case-study of schools in New Zealand trialling *The Index for Inclusion* found the focus tends to shift from students with 'special educational needs' to a focus on the whole school (Carrington, Bourke, & Dharan, 2012). One school discovered teachers' aides felt excluded and undervalued, and students were being bullied during playtimes. Another school unexpectedly found students believed teachers did not have high expectations for them, and some parents wanted an increase in communication between school and home. This led to changes in both schools practices.

Berryman and Woller (2011) identified the following themes in inclusive settings for Māori students who had experienced behavioural or learning difficulties in Māori immersion or bi-lingual settings:

- considering all students to be 'special' and having needs,
- aiming for all students to reach their potential, having collaborative relationships between school and home

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- effective formative assessment and placing importance on the students' social and cultural needs.

Schools with an inclusive culture have a respect for diversity and a commitment to providing for all students. Although all staff may not entirely agree, joint problem-solving and collaboration can help to overcome these issues (Ainscow et al., 2013). Booth and Ainscow (2011) emphasise there is no such thing as a school that is completely inclusive. Working towards inclusion is a never-ending process to increase the participation of everyone and reduce all forms of discrimination.

Achievement (social, developmental and academic)

Inclusion is arguably a human rights issue that is not enhanced or weakened by research on the influence of inclusion on student achievement (Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2004). However, there has been research on this topic and student achievement is a concern for all educators. Achievement in education is often focussed on academic progress as measured on tests, but this section includes social, and developmental and academic achievements.

Fisher and Meyer (2002) conducted research on the developmental and social competence of students with disabilities in general education compared with students in a self-contained educational program in New Zealand. The two groups were initially matched by chronological age and scores on the Scales of Independent Behaviour (SIB), then tested on the Assessment of Social Competence (ASC) at the initial testing. They were reassessed after a further two years of either inclusive or 'special' education. The students in the inclusive education group made statistically significant progress on the SIB and greater gains of the ASC compared to the students in the self-contained educational program (Fisher & Meyer, 2002). Another New Zealand based study explored the educational experiences of children aged 11-14 with

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disabilities (MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly, & Gaffney, 2007). The researchers found students with disabilities emphasised the ways they were similar to their peers. These children actively tried to participate and develop in their social and academic environment. Teachers and peers were influential in either assisting or negating these attempts to be part of the group.

There are numerous international reports that show positive or neutral impacts on various measures of achievement when students with disabilities are included in regular classes (e.g. Demeris, Childs, & Jordan, 2007; Dyson et al., 2004; Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009). A series of Canadian studies using large-scale standard achievement test results and controlling for class size and socio-economic status found students with disabilities who were in inclusive settings performed better than their peers who were segregated. They also noted that students without disabilities performed slightly better as the number of children with disabilities in their class increased (Demeris et al., 2007; Jordan et al., 2009). A literature review of research from 1999 to 2009 showed mostly neutral or positive effects on cognitive development and social/emotional measures when children with mild to moderate learning, behavioural or psycho-social difficulties were in inclusive settings compared to non-inclusive settings (Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009). Non-disabled children also appeared to make greater gains in achievements when in the inclusive classes; this may be due to the additional supports that are available in these classes. A synthesis of 26 studies concluded it was unlikely for there to be negative impacts on other students when children with disabilities are included in regular classes (Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kapan, 2005). Teachers and pupils have also reported that inclusion can positively influence the social skills and understanding of all students (Dyson et al., 2004).

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In summary, altering schools to make them more inclusive may bring benefits to all students and staff as opportunities for participation and learning are increased (Alton-Lee, 2003; Booth & Ainscow, 2011) and a more child-centred pedagogy is used (UNESCO, 1994). Policies and practices are created from the values and beliefs that are held (Powell, 2012), and depending on the orientation of these, may either support or undermine teachers' and schools' inclusive values (Dyson et al., 2004).

Theoretical Discourses

Theoretical discourses are used to discuss the world in different ways. They frame how problems are identified, how these are viewed, and the potential solutions to these problems (Fulcher, 1989). A theoretical discourse can provide us with a lens to examine how our beliefs and teaching practices impact children's learning, belonging and participating (Macartney, 2009). Discourses can also be accepted as 'the truth' and used to rationalise how we understand and interact with children with diverse educational needs (Fulcher, 1989; MacArthur, Purdue, & Ballard, 2003).

Medical model discourse

The medical model has historically been the most dominant view of disability (Fulcher, 1989). The medical model focuses on disabilities and impairments, as the predominant feature of individuals and the main reason they experience difficulties (Kearney, 2013; Mitchell, 1999). This discourse suggests that disability is an intrinsic attribute (Fulcher, 1989), and professional knowledge is needed to provide a "cure" or "intervention". Medical professionals hold the power and low expectations are common for those with disabilities (McKenzie, 2013; Mertens, Sullivan, & Stace, 2011). Language such as 'special needs' defines children with disabilities or additional learning needs as different from 'normal' people and segregation or

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interventions are seen as appropriate responses to these different needs (Kearney, 2013; Mertens et al., 2011; Slee, 2007; Stamou & Padelia, 2009).

Charity discourse

The charity discourse sees people with disabilities as pitiable, needy and dependent on others for care (Macartney, 2009). Personal tragedy is another term to describe this discourse. Well-intentioned charity can lead teachers to respond in a compensatory way, or other children may take a dominant role, such as doing tasks for the child that they would be capable of completing on their own (Alton-Lee et al., 2000). Those receiving 'help' are expected to be grateful (Fulcher, 1989). The charity discourse shares some themes with the medical discourse and these have traditionally been the dominant discourses relating to disability (Fulcher, 1989).

Social/human rights model

The rights discourse or social model of disability was developed by disability activists to counter the medical model (Mertens et al., 2011). It moves disability from being located within an individual to a product of social factors in the environment (Alton-Lee et al., 2000). Disabled people described themselves as an oppressed minority (Mertens et al., 2011) and shifted the debate from medically dominated agendas to politics and citizenship (Hughes & Paterson, 1997). A distinction is made between impairments and disability. Impairments refer to biological differences, and disability to the process of social exclusion (Hughes & Paterson, 1997). Impairments and other differences are not viewed negatively, instead they are seen as individual facets of a person's life that contribute to a diverse social world (Hamre, Oyler, & Bejoian, 2006). Understanding disability through a human rights or social model lens

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encourages steps toward social acceptance and the provision of services and infrastructures that remove barriers to education (Stamou & Padelia, 2009).

‘Special’ education is seen as reproducing structural inequalities that exist in society in an institutional form (Mitchell, 1999). Inclusive education has emerged out of the human rights model and challenges the practices that exclude some children from education (Winter & O’Raw, 2010). Difficulties with learning can be reframed from problems within the learners to professional challenges for the teachers (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Inclusive Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand

National policies on the education of children with disabilities can help guide the development of more inclusive education systems (World Health Organization, 2011). New Zealand’s educational policies have evolved in response to overseas precedents, socio-political changes, the rights movement, lobbying by stakeholders, research and developments in medicine and technologies (Mitchell, 2010). Educational policies relating to children with ‘special educational needs’ or disabilities have changed significantly throughout New Zealand’s educational history.

Missionary schools provided the first formal European based education in New Zealand (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1985). Free compulsory state education for children aged 7 to 13 was introduced with the Education Act 1877, but attendance was rarely enforced. Children who had ‘permanent infirmities’ did not need to be included, and there were no provisions for ‘special’ education. Churches, voluntary organisations, institutions for the ‘blind, deaf and dumb’, or other such ‘infirmities’ were the only option for families until the 1907 Education Amendment Act made education compulsory for “defective” children between the ages of 6 to 21. A defective child was defined as

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a child who, not being idiot or imbecile, and not being merely backward, is by reason of mental or physical defect incapable of receiving proper benefit from instruction in an ordinary school, but is not incapable by reason of such defect of receiving benefit from instruction in a 'special' school or class. (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1985, p. 14)

Segregation and institutionalisation continued as the academic standards of schools became more important with the industrialisation of New Zealand (Mitchell, 1987). Voluntary and professional organisations such as the New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicapped were formed and publicised the needs and rights of segregated children. The antiracist, gay and feminist movements in the 1960s encouraged people with disabilities in the Western world to challenge oppressive stereotypes (Mertens et al., 2011), but the numbers of people in institutional care continued to grow, reaching a peak in the 1960s and 1970s (Webb, Verhoeven, & Eggleston, 2007).

The mainstreaming movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s led to several 'special' schools being closed (Greaves, 2003). Satellite classes, which are classrooms that are located in mainstream schools but run by a 'special' school, were established. Some children with disabilities began to be included in regular classes, but the teaching curriculum and classroom strategies did not change. This led to some children being present in regular schools, but unable to participate. The International Year of Disabled People in 1981 brought a great deal of attention to the human rights issues relating to people with disabilities (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) specified that children with disabilities have the same rights as children without disabilities, including the right to education (UN General Assembly, 1989).

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Education Act 1989

The Education Act of 1989 made it illegal for schools to turn away children with disabilities or ‘special educational needs’ (Minister for Disability Issues, 2001; New Zealand Government, 1989). The Department of Education was decentralised and replaced with a policy focussed Ministry of Education. Schools became self-managed by elected Boards of Trustees, and the Education Review Office was established to evaluate and report on the education in schools (McLean & Wills, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2010b). National education guidelines had room for interpretation, Kearney (2009) believes this allowed some schools to continue to exclude children. ‘Special’ units attached to conventional schools become the general setting for children with disabilities (Ryan, 2004). To receive ‘special’ education support a Section 9 Agreement needed to be completed showing that the Secretary for Education and the child’s parents agree that the child should receive ‘special’ education, be enrolled in a ‘special’ school, or receive support from a ‘special’ service (New Zealand Government, 1989).

Not long after these important changes in New Zealand, 300 participants from 92 governments, including New Zealand, met to adopt the principles outlined in the Salamanca Statement in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Statement has been named the most important international document on inclusive education (Ainscow et al., 2013). Regular inclusive schools are promoted as “the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all” (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix).

SE2000

The *Special Education 2000* (SE2000) policy was the first time a cohesive ‘special’ education policy had been formulated in New Zealand (Ryan, 2004). It was

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released in 1996 and progressively implemented with the intention of supporting children with ‘special educational needs’ to access the curriculum at their local school (Ministry of Education, 2012b). A new system of resourcing conceptualised students’ needs as forming a pyramid, with a small number of students requiring intensive support and increasing numbers of students requiring less support (McMenamin, 2011). A flexible funding policy was introduced where schools received grants and then paid for adaptations and specialists’ services directly (Coleman, 2011; Stace, 2007). Three high needs categories were created; Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS) which has since been renamed Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS), Severe Behaviour Initiative (SBI), and Severe Language Initiative (SLI). Funding is devolved, with schools choosing a "fundholder" to manage resources for the student. A bulk-funded Special Education Grant (SEG) is given to schools annually to provide ‘special needs’ assistance for students falling outside these categories (Coleman, 2011; Ryan, 2004). Schools can decide how to spend the SEG to benefit children with ‘special needs’, for instance on teacher training, resources, teacher’s aide time, and/or on groups of students or individuals (Ministry of Education, 2010e).

The intention of SE2000 policy was to move away from a medical paradigm, attributing difficulties in learning to internal characteristics of individual children. Mitchell (1999) argues that medical model ideas remain and are evident in components that focus on identifying students’ deficits and then providing resources to schools to address these. The role of ‘special’ schools was not considered in much detail in SE2000 (McMenamin, 2011).

The NZ Disability Strategy

The New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS) was created in collaboration with disabled people and community organisations to remove barriers that disabled

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people face in society (Minister for Disability Issues, 2001). There is no legislation or policy from the strategy, but it provides guidance for government and agencies relating to disabled people (Office of Disability Issues, 2011). Objective 3 has the following actions for schools to include students with disabilities:

- no child being excluded from their local school due to their impairment
- development of effective communication to fit the needs of the student
- educators understanding the needs of disabled people
- equitable access to resources
- encouraging interactions between disabled children at different schools
- promoting inclusive schools
- improving the options for post-compulsory education for people with disabilities (Minister for Disability Issues, 2001).

Review of special education

The Government commenced a review of ‘Special Education’ in 2009. The public was asked to share their views on the review in 2010 by responding to a series of questions in the discussion document, and more than 2,000 responses were received (Ministry of Education, 2010d). The findings suggest inclusive practices in schools need to increase, achievement for learners with ‘special educational needs’ to rise and ‘special’ educational services need to be less bureaucratic and more accessible (Ministry of Education, 2012b).

MacArthur and Armstrong (2010) question the relevance of this review, as it interprets inclusion in a way that is not consistent with current education research, or the way other countries have embraced inclusion. It separates a group of children by labelling them as disabled and ‘special’, which can create low expectations for their achievement.

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Success for All

Success for All-Every School, Every Child was implemented in 2010 in response to the review of special education and with the aim of achieving a fully inclusive education system (Education and Science Committee, 2010). This means all schools having the resources and knowledge to provide an environment where all children, including those with ‘special educational needs’ or disabilities are welcomed and supported (Ministry of Education, 2010a, 2011, 2012b). Initiatives included a revamped Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) service, additional supports for children starting school or transitioning between schools, an outreach service, more efficient use of specialist teaching resources and a focus on improving the educational outcomes for Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2012b).

Ongoing Resourcing Scheme

New Zealand does not require a diagnostic assessment for access to resources, but evidence of an ongoing need is required (Morton, 2012). The Ministry of Education explains this is due to many children with ‘special needs’ or disabilities not having a clear diagnosis and the wide variability between learners who may have the same diagnosis (Ministry of Education, 2012b).

One resourcing component is the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS), which was initially the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS) (Ministry of Education, 2012c). It provides funding for additional specialist resources for a very small number of students deemed to have the highest educational needs that are likely to remain throughout their time at school (Ministry of Education, 2012c). The categories for eligibility include difficulties with learning, hearing, vision, mobility, language use and social communication and moderate to high difficulties in learning combined with any two categories from above (Bartleet, 2009). ORS funding is for

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specialist expertise, additional teaching, paraprofessional support and consumable items. Specialists available through ORS can include physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, speech-language therapists, advisors on deaf children and ‘special’ education advisors (Ministry of Education, 2012c). Students who are classified as having very high needs receive funding for 0.2 and those with high needs 0.1 full-time equivalent teacher (Ministry of Education, 2012c). They are entitled to free enrolment until they are 21 years old (Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Educators and parents have expressed concerns about the ORS applications, which require those writing them to focus on the deficits of the child. The categories can be too discrete, and many children who would benefit do not receive funding after the quota has been met (Bartleet, 2009; Coleman, 2011). ORS funded students may be enrolled in local schools, or they may attend a ‘special’ school. There are currently 28 state-funded ‘special’ schools in New Zealand. These usually cater only for children with disabilities, and there is minimal interaction with other students in general education (Mitchell, 2010).

Leadership

Leaders have a crucial role to play in the development of inclusive education (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Education Review Office, 2010). Inspiring leadership can support the process of inclusion by challenging limiting beliefs, sharing information, and providing direction in the cycles of learning, reflection and change (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Morton, Rietveld, Guerin, & Duke, 2012). However, an inclusive school cannot be created by the actions of a few; leaders must actively involve staff and the wider community (Hargreaves & Braun, 2012).

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Ainscow and Sandill (2010) believe schools have extensive knowledge within them that is often not being utilised effectively. Creating a shared vision of what the school is working towards, a sense of accountability for putting plans into action, and opportunities for social learning processes can encourage positive change (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Dyson, Howes, & Roberts, 2002). Giving teachers opportunities to observe each other and to collaborate encourages them to reflect on current practices, challenge assumptions, see new ways of working, and problem solve (UNESCO, 2005). Shared practice can help teachers view issues with behaviour or learning as a sign of an issue with the classroom situation rather than a problem within an individual child. Teachers can then investigate ways of changing the environment to benefit all students (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). School leaders can promote collaboration and partnerships through professional development opportunities and by creating a milieu where teachers feel comfortable to discuss their concerns and try out new ideas (MacArthur, 2012a; Sagers, Macartney, & Guerin, 2012). When teachers feel supported, they are more likely to be positive about inclusion and have practices that are more inclusive (Boyle, 2012). Hargreaves and Braun (2012) encourage teachers to take this further and develop a collective responsibility for the success of all students. This includes students in other year levels and subjects, with classroom teachers and ‘special’ education resource teachers seeing all students as “our students”.

Inclusive education requires continual discussion, reviews and alterations of practice; it is a process that cannot be separated from the context that it evolves in. The interactions between individuals and groups alter and create shared beliefs, and values can either support or limit the development of inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Hargreaves and Braun (2012) showed that by allowing schools the flexibility to respond to the issues in their local context, they created a sense of ownership and

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commitment to further changes. Collaboration is not limited to the teaching staff; expertise and resources may be shared through the student body, families, and across schools and communities (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Dyson et al., 2002). Inclusive schools are associated with leaders who encourage others to be involved in the leadership process and have developed good relationships with parents and the local community (Dyson et al., 2002; MacArthur, 2012a).

Pedagogy

Teachers are constantly making decisions and taking actions in response to the learning in their classes (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Experienced teachers have a repertoire of lesson formats that they adapt to suit a range of contextual factors such as the subject being taught, the age and mood of the students, environmental conditions and resources. These decisions often appear to be made at an intuitive level (Ainscow et al., 2013). Some teachers have successfully included diverse student groups in their classrooms, whereas other teachers have struggled or have been reluctant to try. Research into how teachers create an environment with a strong focus on inclusion can help us to understand what makes an inclusive pedagogy possible and how teachers can respond when learners experience difficulties (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012).

Teachers in successful inclusive classrooms focus on creating a culture of learning and a culture of belonging (Morton et al., 2012). Students learn most effectively when they feel accepted and have positive relationships with the adults and students in their schools (Ministry of Education, 2007a; Noddings, 2005).

There has been a tendency for educators to look for strategies that work with children who have been given certain classifications such as Autism or Down

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syndrome (Florian & Kershner, 2009). However, when the recommendations are closely examined they are often indistinguishable from each other. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) studied differentiation in Scottish primary schools. They found when teachers used approaches that worked for most learners, and provided additional support for those who had difficulties, students with additional needs were marginalised in the classroom. When some students were given simpler tasks, or were working with a teacher aide, other students saw them as different, and a limit was placed on how much they could achieve. Some experienced teachers extended what is generally available to most students to all students by providing options of choosing how, when, where and with whom they would learn and trusting them to make good decisions (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). It was not the choice of strategy that mattered, but how it was used; when a strategy is used to respond to differences in ways that do not marginalise any students it can be classed as an inclusive pedagogical approach (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012). It is important to note that even teachers who embrace inclusion may still have some practices that do not fit with an inclusive pedagogy; this may be due to external factors such as school policies (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). In New Zealand, differentiation is encouraged and is explicitly examined when a school is reviewed by the Education Review Office (Education Review Office, 2014).

Rouse (2006) lists three elements that are needed for inclusive teaching. The first is 'knowing'. This is the content knowledge relating to teaching, including different teaching strategies, how children learn, what children need to learn, policies and where to get help if needed. Knowing has been a key focus of initial teacher education and on-going professional development, but it does not always translate into improved practices in the classroom. The next element is 'doing', turning the

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knowledge into action. The last element is ‘believing’, which involves teachers believing that all children are capable of learning, and that they have relevant skills to be able to teach all children (Rouse, 2006). Rouse has gone on to argue that if two of these elements are in place the third is likely to follow. For example, if a teacher has the positive beliefs about all children learning and gains more knowledge through reading or further training they will be motivated to put it into action; if a teacher has the knowledge and puts it into action, negative beliefs will begin to change (Rouse, 2008).

Higgins, MacArthur and Kelly (2009) have also framed inclusive pedagogy around three elements. They call these the ‘a, c, d’s’ of inclusive social justice. The ‘a’ is for agency, which is present when students are participating in social interactions, doing activities with their peers, sharing in jokes and discussing their work with the teacher. The ‘c’ is for competence; this is when children are recognised for their unique abilities, all children are seen as capable and teachers have high expectations. The ‘d’ is for diversity that values differences and rejects the concept of ‘normal’ children. The researchers found when all three elements were present, disabled children were included and felt a sense of belonging (Higgins et al., 2009).

The New Zealand Curriculum states that high expectations should be held for all learners regardless of their individual circumstances. Even if a student is working within the first level of the curriculum throughout their schooling, there is still no limit to their learning and this learning needs to be recognised and celebrated (Ministry of Education, 2012a). Historically assessments in education have been used to limit the number of students who can participate in higher education or draw on limited resources (Morton, 2012). Assessments are now viewed as a way to improve both learning and teaching as teachers learn from and actively use the information in their

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future teaching (Ministry of Education, 2007c; Morton et al., 2012). However, assessments are still used for other purposes; public progress reporting against National Standards for literacy and numeracy has recently been introduced in New Zealand. There is a concern that schools may be reluctant to include children who are unlikely to show progress on these measures, and teachers may focus on content that is in the assessments (Morton, 2012). Schools have also expressed concern to the Education Review Office that this reporting may have a negative emotional impact for students who do not achieve at a level equal to their age (Education Review Office, 2013).

The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is one of the ways the school shows how it will adapt its teaching and learning programme to include a student, rather than require the student to fit the programme (Morton, 2012). In New Zealand, not all students with disabilities require an IEP; they are most commonly used when significant adaptations are needed for a child to access the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2011). An IEP plan is developed in collaboration with the student, their families or caregivers and all educators involved in the student's learning. An IEP is:

- a plan that brings together knowledge from those who know the student best.
- a document showing how the school programme will be adapted for the student.
- an individualised addition to the regular class activities.
- a forward looking plan that has goals, notes what supports might be needed and what achievement might look like.
- a living document that needs to be updated and frequently consulted (Ministry of Education, 2011).

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The World Health Organization supports the use of IEPs, stating they “are a useful tool for children with special educational needs to help them to learn effectively in the least restrictive environments” (2011, p. 220).

However, there have been concerns expressed about IEP goals. If the goals are not linked to curriculum documents, a parallel curriculum is created which may cause isolation from the rest of their class (Morton et al., 2012). Additionally IEP goals in New Zealand tend to have social and cultural goals rather than an academic focus (Education Review Office, 2013).

Teacher education and professional development

As previously mentioned, teachers’ attitudes may be positively related to how much training and experience they have in working with students with diverse needs (de Boer et al., 2010). In New Zealand, there are approximately thirty approved providers of teacher education, providing three or four year undergraduate degrees or one year graduate diploma (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2010). There is minimal preparation relating to the range of diversity teachers will encounter (McLean & Wills, 2010). Courses on disability or diversity may be optional, but some providers are using an integrated model where the content of all courses addresses issues of diversity and inclusion (O’Neill, Bourke, & Kearney, 2009). In 2005, the Ministry of Education stated teacher training needs to focus on the skills, knowledge, strategies and values to work effectively with diverse learners (Ministry of Education, 2005). A review five years later continued to call for improved teacher training, professional development and school leadership so all schools are better able to work with children with disabilities (Education and Science Committee, 2010). Rather than adding additional content relating to disabilities into teacher training programmes, it has been suggested

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that these programmes focus on the diversity of all students (Alton-Lee, 2003; O'Neill et al., 2009; Rouse & Florian, 2012).

Teacher aide education and professional development

In New Zealand, no training is required to work as a teacher aide (Rutherford, 2012b), although there are courses available. In the 2010 review of 'special' education, about 20 per cent of respondents brought up the need to improve teacher aide training and professional development (Ministry of Education, 2010d). Since this review, approximately 20 per cent of schools sampled have reviewed how teacher aides are used (Education Review Office, 2013). In particular, schools are trying to meet students' needs in the classroom rather than withdrawing them.

Teacher-teacher aide relationships need to be built on a mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities, good communication and collaboration (Rutherford, 2012b). Ensuring students understand that a teacher aide is there to help the teacher to support all students in the class and are not linked to any particular student can avoid the stigma of a particular student feeling different or being isolated from the class or teacher. Additionally other students who may need support are also able access it (Rutherford, 2012b).

The way educators understand and work with different students are influenced by their theoretical frameworks. The next section introduces the theoretical framework that was used to frame this research.

Social Constructionism as a Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are used as we interact with each other and our environment; they shape our assumptions and influence what we see, how we explain things, what we define as problems and what we see as solutions (Carrington,

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MacArthur, et al., 2012). This research uses social constructionism as the theoretical framework used to frame this research. Social constructionism views all knowledge as constructed by people as they interact and interpret the world (Crotty, 1998; Robson, 2011). Constructed knowledge is embedded within the context and culture that it evolved in (Robson, 2011; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). A single phenomenon such as inclusion can have multiple interpretations by different individuals, cultures and eras (Crotty, 1998). Social constructionism explains how ideas around categories such as education, gender, race, class, childhood, disability and ‘normal/abnormal’ can and have changed across time and cultures (Carrington, MacArthur, et al., 2012; Gergen, 1985; Macartney, 2009).

Stories about people with disabilities or impairments have commonly used narratives based on a medical model of disability (Shakespeare, 1996). These stories may focus on interventions and rehabilitation to overcome disabilities or on how someone with a disability is different from ‘normal’ and the negative effects of this. Such narratives can be thought of as being constructed (shaped by and continuing to shape) understandings of disability as deficit and illness. These social constructions have impacted on ideas about where people with disabilities belong in society and have led to a focus on remediation as well as containment in institutions and other separate places. Constructionist inquiry can challenge the thinking behind categories of separation, such as gender or disabilities and allow us to create new meanings that may be less confining or remove the unhelpful constructions completely (Gergen, 1985). Thus, social constructionism allows us appreciate that disability can also be constructed in positive ways, as an ordinary aspect of the human condition that is associated with strengths and capability.

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An example of this process is illustrated in the work of Biklen and Burke (2006). Adults and children who have severe communication impairments are often presumed to be incompetent, but Biklen and Burke (2006) propose that outsiders have a choice to see a person with limited verbal communication as either incompetent or to make no judgement on the other's thinking unless they reveal it. Perceiving a person as competent, when they have limited means of communication, means educators and caregivers must find ways to support the person to demonstrate their agency. This is more challenging than maintaining that the person is incompetent, but prevents limiting a person due to assumptions that may or may not be correct.

Research by Bogdan and Taylor (1989) also emphasises positive, transformative narratives of disability by illustrating loving relationships between people who do not have a disability with people who have 'severe' disabilities. People without disabilities in this study did not deny that there were differences, but they could see the similarities with themselves, that the person is a 'person like me'. The authors identified dimensions that supported people without disabilities to focus on the humanness of the other, including: individuality in the other; viewing the other as contributing to the relationship; and defining the other as a full and integral part of their social unit, or family.

Relationships with these dimensions may not be common, but they show that how a person with disabilities is understood and treated depends on the definitions we use ourselves, rather than the person's physical or mental condition (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989). Thus, how we understand difference comes from our beliefs, attitudes, values and the environment we are in. In education, this understanding will shape how we interact with students, families and the wider society (Carrington, MacArthur, et al., 2012).

The Present Study

This study is located in a school community: a complex environment with multiple influences on the way ideas about inclusion are understood and put into practice. It focuses on one classroom that includes a child with 'high needs' within a school that is perceived to have an inclusive focus. Participants included key members of the class, a child with 'high needs'; the mother of the child; four peers; the class teacher and teacher aide; the ORS funded teacher; and the school principal.

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is inclusion understood by the various participants?
2. What are the values and practices in the classroom and the wider school and classroom that are associated with inclusion?
3. How do children experience a classroom that focuses on being part of an inclusive school community?

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the way the research was designed and carried out. The paradigm that underpins this study and the research design are described, along with the setting and participants; the methods used to collect and analyse the data; and the ethical considerations that are relevant to this research study.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

Qualitative research is a rapidly expanding area in the humanities, including education and psychology (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Qualitative research does not seek to make generalisations or to create universal knowledge. It can provide insights into how people make sense of the world and experience events by focusing on the perspectives of those who are most influenced by the phenomenon being investigated (Coyle, 2007; Koch & Gitchel, 2011; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Qualitative research can be particularly valuable to inform practitioners and policymakers (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Qualitative studies can explore the attitudes and experiences of a range of people and how policies or practises influence them. Qualitative data includes a wide range of sources including, for example, interviews, observations, photographs, videos, archival material, and fieldnotes.

Social constructionism is the theoretical approach used to inform the methods used to collect and analyse data in this study. A social construct is something that is assumed to be 'real' at this time and in this place, but in another place, time or to another person the same phenomenon will be understood differently (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Researchers working within a qualitative paradigm and from a constructionist

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approach are positioned as learners, rather than the owners of knowledge, and work in partnership with participants who are the experts on their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). A constructionist ‘lens’ is used in the present study to examine how the participants (children, parents, the teacher, teacher aide, school principal and others) interpret inclusion and how inclusion is played out in the day-to-day life of the school.

Case Study Methodology

A qualitative case study methodology was selected to focus on the perspectives of individuals in this specific context. Case studies have been used since we have had recorded history, and have made significant contributions to our knowledge of the empirical world (Flyvbjerg, 2011). They are highly valued for their capacity to examine the experiences of the insiders and provide an in-depth analysis of a given situation (Black-Hawkins, 2010; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Information such as what works for whom and why can be discovered through case studies, and can encourage discussions between the researcher and participants that may lead to improvements in teaching practice (Mabry, 2009; Nilholm & Alm, 2010; Rudduck, 1988). Case studies explore real life experiences where the researcher conducts in-depth investigations on a phenomenon within the context in which it occurs (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Case studies allow the researcher to use multiple data gathering methods and to use either a single case or multiple cases to examine a phenomenon.

Qualitative and quantitative researchers are equally concerned about scientific rigor and credibility (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). A strength of case studies is the depth of detail and richness of data that can be obtained through this method. A criticism has been a lack of generalizability. Qualitative research aims to understand specific individuals’ experiences but Flyvbjerg (2011) argues that descriptive studies such as this one can contribute to the collective knowledge in the field and provide insights

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that may lead to generalizable findings. Practitioner subjectivity has been raised as another concern. Mabry (2009) advises this can be minimised with triangulation and validation although, Aguinaldo (2004) argues subjectivity should no longer be an issue, as validity can be perceived as an issue of power. Aguinaldo explains researchers who use a positivist framework assert their research as ‘fact’ by using specific language and strategies in scientific writing, and discounting other interpretations. Social constructionism, on the other hand, argues that there is no ‘fact’, no single truth (Gergen, 1985). No research findings are ‘value free’, findings are always in need of interpretation, and are actively constructed (Aguinaldo, 2004).

Ethics

Ethical approval was granted by Massey University Human Ethics Committee and was guided by the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for research involving human participants and the Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Psychological Society. This covered key concerns relating to informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and the right of withdrawal (New Zealand Psychological Society, 2002). In addition, the ethical review included approaches to the inclusion of children in the research in ways that respected their rights as children, such as giving them the same rights when it came to reviewing their data and the consent procedure, although the child participants did require parental or guardian consent to participate. No data were collected until ethical approval was granted.

Confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw at any stage were key features of this research. However, the participants are all involved in one classroom and can choose to read the completed thesis if they wish. Complete confidentiality and anonymity were therefore not possible as they are likely to be able to identify each other if they read this thesis. All practical steps have been taken to protect the

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participants' anonymity and confidentiality; this includes altering identifying information and using pseudonyms.

It is important that children are given a voice in research that impacts upon them (Powell & Smith, 2009; Rucklidge & Williams, 2007). To ensure that children can participate ethically in research, children and those who require support from others are given special consideration and additional layers of consent are advised (Loveridge & Meyer, 2010; New Zealand Psychological Society, 2002). Consent was obtained from each child and a parent of each child. I reminded children they had a choice about being involved in the study, and they did not have to answer the questions. I used language the children could understand and checked for understanding. The children who were not directly involved in the research did not have any details recorded about them.

All names and identifying features have been removed from this thesis, and only pseudonyms are used for the school, participants and places.

Procedures

Steps for recruiting participants and consent

This study used purposive sampling whereby a sample is selected because it is likely to yield the most relevant data for the research objectives (Palys, 2008; Yin, 2011). The aim was to base the research in a school that was viewed locally as 'inclusive' and currently had children with diverse needs including those on the ORS scheme' in regular classes. The researcher initially asked contacts in education and disability services to recommend schools in the local area that they perceived as having inclusive cultures. This was defined as:

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- having policies and a values structure that supports inclusion
- welcoming children and families who have disabilities (and other minority groups)
- having children with disabilities, including children on the ORS scheme currently enrolled
- actively including children with disabilities

I looked at recent Education Review Office (ERO) reports and the websites of schools, and created a short-list of three schools. The researcher phoned the principal of the first school on the short list; the principal was welcoming and enthusiastic about the proposed research and confirmed the school included children with high needs in regular classes. Other schools were not approached.

The Board of Trustees was given information about the study that the principal presented at the Board's monthly meeting (see Appendix A). The Board and the principal consented to the study being carried out in this school. The principal distributed Information sheets (see Appendix B for all information and consent forms) to the teachers at St Gabrielle's who had ORS funded children in their class to see who would like to be involved in the study. A teacher in a new-entrant/year one classroom expressed interest and met the researcher to discuss details further and complete the consent form. The principal contacted the parents of the ORS funded child; they expressed a willingness to participate and agreed to have their contact details forwarded to me. The child's parents were divorced, so I phoned both parents to explain the research and posted the information and consent forms to them separately, which they signed and returned. The child's mother was used as the key contact as she was the primary caregiver. I met briefly with the teacher aide to introduce myself and to give her the information and consent forms, which she signed and returned. The

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teacher passed on the consent form to the ORS funded teacher, who emailed me with several questions before returning her signed consent form.

I did not have any preference for a specific year group, but the information and consent forms for the children were simplified to make the language more understandable once it was known the children would be five years old. To select the child participants the researcher briefly spoke to the class about the study, and checked their understanding of what was planned. A letter was sent home with all students with brief details about the study (see Appendix C). Those students who wished to be involved asked their parents to sign the bottom of this form and return it to school. When these were returned, the researcher sent home information and consent forms (see Appendix B). The first four children to return the consent forms were selected as participants, at this point the class was informed enough participants had been selected but if anyone wanted to ask any questions or talk to the researcher they could. The researcher did not record any identifying details about children who were not participants in the study, but observations and discussions were recorded in field notes. In addition to written parental consent, consent was required from the children participating. Prior to the interview, I rechecked for understanding and consent. The consent process was designed to be consistent with recommendations for ethical research involving children (Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson, & Fitzgerald, 2013; Loveridge & Meyer, 2010). The researcher worked with the mother of the ORS funded child to develop a consent form that fitted her needs (see Appendix B).

Research setting and participants

The focus classroom, Room 2, is a new-entrant/year one classroom. There were 18 children in this class at the time of data collection including Mandy, the focus student in this research. Mandy is verified on the ORS scheme as having 'high needs'

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(HN). Under the ORS scheme Mandy receives funding for additional resources that include additional teacher time (0.1 FTE ORS teacher), specialist support, paraprofessional support (teacher aide) and consumables. The principal has extensive teaching experience in New Zealand and overseas. He has been in his current role for the last eight years. The class teacher has been teaching for eight years at St Gabrielle's and overseas. St Gabrielle's has employed the ORS funded teacher in a part-time position for the last 12 years; she also works in several other schools. The teacher aide has worked at St Gabrielle's for more than 20 years. The children in the class were between five and six years old, except for Mandy, who turned seven during the research period. Table 1 lists the participants in this project and the data collection methods used for each participant.

Table 1: *Research participants and data collection methods*

Pseudonym	Role	Data Collection Methods
Mr Jackson	Principal	Interview
Jane Peters	Teacher	Observations, interview
Kylie Harris	ORS funded teacher	Observations, interview
Lisa	Teacher Aide	Observations, interview
Mandy	ORS funded student	Observations, interview
Mandy's mum	Mother of ORS funded student	Interview
Alex	Student in the class	Observations, interview
Tom	Student in the class	Observations, interview
Annie	Student in the class	Observations, interview
Isla	Student in the class	Observations, interview

Data Collection Methods

The approach to inquiry influences how the data is collected (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Social constructionism views individuals as actively constructing their understandings of a particular phenomenon (inclusion in this case), through their

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everyday actions and conversations (Gergen, 2009). To gain an understanding of how this happens I positioned myself as an observer, documenting interactions and conducting interviews to explore participants' perspectives and experiences.

Data for the study were collected through interviews, observations and the analysis of archival data, including the school's policy documentation, and class documentation such as IEPs. Observations were used to gain a picture of what was happening in day-to-day practice. Semi-structured interviews gave the participants the opportunity to express how they felt about and experienced inclusion. They also provided an opportunity for me as a researcher to ask and explore questions I had after the school-based observations. Archival searches enabled me to see how inclusion featured in the documentation that was central to the school's designated character, culture and day-to-day practice. Combining different sources of data can enhance the content validity of the study and allows the researcher to explore participants' experiences through a range of lenses (Firmin, 2008; Mabry, 2009).

Observations

Naturalistic observations attempt to capture "authentic, rich descriptions of the behaviour of interest as it naturally exists and unfolds in its real context" (McKechnie, 2008, p. 551). Observations have been called 'primary data' because what the researcher sees and perceives has not been filtered by others (Yin, 2011).

Observations were used to document interactions between participants and to appreciate how inclusion is constructed through everyday actions and conversations. I conducted observations over four full school days from 8:50 am to 3:00 pm over two weeks. Days when both Mandy and the class teacher were present were chosen. I followed the class through the school day, and occasionally observed Mandy during out of class activities. I tried to maintain a background role, but willingly assisted the

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staff and students when requested. Field notes were recorded during and immediately after observations; these were detailed written descriptions of what I heard and saw, including what was said. There were frequent opportunities for informal conversations with the participants during the observations, and these exchanges were recorded in detail and incorporated into the field notes.

Documentation and physical artefacts

Examining documents and physical artefacts can provide rich information on the case, particularly as they are created outside of the research (Olson, 2010). Documents and artefacts are frequently viewed as a form of primary data (Yin, 2011). The documents examined included governance documents (the school Charter and 'special' needs policy); Mandy's Individual Education Plan (IEP); the ORS funded teacher's schedule and fortnightly reports that detail what they had been working on, what resources were used and what progress was made. Consent was obtained from Mandy, Mandy's mother and the principal to examine and analyse these documents.

Interviews

Interviews are a common source of data for qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). They allow the researcher to gain multiple perspectives and provide a means of finding out what participants themselves are thinking, feeling and doing (Firmin, 2008; Robson, 2011). Qualitative interviews are not formally scripted; rather they are more conversational, involving a two-way interaction and encouraging the participant to tell their story in their own words (Yin, 2011).

Interviews were scheduled at convenient times and locations for the participants, these took place over a three week period Children were asked if they would like to be interviewed at home or school and if they would like an adult of their

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choice present. All children opted to be interviewed at school, in a room adjacent to the classroom and on their own. I went over the consent forms prior to the interviews and reminded all participants they did not need to complete the interviews or answer any questions that they did not want to. The interviews were semi-structured. I had an interview schedule with key questions (see Appendix D) but this was only used as a guide; questions were altered, omitted, added or asked in a different order depending on the situation. The participants were able to shape the interview actively to tell their story (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

With each participant's consent, a voice recorder was used to provide a precise record of the interview and field notes were written after each interview. The interviews were transcribed by myself. The transcripts were given to participants so they could comment on the accuracy of the transcripts, and alter them if they would like. When they were happy with the transcripts, participants were asked to sign a transcription release form (see Appendix E). I asked participating children if they would like me to read the transcripts with them or if they would like to take the transcripts home to read with their parents. All children chose to read them with me. Giving data back to participants to validate helps to ensure and improve the accuracy of the data and minimise bias (Mabry, 2009). Most participants made small changes to their transcripts.

I discussed methods of interviewing Mandy with her mother, teacher and teacher aide. It is important when working with disabled children that "flexible approaches are adopted, which can be tailored to the needs of those involved" (Shaw, Brady, & Davey, 2011, p. 18). I went over the consent form developed for Mandy (see Appendix C). I used picture cards that Mandy used in her visual timetable, and provided four to eight options for each question. Mandy pointed to or picked up at

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least one card for every question. The researcher repeated questions when unsure.

Mandy's responses were recorded in field notes.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed for emerging themes around the understanding and experiences of the participants about inclusion. An inductive thematic analysis was used; this is a data-driven form of analysis, where themes are identified from what is in the dataset without the use of a specific theory (Braun & Clarke, 2013). I reviewed the data several times, to become familiar with the content. The research questions provided a framework from which to identify and explore relevant themes emerging within the data set. Themes were refined through repeated, critical reading of the data that was informed by central ideas about inclusion and 'special' education in the extant research literature. Themes were ultimately organised into the following categories:

- Values
- Understandings of inclusion
- Roles and responsibilities
- Team work
- Practices that lead to inclusion
- Barriers to inclusion

The findings are supported by data such as excerpts from interviews and vignettes from observations (Mabry, 2009). In summary, this study uses a case study methodology and a social constructionist lens to examine how the participants understand and experience inclusion in one classroom. The ethical considerations, and steps to recruit the participants have been described. The research setting and the participants have been outlined. Data were gathered through semi-structured

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interviews, observations in the classroom and through an analysis of relevant school documentation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The themes that emerged from the data have been grouped around the three main research questions. In order to represent the findings in the most authentic manner possible, direct quotes are used extensively. There is an initial description of the school to provide the reader with relevant information on the environment.

The Context

Description of the school. Saint Gabrielle's is a coeducational state-integrated Catholic school that caters for years 0-6 (ages 5 to 11). St Gabrielle's is located in the North Island of New Zealand in a provincial city. The school receives government funding and follows the eight core New Zealand curriculum areas with an additional focus on religious education and values as fitting the designated character of the school. The school charter describes the designated character and values as permeating all aspects of school life. St Gabrielle's is an attractive school with the administration and teaching blocks on a hill surrounded by large trees. The school has been extended to cater for a rapid increase in enrolments over the last ten years. There are currently approximately 250 pupils enrolled; those who identify with the school's designated character individually or through their family have enrolment preference. Students come from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and the school welcomes children with additional learning needs or disabilities.

Room 2 is painted brightly, has large windows, a mat area at the front of the class and a library area with a couch at the back. Areas for resources are clearly labelled and tidy. Each child has a placemat with their name and picture, an alphabet with pictures, consonant clusters and frequently used words. The other side has the

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numbers zero to nine showing how to form the numbers and write the words, a number square to 50 and the school's core values, which are explained in the values section.

Special education policy

St Gabrielle's 'special' education policy describes 'special' education needs as any child requiring "extra assistance, adapted programmes and/or learning environments, specialised equipment and/or materials to support them in education settings". The 'special' needs policy is focussed on moving away from a deficit model and recognises that the environment must change to support student learning. The policy states: "We recognise that good inclusion teaching practice is good teaching practice and creates an environment where all children will learn in optimum conditions".

The 'special' education policy explains the teacher "changes or adapts the environment to suit the needs of the children" to create an environment where learning preferences are factored into learning. Differences are celebrated, and problem solving is used to overcome barriers to learning; collaboration among parents, children and teachers are fostered. Goals are discussed, defined and openly shared. Professional development is provided to help staff create programmes and environments that are beneficial to students' development. An IEP is required if the "child's needs cannot be met through the normal classroom programme in more than one area". Teacher aides are located "in various classrooms to work with special needs children" ; if children are withdrawn from the classroom, the time needs to be well spent. All children who have been identified with 'special' needs or abilities are recorded in the register with the actions taken. The 'special' education grant is to be spent on the school's identified needs (Special needs policy).

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The school charter has a strategic goal to “provide quality teaching and learning programmes that meet individual needs and abilities”. The intended outcome for this goal is that “learners with special educational needs are supported to come to school, engage in all school activities and achieve against the key competencies and learning areas of The New Zealand Curriculum”. The strategies to reach this goal include “Continued programmes and opportunities to be sought outside of the school to cater for the specialised needs of the ORRS [sic] funded.” While the goal is all students to engage in all activities, the above strategy of seeking external programmes and opportunities for students with perceived additional needs, will take this group of students away from the activities their classmates are engaged in. These statements exemplify the potential tensions schools may face as they move toward increasingly inclusive practices.

Values

St Gabrielle’s mission statement reads “Our School, with Christ as the foundation, aims for excellence in education and the total formation of the individual, working in partnership with the community and based on the principles of the Catholic Church”. This statement shows the school’s focus on the whole child as well as the academic. Data gathered from school documents, interviews and observations evidences this consistent emphasis on these values.

The charter overview, in Figure 1, has the core values at the centre, emphasising the academic and social skills the school wants students to develop. The core values are surrounded by the NZ curriculum vision, then the key competencies in the New Zealand Curriculum. The outer layer has the gospel values tika (justice), pono (respect), and aroha (love).

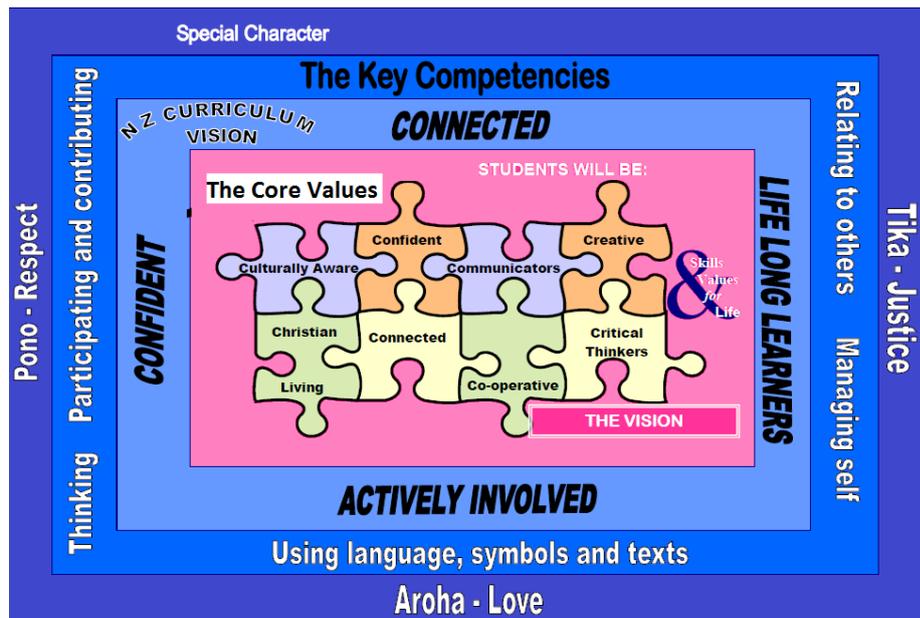


Figure 1. St Gabrielle's charter overview

Mr Jackson, the principal, explained the importance of the gospel values for the creation of the school culture:

Aroha is obviously love and that's love for our neighbour and our love for all people within our community context and then we've got our respect function within that and that's respect for self and respect for others. We make sure that the children understand that their relationship with others is respecting themselves first and others so it's all based on those gospel values right at the heart of everything and....with tika and acting justly that's all about is that social justice so there is no inequality in our school.

The school vision states "We will provide quality learning opportunities that actively promote the development of our core values." Core values in the School Charter relating specifically to inclusion include:

- Christian Living (showing consideration for others and building positive relationships through the use of justice, respect and love);

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- Co-operation (being aware of and accepting difference between individuals and respecting the rights of others);

Cultural Awareness (respecting and understanding our own and others' cultures) Cultural awareness was the value Mr Jackson referred to as being particularly key for inclusion as it involves respect for themselves and diversity. He stated:

With culturally aware, that is not necessarily ethnic background relationship, that's understanding who we are in where our context is, where we've come from and what our place is and we can respect that someone else's place within our community is quite different in what their cultural context is. So we make sure that the children understand that their relationship with others is respecting themselves first and then others.

The core values and gospel values are highly visible in the physical environment. The classrooms have displays of the core values and the school foyer has a witnessing wall that shows the school growth in each value. Assemblies focus on different core values; I observed an assembly focused on Christian Living where members of the parish came in to talk about the work they do and ways children could participate. Certificates were given to children for achievements relating to the core values. Some examples were: always displaying confidence to tackle new tasks and learning; making connections in maths; creative ideas in writing; showing Christian living; being kind and welcoming to all new children.

School management

St Gabrielle's has grown from a small school to a medium sized one fairly quickly. This growth had led to resourcing and structural changes within the school, including a new position. The principal explained:

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We now have a SENCO...who happens to be our director of religious studies as well. She drives the special character of this school too and the pastoral care, so it was a natural fit to put her into that role....The two DP's still have a drive for it but the SENCO role takes care of a lot of the administration load...which is great.

Mr Jackson values the communication processes that were set up when it was a small school, and tries to keep these as it expands.

I think one of the key things too is that previous year teacher stuff. Is um we do a start of year enquiry for our class; we break it down...we look at who our priority learners are, and we break that down further...in terms of achievement and then...in terms of ethnic background...special support that they may have had or need...We spend a lot of time at the end of the year and start of the year really pulling our class apart and looking at who the individuals are within our class, how we can cater to their needs whatever they may be.

This information is used to make decisions regarding student and teacher support. St Gabrielle's employs a part-time English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher and ORS funded teachers to help meet the diverse needs of the students.

How is Inclusion Understood?

Principal

Mr Jackson, the principal, is a strong supporter of inclusion. He described inclusion at St Gabrielle's as:

(Inclusion) reflects our Catholic vision for this school, it's the fact of tolerance, it's that fact of understanding, it's the awareness of all of God's people, all of them are our neighbours, we love everyone who is our neighbour, so it relates just straight to the foundation of who we are as a school.

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He did not discuss any benefits or disadvantages to inclusion, reiterating that it was central to fostering a sense of belonging for all. Describing his aims for St Gabrielle's, he said:

I want it to be a well-rounded school full of experiences for kids where every child can identify how they fit into this community. It's a school where I think all children enjoy being here and the staff enjoy being here and that is my goal to lead that group of people when they feel that sense of belonging, is really what I am after, that connection to the place.

To create an environment where diverse students are welcomed Mr Jackson sees himself as having three main roles to fill. These are being aware of the needs of the children with the school and ensuring they are being catered for, modelling the values and behaviours he wants to see throughout the school, and negotiating with external agencies for resources. Discussing his role in Mandy's education he said:

My role is an awareness of what her learning needs are in the classroom, what her social needs are, what her health needs are...overseeing that so I can make sure that all those needs are being catered for, as that's where the buck stops, I guess.

He gave an example where he needed to demonstrate that expectation and acceptance when a mother came to enquire about enrolling her son:

She hesitantly told me you know he has Down syndrome, and I said, it doesn't matter, we love all our children it doesn't matter who they are or where they come from....

It's maintaining that positive relationship with the whānau, making sure that's in place cause if that's in place with me then we can make sure that it filters

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down and is in place with everybody. So once again it's modelling the expectation and acceptance of that child.... she's just a part of our school, just another pupil really with needs that we try to cater for.

His final role is to make sure the needs of children are being catered for. Often this involves negotiating with agencies to make sure the resources for staff and children are provided. "We can show as much love and support as we can but we've got to have the resourcing there to support the children too".

Mr Jackson focuses on what is happening in the school rather than what is written down in school or government policies:

With policies there are a whole lot of words on paper but I guess when you look at words on paper the way it is lived within our school is through our visions, our gospel values and our core values. We talk about that being off the page... that is what the kids can speak, what our community speaks, and it's all about what we are aiming to be.

He did not want to comment on the Ministry of Education's policy *Success for All* as he felt he was not familiar enough with the policy. He mentioned there had been limited support to develop an inclusive culture, with "special needs specialists not having a truly interactive presence within the school, a lot of it is left to us, and I suppose as an autonomous entity, I guess it should".

Funding was the only barrier to inclusion that Mr Jackson identified. He felt there was too much government money going into a new leadership initiative (Investing in Educational Success) that would be better spent on 'special' needs students:

...the lack of funding to be able to cater for her needs at all times, ah the fact that the school is having to top up teacher aide salary to be able to cater for

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what we believe her needs are and where she needs support at all times to keep her safe and to keep other people safe within the class so that would be the barrier, would be the lack of resource funding in terms of everything else um, no I think, I don't think there really are any other barriers.

Teacher/teacher aide/ongoing resourcing scheme funded teacher

St Gabrielle's policy documents promote inclusion, and this filters down through all the levels of the school. When explaining the responsibility for inclusion in St Gabrielle's, Kylie, the ORS funded teacher noted:

It comes through from the policies so the Board...the principal then working at his management structure, we've now got a SENCO... then comes down to the teams. And it's up to the teams to represent honestly the culture that is within the school and where it's all written, what it does, and our belief in inclusiveness.

She described inclusion as accepting who we are as a community, and including all children as students, explaining "it's really important for, not just for our students being with their whole community but also our community being with our students" as it allows children to learn from each other and parents can have all their children attend the same school. To ensure she is working inclusively, Kylie checks the decisions she is making about teaching and learning to meet the needs of the student and the class:

So really you've got to constantly look at everything you are doing from an inclusive point of view and checking that you are meeting the needs of the student. Not out of...convenience for us, you know. It's got to be about the needs of the student, but also the needs of all the students.

Kylie associates inclusion with more than just children with ORS funding, specifically mentioning students that come from different cultural backgrounds. "It's

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one of modelling the appropriate way that we treat all of our members in our school...it models the expectation of how we treat each other no matter who we are”.

Jane described her role as a class teacher in a holistic way that includes academic, social and caring roles:

To teach and to guide them and to support them, and help them to develop relationships with others um help them, um help them academically, I guess you’ve got to be that caring person for them as well um your guiding them, your facilitating their learning, your encouraging them to be those lifelong learners really.

When asked what inclusion means to her, Jane, the class teacher, replied “you just don’t exclude any child or any family for any reason whatever it may be.” She went on to explain that assemblies, sports events, school religious activities, and the playground are open to all students and all families. Jane stated that the school emphasises “seeing everyone as equals, and we help them all out in different ways.” She felt inclusion was beneficial for Mandy, particularly for her communication skills. Inclusion benefited the other children as well, supporting them to develop a greater understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Lisa, the teacher aide, noted many years ago when children with disabilities were invisible in the community, and contrasted inclusion as being about seeing everyone as worthy to be included. Her statements reflected a broad view of inclusion:

I like the school uniform, absolutely love it, cause socio-economically we have got from the very poor to quite wealthy here and the kids all play together on a level playing field which is good.

Lisa believes the expectations for children with disabilities may be raised when they are in an inclusive setting. “Our children are shoulder to shoulder and I

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think it's enriching for them as well and it's good for these kids, cause it raises our expectations as well". She went on to say "it is not possible to include children with disabilities in everything, but you do so as much as possible." She did indicate that inclusion might not work for all students; she believed some students were too 'disruptive' to be at school all day, giving the following example:

Once I had this little boy...his behaviour was just extreme you know. So you sometimes think if there was somewhere they could go for half a day, maybe do their formal learning here then go off somewhere else, because he had a lot of time out of class it was very difficult to include him. But children like little Mandy um yeah I think inclusion is good.

Mandy's mother

Mandy's mother had a positive view of Mandy's education but tries not to think too far into the future, as throughout Mandy's childhood plans have been interrupted due to Mandy's medical concerns:

They will encourage her to read, write and those things...how much she will understand that is an unknown factor but she should definitely learn, and she'll go on to high school, it would be more her health that holds her back from whatever she intends to do.

Mandy started to go to day-care for twenty hours a week when she was sixteen months as "I thought being an only child she needs some social, social skills". This worked well until Mandy was three and moved to the older group of children where "there was issues around inclusion. And I didn't like the way they were treating her and holding her back [...] it wasn't very inviting". She explained "as a parent it's your job to make sure the place is okay. If a place isn't welcoming you get them out and

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find a place that is”. Mandy moved to another setting where her mother felt she was welcomed.

When it came to choosing a school, the religious character was important to Mandy’s mother, but also finding “an environment where they wanted her there” and where she would be treated “normally”. She felt St Gabrielle’s was the right choice because:

They had the program set up with her, they know what they were doing with Down Syndrome, they knew with disabilities, what to do. Whereas the other schools they were more academic, and more around that base. Whereas Mandy is intelligent, but she’s not going to be an academic, it would just be too much for her.

She clarified that she wanted Mandy included in everything “as much as she can...as much as Mandy will take in”.

Values and Practices in the Classroom and the Wider School Associated with Inclusion

Values

The core values were identified by all adult participants as a key factor in helping to create the appropriate environment for inclusion. Kylie felt it was important for attitudes and values to “come from top down, it’s got to come from our staff, it’s got to come from our families and it’s got to come from our students”. Jane described the main values of the school as “a nurturing role of helping others...supporting those that are in need or helping everyone out basically” and referred back to the core values. Lisa saw “nurturing” and “supporting those that are in need” as key values for St Gabrielle’s. Lisa explained this means children who need food, shoes, clothes have been given these and parents who can’t afford school activities are supported. The school charter refers to this as a pastoral care program that helps families in times of

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need, celebrates happy events such as births, provides financial support for school activities, and acts as a liaison for families seeking parish support.

When children were asked about the core values, there were a variety of responses. Annie explained it was “Christian living”, but when prompted for the details she said “I don’t remember”. Isla excitedly said, “You get to have morning tea with Mr Jackson and two or three bits of chocolate cake.” When prompted to share what you have to do to get that, she said “help other kids.” Alex described the core values as “helping others, doing good at writing time, don’t lie down in the carpet, um um sit up in the carpet and...no others.” Mandy smiled at me but did not point to any pictures when asked.

Social relationships

There is a strong emphasis on positive social relationships in the school, along with collaboration and support for one another. Lisa explained “the kids here, they’re not perfect, but basically they’re nice kids and they’re encouraged to be nice to each other, to be respectful and I think the culture of the school revolves around that”. Jane said she wanted the children to “develop a caring and kindness towards others but also helping each other out”. She emphasised taking turns, sharing, and co-operation in her classroom. Lisa reinforced this, saying that Jane encouraged the children to be kind, think about others, take time to listen to each other, and to not leave anyone on their own. “There would be no such thing as one child laughing at another child’s work or anything like that; it would just be totally unacceptable, and they all know that.”

Approaches to teaching practice

Modelling values in practice. The principal, teacher and ORS funded teacher talked about the importance of modelling appropriate behaviour. Mr Jackson

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described his role as “modelling the expectation and acceptance” of children from minority groups, such as those with disabilities or from non-English speaking backgrounds, stating “if that’s in place with me then we can make sure that it filters down and is in place with everybody”. Kylie echoed this when she noted “It’s important for the adults to model it for the students, for the students to imitate it and to take it all on board.” The school charter stated class bears are used to model the core values. Jane begins the school year with co-operative activities to promote a positive class culture. She described this process:

I’m sort of getting alongside, almost that social coaching where you are telling them how they are playing and oh I like the way you shared that doll or whatever with that person and you set up your class rules and expectations...and I think continual reinforcement of that.

I observed Jane using frequent praise for behaviour, for example, “Tom is sitting up facing me, and Mandy looks ready to learn”.

Support for teaching and learning

Differentiation is used to help Mandy and the other children in the class. Jane said “they all have the same opportunities, it’s just different levels of support...to make the activity achievable for them, with some challenge”. Her expectations varied for each child as she perceived them to be working at different levels. Jane started with the same planning for all of the class and then modified it for Mandy and other students. She explained:

Within the school you have got a timetabled structure for reading, writing maths and so on... we fit um Mandy’s planning into that you know so reading is just the same, it’s that handling of book, care, directionality, attempting finger pointing, we just sort of look back at what our readers can do or what

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our writers can do and we just narrow it back for Mandy basically. For maths, it's just those concepts of more or less or none and those number counting to ten basically...I think about how accessible the activity is and relevant to the experiences of the learner. We also have other programmes available for Mandy, PMP, riding for disabled, and Moveables.

PMP (Perceptual Motor Program) uses a series of movements that are designed to “prepare the brain for formal learning” (Moving Smart, 2014) and Moveables is a movement skills programme for children with disabilities.

Jane found identifying resources to help Mandy with her learning difficult at the start, she noted “because her developmental age was far below the other kids basically so it's just getting those developmental type activities”. Kylie described her role initially as finding good starting points for Mandy in the class and helping Jane and Lisa get set up with resources and ideas. They now have a resource cupboard with activities, books and items that have been gathered and made as a team over the last year. Mandy needed some other small physical adaptations in the class. For example, sitting on the floor is difficult for her, so she has a small chair that she uses.

Kylie and Jane have moved their focus to increasing the time Mandy spends participating in the classroom routines. Kylie described this as “looking for the opportunities of fitting Mandy in with the class routine and actually how to adapt things”. Mandy is with the class for prayer, shared reading, and some other whole class mat times. She has recently started to join the class for the first rotation of the reading tumble activities. Reading tumble is a series of activities that rotate daily; an example is shown in Table 2. Mandy reads with Jane while other students are completing the worksheets, has a break and then does other phonics or letter based

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activities. These latter activities happen at a separate table at the back of the class with Lisa or Kylie while other students do the second activity.

Table 2: *Reading Tumble example*

Groups	1 st Activity		2 nd Activity
Blue	Big books	Worksheet	Whiteboards
Red	Alphabet	Worksheet	Listening post
Yellow	Picture detective	Worksheet	String letters
Green	Book Corner	Worksheet	Alphabet games

During the observation period, Mandy was also with the class during some fitness sessions, finger gym (these are activities designed to help children's fine motor skills such as finding keys that fit padlocks, threading beads onto string, spinning tops), most of the assemblies and singing. There were several times when Mandy went out of the class with either Kylie or Jane to do work on the iPad. They both said this was due to the iPad being noisy and not wanting to distract other children. Most of the time Mandy works at the back table with either Lisa or Kylie. She has a place at a table with three other children but was only observed to go to this seat for finger gym, and when Jane asked children to stand behind their chairs.

Kylie discussed additional needs that Mandy has, such as needing more breaks as the quantity of work she is doing is increasing. Mandy needs to move her body when she is sitting on the mat, which sometimes results in her bumping or kicking other children. To prevent this she has a larger 'bubble space' around her on the mat, and while Jane expressed concerns about how this might look to people coming into the class, Kylie feels it is the best for Mandy and the rest of class. Kylie noted that working in the classroom is the aim but sometimes children with disabilities need "a little bit of 'out' time, just like any other student, for example, if they go to reading

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recovery and things”. Kylie felt this time was valuable, describing it as easing distractions and allowing focussed learning but that it needed to be a decision made based on the needs of the student.

Safety

Creating a safe, comfortable environment is a priority for St Gabrielle’s and a survey on safety is conducted annually with all of the children in the school. The questions include where they feel safe, where they don’t feel safe within the school, and who makes them feel safe. Parents complete a survey every second year.

Jane aims to “create that sort of safe, nurturing environment where they enjoy to come to school”. Mandy’s mother feels Mandy is safe and happy at school. Kylie also described the atmosphere in the class as ‘relaxed’. She elaborated saying:

The children feel safe and that includes Mandy and I think that’s the thing with Jane, as the teacher, she makes all of her students part of the class and they all know that she is there for them.

As part of the senior children’s leadership activities, they take turn about to spend the morning tea time with Mandy while Lisa has a break. The following interaction was observed:

Two older children (a boy and a girl) came up to Mandy. The boy bent down to Mandy and said “Mandy do you want to go for a walk? Mandy rocked back and forth. The girl asked “Do you want to look in the hall?” Mandy walked outside. The boy bent down and indicated with his hand for Mandy to climb on to be ‘piggy backed’. Mandy moved past. The girl went up to Mandy and wrapped her arms around her stomach from behind to pick her up and walked off towards the hall.

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This interaction could be understood as the senior children being thoughtful and putting the caring values into practice. When I discussed this incident with Jane, she said, “Sometimes they get too mother hen like towards her” smiled and shrugged, suggesting her awareness of the different ways children of different ages show their support and demonstrate caring values.

Out of class activities

Mandy has weekly activities that are outside of the school such as Moveables and riding for the disabled. Other activities take place at the school such as PMP, and cooking. These are also separate from the class, although other children in the class may also go to PMP or be chosen to do cooking with Mandy. These activities mean she is out of the class for at least one morning and most of one other day (see Table 3).

Table 3: *Mandy’s Timetable*

Date and time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:50-10:00	Working with Kylie	RDA (horse riding)	Class Based Activities	Working with Kylie	PMP (9-9:30) Class Activities
10:00-10:30	Toilet/Morning Tea				
10:30-11:00	Working with Kylie	Class Based Activities	PMP	Class Based Activities	Class Based Activities
11:00-11:20	Morning Interval				
11:20-12:40	Class Based Activities	Toy Library (11:30-12)	Class Based Activities	Class Based Activities	Moveables
12:40-1:30	Lunch				
1:30-2:50	Class Based Activities	Class Based Activities	Class Based Activities or Cooking	Class Based Activities/ Assembly	Afternoon Out (Park, beach, library etc.)

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Jane describes these activities as catering to Mandy's needs "it's the same with other kids; they go out for extra maths classes", early words or other activities. She has explained it to the class by saying "we're all learners in here, and we all need to learn different things, so we do different activities to help us." Jane felt the excursions were linked to the curriculum, with PMP and Moveables connected with PE and health. She noted Mandy's difficulties with certain movements such as crawling and getting up off the floor, which is why these activities were put in place, but they are also good for her confidence. There is no mention of the out of class activities in Mandy's IEP documents, but as noted previously the school charter promotes the use of external activities and programmes for ORS funded children. Kylie explained the out of school activities provide Mandy with access to physical development activities that the school does not have the appropriate resources for. Noting "students with Downs often have a weaker muscle tone, and you don't get to talk and move your bodies and things until you strengthen those things up." She reported that some children are not able to keep up with regular fitness activities, and even if activities are adapted the child may need much more practice. She also mentioned these activities helped broaden Mandy's social communication skills, saying "they really broaden the children out with their experiences to make those social communication connections as wide as possible."

Lisa described the difference in Mandy's balance and movement on a horse as "amazing" compared to the unbalanced gait she has when walking. She felt Mandy gained confidence, enjoyment and developed her social skills and communication from riding. She mentioned similar benefits for PMP and Moveables. On Friday afternoons Lisa, Mandy, another teacher aide, and one or two other children go "on safari". They may go to the beach, the river, McDonalds, the park, zoo, supermarket, museum,

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library or do cooking. Lisa takes photos or short videos with an iPad to bring the outings back to school, which can be used for Mandy's language activities. Mandy also borrows items from the toy library that she brings back to play with the kids in her class. Lisa said, "Being able to go out into the community well supported on outings creates so many learning and growing opportunities." and on another occasion "Why go back and do sport, art or music? For some children it's more important to learn how to do things in the community".

When asked about the out of school activities, Mandy's mother said she felt it was important for Mandy to be out in the community, as it contributes to an acceptance of disabilities in the wider community that she has noticed can be lacking in other cities.

Second year in the same class

This is Mandy's second year in room 2. She is with the same teaching staff and a new group of children; last's year class has moved up a level. This decision was made by the school leadership team, with input from the teaching staff. Mandy's mum was not directly consulted but was happy with the decision and believed she would be listened to if she spoke up against it. Kylie and Jane believed it had helped Mandy since she was already settled, and knew the routines in this class. Mandy's mum and Jane reported that Mandy typically takes longer to adjust to changes than other children. Jane said:

the thinking behind it was, she knows the routines of the class, she knows the teacher, the teacher aide, she knows where to go, she knows her place in the school, it would just be easy so that with the transition to keep her another year and you can see the advantages of that because this year when she came in the only new thing was the kids.

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During the observations, the following discussion occurred at the mat and was recorded in the fieldnotes. Jane was taking the role;

Jane smiled and said “We better sing happy birthday” The class sang ‘Happy Birthday.’ Jane said, “We have a big six year old in the class” and there was some chatter about how old different children were. A boy raised his hand and asked Jane “Is Mandy six?” Jane replied “Yes she’s six, and her birthday is on Sunday”. The same boy then asked Boy “Is she five and a half?”

Jane said “No, she’s six and a half”. The children turned to look at Mandy and the boy asked “She’s older?” Jane answered, “Yes, she’s a little older. Now let’s tidy up”. The class began tidying up, and Jane turned on the tidy up song. Several children came over to ‘Hi 5’ Mandy.

Adults made the decision to keep Mandy in the same class for two years while her peers moved on to a new class.

Different expectations

The children in the class learn that there are different expectations for different students. Mandy was described as needing ‘downtime’ by the class teacher, teacher aide, ORS funded teacher and her mother. This was often linked to her health issues. She frequently arrived at school late, for example, on one day during the observation period Mandy arrived at 10:15 am. IEP notes show this is a current concern, particularly on days when Kylie is there to work with Mandy.

Mandy also left the class earlier than the rest of the class to eat her morning tea, Lisa explained this was necessary due to Mandy’s health issues, that cause Mandy to tire easily and she needs to take medication with food.

Field notes show examples of Mandy’s downtime:

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The class is reading a big book with Jane. Lisa is not in the room. Mandy quietly gets up and goes to the library area twisting her beads and looking around. A child mentions this to the teacher. Jane replies “She needs a break” smiling. The class carries on reading the big book. Once Jane has settled the class with activities she goes over to Mandy and reads the “Hello” books with her.

Another day, Mandy was walking around the room and a child said to Jane, “I think Mandy is tired”. Jane smiled, and the class carried on with their activities. When Mandy was having a break, she was observed “spinning” her beads, walking around the class or looking at books in the library area.

The other students in the class show an interest in what Mandy is learning, and appear to be trying to find ways to engage with Mandy. Children were observed standing around the back table watching when Lisa was working with Mandy on several occasions. In one instance, I recorded in my fieldnotes:

The class was in their maths groups doing activities to order numbers from smallest to largest, either with Jane, on the interactive whiteboards or using small whiteboards. A boy came over and watched as Lisa removed Velcro butterflies for Mandy to put back on the picture. As Mandy replaced them, Lisa counted and did the sign for each number. Another child joined and said “That looks like a fun game for Mandy.” Lisa smiled and continued.

I observed Mandy being out of the class for long periods of time and wondered how other children perceived this without specifically referring to Mandy. During the interviews, I asked the children if they ever went out of the class to do activities or if there was anyone in their class that went out for special activities. Alex and Tom both recalled going out of class for tasks sometimes. Alex said this was to go over reading

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words with Lisa, and mentioned Tom got to go and bake muffins with Lisa once. Tom said he had gone out to do reading and spelling with Miss Peters and other children do the same. Isla and Annie did not recall going out of the class for extra activities or anyone else doing so. No child mentioned Mandy going out of the class.

Collaborative team work

Communication and collaboration were recognised by all the school staff interviewed as a key feature of St Gabrielle's school. A recent ERO report also stated "Teachers are highly collaborative (They) purposefully share their practice through observations of teaching, discussions and participation in relevant professional learning." (To prevent identification the ERO report is not referenced). Kylie said "I think we are a very communicative team...we don't have any issues because we are constantly talking about Mandy's needs and also, also what are the needs of the classroom". Communication happens through fortnightly written reports between the class and ORS funded teachers; informal chats in the classroom or staff room, and Mandy's IEP meetings, which may involve 10-12 people including staff from 'Special Education, Mandy's parents, step parents, and the school leadership team. Mandy does not attend these. Mandy was discharged from physiotherapy two years ago and receives speech and language therapy through Kylie as the .1 teacher. Lisa likes the IEP meetings "everyone contributes, and the plan is worked out...you don't feel like you are working in the dark".

Jane felt she was well supported and prepared for when Mandy started in her class:

I met with special ed (sic) and with I think one of her teachers from her previous kindergarten, and so there was a meeting with 3 or 4 of us and we basically talked about Mandy in the childcare setting and you know, what she

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liked and or how she operated in that setting...They showed me a lot of the visual type stuff and strategies that they had been using in the kindergarten setting and obviously with this school supporting me with like management and principal just to chat through different things that we would come across and how it would all work. And also just chatting with the parents when she actually started though, that gives you; you just get an insight into that child...I did some of my own personal readings just to get an idea of, you know their strengths, their dislikes, you know just some general reading about Down syndrome.

She continues to feel well supported “if you are stuck with something or you need some help there is someone who is always going to help”.

The relationship between the teacher, teacher aide and ORS funded teacher appears to be positive. Kylie said, “I’m really lucky with this team”, and Jane described Kylie as “a great wealth of knowledge to figure things out.” Jane and Kylie have worked out a routine where Mandy participates in more of the class activities but still has time working with Kylie at the back of the room. Kylie described her role as working on adaptations for Mandy, monitoring how she is coping with focussed activities and looking at the next steps. Kylie is conscious of ensuring Mandy recognises Jane as the class teacher. Jane acknowledges she would not be able to meet all of Mandy’s needs on her own, but “with teacher aide support and everything it became a lot easier”.

When talking about her relationship with Jane, Lisa said “she’s absolutely brilliant yeah we get on extremely well, she listens to me; she gives me opportunities to try new things...we’ve got an excellent working relationship”. Lisa could not recall formally establishing what her role is:

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...it's very difficult with these kids to have a job description...(but) we TAs here are really well supported and if you've got a problem you would probably deal with it pretty quick.

Lisa does not see her role as only working with Mandy; she was observed preparing resources for the class and assisting other students. When asked about this, she said:

As a TA you spend, depending on the needs of your child, Mandy's quite high needs, but wherever possible you try and work with the other students and that kind of makes Mandy's inclusion more tangible if you like, yeah, they...they [the other children] don't see you as somebody who only works with Mandy, they can come to you, you can go to them and it's quite exciting actually seeing the other children develop as well...and we are trying more and more to get Mandy to join in activities the other students do so that she is actually alongside them while she's working rather than withdrawing her to her own table. Although today she has worked on her own.

Field notes from the observations have many examples of brief discussions between Jane, Lisa and Kylie, sometimes relating to health concerns, but more frequently around education issues, such as clarifying what Mandy should be working on and progress she had made.

Mandy's mum felt that she was listened to, and other participants emphasised the knowledge and insight that comes from listening to the parents of a child with a disability. Mr Jackson noted parents have often become specialists in their child's condition or needs so they can be a valuable resource. Jane said, "I see the parents on a regular basis, so you are constantly discussing any issues and all the positives that happen too." During the observations, Jane or Lisa spent time talking to Mandy's

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mother or father when they arrived, discussing issues or successes with them. Lisa phoned Mandy's mum several times during the four days to let her know how Mandy was coping after having a few days off with a medical issue. On another occasion, she phoned to let her know Mandy would be receiving a certificate in the assembly, so her mother was able to attend.

Professional development

Jane was excited to have Mandy in her class, seeing this as a challenge and an opportunity "not only to learn different strategies but also I get to work more with special ed and build up those relationships there". Mr Jackson supports the teaching staff to develop inclusive practices by providing internal professional development opportunities. He said, "It's giving them the opportunities to see others doing a similar role." Kylie praised the professional development at St Gabrielle's, saying it helps those teachers who may initially be "a little frightened" about working with students with disabilities to overcome any barriers.

Lisa described the process of learning to be a teacher aide as a "baptism by fire really", but found class teachers and specialist teachers like Kylie helpful. She described recent professional development experiences:

I've been trying to learn sign language which I have found invaluable dealing with all special needs actually that very visual thing...that's something I do myself, the school doesn't pay for it or anything. We do that. We, here four of us here recently did our teacher's aide certificate, the school paid for that, and that was actually, yeah good. It really was good. Worthwhile.

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Class routines

Jane has very clear routines that were observed and brought up by Kylie and Lisa in their interviews. Kylie said Jane is “very good at letting them know what is coming up, what changes are coming”.

In the morning Jane does the roll with the class, and goes over a visual timetable at the top of the board; she refers back to this frequently and updates it if there are any changes. After break times, the children would come into class and get started on activities such as practising writing words after morning tea or doing finger gym after lunch. Mandy has an additional smaller visual timetable that lists one or two activities then a break. She places her beads in a container below this and goes to get them once she has completed the activities. When she arrived one morning, she got out the days of the week board and placed it on an easel, ready for Jane.

Celebrating success

Mandy’s mum believed all children’s successes were celebrated and recognised; St Gabrielle’s does not solely focus on academic achievement. Kylie noted that the families that she works with in her role as an ORS funded teacher, wanted their children to be happy first, “but then when they saw their children learning and when they see successes...you can’t express the satisfaction”.

Jane, Kylie and Lisa take note of Mandy’s achievements, share these together and with Mandy’s parents:

You know the little things that we take for granted are huge milestone for kids. So many times when we just see Mandy saying hello to us or waving or saying bye that’s rewarding for us because we know that communication is her key,

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basically that's her one thing that we are really trying to develop with her, so for her to say hi and bye you know, it's gorgeous it's great, it's very rewarding.

Learning ways to communicate

Kylie and Jane identified communication as a key goal for Mandy. Kylie is introducing ways for Mandy to communicate about how she is feeling. She describes this:

So at the moment they have a strip that has want drink, I'm tired, I feel sick and I'm sad, so at the moment we have done a wider health chart, she has done a lot of matching and getting to know the pictures and things... (today) she touched I'm tired briefly and then she touched drink, so I took her hand over hand and got her to rip it off and put it in my other hand. Then I responded Mandy wants a drink; okay and Mandy went to get a drink. So gradually, we need to teach her PECS that is picture exchange communication system.

Kylie explained why there is such an emphasis on communication:

At the moment the concern that we have got is just around Mandy's communication where she actually hits children. And it is communication it is not naughty behaviour, we have got to figure out what is it that we are doing or that the environment is doing, not just about what is Mandy doing.

During the classroom observation I noticed Mandy spontaneously used her visual timetable to communicate a desire to do more work:

Mandy put her beads away, and pulled off the pictures of reading and games from her visual timetable, she replaced them with worktime and maths, sat at

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the back table, tipped magnetic numbers out and moved them around. She appeared focussed.

I pointed this out to Lisa, who was assisting other students. Lisa said, “She hasn’t done this before, she would normally be very tired, working with Kylie is very intensive, but she loves to learn.” Lisa and Mandy counted to ten arranging the numbers and signing as they did this. When they finished, Mandy picked up her beads and walked around the class.

Children in the class are learning ways to communicate with Mandy, they “Hi 5” with her, wave hello and occasionally give her a hug. Mandy was observed to touch children on the faces or arms, when on the mat or outside. Most of the time children ignored it, or moved away from her. Field notes contain several examples of instances where teaching staff intermediated interactions between Mandy and other students:

One day when Mandy arrived at school late, she rushed inside the library and went up to several children who were looking at books; she pulled their T-shirts and touched their faces while smiling. Jane went up to Mandy as said “Are you excited to see everyone? Say hello” and waved. Mandy waved, Alex gave Mandy a hug, and two other children did as well.

Mandy has “Hello books” which have a photo of a member of the class and the word “Hello” before their name, to help Mandy and the other children in the class get to know each other. The teaching staff use these books to practice reading and also to encourage Mandy to interact with the child on each page. Kylie explains;

we will go through the latest book and start looking for the children in the book, but I will always be noting for example Alex is over with Jane in her

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group so we won't disturb.... We call them over and they go through a greeting routine, so Mandy sees the photo by the child's face to make the connections so I think that helps Mandy become part of the community much quicker and the children to get to know how to greet her appropriately.

I observed Kylie using these books with Mandy to facilitate communication, field notes show:

Children were in groups for activities, Kylie was reading "Hello books" with Mandy.

Kylie: "Let's find Annie". Holding Mandy's hand Kylie led her to Annie.

Kylie: "Hi Annie"

Mandy: "Hi".

Annie: "She said hi!"

Kylie: "Yes, that's why we are doing this, Mandy is learning to use her words."

They carried on going up to and greeting several more children.

When Mandy started touching children on the face, Kylie said "No, Mandy" and explained "Mandy is touching you to say 'hi'. We are showing her a better way" and another time "She wants to be friends, we are trying to show her better ways but it will take time".

Mandy's mum feels the other children make a big effort to include her, as even if she ignores them initially they come back and try again. Field notes confirm this with instances like the following,

Mandy finished eating her lunch, three girls from Room 2 called out Mandy's name and came up close to her, Mandy turned her back to them; they tried again, Mandy left them, came running over giggling and touching my hair.

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Mandy seemed to engage more with her peers when she was part of a small group in the classroom.

Mandy's peers often looked to see what she was doing when she was working with Lisa or Kylie at the back of the classroom. The following interaction was recorded in field notes. Mandy was doing a counting exercise with Lisa; a boy came over to watch, he said, "That looks like a fun game for Mandy," Lisa and Mandy smiled and continued counting. Other times children appeared eager to help Mandy, holding out objects for her to choose during finger gym, reading books to her, doing jigsaw puzzles or memory games together.

Mandy did not appear to have any friendships within the class. Jane and Lisa described a friendship that Mandy built up with a girl in her class the previous year where both children enjoyed spending time together. Since the other girl moved up a class, the friendship appears to have faded, with neither acknowledging the other in the playground.

The staff at St Gabrielle's used a wide range of approaches to support the inclusion. The teaching staff received supported through collaborative practises and professional development. Predictable classroom routines, differentiation, and positive reinforcement and a variety of communication strategies were some of the strategies used.

How Children Experience the Classroom

The four children interviewed all talked about school being a good place where they love to be. Alex initially said he didn't like school but later clarified that it was waiting around for his mum to pick him up that he did not like. He talked excitedly about learning and special events such as book week. Annie and Tom said they liked everything about school. Annie particularly likes her teacher who she described as

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“doing kind things,” her friends and learning. Tom described school as peaceful and said he likes “to work hard when there is hard stuff.” However he found it hard to concentrate if the class was noisy. Isla likes school and having new kids join the class, but she doesn’t like a boy who follows her around at lunchtime wanting to be her friend. When Mandy was asked about school she smiled, and her mother said she loved school, “she signs “school, school...the holidays are terrible because she wants school.”

Children had confidence in their own abilities. Alex described himself as good at reading, spelling and writing; Isla, good at painting and drawing; Annie swimming and dancing; Tom playing with Nerf guns and building stuff with Lego, and learning when there is hard stuff. When Mandy was asked what she likes to do at school, she pulled off her pictures for writing, work-time with Lisa, and singing. Two of the activities she chose usually happen at the back table in the classroom. Singing occurs in another class with all the classes in the junior school. Lisa had mentioned she felt it was too overwhelming for Mandy and they usually left early.

The children in the class were described as “good people” by Tom. Alex and Annie said the class “get on well together” and Isla said they helped each other. During the observations children were asking for help from Jane, Lisa, Kylie, myself and other teachers who were sometimes in the class and each other. While Alex and Annie said they were only helped by Miss Peters (Jane), they said they help other children. Isla said she was helped by Lisa, Kylie, another teacher who comes in during writing time, and the children all help each other. Tom said no one helps with his learning, except Miss Peters during writing, and other children help if he feels lonely. Mandy was given pictures of Jane, Lisa, Kylie and groups of children in the class, and

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asked “Who is your teacher? She pointed to Miss Peters. She pointed to Miss Peters again when asked who she likes to work with.

In summary, this section has presented data that emerged from the interviews, observations and documentation and linked this to the research questions. Key themes emerged from the data. These include, the various attitudes and understandings of inclusion, the practises that are used to support inclusion and tensions that may come from their use

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This chapter links the results from this study with other research and literature to explore the experience of inclusion for Mandy and the other participants. The discussion is organised around the research questions, starting with how inclusion is understood. Next the values and practices that are associated with inclusion are discussed. Within this section there are some tensions between values and practices that are explored as barriers to inclusion. The focus is, not to criticise practice but rather to examine potential barriers to inclusion as a result of the complex connections between policy, support, knowledge and inclusive practice. Finally, the experiences of Mandy and the other children are discussed.

The analyses of the data indicate that it is possible to learn from the connections between inclusive values and practices in Room 2, and at St Gabrielle's generally, that create a warm, caring environment. However, there are also practices that lead to Mandy having limited time interacting with her peers. This chapter explores these practices with a view to understanding why they might occur and what might support Mandy's teachers to develop approaches that promote Mandy's time in class with her peers.

This study used a social constructionist framework which understands all knowledge is constructed by people as they interact and interpret the world (Crotty, 1998; Robson, 2011). Through this lens the participants in this study were actively constructing understandings of disability, teaching and learning through social processes and language (Gergen, 2012). Disability may be constructed as a normal part of human diversity which can lead to an understanding of belonging to the group,

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or as difference which encourages a deficit understanding (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989; Shakespeare, 1996).

Understanding Inclusion

Inclusion is based on a the concept of “one school for all” where all children are present, actively participating in school activities, and achieving educational and social goals (Ainscow et al., 2006; Ainscow et al., 2013). However, it is not unusual to have individuals within the same environment with different understandings of inclusion or isolated practices that do not fit with the overall culture (Black-Hawkins, 2010; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). St Gabrielle’s has a clear policy to provide an inclusive environment, and the teaching staff agreed inclusion involved welcoming all children, and not leaving any child out.

The principal linked inclusion to his faith and the religious nature of the school, stating, “We are all God’s people” and “she’s just a part of our school, just another pupil really”. Ideas about ‘sameness’ are clearly represented here, with disability constructed as just one part of the diversity of humanity (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989).

The principal, class teacher, teacher aide and ORS funded teacher all made reference to the importance of looking out for children who may experience exclusion as a result of culture and living in households where poverty is a reality. Inclusion is understood as not only about children with disabilities. Contemporary approaches to inclusive education have moved away from a response to specific groups to the right for all children to attend their local school and creating a school environment that meets the needs of the diverse school community (Black-Hawkins, 2010).

The ORS funded teacher believed the inclusive values came down through the various levels in the school, starting with the board and the school policies. The class

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teacher and ORS funded teacher felt inclusion was beneficial to children with disabilities and their peers without disabilities, allowing children to learn from each other and develop their communication skills, social skills and acceptance. This supports other research where teachers and pupils have also reported that inclusion positively influences the social skills and understanding of all students (Dyson et al., 2004).

Mandy's mother's view was that feeling welcomed and being treated as normal were important aspects of inclusion. However, she also felt it was important for schools to have had experience with children with disabilities who were similar to Mandy, and gave this as her reason for choosing St Gabrielle's for her daughter. In this regard she wanted Mandy to be part of the school and wider community but she also valued teachers' experience of disability in the classroom.

The teacher aide, in contrast, expressed concerns that some children may be "too disruptive" to attend local schools all of the time, or may benefit spending sometime in a separate facility. Similar contradictions within an apparently 'inclusive' school context have been identified in other research. Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2008), for example, found in schools with good inclusive practises that some staff members agreed that all children and young people have the right to attend their local school and would be welcomed, but some children would benefit from being in a 'special' school that could better cater for their needs. This raises questions about how schools can ensure that understandings about inclusion are informed by human rights conventions and the extant research on teaching and diversity. In addition, it suggests that schools may need support to reach a shared understanding about what inclusion means and looks like in practice.

Values and Practices in the Classroom and the Wider School Associated with Inclusion

Inclusive values and values in practice

Values provide guidance for reviewing current practices and planning changes, and values were found to be an explicit part of St Gabrielle's overall school culture. Booth and Ainscow (2011) believe the journey towards inclusion needs to be based on inclusive values, rather than simply following policy directions. St Gabrielle's has very strong, clearly articulated values that relate to inclusive practices. These values relate to the religious nature of the school. Mr. Jackson referred to the core values as being "off the page...that is what our community speaks, and it's all about what we are aiming to be". The child participants did not recall many of the core values, which is not surprising as most of them had only been attending school for one term at school. Their comments did show a general understanding, with several children mentioning "helping others" as a core value.

The *Index for Inclusion* developed by Booth and Ainscow encourages schools and educators to link their actions to their beliefs, to put values into action. This includes actions relating to the teaching and learning activities and interactions between staff, children and other adults. The framework of values a school creates needs to be explicit, understood and utilised in all educational decisions (Carrington, Bourke, et al., 2012).

Community/culture

Principals are central to the culture that develops within a school; they are in a position to promote and provide direction for inclusive development (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Education Review Office, 2010). Inclusion relates to all members of the school community, and staff members can experience exclusion. Teacher aides in

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some schools have expressed feeling undervalued (Carrington, Bourke, et al., 2012).

Lisa, a teacher aide, was very positive about the school in general and felt well supported. She had positive relationships with the adults and children she worked with and felt her options were valued. Mr Jackson's aim for the school was to create a community where all students and staff felt connected and enjoyed being there. Participants only expressed positive feelings toward the school.

Caring

When students feel accepted and have positive relationships with the adults and students in their school, they can learn most effectively (Ministry of Education, 2007a). Noddings (2005) has suggested that some schools will focus on academic achievement to the detriment of caring relationships. Creating a caring culture is valued at St Gabrielle's. One of the gospel values is Aroha (love), described as "love for our neighbour and our love for all people within our community context" by Mr Jackson. It seems clear that teaching staff need to have a caring relationship with their students, but it is also important to help them develop the capacity to care for others (Noddings, 2005). Jane was described as 'caring' by most participants, including one of the children. Jane mentioned that developing a caring response towards others was one of her key goals for the students in her class. She demonstrates a caring nature towards her students, gives them time to listen to each other and encourages them to be aware of each other's feelings. On a school wide level, class bears were used to encourage caring and to demonstrate the core values. Senior students are involved in leadership activities that include helping to care for younger students and students with disabilities. Students develop caring behaviours as a result of adults' modelling efforts (Agne, 1992), and providing opportunities for children to care for each other can help them to develop into caring adults (Noddings, 2005; Owens & Ennis, 2012). The

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approach taken at St Gabrielle's is consistent with the idea that all students can be given opportunities to show caring towards others (Noddings, 2005).

Inclusive practices in the classroom and school

Participants in the study expressed support for the teaching staff's approach and capability in teaching Mandy, and all staff interviewed were enthusiastic about working with students with high needs like Mandy. This enthusiasm and willingness may be due to the welcoming culture of St Gabrielle's which is grounded in the assumption that "all children are welcome here".

Collaboration

Traditionally, class teachers worked alone in their classrooms, but as classes have become more diverse, teachers are required and need to collaborate with other professionals (Mentis, Kearney, & Bevan-Brown, 2012). Mitchell (2010) notes teaching children with disabilities requires more collaboration and teamwork than other areas of education. Collaboration is vital as no single teacher has all the necessary knowledge, strategies, and time to provide for all children in diverse classes (Mentis et al., 2012). Collaboration involves team members combining their skills to meet the needs of the learners in the class. This can create a team that is greater than the sum of its parts as participants problem solve and learn new ways of working from each other (Mitchell, 2010).

All adult participants interviewed were enthusiastic about the strength and support of the team approach. They valued each other's input and felt there was always someone to help them if they got stuck or needed more ideas. Jane and Kylie felt their communication with each other was good, although it mostly consisted of informal conversations in the class or staff room, and written fortnightly reports from

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Kylie. The Ministry of Education (2012d) defines the role of specialist teacher (referred to in this study as the ORS funded teacher) as adapting the class environments, programmes and materials in collaboration with the class teacher. Kylie's main roles were teaching Mandy directly, supporting Lisa as the teacher aide, keeping Jane informed of Mandy's progress, providing resources and helping Jane to develop the programme from the IEP. Jane took ultimate responsibility for Mandy's education, and collaborated with Kylie and others as necessary to problem solve.

Collaboration is generally assumed to be between school staff, administrators and external experts, but the student themselves, their parents, caregivers and peers can also be valuable team members (Higgins, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2010c). They have extensive knowledge about a student's abilities, needs, and interests (Macartney, 2009). Jane found Mandy's parents to be a valuable source of knowledge when Mandy first started in her classroom and communication between home and school continues to be a strong focus.

Mandy's mum has been happy with how Mandy's education is progressing at St Gabrielle's and feels she can speak up and is listened to if she has any concerns. She advocated postponing Mandy starting school, as she was recovering from an operation and changed day-care centres when she felt Mandy was being excluded. Research shows parents often take on the role of advocate, and influence the services that are provided for their child for their child (Ashdown, 2010; Mitchell, 2010; World Health Organization, 2011).

The teacher and teacher aide need to work together closely with a mutual understanding of what their roles and responsibilities are, collaboration and good communication to be effective (Rutherford, 2012b). Lisa and Jane have a very open

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style of communication, frequently clarifying things with each other throughout the day. Research shows some class teachers give the teacher aides key responsibility for the education of children with disabilities (Blatchford et al., 2011; MacArthur et al., 2007). In this case, Jane, as the class teacher, clearly took responsibility for Mandy's learning in collaboration with the ORS funded teacher. Jane checks with Lisa if she wants her to do certain tasks to ensure Lisa is familiar with and happy to do them. Lisa also feels she is given freedom to try new things.

Jane was observed to spend time teaching Mandy each day, usually during the reading rotation and interacting with her during activities such as finger-gym. Mandy was also included in whole-class mat-based activities, and Jane requested Mandy join in on other activities such as fitness, even if she was working with the teacher aide or ORS funded teacher at the time. Jane was kept informed of what Mandy is working on and her progress through fortnightly reports from the ORS funded teacher and informal discussions. Jane shows she takes responsibility for Mandy's learning and requests that Mandy joins the class for certain activities.

Teacher aides at St Gabrielle's are assigned to classrooms to work with children with 'special educational needs'. Mandy generally works at a table at the back of the classroom, in the room next door or goes outside the class and school environment for activities with Lisa. Lisa also attends to Mandy's physical needs which require them to be out of the class during school time. Lisa does work with other students, particularly when Mandy is 'having a break', but her main role is to support Mandy. When Lisa talks of her role, she said "depending on the needs of your child...but wherever possible you try and work with other students and that kind of makes Mandy's inclusion more tangible". The use of the word "your" could be interpreted as suggesting a sense of ownership, linking the teacher aide and child with

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disabilities together. Research by Rutherford (2012a) shows teacher aides working in partnership with the teachers can help all students, rather than being specifically linked to one particular child. Lisa demonstrates an understanding of this as she can see when she does work with other students it “makes Mandy’s inclusion more tangible”.

Staff at St Gabrielle’s share positive, respectful working relationships as a foundation for their teaching. This suggests that team work is a priority for the school and is a deliberate part of the culture, since it has been noted in the research literature that building and maintaining respectful collaborative relationships is not easy (Deppeler, 2012).

How Children Experience a Classroom that Focuses on Being Part of an Inclusive School Community

All children said they liked school and felt good there. In the observations the class as a whole appeared to be happy and engaged in the classroom activities, with children asking adults and peers for assistance when required. The children expressed enthusiasm towards learning and had a positive relationship with their teacher describing, her as kind and “she helps them”. The children also described their class peers in positive terms. Mandy selected Jane from a range of pictures when asked who her teacher was. This suggests there is a culture of learning and belonging within this classroom (Morton et al., 2012).

When Mandy selected activities that she enjoys doing at school, one of them was singing, which was surprising to the teaching staff, who felt Mandy did not enjoy singing as there were too many children. Providing opportunities for Mandy to express what she likes and does not like could help the teaching staff to build up a better understanding of what works for Mandy and provide her some agency (Biklen &

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Kliewer, 2006). Mandy waved to each individual picture of the children in her class when asked who her friends were. This could be interpreted as Mandy seeing all children in her class as friends.

Tensions between inclusive values and practice

Inclusion is about schools embarking on a journey towards the ultimate goal of inclusive practice (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). No school can ever be a perfect example of inclusion, and it is important to discuss the tensions or limitations as these can help other educators who encounter similar issues (Loveridge & Meyer, 2010). Schools conducting self-reviews on inclusion often find areas to improve, even though they have believed themselves to be generally inclusive (Carrington, Bourke, et al., 2012). Similarly, while St Gabrielle's has a profoundly positive approach to teaching and diversity that is underpinned by care, there seemed to be some tensions between the values and practice.

Categorisations

When Jane knew there would be a child with Down syndrome starting in her class, she met with those who knew Mandy well. She also did some of her own reading about Down syndrome "just to get an idea of, you know their strengths, their dislikes." Jane did not have prior experience teaching a student with Down syndrome or other diagnostic labels, and appears to be conscientiously preparing herself through this reading. However, grouping people together on the basis of any criteria runs the risk of overlooking the complexities of the individual. There are teaching guides with specific techniques for teaching categories of children such as those with behaviour issues or autism, but these techniques are generally the same as those recommended for all children (Florian & Kershner, 2009). Biklen (2000) suggests reading about

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insiders' perspectives of disability in autobiographical accounts can be valuable for teachers may help them overcome presumptions about the experience of disability.

A sociocultural view attributes disability to interactions between a child, their environment and the influence this has on the child's participation (Macartney, 2009). Inclusive education in this understanding is not focused on identifying and fixing perceived deficits within students, rather it is to respond to the diversity of student populations (Mentis et al., 2012). Some research, for example, shows how some teachers have created inclusive classrooms by providing options for all students to choose how, when, where and with whom they learn, and trusting them to make good decisions (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). For Room 2 this could mean giving all children, including Mandy, options to work on their own, as part of a group of children, or with adult support from a teacher or teacher aide. A child in the class who had mentioned he found it difficult to concentrate with noise, could, for example, be offered choices to work in a quiet space next door, as Mandy does at times. In this way, thinking about support for Mandy's learning could also open up opportunities for other children by removing barriers to their learning.

Biklen and Burke (2006) highlight the importance of educators presuming that all students are competent, including those with limited communication skills. The importance then to find ways of supporting students with disabilities to have agency. The teaching staff are working with Mandy to increase her agency through the use of multiple communication methods, and they used verbal communication, New Zealand sign language, visual timetables and are introducing PECS. Mandy was also working on reading and writing skills with the expectation that she is capable of developing these skills, thus demonstrating a fundamental belief in Mandy as competent.

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Policies

The school charter and 'special' education policy have many statements that support inclusion. The 'special' education policy acknowledges a move away from a 'deficit model to recognising the environment must change, not the child and "good inclusion teach practice is good teaching practice". However the school charter appears to have conflicting statements, on one hand saying "learners with special educational needs are supported to ...engage in all school activities", but in the same section saying they will continue to seek external programmes and opportunities for ORS funded students to meet their specialised needs.

Presence and participation and learning

Presence within an education system is a prerequisite for both participation and learning, but all three are key elements in inclusion (Booth, 2005). Mandy was often not present in the classroom due to a variety of reasons, including arriving late to school, her health issues, her physical care needs, external activities, and using a small classroom next door for focused learning. When Mandy was physically present she was with the class for most whole class activities, then working at a table at the back of the room with Lisa or Kylie, doing activities that were different from the class, or having a break. Lisa and Kylie are working towards including Mandy in more activities with her class. The rationale for starting to work with Mandy at a separate table, or in a quiet room was to allow for focused work for Mandy or to avoid disturbing other children.

Teacher aides may be part of the solution and part of the problem in addressing the educational and social needs of many students with disabilities. Assigning teacher aides to specific students is linked to a number of issues that include less engagement

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with the teacher (Rutherford, 2011). Mandy always has an adult with her when she is doing a learning activity or interacting with her peers. Yet Rutherford's research suggests that there are alternative ways of supporting students with high needs in ways which encourage learning through peer interactions. Cooperative support such as small group work and peer tutoring can benefit all students. Seating students with disabilities in the middle of the class to encourage interactions with the teacher and classmates can foster opportunities to learn through social experiences alongside and with peers. The teacher aide can assist the teacher by supporting the class in general through activities such as whole-class teaching, or working with specific groups. Teacher aides can also role model communication strategies and encourage peers to interact (Rutherford, 2012a).

Jane does not want Mandy to feel different and her explanation to the class that different children need different things to help them as learners reflected that. The acknowledgement that we all have seen and unseen differences and similarities can help to value diversity (Booth, 2011) but research such as that MacArthur et al. (2007) by suggests students don't want to be perceived as different. The students who participated in this research on inclusive classrooms in New Zealand had negative experiences of differentiation, feeling it limited their learning opportunities and made them feel separate from their peers (MacArthur et al., 2007). Teachers may need assistance from specialists, but this is to support the staff to create an environment where the student can have meaningful learning experiences in the classroom with their peers (Rouse & Florian, 2012).

Out of class activities. Mandy attends a programs outside of the school to develop her physical and communication skills called "Moveables", which involves one hour each week. She attends another program that has similar objectives called

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the Perceptual Motor Programme (PMP), which takes place on the school grounds but separate from her class. There are twice weekly sessions of PMP, consisting of an hour in total. These programmes seem to be offered as add-ons to school activities as they are not integrated into her school day, nor are they mentioned in her IEP documentation. As Mandy does not have support from a physiotherapist or speech and language therapist it seems that these programmes have not been recommended by these professionals. The teaching staff are trying to meet Mandy's physical needs without systemic interprofessional support and are searching for supports. Mandy's absence from class for significant periods to meet her physical "needs" and from programmes that are not physiotherapy and for which there is an unclear evidence base, opens up the possibility that Mandy's disability is being constructed as a deficit in need of remediation (Dudley-Marling, 2004).

Mandy goes on an outing every Friday afternoon and sometimes does cooking on another afternoon. Jane linked these activities to developing language skills in the New Zealand Curriculum, but again the planning is not supported by a speech and language therapist. Children's perspectives about leaving the classroom for long periods indicated that this was not a usual activity, therefore there is a risk that removing Mandy from the class for this and other activities could contribute to mixed messages in the classroom about sameness and belonging. There is a risk that disability is constructed as deficit, difference, and 'special', even though this is not what the school wants or intends.

Impairments do have genuine impacts on a child's life (Priestley, 2003). For Mandy, complex health issues also mean adjustments are made to the school day that include eating before the normal morning tea time, and time out of the class for her physical needs. As Mandy's class teacher noted, she did not know how she would

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have managed these needs without the support of a teacher aide. The impairments themselves are not causing barriers, rather it is the environment that is not set up to cater for these. Reflection and problem solving may provide alternative ways of doing things that reduce the reliance on a teacher aide, and allow Mandy more time with her peers.

Friendships and Identity. Friendships are important for all children, but they can be difficult for children with disabilities, especially when classroom practices isolate them from their peers. Practices such as ability grouping, teacher aides who shadow children with disabilities, and being withdrawn from the class have been identified as problematic by children in other studies (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; MacArthur et al., 2007; Meyer, 2001). When teachers encourage participation through the use of small groups or seating students with disabilities next to peers with good social skills, more social interaction is observed (MacArthur, 2012b). My observations showed that Mandy currently spends very little time engaging in activities or play with her peers. Research by Meyer suggests children with severe disabilities are more likely to form friendships with other children when the classrooms use the same seating arrangement, activities or expectations for all children (Meyer, 2001). Mandy did form a closer relationship with one of the girls in her class last year, but when Mandy was retained in the same class this year, the friendship did not last. Some of Mandy's peers show an interest in what she is doing and are eager to work with Mandy when asked but this was often not utilized.

Mandy is in Room 2 with Jane for the second year, while all her peers from last year moved to another class. This decision was made by considering what the adults felt was best for Mandy as she finds change difficult. There may have been other options that were not explored, such as Jane moving through with Mandy's year group.

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Mandy's retention has had social consequences for her. The positive social relationship she was building with another student has not been maintained, and Mandy has not developed friends with the new children in her class. The children in Mandy's class know she is older than them and that she does different work. Despite the supportive values in relation to inclusion in the school, this practice could run the risk of encouraging children to create a construct of Mandy as 'different from us' and thereby further impede her friendships and social relationships.

Mandy was supported academically, enjoyed the activities within and outside of the school, and was cared for. The school policies and values support inclusion but if what happens daily was very different from what her peers are doing, the question remains as to whether such practices may, albeit inadvertently and unintentionally, create a 'special' status and define Mandy by her disability (Meyer, 2001; Shakespeare, 1996).

Professional development and guidance

The Ministry of Education's *Success for All* policy states "Confident schools have positive relationships with, and are supported by, specialist service providers and other agencies. The service provided is evidence based, practical and works in partnership with others" (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Nonetheless, teachers at St Gabrielle's appear to have few specialist supports that allow them to reflect on their practice or to support the school to inclusive development. Most professional development that relates to inclusion is conducted in-house at St Gabrielle's. Teachers can improve their collective knowledge through sharing practices and problem solving with other teachers in their schools (Dappeler, 2012), having new ideas and ways of working from educators or experts outside of the school may help to address some of the tensions discussed.

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St Gabrielle's appears to have had limited supports and resources to assist with their journey towards inclusion on the whole. While schools in New Zealand are autonomous, they can still benefit from well informed support to guide them on their journey towards inclusion. Interprofessional practice, where professionals from different practices are working together can help to address gaps in knowledge and practice that may inadvertently lead to exclusion. Diverse teams can provide valuable knowledge to assist with specific teaching strategies that can be used to facilitate inclusion in a class, but also expertise in relation to policies and systems in the school and classroom (Mentis et al., 2012).

Summary

In this case study adult participants' shared positive interpretations of inclusion. Inclusion was understood to relate to the belonging of all children in the school community, not just those with disabilities. St Gabrielle's has a strong values base that is visible and active throughout the school. They have worked hard to create a sense of community and build caring relationships between all children, staff and parents. The teaching staff and parents have built up good collaborative practices. St Gabrielle's has a positive approach to teaching and but some tensions between the values and practice were identified that may inadvertently contribute to Mandy being perceived as different. The children experienced the classroom as a safe positive place, where they helped each other and enjoyed learning.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the study, demonstrating how it contributes to the existing body of research. I provide some recommendations, and possible directions for future research. The limitations of this study are also discussed.

Contribution of this Study

Over the last two decades, the New Zealand education system has made policy changes to reflect current understandings about the rights of disabled children and adults to quality education in their local communities (MacArthur, 2009). Nonetheless, there exists a wide variation in how welcoming schools are and how they understand and meet the needs of children with disabilities in their schools and classrooms (Rutherford, 2012a).

This research focussed on one classroom which included a child who receives funding for high needs on the ORS scheme. The classroom was located in a school that was perceived in the community to be inclusive and to have inclusive policies and values. Nilholm and Alm (2010) stated “classrooms should by no means be labelled ‘inclusive’ if we do not have firm data regarding how children experience the classroom” (p. 249). This study looked at inclusion through different eyes, through the eyes of Mandy, the children, Mandy's mother, the teacher, ORS teacher, TA and principal.

Social constructionism was used to explore how inclusion and disabilities were understood. Definitions of “normal” or “disabled” are seen as social constructs that are created by people as they interact and interpret the world (Biklen & Burke, 2006; Crotty, 1998). The findings of this study suggest a well-defined framework of values

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at St Gabrielle's, and these values in action throughout the school contributed to a positive construction of people with disabilities as "people, like us" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). The principal is a key figure in the development of inclusive cultures and practices (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). In this case the principal's construction of diversity is shown in the statement "We are all God's children", reflecting the religious beliefs of the school, but also the fundamental understanding that "we are the same", we have shared characteristics as humans (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989). His role included explicitly modelling the values and behaviours he wants to see throughout the school, and ensuring the needs of children are being met. The teaching staff had similar understandings about inclusion, extending the concept of "a school for all" beyond disability to children with other potential barriers to participating or learning that may come from being marginalised through culture or poverty. Creating a sense of community, caring, and engaging in collaborative practices were key principles identified and shared by staff in this school. Having a shared understanding of these principles is identified in the research literature as a key to supporting a school on its journey to inclusion (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

Mandy's mother valued the welcoming nature of the school, how Mandy was treated as "normal", and the collaboration she has with the staff. The children in this study had showed positive understandings of their classroom, teacher, peers and learning. St Gabrielle's has many inclusive practices and contributes to a more just society by constructing disability and diversity as an expected part of the human condition (Slee, 2011). The culture of the school sends a clear message that "everyone in the community is welcome here and we will teach you". This message was understood and conveyed to the researcher by staff, children and Mandy's mother.

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This study supports other research which says that the journey a school takes towards inclusion can also be marred by contradictions, tensions and challenges. Even within schools which are working to be inclusive, there may be some practices that are barriers to inclusion, albeit unintended barriers (Dyson et al., 2004; Education Review Office, 2013). A gap between policies from the Ministry of Education and supports for St Gabrielle's in the form of well-informed support by physiotherapist and speech language therapists as team members, led to some practices that separated Mandy from her peers and from the curriculum for extended periods of time. Mandy was considered to have physical needs that required additional support, and staff responded to this need as well as they could through the use of programmes that were external to the school. The Ministry of Education's position is that all children have a right to learn with their peers and that all children can be taught within the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2013). From a social constructionist perspective, there is a risk that such separate approaches contribute to a construction of Mandy as "different" and in need of remedial approaches that schools cannot provide. This arrangement sits in stark contrast to the school's broader culture of all children being "one of us", and raises questions about opportunities and supports for staff to critically reflect on their practices, to consider the extent to which they include or exclude. Engaging in informed reflective practice in this way could be one way to ensure that Mandy and other children with disabilities can enjoy contextualised integrated approaches to therapy and other forms of support that enhance their presence, participation and learning at school (Ministry of Education, 2007b).

Where to from here?

The Ministry of Education has stated they have a strong commitment to inclusive education, and the curriculum is designed to be inclusive of all (Ministry of

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Education, 2007c, 2012a). St Gabrielle's demonstrates a set of values in practice that are consistent with current understandings about how schools can develop through a journey towards inclusion. However, as shown in this case study, there can be gaps between policy and practice that run the risk of schools slipping away from the intentions of their inclusive values. There may be several ways to address these gaps.

Schools can conduct regular self-reviews to reflect on inclusive practices and make systematic plans to address barriers as they are identified (Education Review Office, 2013). There are several resources available to assist schools, including the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2011), the self-review for schools from *Including Students with High Needs: Primary Schools* (Education Review Office, 2013) or the *Inclusive Tool Kit* (NZCER, 2013). Providing schools like St Gabrielle's with support to engage in such practices of self-review may be a productive starting point.

Collaboration and approaches to interprofessional practice that can help to increase the collective knowledge of the school community may also be beneficial. Schools can learn how to reflect in informed and critical ways on their current practices, and how to problem solve around issues that may be barriers to inclusion (Mentis et al., 2012). The school leadership has a role in making sure there is time available for this (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Teachers, teacher aides and ORS funded teachers need dedicated time to plan together and consider ways to develop inclusive practices in the classroom that keep children together and maximize opportunities to learn and have friends. The additional input of well-informed Special Education Advisors and therapists in this process would seem to hold some value for St Gabrielle's as they seek ways to meet Mandy's needs within the school community.

Further Research

The results from this study, and data from the 2006 household disability survey suggest children who are classified as having “high needs” or very “high needs” can be at risk for exclusion from social and educational activities at school (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Further research into the barriers that are preventing participation and ways these barriers may be overcome could help to make education more inclusive for these students. As indicated in this study, seeking to be inclusive is a challenging task for schools, even when the fundamental values that drive practice are well established.

Further research into schools and classrooms that support the educational and social inclusion of a diverse student group will continue to add valuable insights. As indicated in this study, there is a need to understand how schools can be supported interprofessionally to meet their school community’s inclusive goals.

Limitations

Single case studies have a number of limitations. The ability to make generalisations based on one case are limited, but it can add to the collective knowledge and led to generalizable findings as more cases are studied (2011). This study involved interviews with participants from a variety of roles, but the number of students was limited to five and only one parent to keep the data manageable. Other children, parents or staff members would have had additional issues or insights. Observations were also conducted over four school days, the results may have been more authentic if the observations occurred for an extended time.

Data for this study primarily came from interviews and observations. The participants all knew each other, so confidentiality could not be guaranteed. If a participant chose to read the final thesis, they would know the views of the other participants. Knowing this may have influenced the statements they made.

Conclusion

This study used a single case study design to look at an example of a classroom within a school that was perceived to be inclusive. The understandings and experiences of various participants were then examined through a social constructionist lens.

The concept of inclusion has moved from the physical presence of children with disabilities in school to an awareness of the needs of all children (Black-Hawkins, 2010). An inclusive school takes steps to promote presence, participation and achievement for all students (Ainscow et al., 2013).

The values and beliefs held by principals' and teaching staff have been identified in international research on inclusive education as key factors in facilitating or hindering students' rights to education (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Jordan et al., 2009). In its policies and explicitly stated values, St Gabrielle's demonstrates these qualities. The school has strong school values that permeate the school, there is a concern within the school community and particularly at leadership level to create a welcoming and supportive community for staff, students and parents.

Research suggests collaboration is a key practise for inclusive education (Mentis et al., 2012), and this is recognised by the staff at St Gabrielle's who have good communication with each other and with families. They have a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, with Jane as the classroom teacher taking overall responsibilities for Mandy's education. This is in contrast to findings from other research which suggests that it is not uncommon for teachers to hand responsibility for the education of children with disabilities to teacher aides (Blatchford et al., 2007; Topping, 2012).

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Nonetheless, while there was evidence of the school of sound collaborative practices to support inclusion, there appeared to be minimal external support for the school to critically evaluate the extent to which values translated into inclusive teaching practice and inclusive experiences for students with disabilities. It is particularly concerning that there was limited contact with a physiotherapist or speech and language teacher despite Mandy's physical development and communication skills being identified as areas in need of attention and support. The school has instead tried to cater for Mandy's perceived needs through programmes that were external to the school. Mandy spent significant amounts of time outside of the classroom or working at the back with the teacher aide or ORS funded teacher. This may have contributed to a construction of Mandy as "different" even though this is not what the school or Mandy's teacher intended.

The findings of this study suggest that collaboration with other professionals and/or teaching staff who have had experience working with diverse children could help Jane and St Gabrielle's in general to critique their own practice and explore a range of ways in which to address the needs of all children within the classroom and curriculum (Mentis et al., 2012).

It may be problematic that the New Zealand Ministry of Education promotes inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 2011) while at the same time continuing to refer to a separate, different way of thinking about teaching and disability as 'special' education (Ministry of Education, 2012b). This bifurcation of thinking, policy, and practice in education may serve to promote a misunderstanding that children with disabilities have different needs to other children perceived to be 'normal'. In the case of St Gabrielle's, the search for 'special' programmes outside the boundaries of the school and education system may therefore be perceived by staff as appropriate.

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An alternative way of thinking could perhaps be promoted by the Ministry of Education by encouraging schools to move to a model that recognises (at a policy and practice level) all children as having rights to an education that is contextualised within the New Zealand curriculum and within schools' own local communities. Supports to achieve an educational experience that addresses these rights would then become paramount so that schools can develop professionally in the area of teaching and diversity. Schools might then build the capacity needed to respond to diversity in inclusive ways, rather than focussing on perceived deficits within individual students (Mentis et al., 2012).

St Gabrielle's has made positive steps on the journey towards inclusion and should be commended for the local values and developments that have supported this. The use of tools such as the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2011), and the recently introduced self-review for schools from *Including Students with High Needs: Primary Schools* (Education Review Office, 2013) and the *Inclusive Tool Kit* (NZCER, 2013) may help St Gabrielle's and other schools to provide effective education for all students. Nonetheless, this study identifies the need for robust policy and associated collaborative systems of support so that school communities can critically reflect on their practice; continually explore inclusive ways to support student learning; and grow and develop in ways that enhance the presence, participation and learning of all students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter to the School Board of Trustees



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

Dear Principal/ Chairperson BOT,

My name is Hayley Armstrong and I am currently studying towards a Masters in Educational Psychology with Massey University.

As part of my studies I am completing a 2-year research project for a thesis. I wish to study a single classroom that includes a child who receives funding through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) and is part of a wider inclusive school community. My study will explore how values relating to inclusion are applied and how these values are experienced by children in the classroom. This is a positive study, in a school that is considered to have an inclusive focus. The participants in this study would be actively contributing to research that could have a positive influence on inclusive practices, and the completed research may provide beneficial information for teachers or schools who want to create an inclusive community.

I am writing to you to ask for the Board of Trustees' permission to conduct this project at [REDACTED]. If you agree, I will work with your principal to approach participants for their informed consent to take part. The participants would be the class teacher, the teacher's aide, the ORS funded teacher, an ORS funded student, four other children in the class, the principal, and the parents of the ORS funded student (about 8 individuals in total). If you agree, I will spend one week in your school observing in one classroom and in the wider school environment. The observations would focus on the teacher, the teacher's aide, and the five participant children and would be recorded in fieldnotes. Interactions with other children may be described in general way, but they will not be specifically

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described in the fieldnotes or the completed report. During observations I would endeavour to remain unobtrusive so my presence does not cause any disruption to the class. I would negotiate my role in the classroom with the class teacher and could assist with class activities as directed by the class teacher.

Open questioning style interviews would be conducted with each participant. These would last for approximately an hour for the adult participants, and half an hour for the child participants. A convenient time and place would be negotiated with each participant.

I would like to use some examples of the ORS funded students' work, and IEP notes as data for the project, but I will only do this with the permission of the child involved and their parents. I would look at the school charter, particularly around the special needs policy.

A proposal for the study has been approved by Massey University's Human Ethics Committee. The results from this research may be used in conference presentations, teacher professional development, and written publications in teacher-focused and academic publications. In any of these forms of dissemination, confidentiality and anonymity will prevail. Your school, and the children, parents, teachers and principal will not be identified. All data collected will be confidential to myself and my supervisors, and will be securely stored so no one else will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed, except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be kept in secure storage for five years, after which time it will be destroyed.

I have enclosed copies of the Information Sheets and Consent Forms for the potential participants in the project. If you have any questions regarding this project please don't hesitate to contact me, or my supervisors, Dr. Jude MacArthur and Wendy Holley-Boen (see contact details below). Thank you for considering this proposal. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Hayley Armstrong

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Dr. Jude MacArthur

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wendy Holley-Boen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 13/70. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 80877, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix B: Information Sheets and Consent Forms

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE TEACHER

Researcher(s) Introduction

My name is Hayley Armstrong and I am currently planning a thesis project which will contribute towards a Masters in Educational Psychology.

Project Description and Invitation

This is a case study of a single classroom that includes a child who receives funding through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) and is part of a wider inclusive school community. It aims to explore how values relating to inclusion are applied and how these are experienced by the children in the classroom.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research. This information sheet explains the project. Please read this information sheet before you make a decision about participating.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

This study will be based in a single classroom. The participants will include the class teacher, the principal, a child who receives ORS funding, their parents, four other children in the class, the teacher's aide and the ORS funded teacher.

Project Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form which shows that you understand the study and have chosen to participate. I would observe in the focus classroom and the wider school environment for one week to gain an understanding of the environment and practices. Observations will be recorded in field notes. Copies of work, meeting minutes (e.g., IEPs) or other relevant documentation (e.g., school policies) may also be examined (with permission). I will try to ensure my presence causes no disruptions and I am willing to help out as an extra pair of hands during this time.

I would also like to interview you. This would be at a time and place that suits you and I would ask about your work, particularly around the inclusion of children with disabilities.

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Data Management

I would observe you and the five participant children in the classroom and wider school grounds. These observations will be recorded in field notes. Interactions with other children may be described in a general way, but they will not be specifically described in the fieldnotes or completed report. I may talk with participants about what is happening for purposes of clarification and this would also be recorded in the field notes.

The interviews would be sound recorded so they can be transcribed at a later date. These would be conducted in a semi-structured, conversational style. I have guidelines for questions I might ask, but other questions will come up as the interview progresses. In the event that the line of questions develop in a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you have the right to decline to answer particular questions and withdraw from the project at any stage without disadvantage of any kind. After the interviews have been transcribed, you would be given a transcript which you may edit.

I may use some examples of students' work, or IEP notes, as data for the project, but I will only do this with the permission of the child involved, their parents and the school. I would look at the school charter, particularly around the special needs policy.

All data collected will be confidential to myself and my supervisors, and will be securely stored so no one else will be able to gain access to it. The names of participants and the school site will be changed, and any identifying features will be removed or changed. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed, except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be kept in secure storage for five years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time during participation;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.
- review the transcription and to remove or change any information that you do not wish to have included in the final project.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Project Contacts

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact:-

- Researcher – Hayley Armstrong

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Supervisors – Dr. Jude MacArthur

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wendy Holley-Boen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Compulsory Statements

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 13/70. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 80877, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE ORS FUNDED TEACHER

Researcher(s) Introduction

My name is Hayley Armstrong and I am currently planning a thesis project which will contribute towards a Masters in Educational Psychology.

Project Description and Invitation

This is a case study of a single classroom that includes a child who receives funding through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) and is part of a wider inclusive school community. It aims to explore how values relating to inclusion are applied and how these are experienced by the children in the classroom.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research. This information sheet explains the project, please read this information sheet before you make a decision about participating.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

This study will be based in a single classroom. The participants will include the class teacher, the principal, a child who receives ORS funding, their parents, four other children in the class, the teacher's aide and the ORS funded teacher.

Project Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form which shows that you understand the study and have chosen to participate. I would observe in the focus classroom and the wider school environment for one week to gain an understanding of the environment and practices. Observations will be recorded in field notes. Copies of work, meeting minutes (e.g., IEPs) or other relevant documentation (e.g., school policies) may also be examined (with permission). I will try to ensure my presence causes no disruptions and I am willing to help out as an extra pair of hands during this time.

I would also like to interview you. This would be at a time and place that suits you and I would ask about your work, particularly around the inclusion of children with disabilities.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Data Management

I will be observing you as you work, along with the teacher, and the five participant children in the classroom and wider school grounds. These observations will be recorded in field notes. Interactions with other children may be described in general way, but they will not be specifically described in the fieldnotes or the completed report. I may talk with participants about what is happening for purposes of clarification and this would also be recorded in the field notes.

The interviews would be sound recorded so they can be transcribed at a later date. These would be conducted in a semi-structured, conversational style. I have guidelines for questions I might ask, but other questions will come up as the interview progresses. In the event that the line of questions develop in a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you have the right to decline to answer particular questions and withdraw from the project at any stage without disadvantage of any kind. After the interviews have been transcribed, you would be given a transcript which you may edit.

I may use some examples of students work, or IEP notes, as data for the project, but I will only do this with the permission of the child involved, their parents and the school. I would look at the school charter, particularly around the special needs policy.

All data collected will be confidential to myself and my supervisors, and will be securely stored so no one else will be able to gain access to it. The names of participants and the school site will be changed, and any identifying features will be removed or changed. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed, except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be kept in secure storage for five years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time during participation;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.
- review the transcription and to remove or change any information that you do not wish to have included in the final project.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Project Contacts

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact:-

- Researcher – Hayley Armstrong

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Supervisors – Dr. Jude MacArthur

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wendy Holley-Boen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Compulsory Statements

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An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE TEACHER'S AIDE

Researcher(s) Introduction

My name is Hayley Armstrong and I am currently planning a thesis project which will contribute towards a Masters in Educational Psychology.

Project Description and Invitation

This is a case study of a single classroom that includes a child who receives funding through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) and is part of a wider inclusive school community. It aims to explore how values relating to inclusion are applied and how these are experienced by the children in the classroom.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research. This information sheet explains the project. Please read this information sheet before you make a decision about participating.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

This study will be based in a single classroom. The participants will include the class teacher, the principal, a child who receives ORS funding, their parents, four other children in the class, the teacher's aide and the ORS funded teacher.

Project Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form which shows that you understand the study and have chosen to participate. I would observe in the focus classroom and the wider school environment for one week to gain an understanding of the environment and practices. Observations will be recorded in field notes. Copies of work, meeting minutes (e.g. IEPs) or other relevant documentation (e.g. school policies) may also be examined (with permission). I will try to ensure my presence causes no disruptions and I am willing to help out as an extra pair of hands during this time.

Data Management

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

I will be observing you as you work, along with the teacher, and the five participant children in the classroom and wider school grounds. These observations will be recorded in field notes. Interactions with other children may be described in a general way, but they will not be specifically described in the fieldnotes or the completed report. I may talk with participants about what is happening for purposes of clarification and this would also be recorded in the field notes.

I may use some examples of students' work, or IEP notes, as data for the project, but I will only do this with the permission of the child involved, their parents and the school. I would look at the school charter, particularly around the special needs policy.

All data collected will be confidential to myself and my supervisors, and will be securely stored so no one else will be able to gain access to it. The names of participants and the school site will be changed, and any identifying features will be removed or changed. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed, except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be kept in secure storage for five years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time during participation;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Project Contacts

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact:-

- Researcher – Hayley Armstrong

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

- Supervisors – Dr. Jude MacArthur

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wendy Holley-Boen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Compulsory Statements

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An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE PARENTS OF THE ORS FUNDED CHILD

Researcher(s) Introduction

My name is Hayley Armstrong and I am currently planning a thesis project which will contribute towards a Masters in Educational Psychology.

Project Description and Invitation

This is a case study of a single classroom that includes a child who receives funding through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) and is part of a wider inclusive school community. It aims to explore how values relating to inclusion are applied and how these are experienced by the children in the classroom.

I would like to invite you and your child to participate in this research. This information sheet explains the project, please read this information sheet before you make a decision about participating.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

This study will be based in a single classroom. The participants will include the class teacher, the principal, a child who receives ORS funding, their parents, four other children in the class, the teacher's aide and the ORS funded teacher.

Project Procedures

If you and your child agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form which shows that you understand the study and have chosen to participate. I would also ask you to discuss this project with your child, and I will provide them with an information sheet and discuss what being involved in the project would mean for them. If they also consent then I would observe in the focus classroom and the wider school environment for one week to gain an understanding of the environment and practices. Observations will be recorded in field notes. Copies of work, meeting minutes (e.g., IEPs) may also be examined (with permission from you, your child and the school). I will try to ensure my presence causes no disruptions. I would also ask you and your child some questions.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Data Management

I will be observing the teacher and the five participant children in the classroom and school grounds and taking field notes. I may talk with your child about what is happening for purposes of clarification and this would be recorded in the field notes.

I would like to interview your child and sound record this conversations so I can transcribe it at a later date. This would be a semi-structured, conversational style discussion about what they like and dislike about school and their experiences in the classroom. I have guidelines for questions I might ask, but other questions will come up during the conversation. Your child will informed they can stop the discussion at any time, they do not need to answer any questions they do not want to and if they want to withdraw from the project at any stage they may do so without any disadvantage. Once the conversation has been transcribed I will give a copy to your child for them to read (or I will read it to them) and they can alter their responses if they wish.

I would also like to interview you, and you will also have the options of stopping the discussion, declining from answering any questions that you do want to or withdrawing from the project at any stage, without any disadvantage to yourself or your child. I will transcribe the interview and you will have the option of editing this if you wish.

I might use some examples of students work, or IEP notes, as data for the project, but I will only do this with the permission of the child involved, their parents and the school. I will look at the school charter, particularly around the special need policy.

All data collected will be confidential to myself and my supervisors, and will be securely stored so no one else will be able to gain access to it. The names of participants and the school site will be changed, and any identifying features will be removed or changed. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed, except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be kept in secure storage for five years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Participant's Rights

Your child is under no obligation to accept this invitation. If your child decides to participate, they have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time during participation;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.
- review the transcription and to remove or change any information that you do not wish to have included in the final project.

Project Contacts

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact:-

- Researcher – Hayley Armstrong

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Supervisors – Dr. Jude MacArthur

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wendy Holley-Boen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE PARENTS OF CHILD PARTICIPANTS

Researcher(s) Introduction

My name is Hayley Armstrong and I am currently planning a thesis project which will contribute towards a Masters in Educational Psychology.

Project Description and Invitation

This is a case study of a single classroom that includes a child who receives funding through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) and is part of a wider inclusive school community. It aims to explore how values relating to inclusion are applied and how these are experienced by the children in the classroom.

I would like to invite your child to participate in this research. This information sheet explains the project, please read this information sheet before you make a decision about your child participating.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

This study will be based in a single classroom. The participants will include the class teacher, the principal, a child who receives ORS funding, their parents, four other children in the class, the teacher's aide and the ORS funded teacher.

Project Procedures

If you agree to your child participating in this project, you will be asked to sign a consent form which shows that you understand the study and have given your consent for your child to be involved. I would also ask you to discuss this project with your child, and I will provide them with an information sheet and discuss what being involved in the project would mean for them. I would only proceed if your child also provides consent.

I would observe in the focus classroom and the wider school environment for one week to gain an understanding of the environment and practices. Observations will be recorded in field notes. I will try to ensure my presence causes no disruptions. I would also ask your child some questions about what they like or dislike about school and their classroom.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Data Management

I will be observing teacher and the five participant children in the classroom and school grounds and taking field notes. I may talk with your child about what is happening for purposes of clarification and this would be recorded in the field notes.

I would like to interview your child and sound record this conversations so I can transcribe it at a later date. This would be a semi-structured, conversational style discussion about what they like and dislike about school and their experiences in the classroom. I have guidelines for questions I might ask, but other questions will come up during the conversation. Your child will informed they can stop the discussion at any time, they do not need to answer any questions they do not want to and if they want to withdraw from the project at any stage they may do so without any disadvantage. Once the conversation has been transcribed I will give a copy to your child for them to read (or I will read it to them) and they can alter their responses if they wish.

All data collected will be confidential to myself and my supervisors, and will be securely stored so no one else will be able to gain access to it. The names of participants and the school site will be changed, and any identifying features will be removed or changed. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed, except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be kept in secure storage for five years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Participant's Rights

Your child is under no obligation to accept this invitation. If your child decides to participate, they have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time during participation;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.
- review the transcription and to remove or change any information that you do not wish to have included in the final project.

Project Contacts

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact:-

- Researcher – Hayley Armstrong

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Supervisors – Dr. Jude MacArthur

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wendy Holley-Boen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Compulsory Statements

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 13/70. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 80877, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR CHILDREN

My name is Hayley Armstrong and I am doing a study. I would like you to read or listen to this information and decide if you want to be involved.

What is the study about?

I am interested in finding out what happens in your class so everyone can learn.

What would happen?

I will spend one week at your school to see what happens in your class and how you are all learning. If you want to be in my study I will talk to you about your class. You can choose to have someone with you when we talk and we can do this at school or at home. When we talk I may put a tape on so I remember what was said. You can tell me to turn it off and I will. The tape and the copy of your words from the tape will only be seen by me. When I have written the report the tape will be wiped clean. The copy of the words will be kept locked up, then after 5 years it will be destroyed. I will also talk to some other children in the class, your teacher and the principal.

Before we do this you and your Mum or Dad (or a caregiver) would sign a Consent Form, to say you understand the study and want to be in it.

The following paragraph will be added for the ORS funded child

I will also talk to your Mum or Dad (or caregiver). We will talk about your family and what they like about your school.

I may look at some of your work, but I will only do this if it is okay with you. Nothing bad will happen if you decide not to talk to me, don't want to answer any questions or decide you don't want to be part of the study. You can tell me or ask your parents to tell me at any time.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

I will write a report about helping all children learn at school and I may use some of your words but I won't use your name or the name of your school so people won't know they are your words.

Your Rights

If you decide to be part of this study ...

- You can change your mind at any time;
- You don't need to answer questions you don't want to;
- You can ask me questions;
- Your name will not be used;
- You can see what I found out when I finish;
- You can ask me to turn off the tape recorder;
- When I've written out the words you we can read them together and you can tell me if you want to take out or change any of the words.

If You Want To Know More

If you, your Mum or Dad (or caregiver), want to ask questions you can ask me or my bosses, Jude and Wendy.

- Researcher – Hayley Armstrong

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Supervisors – Dr. Jude MacArthur

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wendy Holley-Boen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Compulsory Statements

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 13/70. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 80877, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – Teacher and Principal

I have read the Information Sheet about this project and I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I know that:-

- My participation and in the project is voluntary;
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage;

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my transcribed interview returned to me for editing.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – ORS Teacher

I have read the Information Sheet about this project and I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I know that:-

- My participation and in the project is voluntary;
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage;

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my transcribed interview returned to me for editing.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – Teacher’s Aide

I have read the Information Sheet about this project and I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I know that:-

- My participation and in the project is voluntary;
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage;

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

PARENT CONSENT FORM – Parental Consent for the ORS funded Child to Participate

I have read the Information Sheet about this project and I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I know that:-

- My participation and the participation of my child is voluntary;
- We are free to withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage;

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I agree/do not agree to the research examining IEP document and samples of work.

I agree to my child _____ participating in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name - printed

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

PARENT CONSENT FORM – For Parents of Participant Children

I have read the Information Sheet about this project and I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I know that:-

- My participation and the participation of my child is voluntary;
- We are free to withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage;

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I agree to my child _____ participating in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - Children

Please note: This form maybe adjusted for the child who receives ORS funding to suit their communication preferences

I have read the Information Sheet and I understand the study.

I know:

- I can ask questions at any time or I can get Mum or Dad to phone Hayley.
- I don't have to take part unless I want to.
- I can change my mind at any time and nothing bad will happen to me.
- I don't have to answer any of the questions if I don't want to.
- I can ask for the sound recorder to be turned off at any time.

About my interview (tick if agree)

- It is okay for the talk to be recorded.
- I want to read (or have Hayley read to me) the talk when it is written down so I can check it or change things.
- I would like to be part of the study.

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Name:

.....

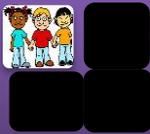
INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM



My name is Hayley Armstrong



I am a teacher and I am studying at University



For my work at University I am talking to some children, your teacher, the principal and your mum to find out what makes school a good place for everyone.



I'm interested in what you think about school and your class



I would also like to watch what happens in your classroom.



I will write about what school is like for you.

- I won't use your real name. You can choose a made-up name. That means no one will know that the writing is about you.
- I won't name your school either, so no one will know that the writing is about your school



If we do talk about school together, you can tell me that you don't want to talk about school any more.



Is it OK with you if talk to you about school?

YES

NO



My signature
Date:

Appendix C: Letter to Class

An Inclusive Classroom: Through different eyes

Hi, my name's Hayley, and I am doing a study to find out what happens in Room 2 so everyone can learn well.

Who would be in the study?

I will come into your class for a week to see what happens. I will talk to five children who volunteer to be in the study, your teacher and the principal about the good things that happen in your classroom to help everyone learn well and have friends. The names of the people I talk to and the school will

What do I do if I want to be in the study?

If you would like to be in my study you need to:

1. Talk to your parents and ask them if they think it's Okay.
2. Put your name on the bottom of this sheet and give it to your teacher.
3. You and your parents will read more about what you will do in my study and you will both sign a form to say you want to be in the study.

I only need to talk to 5 children, so the first to get back to me will be chosen.

What if I don't want to be in the study?

You don't need to do anything. I will be coming into your class for a week. But I will not be talking to you directly about my study.

What if I have questions?

You or your parents can contact me at: hayley-armstrong@hotmail.com

Phone: 0223223363 **or my supervisors**

Dr. Jude MacArthur j.a.macarthur@massey.ac.nz Phone: 027 741 5413

Wendy Holley-Boen W.Holley-Boen@massey.ac.nz Phone: 09 414 0800 ext 41595

I want to be in the study

Name:

Parent or Guardian's signature:

Appendix D: Interview Schedules

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CLASS TEACHER

Thank you for your interest in this study. This research is conducted for my Masters in Educational Psychology study through Massey University. You will be familiar with this project from reading the information sheet. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and then transcribed. You will be given a copy of the transcription for editing.

I am interested in your experiences teaching a class that includes children with a wide variety of educational and social needs, and the strategies you use to enable everyone to participate.

Background

- Tell me about your background, your teacher training, and prior experience
- How do you see your role as a teacher? Can you describe your personal philosophy or approach to teaching?
- What are the key values of this school?
- What do you want the children in your class to learn?

Teaching in an inclusive class

- How did you feel when you learned you would be teaching (name of child who has ORS funding)?
- What did you do to prepare (name of child who has ORS funding)'s arrival and what supports have you had to help with that preparation?
- What have been the benefits of having (name of child who has ORS funding) in your class?
- What have been the challenges and how have these been addressed?
- What barriers have you identified and how have you worked to overcome these?
- What are your considerations when you are creating a teaching plan?
- How would you describe an inclusive classroom?
- Can you describe the culture of the classroom? How did this culture develop?
- What approaches do you draw on in your teaching to ensure that all children in your class are fully participating and learning?
- How have you come to know about these approaches? (Teacher training; professional development; family members with disabilities etc.)
- To what extent is what you do part of a whole school approach for inclusion?

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

- How does your approach in this classroom relate to the directions for teaching and learning set by your school management (principal and DP)?
- What are the benefits for students of being in an inclusive class? (socially/learning etc.).

Support

- Could you describe any support you have had to develop your classroom as an inclusive community - (from within and outside your school)? How do you use this support?
- Who is on the team to support X's learning and how does this team work? Would you change anything about how the team works?
- Are there any areas where you would like to see changes to improve teaching and learning in your classroom?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Thanks for taking the time to do this interview.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Interview Guidelines for the Principal

Thank you for your interest in this study. This research is conducted for my Masters in Educational Psychology study through Massey University. You will be familiar with this project from reading the information sheet. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and then transcribed. You will be given a copy of the transcription for editing.

I am interested in how the school creates an environment and culture where all children are welcomed, including those with high needs. I want to talk about how you see your role in this process.

Background

- Tell me about your background, qualifications, experience etc.
- What are your aims for this school?
- How would you describe inclusive education – what does it mean to you?
- How does it fit with your schools' policies?
- How would you describe your role in developing an inclusive environment in this school?
- How do you support your staff to be inclusive in their teaching?
- What are your views on Success for all, the government's targets for inclusion?
- What support is available to you as a school to develop as an inclusive community?
- What support do you find most valuable?
- What changes would you like to see at the level of MoE policy, support, resourcing, funding etc. to support your work as an inclusive school?

The student with ORS funding

- How would you describe your role in supporting the inclusion of (child's name with ORS funding)?
- What has been like having (child's name with ORS funding) in your school?
- How would you describe your role in supporting (child's name with ORS funding) presence, participation and learning in this school?
- What, if any, would you see as the barriers to (child's name with ORS funding) inclusion? How do you overcome these?
- What are the advantages of inclusion for students like (child's name with ORS funding)?

For other students?

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- Is there anything else you would like me to know?

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Interview Guidelines for the Family of the ORS Funded Child

Thank you for your interest in this study. You will be familiar with this project from reading the information sheet. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and then transcribed. You will be given a copy of the transcription for editing.

I am interested in how you feel the X classroom teacher, family and principal work together to support learning for your child. I want to talk about how you see your role in this process and how individual roles come together to enhance the student's day to day life at school alongside their peers.

Background

- Tell me about X. His/her age, your family and their place in it. What are they like as a person, a little bit about their disability- type, impact?
- Tell me about their previous school experience.
- Why did you choose this school? Please talk me through the decision and enrolment process.

Current School

- What do they say about school? What do they like/dislike? Interests?
- What are good things about his/her school experience? What is it that makes these things work? (Leadership in the school, school values, attitudes, special character...)
- What things would you like to see changed? Why and how would you make these changes?

Current Class

- How is their academic progress and progress in other areas? Friendships and relationships?
- How would you describe the classroom (child's name with ORS funding) is in at the moment? What does the teacher do to ensure (child's name with ORS funding) is included, belongs, and learns?

The support team

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- Who is involved in your child's support team?
- What is your involvement on the team? How happy are you with this level of involvement?
- How would you describe the work/role of the various people in the team? What do you value most about their work? In what areas would you like to see changes?

The future

- As you look ahead, how do you picture their progress through school?
- Do you have any concerns about what might happen as X progresses through their schooling?
- What are your hopes?

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

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Interview Guideline for ORS teacher

Thank you for your interest in this study. This research is conducted for my Masters in Educational Psychology study through Massey University. You will be familiar with this project from reading the information sheet. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and then transcribed. You will be given a copy of the transcription for editing.

I am interested in how the school creates an environment and culture where all children are welcomed, including those with high needs. I want to talk about how you see your role in this process and how individual roles come together to create an inclusive environment.

Background

- Please tell me about your background, your training, and prior experience with children with diverse needs.
- What does inclusion mean to you? What makes schools inclusive? What are your views about the inclusion of students with disabilities in their local school?

Roles and responsibilities

- Who has responsibility in this school for the learning needs of children with disabilities?
- How do you see your role in this classroom? How have you come to understand your role? How have roles been determined?
- What is your role on the team that works to support X? What contributes to the effective operation of this team? Would you change anything in terms of the way the team works, and if so what would that be and why?
- How do you see your role with X (ORS funded student); with the class teacher; in the classroom generally?
- How would you describe the culture of this school? And what about this classroom? What is it that makes the classroom inclusive (teacher approaches; student behaviour and attitudes; the way support staff work; school leadership)
- Are there any barriers to achieving inclusion in this school/classroom? What are these and how could they be overcome?

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Interview Guideline for Teacher Aide

Thank you for your interest in this study. This research is conducted for my Masters in Educational Psychology study through Massey University. You will be familiar with this project from reading the information sheet. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and then transcribed. You will be given a copy of the transcription for editing.

I am interested in how the school creates an environment and culture where all children are welcomed, including those with high needs. I want to talk about how you see your role in this process and how individual roles come together to create an inclusive environment.

Background

- Please tell me about your background, your training, and prior experience with children with diverse needs.
- What does inclusion mean to you? What makes schools inclusive? What are your views about the inclusion of students with disabilities in their local school?

Roles and responsibilities

- Who has responsibility in this school for the learning needs of children with disabilities?
- What is your role on the team that works to support X? What contributes to the effective operation of this team? Would you change anything in terms of the way the team works, and if so what would that be and why?
- How do you see your role in this classroom; with X (ORS funded student); with the class teacher?
- How have you come to understand your role? How have roles been determined?
- How would you describe the culture of this school?
- What about the culture of this classroom? What is it that makes the classroom inclusive (teacher approaches; student behaviour and attitudes; the way support staff work; school leadership)
- Are there any barriers to achieving inclusion in this school/classroom? What are these and how could they be overcome?
- Can you tell me about the work you do with X outside of the classroom/school?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Interview Guidelines for Children

I want to talk to you for a few minutes about your class, about what happens in your class and the things you like and don't like at school. I'll also be talking to your teacher, principal, parents and some other children in your class about this. I will write a report about what everyone thinks, and this will help us to make classrooms better when they have children who need different types of help. I will not use your name. You can choose a different name for yourself that will be used instead. What would you like your name to be in my research? You can also ask to have an adult or another friend with you during this interview if you would like.

Are you happy to talk to me or show me what your class is like?

Would you like to have a friend or adult with you while we talk?

Consent

You can choose if you want to talk to me now about school and your class. If you don't want to talk to me, that's fine, you can tell me and we will stop now.

If you want to stop talking at any time while we are talking, that's ok

If you don't want to answer any questions, that's ok too.

I am going to use a recorder, so I can remember what you say or I'll write down what you chose to show me. Is that ok?

Are you happy to talk to me now?

Interview

Self

Tell me about yourself:

- What do you like to do?
- What are you good at?
- How would you describe yourself to a new teacher?
- How do you think your teacher would describe you?

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School

Can you tell me about school?

- Do you like school?
- What things do you like doing at school?
- Are there things you don't like about school? What are they?
- What do you like to do at playtimes?
- Are there things you don't like about playtimes?
- Who do you usually play with?
- Who helps you at school? And who do you help?

Classroom

Can you tell me about your class?

- Is there anything that makes it special/ a good place?
- Is there anything you would like to change about your class? Can you tell me about that? Why do you want that changed?
- How do the children in the class get on with each other? (check for class treaty or rules/guidelines that might be used to guide children's behaviour towards each other)
- What happens if someone is having trouble learning or doing something in class?
- Tell me about the work you do outside of the classroom (if child is removed for additional support). How do you feel about this?
- Who are the adults that help you to learn at school? What do they do to help you? Is there anything you would like to change about the way they help you learn?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Thank you so much for answering these questions. It's been fun talking with you.

Appendix E: Transcript Release Authority

An Inclusive Classroom: Through Different Eyes

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

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