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**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**CASE STUDIES INVESTIGATING PERSPECTIVES AND  
EXPERIENCES OF INCLUSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**BY**

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**A STUDY PROJECT IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION**

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**SEPTEMBER 2006**

**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this study project is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university in order to obtain a degree.

Signature: Signed by candidate .....

Date: 2006 : 12 : 05 .....

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## LIFE IS A JOURNEY!

A journey that was fraught with frustrations, joys, sadness, anxieties and overwhelming successes. This is the journey that I have been on and many people have accompanied me on this wonderful, exciting, exhausting yet fulfilling journey.

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# CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

## 1.1 Introduction

Education systems in many parts of the world have undergone a number of systemic, organizational and curricular changes and South Africa is no different in this regard. In South Africa, educational changes are embedded in the broader political and social changes taking place in the country. Broader political changes included a move in 1994 from a separatist government that operated along racial lines to a new democratically elected government (see Matthew, Ngele, Punt, Smuts, & Van Louw, 1998).

Educational changes included the reorganisation of a system that, prior to 1994, was segregated along racial lines. Prior to the newly elected democratic government, education in South Africa was divided into nineteen education departments, each catering for different racial groups. These education departments applied different practices and policies to entrench inequalities and disparities in terms of organizational structures, resourcing, curriculum and provisioning. Each education department prepared children in different ways for the positions they were expected to occupy in the social, economic and political context under the apartheid regime.

The new democratic government sought to address the above-mentioned inequities through the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a structure that formed the framework for a single integrated education system. The NQF was developed as a structural apparatus that would provide quality, equality, equitable learning opportunities for all learners regardless of age, circumstances, gender, and level of education and training. This bold move set the scene for a host of systemic, organisational, curricular and management changes in the education system at national, provincial, and local school levels<sup>1</sup>.

The changes are embedded in the South African constitution<sup>2</sup>, Section 29: 14 which declares 'that everyone has the right to a basic education'. These policies stemming

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<sup>1</sup> National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 and South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

<sup>2</sup> The Constitution in Section 9 (2), commits the state to the achievement of equality, and Sections 9 (3), (4) and (5), which commit the state to non-discrimination.

from the constitution, formed the foundation for educational transformation and ensured that, at a policy level at least; structures existed that outlined the political intention, application and implementation of plans. At the systemic, organizational and management levels, White Papers, acts and policies, and strategic operational plans were promulgated to ensure equality and equity. The policies included, amongst others, the National Education Policy Act 27/1996, South African Schools Act 84/1996, Curriculum 2005 (1998), the Assessment Policy (1998), the (Revised) National Curriculum Statement - Grades R-9<sup>3</sup> (2002) and culminated with Education White Paper 6 - Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001).

As the final in a series of White Papers, the intention of Education White Paper 6 was to bring about changes in how this country managed special needs education. It proposed shifts in conceptions of barriers to learning and the ways in which they are addressed at systemic and local levels in schools.

Even though the goals of the policy, White Paper 6, are clearly outlined, the main challenge for South Africa would be the interpretation and implementation of the policy at grass-roots level.

This challenging issue was the focus of this study. It sought to investigate the implementation of White Paper 6 through examining what occurs when schools provide access to learners who were formally marginalized in mainstream education.

## **1.2 Context of the Study**

Special needs education is a sector in education that was neglected as a result of the educational disparities during the Apartheid era. The racial segregation of learners was extended to incorporate segregation based on disability. In accordance with Apartheid policies and also along racial categories, special schools were established for disabled learners. These schools incorporated learners with physical,

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<sup>3</sup> The national curriculum was previously referred to as C2005. This was revised in 2001 and is now referred to as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The NCS consists of 8 Learning Areas: Languages, Mathematics, Economics and Management Sciences, Life Orientation, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Arts and Culture and Technology.

emotional, sensory and neural barriers to learning who could not be accommodated in mainstream classes. There was no uniformity in the curriculum for special needs since each department decided upon the nature and form of the curriculum. While there were exceptions, in the main, special schools followed the same curriculum as that offered in mainstream schools. However, adjustments were made to focus on skills development rather than academic achievement. In addition and along separatist categorization, provisioning for each racial group was different with white disabled learners having access to well-resourced institutions while fewer; under-resourced special schools were available to learners of the other racial groups.

In addressing the inequalities of special education after 1994, a number of consultative processes, papers<sup>4</sup> and reports were initiated, which culminated in the final policy, Education White Paper 6 - Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. This policy sought to address three interrelated issues: inclusivity and equal educational opportunities for all; the nature and form of special needs and the accessibility of the curriculum.

Fundamentally, White Paper 6 (2002, p.17) expands conceptions of barriers to learning and provides a reoriented understanding of special education. It accepts that a "broad range of learning needs exists among learners and these learning needs arise from a range of factors, including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psycho-social disturbances, differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation." Barriers to learning are, therefore, understood as not only located within the learner as previously defined, but also within the centre of learning, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context. It proposes various systemic and organizational changes that allow equal access to learning opportunities for all children.

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<sup>4</sup> National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997)(Department of Education 1997d: 55)

### **1.3 Statement of Problem**

A re-orientation to special needs as articulated in White Paper 6 meant that the development of time frames and implementation strategies would ensure its success. The proposal is that both the national and provincial education departments would play a vital role in building the human resource capacity to guide and support the development of the inclusive education and training system.

The implementation proposal in White Paper 6 was multi-levelled. It was proposed that at the systemic level, the capacity of all advisory bodies, that provided advice to the Minister with regard to the goals, priorities and targets for the establishment of the inclusive education and training system, would be strengthened.

At a district level, support teams were to be established, these, it was anticipated, would offer support and build the capacity of all educational institutions to recognise and address learning difficulties as well as accommodate a range of learning needs.

Primary schools were identified and designated for conversion into full-service schools. These full-service schools would provide support with the necessary physical, human resources and professional development of the staff so that they can accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

At institutional/ school level, it was designated that support teams should be established in order to support teachers and learners in the teaching and learning process. The suggestion was that all teachers would undergo professional capacity development to enable them to manage learners with barriers to learning as well develop their capacity to manage and adapt the curriculum development and assessment strategies to meet the needs of these learners.

The successful implementation of White Paper 6 was dependent on strong inter-departmental collaboration. As the above suggests, the implementation strategies are clearly articulated in the Education White Paper 6 policy. Unclear though, is how the policy is interpreted and implemented at the local school and classroom level.

I am aware that processes from policy to practice are not linear, as I elaborate in the next chapter, but this study raises questions about perception and experiences of implementing special needs and inclusion at the chalk face. In other words, how do teachers and parents perceive, understand and experience the implementation of White Paper 6?

Paucity exists in research that indicates how the policy has been understood, interpreted, implemented, and experienced by teachers, parents and the educational community at local levels with regards to inclusion and special needs. Such paucity led me to ask the questions I pose in this work. It seeks to examine responses, perspectives and experiences in the implementation of White Paper 6 at two primary schools in the Western Cape. The one primary school was a well-resourced school from the former House of Assembly (White) Education Department, while the other primary school was an under-resourced school from the former House of Representatives (Coloured) Education Department.

The focus of this study is on the implementation of policy and not about policy. This study examines teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences of policy implementation at grassroots level.

#### **1.4 Aim of Study**

Through the use of structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observational data, this study was aimed at examining perspectives and experiences of inclusion, as perceived by some teachers and parents at two differently resourced primary schools in the Western Cape. In particular the study sought to:

- Examine the 'other' teachers' and 'other' parents' perspectives and responses to inclusion.
- Investigate experiences of inclusion among parents whose children had identifiable barriers to learning
- Examine the experiences of inclusion by two Grade 2 teachers in two primary schools in the Western Cape

## **1.5 Key Research Question**

What are the perspectives and experiences of inclusion among some teachers and parents at two differently resourced primary schools in the Western Cape?

### **1.5.1 Sub-questions**

These following sub-questions were developed:

- What are the perceptions and responses to inclusion amongst some parents in the two school communities?
- What are the experiences of inclusion amongst parents whose children have identifiable barriers to learning?
- What are the perceptions and responses to inclusion amongst the staff members of the two primary schools?
- What are the experiences of inclusion of the identified Grade 2 teacher at each of the primary schools?

## **1.6 Overview of the Study**

Chapter 1 provided an orientation of this study. It provided the background to the study and situated the problem within the broader context of education in South Africa. This chapter outlined the context and statement of the problem, the aims and key research question.

Chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework for the study. It focuses on the politics of policy development and implementation, international and national perspectives, definitions and debates on special needs and inclusive education. Also included in this chapter is a review of literature and research conducted in the field of inclusive education. The research studies section is divided into two parts. The first views studies investigating the teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusion, while the second part investigates the parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion. The chapter ends with a summary.

The research design, including the research methodology, methods, sites, samples and, confidentiality and ethical issues are discussed in Chapter 3. The data analysis

and the limitations of the study are also highlighted in this chapter. At the end of the chapter, a summary of the research design is presented.

In Chapter 4 the findings are presented in the form of two case studies. Each case study is divided into two sections. In the first section, the findings of the structured questionnaires are discussed. The structured questionnaires were administered to the principals, the rest of the staff and the parents of the other learners, who were not perceived as learners experiencing barriers within the selected Grade 2 classes. In the second section of the case study, the findings of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the Grade 2 class teachers and the parents of the learners who were included in the mainstream class are presented. The Grade 2 classroom observations are also discussed in the second section of the case study.

Chapter 4 ends with a final summary that highlights the similarities and differences between the two case studies.

Chapter 5 analyses and summarises the main findings of the study and presents the implications of the study and recommendations for Education departments, the broader education community and for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This study sought to examine the perspectives and experiences of inclusion, as expressed by teachers and parents, in two differently resourced urban primary schools in the Western Cape where some children, identified with particular barriers to learning, were mainstreamed. In this chapter, I provide the conceptual framework that describes the interrelated issues of special needs education and inclusion. As previously indicated, these interrelated issues of inclusivity and equal educational opportunities for all, the nature and form of special needs and the accessibility of the curriculum are clearly articulated in White Paper 6.

This study begins with a brief commentary on the politics of policy implementation. I briefly outline how the process of policy implementation relies on those at the chalk face: the teachers. This brief introduction is important since the main focus of this study was based upon understanding how the implementation of the policy at the grassroots level in schools, were experienced.

Since this study sought to examine perspectives of teachers on inclusion, the second section offers perspectives on inclusion. I begin by outlining the historical debates that led to a commitment by governments across the world to an implementation plan on inclusion. Educationists around the world have not always agreed on what constitutes inclusion. The second section continues to describe perspectives on inclusion and highlights how these contributions led to different outcomes. This discussion is important as it informed the current debates on inclusion in South Africa.

In the third section, I map the route South Africa followed in developing policy on inclusion. This section is important as it provides the rationale and theoretical orientation for this study and it includes a brief historical overview of special needs education and inclusion.

The fourth section of this chapter includes a review of the current literature on inclusion with a specific focus on studies that sought to understand what happens at the chalk face when children, identified as having barriers to learning, are included in mainstream schools. This section is subdivided into two parts. In the first part, research exploring teachers' perceptions, attitudes, skills and knowledge of inclusion are outlined. In the second part, research investigating the parents' perceptions and experiences are highlighted.

Research concerning inclusion in South Africa was all conducted after the restructuring of the education system in 1994. Prior to 1994, inclusion/mainstreaming was not considered as an option in any of the nineteen education departments. If inclusion/mainstreaming did occur, it was as a result of a lack of specialised facilities, especially in rural farm schools and black townships. This was regarded as 'inclusion by default'.

Finally, this chapter ends with a summary that draws the discussion to a close and situates this study in the particular field of inclusion.

## **2.2 Policy Development and Implementation Challenges**

In seeking to understand how the teachers interpret and implement policy through their classroom practices and experiences, it was necessary to understand that policy is influenced politically and the implementation thereof is not a linear process. In other words, there is no straight line from policy-making to its implementation. Nor will people have the same interpretations and perspectives of the policy. Policy implementation is both complex and its success depends on those who implement it, which in the case of education, are the teachers.

### **2.2.1 Complexity of Policy**

Policy development processes are very complex and messy. The drafting of a policy is an iterative process involving numerous negotiations and consultations taking place on different levels. These lengthy discussions are very time-consuming, since they involve different stakeholders who sometimes act as the 'watchdogs' and insist that their members' interests be considered. Policy is not neutral, but charged, since

each of the stakeholders has a particular interest in the policy. Very often these interests of the various stakeholders may develop into conflicts of interest and these situations could stall the final policy negotiations. Policies that do not accommodate the diversity within societies could be impeding the transformation process.

Policy makers need to take into consideration the findings and recommendations of researchers and as Sayed (2002, p. 13) states,

Policy has to be flexible and adaptable containing simultaneously elements that allow for (a) adaptation to regional and local conditions, and (b) the ongoing mechanism for reflexivity and innovation. In other words, policies must include the very conditions for their reappraisal and transformation to ensure that while they are strong enough to direct action, certain principles and philosophies, they are not cast in concrete so as to restrict the flow of new thought into their frame.

But does the intended education policy consider the eco-systemic contexts of all the teachers as implementers as well as the learners who are the recipients of the policy?

### **2.2.2 Implementation of Education Policy**

As with any good policy, what happens during its implementation is by and large left to chance because often policy developers are not assured that the policy will be implemented in the way it was intended. Schreuder (2000, p. 119) indicates that the "development of policy at a political level is not sufficient to ensure the effective transformation of education in schools."

Policy is usually debatable and we find ourselves in the conundrum of how the policy is interpreted. Policies are prone to multiple interpretations depending on who developed it, for what purpose, who the implementers are, whether or not they were trained and what their interests in the success of the policy are.

Policy developers also anticipate that there might be some measure of resistance from the implementers at grassroots level. The resistance from the implementers of an education policy could be as a result of non-consultation with the practitioners in the field and with other relevant role-players. The multiple interpretations of the

policy or the mismatch between the intended policy and the contexts of the implementers and recipients became a challenge. The process of policy implementation becomes even more complex when abstract policy moves into the concrete implementation stages. Dyer (1999, p. 45) states "implementation is an integral part of policy formulation but policy makers tend to view it as an add-on." She also indicates that it is in the "translation into practice that the appropriacy and viability of the policy message are tested" Dyer (1999, p. 45).

As previously indicated, the teachers are important in the implementation of education policies because they are the ones who translate the policy into practice. They have the power to transform policy from its intended outcome to a policy that is more relevant and applicable to their classroom situation. Policies are developed for 'ideal' classroom situations, which in many instances are not the experiences of schools. This incongruity between the ideal, the intended and the contextual realities of schools leads to low teacher morale and feelings of inadequacies. These conditions may ultimately impact on how the teachers perceive their role as the implementers of the policy.

Jansen (2002, p.120) identifies the operational question, "How do teachers as political actors understand and act on their authority with respect to a particular policy, given how that policy defines (images) their role?" The implementation of policy places demands on them, which are often in conflict with their personal identities and the realities at the chalk-face. It is of utmost importance for policy makers to be sensitive to the teachers' personal and professional needs, as they are ultimately the people who have to initiate and implement and sustain policy changes at grass-roots level. Teachers, within the confines of their classrooms enact or enforce their own interpretation of policy and very often these are in contradiction to the "expected".

Teachers, through their own experiences, have also been affected by the broader socio-economic and educational changes of the past and these experiences impact on their understanding and experiences of the implementing policies.

Policies must always be viewed within the broader socio-economic and educational context, and the implementation of any policy is never a straightforward process. Due to the inequalities in the education system as result of the apartheid system, schools were not all equally capacitated in terms of human and physical resources. These inequalities have a major impact on the implementation of any policy, but more specifically, White Paper 6.

Despite the fact that policy is political and that the policy development processes are very complex and messy and the implementation is not linear, teachers need to implement these. As this study deals with the teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusion as it relates to White Paper 6, it was necessary to describe the politics of policy and how these impact on the implementation thereof. Even though the implementation of White Paper 6 is envisaged to rollout over a period of twenty years, the implications of the teachers' interpretation, understanding and experiences of the policy within their classrooms are crucial to this study.

In order to situate the study, I have researched what was happening internationally and how these debates impact on perspectives of inclusion in South Africa.

In the following section, I discuss the international perspectives on special needs and inclusion as they emerged in the United States and United Kingdom. These perspectives had a direct impact on South African responses to special needs and inclusion, as I will show in the next section.

The following section also illustrates how the different interest groups differed in their perspectives on special needs and inclusion.

Some researchers were of the opinion that inclusion meant mainstreaming all learners irrespective of their disability, while others perceived it as a human rights issue. I now go on to trace the origins of these perspectives as they evolved worldwide.

### **2.3 International Perspectives on Inclusion**

In this section, a brief historical overview of these international debates is offered to contextualise how policy directions impacted upon the debates that took place in South Africa. After a brief historical framework, I examine the global perspectives on inclusion around the world. Engaging with the different perspectives is important for my study, since these worldwide debates influenced the policy decisions in South Africa as I describe in section 2.4.

Historically, the experience of disabled learners around the world has been similar, with them being excluded from mainstream education. Their marginalization and exclusion from the educational system has thus been the challenge of many countries. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) and other international policies emphasized the right of every human to be educated. This brought about a radical change in the plight of the disabled children by making provision for their education.

Many conferences were held in the quest to address accessibility to education for marginalized learners. Major turning points occurred as a result of three major conferences, namely, the Jomtien World Conference (1990), Salamanca Conference (1994), and Dakar World Education Forum (2000). These conferences became the vehicle to mobilise the international community to work towards achieving the broad vision of inclusion and to adopt the 'education for all' strategy so that inclusion and access to education is achieved by the year 2015. The co-ordination of this international drive towards inclusion is the responsibility of United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The vision for "Education for All" was succinctly captured in the following statement:

The key challenge is to ensure that a broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All... must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged... young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs... (Expanded commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, 2000, p. 19).

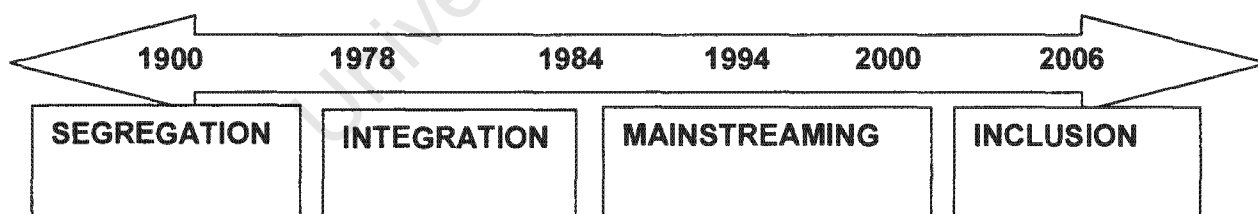
The framework above clearly states the intention, but it was difficult to find common agreement about the parameters of inclusion as the section below illustrates.

Although the development of inclusive education is represented in a linear fashion, the development of the concept of inclusion was not a linear process and the debates on special needs and inclusion were happening at different times across the world. However, in some countries even today, the interpretations of special needs education are still very much about segregation.

Diagram 1 below provides a historical overview of the phases that special needs and inclusive education underwent. While these are presented as linear, it is assumed that one period subsumes another and that these phases did not always follow a linear pattern. Within each phase, many perspectives emerged worldwide including particular perspectives in South Africa. A brief description of each phase is offered below.

The first phase of the special needs movement was referred to as segregation followed by the phase of integration, mainstreaming and lastly, the phase of inclusive education.

**Diagram 1: Phases of Special Needs and Inclusive Education**



### **2.3.1 Segregation**

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, special schools were established for the education of 'disabled' learners. The identification of the disability was based on the 'medical model', which located the disability within the learner. The disabilities were classified as either sensory impairment, physical or intellectual disabilities. As a

result of these classifications, the 'disabled' learners were 'segregated' from their 'non-disabled' peers. During this 'segregation' phase, two separate education systems came into being; in other words, a general education system for children without any 'disabilities' and a special education system for learners with 'disabilities' in special schools. The curriculum for disabled learners focused on vocational skills and varied significantly from the curriculum that was offered to their 'non-disabled' peers, thus restricting learners moving from one system to the other. In some countries, like Hong Kong, the education of special needs learners is still taking place in this manner.

### **2.3.2 Integration**

The next phase in special needs education was referred to as the 'integration' phase. Special needs learners were required to 'fit into' the existing general education system rather than the system accommodating the needs of the learners. These learners were expected to follow the same curriculum as their 'non-disabled' peers.

For example in the United Kingdom (UK), the three traditional provisions of integration identified by the Warnock Committee (DES, 1978), were namely locational, social and functional. In locational integration, special needs learners were being educated in the same place as their 'non-disabled' peers. In social integration there was some contact between special needs learners and 'non-disabled' learners during breaks and after school hours, while in functional integration, special needs learners and their 'non-disabled' peers worked collaboratively on meaningful activities.

Before the concept of inclusion was introduced, in some countries, like UK and Spain, the integration of some disabled learners was the main method of bringing children with special educational needs together with their peers. The integration of special needs learners was not a common practice in all countries and as previously stated, currently, there are still countries in which the education of special needs learners takes place in separate special schools.

### **2.3.3 Mainstreaming**

In some countries the term 'mainstreaming' was used interchangeably with the term 'integration' and the interpretation of both terms was similar. Mainstreaming, as integration, also meant the selective placement of special needs learners in 'regular', 'general' or 'mainstream' classes. The assumptions made were that these learners would demonstrate their ability by coping with assessment tasks in these mainstream classes and would also be able to work at the same pace as their peers.

Even though countries were encouraged through international conference statements, to adopt a more inclusive approach in the education of all learners, there were some countries that were still segregating special needs learners and educating them in special schools. Countries, such as, the UK and the US that moved in the direction of inclusion found that different perspectives of inclusion evolved.

### **2.3.4 Inclusion**

The international conferences on special needs education referred to earlier and the consequent shifts in discourse about inclusion, led to many perspectives of Inclusive Education evolving around the world. These perspectives range from "extending the scope of ordinary schools so that they can include a greater diversity of children" (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995, p. 5) to a "value that is manifested in the way we plan, promote, and conceptualise the education and development of young children" (Salisbury 1991: 147). The transition from segregation to inclusive education was not just a technical or organisational change, but it largely involved a movement to philosophical consideration.

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) published the Inclusion Charter in the UK as early as 1989. This charter identified inclusive education as a human rights issue and proposed the full inclusion of learners with disabilities or learning difficulties into mainstream classes and the phasing out of segregated special schools. CSIE also proposed that these learners should be included in mainstream classes from pre-school level to tertiary level with the necessary support

structures to address their individual needs. The Index for Inclusion<sup>5</sup>, defines inclusive education as, “the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools” (in CSIE, 2000). It is understandable then that inclusion as a human rights issue should not only be demonstrated in the education of all learners, but also within the communities.

This notwithstanding, the interpretation of the term ‘inclusion’ is just as complex as the field of policy implementation. As Corbett and Slee (2000, pp. 135-137) suggest “inclusion is a political and social struggle to enable the valuing of difference and identity (and just) talking about inclusion cannot be pursued in a policy vacuum.” The concept of inclusion has been interpreted in a variety of ways by different interest groups depending on their specific purpose for inclusion. Some considered inclusion to mean, (a) The inclusion of all learners regardless of the severity of disability within the ‘mainstream’, ‘general’ or ‘regular’ classroom, others viewed inclusion as, (b) human rights and social justice issues, while another group viewed it as, (c) a philosophical shift in education.

These were some of the perceptions of inclusion, but the response to the ways in which it was to be implemented has been just as varied, with some proposing (a) systemic and organisational changes, while others considered (b) philosophical and societal shifts.

Each of these responses to inclusion has particular consequences. The following section addresses the different perspectives of inclusion; what it entails and the proposals for implementation are discussed.

Corbett (2000, p. 140) is of the opinion that inclusion is constituted on three levels. The first level is referred to as ‘surface inclusion’, the second refers to ‘structural modifications to the school environment and curriculum’ and the final level focuses on the ‘deep culture’ of the school including the hidden curriculum, the value

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<sup>5</sup> The Index for Inclusion was written by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow and was published by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education in March 2000. The Index is a set of materials designed to support ordinary schools in the process of inclusive school development

systems, rituals, routines, initiations and acceptance of all learners irrespective of their diversity.

'Surface inclusion' examines the policy and notions of school effectiveness at a very superficial level, where it is assumed that a country's inclusive policy and investigations into the schools' effectiveness in implementing the policy would drive inclusion. It is at this level that policies are promulgated, both at a national and local level. Systemic and organisational changes are sporadically occurring as people are sensitised to the concept of inclusion. At this level inclusion could be viewed as mere tokenism and that the major issues of equity, redress and access for all learners have not been addressed.

The second level deals with 'structural modifications to the school environment and curriculum'. Issues that are addressed at this level, include physical access to buildings and adaptations to the curriculum for learners experiencing physical or sensory barriers. In line with Corbett's proposed second level of inclusion, researchers like Kauffman and Hallahan (1995, p. 21) give an institutional perspective on inclusion by proposing that full inclusion should be seen as "placing all students with disabilities, regardless of severity or type of disability in the general education class for the entire school day." Gartner and Lipsky, (1989) also propose that all children with Special Education Needs (SEN) should be educated in mainstream schools and that the support and resources be increased in these mainstream schools. This perspective of inclusion proposes that the 'full inclusion' of learners with special needs is a practical way of dealing with the issues about access and resourcing that are necessary conditions for successful inclusion. The benefits of 'full inclusion' can be viewed as being more cost effective and it also reduces the stigma, categorisation or labelling of 'disabled' learners.

Corbett's third level of inclusion focuses on the 'deep culture' of the school including the hidden curriculum, the value systems, rituals, routines, initiations and acceptance of all learners irrespective of their diversity. This third level of inclusion embraces issues of human rights as the fundamental right of every learner. Corbett proposes that it is within this level of inclusion that the 'real qualities of life issues reside'.

In agreement with Corbett's proposal that inclusive education is a human right, more researchers consider inclusion as a social justice issue and embed it within a human rights framework. Some focus their perspectives of inclusion on human interaction and foreground dealing with differences in learners' abilities, while others adopt an institutional perspective and focus on the organisational arrangements and school improvement (see Ballard, 1995 and Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995). These perspectives focusing on human interaction embrace the principle of human rights and acknowledge diversity, rather than emphasising dissimilarities. Human rights can be defined as those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. The basic standards of living include the freedom of education, freedom of movement, social justice, peace and harmony. All parents can select the school of their choice for the education of their children and no child should be denied access on the grounds of race, gender, language or disability.

Mel Ainscow (1998) expresses another view on Inclusive Education. He views it as a process of growth where people enquire into their own context to see how it can be developed. He believes that it is a social process, which engages people in making sense of their experiences and their context to see how these contexts can be changed. This perspective deals with the social aspect of inclusion. He believes that people should not only discuss their particular needs and experiences of inclusion, but also enquire about educational and other employment possibilities for their children.

As with the above, Corbett and Slee (2000, p. 134) are in agreement with Ainscow (1998) that inclusion is a 'social process', but propose "inclusion is also about cultural synergies for an ever broadening range of identities that celebrate diversity."

All these philosophical perspectives are embedded in human rights and social justice discourse. The social aspect of inclusion moves away from a model that highlighted differences in individuals to an inclusive model that celebrates diversity rather than condemns it. Inclusion is viewed as "a philosophy of acceptance and about providing a framework within all children, regardless of the provenance, or their difficulty at

school, can be valued equally, treated with respect and provided with equal opportunities at school", Thomas (1997, p. 15). By accepting inclusion it requires the moving away from what Roaf (1988, p. 7) has called an "obsession with individual learning difficulties" or disabilities, to an agenda of rights. This paradigm shift is crucial for the implementation of inclusive education.

As indicated above, various interpretations of inclusion have emerged worldwide and these ranged from the early perspective that inclusion implies the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream, to the perspective that inclusion is the human right of all children irrespective of their barriers whether intrinsic or extrinsic. Inclusive education should therefore be viewed as a process, which should develop unhurriedly as more and more people embrace the human rights and social justice issues.

## **2.4 Inclusive Education in South Africa: Current Perspectives**

The reasons for addressing special needs education in South Africa are two-fold; the first resulting from international imperatives and the second, emanating from the legacy of a separatist regime.

As described in 2.3, international definitions and perspectives on inclusion have not always been consistent, but in South Africa, and in alignment with the international imperatives, White Paper 6 clearly defines inclusion as the participation of learners who were previously excluded from the education system on the grounds of race, gender, language or disability.

In Chapter 1, I alluded to the fact that White Paper 6 incorporates the fundamentals of the South African constitution that address the issues of human rights and social justice. White Paper 6 is therefore strongly embedded in a human rights perspective and proposes the inclusion of learners who were formerly marginalized.

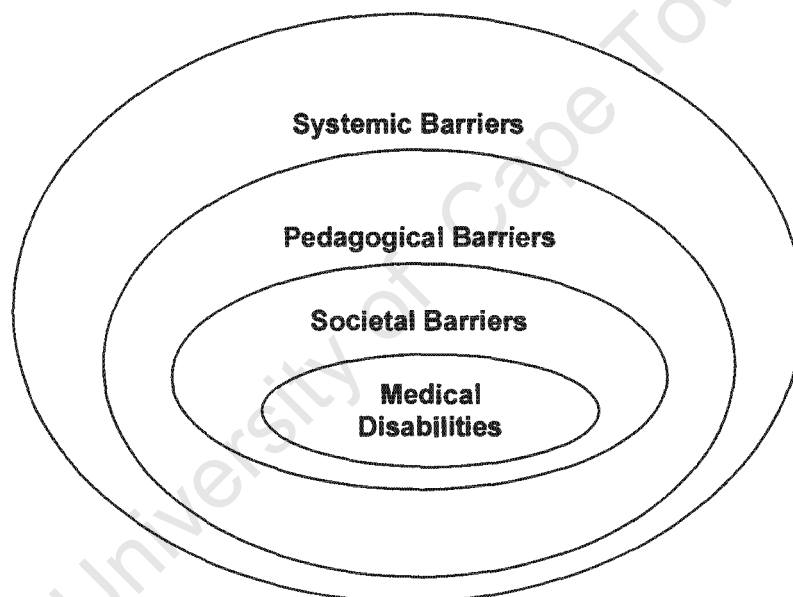
This marginalization of learners was based on the assumption that the barriers were located within the learners, but White Paper 6 acknowledges that the barriers are much broader than those just located within the learners. Inclusive Education does

not only mean accommodating learners with intellectual or physical disabilities in the mainstream, but also learners with any barrier, be it language, age, religion, gender, culture or transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS (White Paper 6, 2001, p. 16).

White Paper 6 describes the barriers occurring on different levels and includes systemic barriers, pedagogical, societal or medical disabilities. This classification is offered to indicate that the barriers are not only located within the learner, but result from other circumstantial and external influences as well.

Diagram 2 below depicts the possible intrinsic and extrinsic sources of learning barriers, as identified in the WCED Inclusive Curriculum File, (2003, p. 12).

**Diagram 2: Sources of Learning Barriers**



Systemic barriers are best described as those conditions that are located within the educational system that can contribute to or may cause the barriers to learning. For example, lack of basic and appropriate learning support materials, inadequate facilities at schools, overcrowded classrooms and the mismatch between the child's home language and the language of instruction.

Pedagogical barriers could be the result of unsuitable teaching styles, insufficient specialised support for teachers, unfair assessment procedures or the inaccessibility of the curriculum for all learners.

Societal barriers are those within the socio-economic environment of the learners, such as, poverty, unsafe environments, gangsterism, crime, abuse and violence, sensitivity to gender issues in cultural groups and harmful attitudes leading to stigmatisation and labelling.

Medical disabilities include sensory, neurological, physical or cognitive disabilities. For the most part, these are not easily overcome without support to the individual.

It is envisaged that through the implementation of inclusive education all learners will experience equal opportunities for learning. It would also mean considering inclusion in a positive manner by viewing the similarities, rather than focusing on the negative aspects that would highlight the differences.

In addressing the challenges of special needs education in South Africa, the country embarked on a reconceptualisation route for special needs and this route is described in the following section.

In South Africa, prior to 1994, exclusion in education occurred at two levels as a result of the political situation that prevailed at that time. The first level of exclusion was in terms of race and culture, while at the second level; it was on the basis of medical disabilities. The provisioning in education, not just special education, differed from one racial department to another and from one South African province<sup>6</sup> to another. The inequalities in education provisioning focused on the lack of schools, insufficient physical resources and monetary allocations. These inequalities in educational provisioning resulted in massive deprivation for the majority of disadvantaged communities. The teacher – learner ratios, further indicated the

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<sup>6</sup> Prior to 1994, South Africa was divided into 4 geographical provinces: Cape Province, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State. After the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa was then divided into 9 provinces and are currently known as: Western Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, North-West, Northern Cape and Gauteng.

inequalities in education for example: in white schools, the teacher-learner ratio was 1:20, whereas in black schools, the ratio was 1:87 (NEPI, 1994). In Special Education, the picture was not any better. This was reflected in the specialists to learner ratios in the departments of apartheid education: white schools 1:4,000 and in black schools it was 1:60,000 (NEPI, 1994).

The nineteen racially divided departments provided different services to learners with special education needs on the basis of their race. Children, who needed special resources, adaptation of the curriculum or different assessment strategies to aid them with their learning, were often referred to as 'learners with special education needs'. As previously stated, they were separated and categorised on the grounds of their disability as well as along racial lines. These categorisations were done according to the 'medical model' that located the deficit or barrier within the learner rather than also considering how some barriers may be external and occur within the socio-economic environment.

Firstly, all race groups were not catered for equally. The statistics reflecting the specialists to learner ratios in the departments of apartheid education indicated the following: white schools 1:4,000 and in black schools it was 1:60,000 (NEPI, 1994). Learners from black, disadvantaged communities had little to no support, while provision for the white learners was funded by the state.

Another aspect that affected disabled black learners was the high correlation, which existed between poverty and disability. In 1996, the Government Census 'Central Statistics Service' confirmed that, since 80% of the black disabled learners lived in extreme poverty, they experienced an even greater disadvantage than the disabled learners of other race groups.

In South Africa, Gauteng Province has 17.14% of the disabled population, but has 96 special schools; Western Cape Province has 5.47% of the disabled population, but has 82 special schools and Eastern Cape Province has 17.39% of the disabled population, yet the province only has 41 special schools (White Paper 6, 2001, pp.13-15). The learner expenditure on learners with disabilities also varied

significantly across provinces, ranging from R11,049 in Gauteng Province to R28,635 in the Western Cape Province and R22,627 in the Free State Province. This mismatch between needs and provision is a direct result of previous apartheid policies that allocated facilities along racial lines.

The De Lange Commission was appointed by the South African government to investigate the education for children with special needs. Even though the working committee's report presented in 1981 indicated that a need exists, to shift from labelling and categorising children using the 'medical model' of deficit and move towards the broader focus of 'special educational needs', the conditions remained unchanged. Subsequently, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) was established to investigate and develop policy options to redress the educational inequalities and "the report recommended a framework for the provision of support services which would be holistic, integrated and require interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration between various sectors. School, health, social work, specialised education, vocational and general guidance and counselling and other psychological services would be incorporated. The rationale for recommending the reorganisation of education support services was to redress the inadequacies of the past by making provision for prevention and health promotion which could operate in addition to a curative mode" (Lazarus & Donald, 1995).

As a result of the South African history and particularly in education, a model of inclusion had to be developed to incorporate the previously marginalized learners. This then gave rise to Education White Paper 6 - Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001). All relevant stakeholders and role-players, individuals, professionals and organisations have welcomed and embraced the perspectives, definition and organisational changes as outlined in White Paper 6.

As previously stated in chapter 1, the White Paper 6 seeks to address the disparities at all levels, from the broader communities to the classroom level. In addressing these inequalities at all levels, White Paper 6 proposes changes at systemic,

organisational and classroom levels, which would cater for the individual needs of the learners.

While there is no single or common definition of inclusion, which all countries agree to and because the concept and focus of inclusion differs from country to country, in South Africa, however, the majority of the researchers' perceptions of inclusion are based on the definition as described in White Paper 6 (2001, p. 16), which embraces a philosophy of education which is grounded in the democratic constitution of South Africa. The concepts of human rights, social justice and non-discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, culture, disability or language are the foundations of the policy.

After many investigations, consultations and draft consultative papers, as indicated in Chapter 1, the policy, White Paper 6 sought to address the educational imbalances of the past. These imbalances would incorporate changes at systemic, organisational and classroom levels that would address the needs of all learners irrespective of the nature of their barrier.

However, the interpretation and implementation of the policy, White Paper 6 poses some challenges for South Africa as this requires, amongst others, a restructuring of the current system.

Inclusive Education is indicated as a process of growth, occurring both within the education system and within the broader social environment. Inclusive education should give all learners equal opportunities for learning and reaching their full potential in a supporting, non-threatening environment. It means the acceptance of diversity and rejecting biases. It is within this context that I investigate the phenomenon of inclusion as it is presented in the two selected primary schools. In these schools, the phenomenon of inclusion was displayed in the admission of learners with Down's syndrome at the one school, while at the other, a visually impaired learner, was included within the mainstream class. Formerly, on the grounds of their medical disabilities, these learners would have been excluded from mainstream classes and would have attended a special school that catered for their

particular disability. I was also interested in observing to what extent their individual needs were met within these mainstream classes.

In order to locate my research within the broader area of research, I reviewed both international and national research studies in the field of inclusion. In reviewing these research studies, I examined the successes and challenges of inclusion as experienced globally and made comparisons with what was happening in my case studies.

The next section reviews the actual research conducted on the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning within the mainstream classes. In the research selected, the teachers and parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion are highlighted.

## **2.5 Research on Inclusive Practices in schools**

As this study was aimed at examining perspectives and experiences of some teachers and parents where the model of inclusion was implemented, I carried out an extensive international and national literature review which dealt with perspectives on inclusion and located the aspects of these studies which were most applicable to my research aim.

The research below is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the teachers' perceptions, attitude, skills and knowledge on inclusion; while the second part deals with parents' perceptions and experiences. In each part, I examined research conducted both internationally and in South Africa and this not only gave me a broader perspective of what was happening worldwide, but also assisted me in determining the similarities and differences between these research findings and my study.

### **2.5.1 Teachers' Perspectives of Inclusion**

In the first part of the literature review, I only examine four international studies, focussing on teachers' perspectives and experiences of inclusion. The first study by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), reviews twenty-eight research studies, which was conducted by various researchers between the periods of 1958 and 1995. Scruggs and Mastropieri's review gave me a broader perspective of inclusion over a period of thirty-seven years. Rose (2001) and Forlin, Douglas and Hattie (1996) conducted the second and third studies respectively. One study by Dyal, Flynt and Bennet-Walker (1996) examined the principals' perceptions of inclusion and their role and responsibilities, as the leaders in promoting inclusive schools.

Bothma, Gravett and Swart, (2000), Hay, Smit and Paulsen, (2001) and Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001) conducted the three South African research studies, which I reviewed for my study.

The first study by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) gives a comprehensive summary of twenty-eight surveys that were conducted in the US by different researchers. The twenty-eight surveys focused on the teachers' perceptions of including students with disabilities in their classrooms. All twenty-eight studies used teacher questionnaires and a total of 10,560 teachers were surveyed regarding their attitudes toward inclusion.

Scruggs and Mastropieri analysed, compared and combined findings of the individual research in a survey report. Their survey report on the findings of the 28 research studies reviewed, revealed that a majority of teachers agreed with the general concept of inclusion and more than half of the teachers were willing to implement inclusive practices in their classes. Only a quarter of the teachers agreed that they had sufficient time, training or resources to implement inclusion. The lack of improvement in the perceptions of teacher preparedness for inclusion suggested that the teachers' in-service training programmes were still ineffective and inadequate. The teachers, who had completed coursework in special education as part of their initial teacher training programmes, had more positive attitudes toward inclusion, than those who had not. The younger teachers' perceptions of inclusion

were more positive than their mature colleagues with many years of classroom experience.

In the final analysis, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) concluded that many teachers had reservations or concerns about inclusion, as the teachers believed that the successful implementation of inclusion was largely dependent on the amount of support they would receive from the education department.

The second study by Rose (2001) focused on the teachers' perceptions and was conducted in United Kingdom. The aim of the study was two-fold, (a) to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the conditions that are required to include learners with special educational needs and (b) to obtain their opinions on the specific challenges which may be presented by individual learners with clearly defined needs within mainstream classes. Research was conducted in seven primary schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 primary school teachers and the head teacher of each of the schools. The semi-structured interviews focused on the teachers' opinions of the conditions for the successful inclusion of learners into mainstream classes as well as the teachers' experiences in dealing with learners who have special educational needs.

The results regarding teacher' perceptions of inclusion and their opinions on the conditions that are required for the successful inclusion of learners suggest that the teachers indicated the following: additional classroom support, additional training, sufficient time for planning and teaching of special needs learners and the school buildings had to be accessible to special needs learners.

Forlin, Douglas and Hattie (1996), conducted the third study that investigated the beliefs of teachers in education support centres and the adjoining regular primary schools in Western Australia. Through the use of questionnaires, they collected the data from 198 teachers from forty-eight regular primary schools and 75 teachers from the education support centres, which were attached to the schools. Teachers who taught 'regular' or 'mainstream' classes had to rate how they considered the total integration of children with either physical or intellectual disabilities to be. They

had to indicate whether learners with mild, moderate or severe intellectual disabilities should be included on a full-time or part-time basis.

The main research findings were that the majority of the teachers believed that children with either severe intellectual or physical disabilities should not be included in a regular class on a full-time basis. The majority of the teachers were more in favour of part-time inclusion and indicated that they would more readily accept learners with mild to moderate physical disabilities, rather than learners with mild to severe intellectual disabilities.

The fourth study by Dyal, Flynt and Bennet-Walker (1996) focused on the principals' perceptions and views rather than the teachers. The aim of the study was two-fold. Firstly, the study examined how principals perceived the concept of inclusion, what the requirements were for creating an inclusive school and whether they were adequately trained to lead an inclusive school. Secondly, it sought to ascertain whether or not the principals advocated the importance of inclusive policies for their schools. A single page questionnaire was mailed to 143 principals throughout the state of Alabama and a total of 118 were returned.

The general findings were that the school principals played a crucial role in shaping the inclusive environment at their schools providing the opportunities for both the 'non-disabled and disabled learners. The majority of the principals viewed inclusion as 'a full continuum of special education placement options for students with disabilities' rather than 'full inclusion' as described in Fuchs and Fuchs (1994). In other words, they disagreed with placing all children in general classes, but preferred the continuation of both general classes and special education classes. They felt that learners who required extra support and who were in general classes should be 'pulled out' for remedial support given by a remedial teacher, rather than receiving additional support in a general class. Lastly, the researchers also found that the majority of the principals agreed that the setting up of inclusive schools would require more state funding and that both regular and special education programmes would have to be restructured.

Upon review of all the research, I indicate the relevance of these research studies for my study in the discussion that follows.

As previously indicated, research concerning inclusion in South Africa was all conducted after the restructuring of the education system in 1994. Prior to 1994, inclusion/mainstreaming was not considered to be an option in any of the nineteen education departments and as such, the studies focussing on inclusion are few.

The following research studies, examining the teachers' perceptions and experiences in inclusion were conducted in South Africa. I selected these research studies for their relevance to my study as they were; (a) all conducted prior to the implementation of inclusive education policy, White Paper 6, (b) situated in school contexts which are similar to the context of my study and (c) focused on the same cohort of the teaching profession who received their initial teacher training prior to the restructuring of the education departments.

Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000) conducted the first South African study, which I reviewed regarding teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The researchers explored the attitudes of a selection of primary school teachers from two government primary schools situated in a middle-class suburb of Gauteng Province in South Africa. Two groups of primary school teachers, who had not officially been trained or exposed to inclusive education, were part of focus-group interviews. These interviews focused on gaining the teachers' perspectives on inclusion. These focus-group interviews were videotaped and transcribed.

The research findings revealed that the teachers had misconceptions of and displayed a negative attitude towards the philosophy of inclusion as outlined in Education White Paper 6. The teachers also raised a number of concerns, which contributed towards their negative attitudes toward inclusion. The first concern was focused on the requirements of learners with special education needs, hereafter referred to as LSEN. Teachers felt that these learners' needs would be best addressed in separate educational facilities, as LSEN might need more time and attention. The additional time and attention required might affect the quality of

teaching and learning of the other learners in the mainstream class. The teachers also expressed the view that LSEN might develop a low self-esteem due to repeated failure and schools did not have the necessary facilities or equipment as required by LSEN. Upgrading all schools would be far more costly than building a few more special schools to cope with the needs of LSEN.

Second, the researchers also found that the teachers indicated their inability to cope with LSEN due to a lack of training and experience. This phenomenon resulted in teachers displaying a negative attitude towards inclusive education. Third, teachers felt that they would be unable to cope with inclusion as they are already facing the challenge of large classes, language barriers, emotional, disciplinary and behavioural problems, lack of parental support and the fact that working mothers are forced to leave their children in day-care, even during school holidays.

In their conclusion, Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000, p. 204) stated, "if teachers' beliefs about their attitudes towards inclusion are not intentionally addressed, these beliefs and attitudes could become a critical barrier to learning and development, and to the successful implementation of the policy of inclusive education."

In the following section, I reviewed research focusing on teachers' skills and knowledge with regard to the inclusion of learners within the mainstream classes. These studies were all conducted within South Africa. The studies reviewed highlighted the teacher skills and knowledge of inclusion within the South African context. I examined studies conducted by Hay, Smit and Paulsen, (2001) as well as a study by Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001).

In the second South African research study, Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001), examined the stresses teachers experienced in coping with a learner with Down's syndrome in their mainstream classroom. The study was located within the qualitative paradigm as the researchers needed to gain an in-depth understanding of the 'social realities' within the teachers' classrooms. Five teachers in the Western Cape Province and five teachers in the Gauteng Province were asked to complete a questionnaire.

Structured interviews were also conducted with these teachers using their responses captured on the questionnaires as the basis for the discussion. The data were analysed qualitatively, that is, descriptively rather than statistically. Some of the findings indicated that the teachers had insufficient pre-service and in-service training regarding inclusive education, but more specifically, in dealing with learners with Down's syndrome.

In the final South African study by Hay, Smit and Paulsen, (2001), the researchers investigated the preparedness of teachers for the policy of inclusion. The researchers collected their data through the use of questionnaires consisting of 11 questions on issues relating to the inclusive approach in South Africa. The items on the questionnaire provided mainly quantitative data, in other words statistical data, but these were also supplemented by qualitative data. The questions dealt with issues relating to the respondents'; educational milieu, work setting, teaching experience in a particular educational phase; knowledge of concepts relating to inclusive education; previous experience and training working with learners with special educational needs; perceptions of his/her own preparedness to deal with integrated classrooms where learners with special needs are included, and support received and referrals of learners with special educational needs.

Although more than 2900 questionnaires were received from mainly primary school teachers in 12 education districts in the Free State Province, only 2577 could be used for the analysis, as the rest were incomplete or spoilt. The general findings were that teachers felt unprepared and unequipped to teach integrated classes and ascribed this to a lack of training, lack of time, large classes, lack of facilities, and lack of teacher experience. Very few teachers had heard of the concepts "inclusive education", "mainstreaming" and "whole school approach", but they were willing to learn more about these issues provided it led to a diploma or certificate (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001, p. 218).

Both the international and South African studies revealed that the absence of training in special needs education at either pre-set or in-set levels had a major impact on

the teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusion. These inadequacies were further translated into the need expressed by the teachers for extra time for planning and administration. The management of large classes, language barriers, emotional, disciplinary and behavioural problems as well as the inaccessible school buildings were more challenges that the South African teachers faced within their school contexts than those in international contexts.

Teachers felt insecure and unprepared in dealing with learners experiencing specific barriers in their classes. They indicated that they lacked the necessary skills and knowledge in addressing these barriers and that they needed more training to cope with these challenges.

In South Africa, prior to 1994, the initial teacher training did not include training in dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers who wanted to acquire these skills needed to complete another year of full-time study that focused on special needs education. In my study, both class teachers did not have any formal training in special needs education, but as a result of their many years of experience, they had developed their own strategies to address the learners' needs.

A similarity revealed by all studies, was the lack of support. In the South African study the support was mainly referred to in terms of the lack of parental support, while the other studies revealed the lack of extra classroom-based support. In the main, the teachers displayed a negative attitude towards the implementation of inclusion.

The research conducted by Dyal, Flynt and Bennet-Walker's (1996) is relevant to my study, as the principals of the two primary schools where my research was conducted, were included in the sample for my data collection. In my study, I have also looked at the principals' role in promoting inclusion at their schools.

The following section focuses on studies conducted to highlight the parents' perspectives and experiences on inclusion. As my study did not only focus on the teachers' perspectives and experiences, it was necessary for me to review studies that were conducted with parents as well. In this area of my research, I found a

paucity of South African studies that explored parents' perspectives and experiences, but a number of international studies were conducted.

### **2.5.2 Parents' Perspectives and Experiences**

In the first part of the literature review, I described the teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusion, both internationally as well as in South Africa.

As the parents' perspectives and experiences of inclusion is also part of my study's investigation, it was necessary for me to gain insight into research that I investigate this aspect. In the discussion, which follows, I investigate the relevant literature that highlights the perceptions and experiences of parents whose children experienced barriers to learning. I found that more studies were conducted on the teachers' perspectives and experiences than on the parents' perspectives and experiences of inclusion.

I obtained studies by Bennett, Deluca and Bruns (1997), Wong (2002) and Kirk and Leyser (2004) who each conducted interviews with parents whose children were included in mainstream classes.

In the first study, Bennett, Deluca and Bruns (1997) researched the perspectives of teachers and parents. They employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In other words, survey questionnaires were sent out and the data were analysed statistically and semi-structured interviews were conducted that yielded descriptive or qualitative evidence. The study consisted of two sets of research questions. Question 1 focussed on the teachers' and parents' experiences and attitudes with regard to parent involvement in the education of their children and the second question focused on the parents' and teachers' experiences and attitudes towards successful inclusion.

The survey was conducted in a mid-western town in the US. A total of 84 teachers responded to the teachers' survey and 48 parents responded to the parents' survey. Furthermore, a random sample of seven parents was also interviewed. These semi-structured interviews were conducted telephonically.

The findings of both the survey and interviews indicated that most parents felt strongly about the benefits of inclusion for their children. The parents reported that through inclusion their children had gained social skills, were accepted by their peers, developed in areas such as pre-academic skills, language and motor skills, and the learners had role models to model appropriate behaviour. These positive attitudes of the parents toward inclusion were accompanied by their positive experiences of inclusion. The researchers also found that the teachers did not have training in dealing with learners with special needs and this resulted in their negative attitude towards inclusion. Another very interesting issue that was highlighted was the different elements, which parents and teachers identified for successful inclusion. While teachers regarded the availability of resources, support structures and curricular adaptations as their primary elements for successful inclusion, parents placed a high priority on the 'in-class support' with a teacher who took a personal interest in the child and the family and who created an accepting environment in which the child was considered as a valued member.

In the second research study, Wong (2002) investigated the parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong children with physical, sensory, or intellectual impairment are usually segregated into special schools, but there are a few reported cases where the children with disabilities are receiving their education in mainstream classes. This scenario is very similar to the South African context in which my study is located.

Wong (2002) conducted four focus group discussions and seventeen interviews with the parents of children with different types of special needs and the results of these discussions were used in the design of a questionnaire. Even though more than 880 questionnaires were distributed to the parents in 132 identified schools; the data of only 515 valid questionnaires could be used in the research findings. More than half of the parents indicated that their children who were either 'slow learners' or had 'learning disabilities' were taught in a mainstream class.

Wong (2002, p. 90) indicated that parents felt, that the 'existing form of integration allows little room for individualized curriculum and support for learners with special needs'. Parents were of the opinion that the children needed more time to read and write, since the academic requirements for these learners were extremely challenging. The children did not fully understand their class teachers' expectations and as a result these children had difficulties in understanding the content and completing their homework. The parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion varied and it included both positive and negative comments. Although less than a quarter of the parents felt that there was a barrier between the teacher and the special needs learners, which negatively impacted upon the teacher-learner relationship, a higher percentage of parents felt that their children were being assisted and encouraged by their teachers. Lastly, the educational structure in Hong Kong was another challenge for the concept of inclusion as the average class size in Hong Kong primary schools was 35 to 40 learners. Teachers faced the challenge of producing excellent learner results and on the other hand indicating the successful inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

In the next study conducted in the US, another perspective of parents' perceptions and experiences emerges and these parents' perspectives and experiences of inclusion differ from the parents in Wong's study.

In a more recent study conducted by Kirk and Leyser (2004) in US that examined parents' views and factors influencing their perspectives 437 parents were surveyed. All parents who had children with disabilities returned completed questionnaires that examined their attitudes toward inclusion and the factors that impact on their perceptions of inclusion. The questionnaire also focused on systemic factors that impact on children with special needs.

The majority of parents reported strong support for the general concept of inclusion. Parents perceived inclusion to have had important benefits in the social and personal domains for their children. The parents also saw inclusion as having a positive impact on their children's self-concept and self-esteem. The majority of parents

recognised the benefits of inclusion for classmates without disabilities with the view that it prepares them for the real world.

About one-third of the parents were concerned about the emotional well-being of the mainstreamed child, namely, that it might hinder his/her emotional development. Half of the parents felt that less instruction or any other specialised support would be given to the child in a mainstream setting and more than one-quarter of the parents felt that regular teachers were unable to adapt classroom programmes for the children experiencing barriers. Lastly, more than a third of the parents felt that the regular teachers lacked the skills needed to integrate learners with 'disabilities' into their mainstream classes.

Parents saw the benefit of inclusion and reported that their children had gained social skills, were accepted by their peers, developed in areas such as pre-academic skills, language and motor skills, and the learners had role models to model appropriate behaviour.

While teachers regarded the availability of resources, support structures and curricular adaptations as their primary elements for successful inclusion, parents placed a high priority on the 'in-class support' with a teacher who took a personal interest in the child and the family.

The findings of these research studies indicated that inclusive classrooms produced several positive benefits for the children, but it also required particular staff attitudes and qualifications. Parents also felt that teachers and policy makers should acknowledge that families play a vital role in the education of their children and their perceptions, views and experiences with regard to inclusion could be a valuable source for the policy makers (see Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Schattman & Edelman, 1993; Bennett, DeLuca & Allen, 1996 and Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline & Morrison, 1995).

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on the importance of understanding the policy implementation process as complex. This was important in that it gave me a framework to explore

implementation processes. Examining international and South African perspectives and responses to special needs and inclusion offered insight into how too in this field of study perspectives are complex and not always agreed upon.

Firstly, in seeking clarity in understanding perceptions and experiences of teachers and parents in Inclusive Education, I investigated the politics of policy-making and the implementation thereof. In doing so, I realised that policy development processes are very complex and messy and their implementation could not be viewed as linear. Implementation of any policy is by and large left to chance as policy developers are not assured that the policy will be implemented in the way it is intended.

I also realised that teachers, as implementers of policy, have different interpretations of the policy and historically, have different educational experiences.

Reviewing the history of special needs and inclusion, gave me a broad perspective of what took place worldwide and I was able to situate my study within this broader context. Many international conferences and debates on inclusion were held and as a result the international communities were encouraged by UNESCO to work towards achieving the broad vision of inclusion and ensuring access to education for all learners.

This chapter also reviewed both international and national perspectives on inclusion. An explanation of the terms segregation, integration, mainstreaming and inclusion were highlighted. Segregation was highlighted as the first method of educating learners with special needs in special schools. A different curriculum was followed to the one offered to learners' in general or regular classes. In mainstreaming and integration, the learners with special needs were expected to 'fit into' the system and had to follow the same curriculum as their 'non-disabled' peers.

Inclusion is located within the human rights and social justice contexts, as learners experiencing barriers had the right to be educated in the institution of their choice and schools needed to accommodate them by making physical, structural or policy changes.

What was very clear is that internationally, definitions and perspectives on inclusion have not always been consistent and the interpretation of the term was just as complex as the field of policy implementation.

I ended this chapter with a review of both international and South African research studies that focused on the teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion. In the main, findings raised a number of key concerns. Studies relating to the teachers, the lack of training in special needs education at either pre-set or in-set levels was raised as a major concern. Teachers felt insecure and lacked the necessary skills in dealing with learners experiencing specific barriers in their classes.

In addition to the above issues raised, the South African teachers indicated their challenges as needing extra time for planning and administration, managing large classes, addressing language barriers, and coping with disciplinary and behaviour problems. Another key issue that was reported was the inaccessibility of school buildings to learners who experience barriers.

All studies identified the lack of support as a concern. In the South African studies the support was in terms of parental support, while in international studies, the lack of extra classroom based support was a concern. In the main, as a result of the lack of training, teachers displayed a negative attitude towards the implementation of inclusion. Finally, studies reported that principals played a pivotal role in promoting inclusion at the schools.

Parents, on the other hand, felt that inclusive classrooms produced several positive benefits for the children but it also required particular staff attitudes and qualifications. Parents also felt that teachers and policy makers should acknowledge that families play a vital role in the education of their children and that their perceptions, views and experiences with regard to inclusion could be a valuable resource for the policy makers.

While teachers regarded the availability of resources, support structures and curricular adaptations as their primary elements for successful inclusion, parents placed a high priority on the 'in-class support' with a teacher who took a personal interest in the child and the family. In general, the parents displayed a very positive attitude towards inclusion and felt that the 'other' learners in the mainstream classes would also gain skills in dealing with 'disabled' learners as this prepares them for the real world.

In reviewing the research conducted on the teachers' and parents' perspectives and experiences on inclusion, I identified some gaps in terms of the methods and content. In most of the studies, structured questionnaires were used and some researchers used structured interviews as well. None of the researchers used classroom observations and in my study, I have, therefore, used classroom observations as a way of obtaining data.

The majority of studies reviewed were quantitative research studies and the findings and interpretations of these studies were all based on statistical data gathered from completed questionnaires. A few of the studies were both qualitative and quantitative and the methods used included questionnaires and face-to face, focus group or telephonic semi-structured interviews. The findings and interpretations of these studies were based on both statistical data from the questionnaires as well as qualitative descriptions from the interviews that were conducted.

My study is located within the qualitative paradigm and the findings are presented in case studies. The qualitative methods used for the data collection were classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires. In the analysis of the structured questionnaires, the data were used descriptively rather than statistically.

With regard to the content of the research reviewed, the focus was either on the teachers' attitude towards inclusion, teachers' knowledge and skills or the teachers' experiences in inclusion. These studies also highlighted the concerns that included discrimination, stereotyping, negative attitudes and the teachers' lack of skills and

knowledge in dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning. These studies have revealed the real challenges for the implementation of inclusive education.

My study, investigates teachers and parents' perceptions and experiences in inclusion. I have not only focused on the class teachers and parents of the learners who were included and were directly affected by the phenomenon of inclusion but also the other staff members and parents of children in the sampled class at the two schools. The sample used in this study is not representative of teachers and learners in all primary schools and was limited to only two urban primary schools in the Southern Suburbs. The contexts of the primary schools are not reflective of the contexts of all primary schools in South Africa and, therefore, the findings cannot be used to generalise the teachers and parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion.

In conclusion, this chapter assisted me in understanding the dynamics in the policy-making processes, the politics of policy and the implications for implementation. As stated in Chapter 1, this study did not concentrate on the policy, White Paper 6, but rather sought to investigate the teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences of policy implementation at grassroots level. Before I could commence my investigation, it was useful to view teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion as it occurred in other parts of the world and in South Africa. The findings of these research studies gave me a broader perspective of the phenomenon of inclusion as well as the successes and challenges that were experienced.

The following chapter provides a description of the research design of this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study sought to investigate the teachers and parents' perspectives and experiences on inclusion at two differently resourced urban primary schools. The qualitative paradigm was most appropriate since my intention was not to prove the existence of the phenomenon, but rather to understand the phenomenon of inclusion within the selected schools and classes I use in the study.

This chapter describes the research design, methodologies and methods of this study. A multi-method approach was used for reasons that become clearer later on in the discussion. The findings were presented as two case studies.

The research planning included the identification of the site and sample, data collection and processing techniques and methods of data interpretation. While conducting the research, I was conscious of the ethical issues at stake in obtaining peoples' opinions as well as their vulnerability to being observed within the classroom environment. I thus assured my informants that their rights and personal privacy would not be violated and that pseudonyms would be used to protect identification.

I end this chapter with the identified limitations of this study that suggest that the study is not generalizable.

### **3.2 Research Design**

According to Merriam (1988, p. 6; 1998, p. 3), the research design or strategy refers to the overall scheme or plan according to which the data would be organized and interpreted. This overall plan culminates in a specific end product. The type of research design used is informed by the worldview of the researcher, the nature of the research problem, the questions it raises and the product desired.

In order to address the aim, I posed the following question to enable me to clarify and operationalise the study.

- What are the perspectives and experiences of inclusion among some teachers and parents at two differently resourced primary schools in the Western Cape?

The sub-questions included:

- What are the perceptions and responses to inclusion amongst some parents in the two school communities?
- What are the experiences of inclusion amongst parents whose children have identifiable barriers to learning?
- What are the perceptions and responses to inclusion amongst the staff members of the two primary schools?
- What are the experiences of inclusion of the identified Grade 2 teacher at each of the primary schools?

The nature of the research question resulted in a qualitative research design being deemed most appropriate since it offered the best opportunity to gain more insight and better understand the phenomenon of inclusion from different perspectives. I was interested in understanding rather than proving or making generalized claims and thus the appropriateness of the methodological approach.

The qualitative methods used for the data collection included semi-structured interviews, structured questionnaires and classroom observations. Although I used a structured questionnaire, a method more closely associated with more quantitative approaches, the results were analyzed and interpreted descriptively rather than statistically. This move to more qualitative work is a shift from what was reviewed in Chapter 2 where the majority of studies used quantitative methodologies. A few of the studies included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. For the most part, the methods of data collection included questionnaires and face-to face focus group or telephonic semi-structured interviews. Very few studies were found to include interviews and classroom observations as this study does.

### **3.3 Methodology**

This study is located in the qualitative paradigm. According to Neuman (2000, pp. 122-123), "qualitative researchers are more concerned about issues of the richness, texture, and feeling of raw data because their inductive approach emphasizes developing insights and generalizations out of the data collected." The intention of a qualitative research, therefore, is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group or interaction (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Marshall and Rossman (1989) also suggest that this entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study; the researcher enters the informants' world and through ongoing interaction, seeks the informants' perspectives and meanings.

The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details. Based on Merriam's (1988, pp. 19-20) six assumptions about the methodology of qualitative research, I was primarily concerned with the process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures rather than outcomes or products. I was interested in meaning, that is, how people make sense of their lives, experiences and their structures of the world. As I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, my research involved fieldwork that required me to observe and record the people and the settings (site or school) in its natural environment.

Through the observations, interviews and questionnaires I describe in detail later on, I was able to gain an understanding of the teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education. As previously indicated, my intention was not to see how the policy, White Paper 6, is implemented but rather, it sought to examine the teachers' perceptions and experiences of policy at grassroots level.

Within this methodological framework, a case study approach was used. Adelman (1984) indicates that case studies present research data in a more publicly accessible manner than does any other kind of research. Case study research can

include studying an organisation or institution, a group or individual or a phenomenon in detail over time (Neuman, 2000). Yin (1989, p. 23) puts it this way

An empirical enquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when – the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which – multiple sources of evidence are used.

### **3.4 Site and Sample**

Below, I outline the processes followed in selecting schools, teachers and parents. I also detail the reasons for selecting the two sites and sample for each case study. I describe the criteria used for the selection of the school, the Grade used for observation and the sample of parents, learners and teachers. Although the site and sample are small, I selected them purposively for intensive investigation. The findings at these sites will not be used to make generalisations, but would be used to gain insight into the phenomenon.

Purposive sampling was used as the general strategy to make choices about the school and sample. It is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations. With purposive sampling, the researcher never knows whether the cases selected represents the population and it is used in exploratory research or field research. A researcher uses it to select unique cases that are especially informative and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon rather than to generalise to a large population (Merriam 1998, p. 61). In this study the site and sampling were purposively selected to investigate the 'phenomenon of inclusion'.

Successful research conducted in formal educational settings begins with the negotiation of entry into the field and written or verbal permission should be obtained prior to the research. Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 65) indicate that, "[e]ntry negotiation requires time, patience and sensitivity to the rhythms and norms of the group." For the purpose of this study, I obtained official permission from the Western Cape Education Department, Research Directorate, the Director and Circuit Managers of the Education Management and Development Centre (EMDC), principals, teachers, School Governing Bodies and the parents of all the learners of

the selected Grade 2 classes (Appendices A-C). After obtaining permission from all the role-players at both schools, I made appointments to visit the schools and classes. Upon arrival at each school, the principal introduced me to the selected Grade 2 teachers and their classes. I was also given the opportunity to address the staff to brief them on the study and its aim. Teachers were assured that participation was voluntary.

### ***The Schools***

As a curriculum planner in the Western Cape Department of Education, I was expected to conduct site visits to offer teachers within the Foundation Phase<sup>7</sup> support and guidance in the implementation of the national curriculum. In so doing, I visited a number of mainstream primary schools in a particular district. Two schools, Eagle Primary School and Swallow Primary School<sup>8</sup> stood out in that they included children who would ordinarily be placed in special schools. While there may have been learners with other barriers to learning present in many schools, the phenomenon of including children with specific special needs was not apparent, as was the case in the schools above. It was, therefore, convenient to approach these schools when I began planning the study.

Both schools voluntarily admitted learners with specific special needs. The school governing body and principal made this choice. The Western Cape Education Department, therefore, did not determine or make this a requirement at the time the study was conducted.

As I indicated in Chapters 1 and 2, the funding and resources were distributed differently to the various race groups prior to 1994, with White schools obtaining the most resources and financial support. Eagle Primary School, therefore, a school from the former House of Representatives (Coloured) Education Department, was defined as under-resourced. In this school two learners with Down's syndrome had been mainstreamed in the same Grade 2 class.

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<sup>7</sup> The Foundation Phase consists of Grades R (Reception Year), Grades 1, 2 and 3 classes. This is the first phase of the General Education and Training Band on the National Qualifications Framework of South Africa.

<sup>8</sup> Pseudonyms are used to denote the two schools.

Swallow Primary was a school from the former House of Assembly (White) Education Department. This school was, therefore, defined as well resourced. At this school a visually impaired learner was mainstreamed into a Grade 2 class. The parent of the learner paid for a teacher assistant at this school. They also supplied a Braille and ensured that their child had all the resources (e.g. a voice-activated calculator) needed to support his inclusion.

Note should be taken that the barriers identified at each of these schools is not representative of the 'phenomenon of inclusion' that would be found at all mainstream primary schools. These, however, represent two of the more easily mainstreamed disabilities and as such were easily identifiable when one walked into classrooms.

### ***The Teachers***

Teachers participated in the study in very different ways and for different reasons, as becomes clearer in the data collection section. The staff (including the principal) at each school participated in one aspect of the study, while the selected Grade two class teacher was included in all aspects of the study. A questionnaire (explained in the next section) was given to the former, while the latter completed a questionnaire, interview and was observed. At Eagle Primary School, 27 teachers were requested to complete the questionnaire; while at Swallow Primary School 25 questionnaires were distributed.

Participation was voluntary. All the participants received a brief description of the purpose and procedure of the research including the expected duration of the study, a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of records, a statement that the participation is voluntary and an offer to provide a summary of findings. The composition of the staff at both schools included both sexes (but predominantly women), who had teaching experience ranging from three to thirty-five years and their ages ranged from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties.

The voluntary nature of the research meant that not all teachers completed the questionnaire at both schools. Thus, the final results included responses from 11 teachers at Eagle Primary School and 17 from Swallow Primary School.

The selection of the class teacher at both schools was determined by the inclusion of learners with 'disabilities' or special needs in the class. It so happened that, at both schools, learners with special needs were in Grade 2 classes, making the choice easy. At Eagle Primary, Mrs Simons<sup>9</sup> had a nine-year-old girl and a ten-year-old boy with Down's syndrome. She did not have a teacher assistant. On the other hand, at Swallow Primary, Mrs Noble had an eight-year-old boy who was born blind. The teacher had a teacher assistant who was paid by the learner's parents. She also had all the resources deemed necessary to facilitate his inclusion in lessons and in the life of the classroom and school.

### ***The Parents***

Parents whose children were in the selected Grade 2 class at each school were sampled. They were separated into those whose children had the disability and those who did not. Different methods of data collection were applied to each group.

A questionnaire was given to the larger group to complete. Interviews only were held with the group whose children had the disability. At Eagle Primary School 40 and at Swallow Primary School 32 parent questionnaires were distributed but only 36 and 28 respectively, were returned. Interviews were held with 5 parents, as explained in the next section.

### ***The Learners***

At Eagle Primary, the two learners, Hannah and Kenneth with Down's syndrome were included in the selected Grade 2 class. It was assumed that all Down's syndrome children would be severely delayed in their development and their intellectual functioning would be in the mild to moderate range, hence their accommodation at special schools.

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<sup>9</sup> Pseudonyms are used for both teachers and learners in the study.

Jonathan, a visually impaired learner, was included from the selected Grade 2 class at Swallow Primary. In South Africa, all learners who are born visually impaired or are partially sighted are accommodated in Special Schools. They are taught with the use of special brailers. Braille is not a spoken language, but it is the primary means for the visually impaired and some partially sighted to gain access to the written word.

### **3.5 Methods of Data Collection**

Cohen and Manion (1994) define methods of data collection as the “range of approaches used in educational research to gather data, which are used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction.”

As this is a qualitative research, the methods of data collection were those deemed most appropriate for such a study. I could not rely on one method of data collection and, therefore, used a multi-method strategy to investigate the phenomenon of inclusion. The methods I applied were classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires. This combination permitted me to gain an understanding of the phenomenon from a variety of positions. Using a combination of data collection methods is referred to as triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Triangulation is used to enhance the richness and trustworthiness of the findings. Triangulation is a process used by both quantitative and qualitative researchers in order to give them a ‘better look at something from several angles than to look at it in only one way’ (Neuman, 2000). According to Neuman (2000), there are several types of triangulation and the technique of triangulation of methods was used in this study. Using a variety of methods for the collection of data was necessary to verify the data. Triangulation or multiple methods of data collection and analysis are also used to strengthen reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988).

At each primary school, data were collected from the following informants.

- The entire the staff (including the principal)
- The selected Grade 2 class teachers
- The teacher assistant at Swallow Primary School only

- The parents whose children had the disability
- The larger group of parents whose children were in the selected Grade 2 class

Data were collected in two phases. In the first phase structured questionnaires were administered to the principals, entire staff and the larger group of parents whose children were in the selected Grade 2 classes at the two schools respectively. The aim of the questionnaire was to gain the perspectives of inclusion from the broader community of teachers and parents. The analysis of the structured questionnaires helped to shape the questions for the semi-structured interviews as well as the classroom observations that followed in Phase 2.

Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were conducted in Phase 2. The aim of the semi-structured interviews and classroom observations was to gain an understanding of the two class teachers' and parents' perspectives and experiences of inclusion. In addition, an interview was held with teacher assistant at Swallow Primary School.

### **3.5.1 Structured Questionnaires**

As already indicated in the above, structured questionnaires were used for staff and parents. According to van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994, p. 504) a questionnaire is "a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics, given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration."

The aim of the questionnaire used in this study was to obtain information from the broader community of teachers and parents regarding their perceptions and experiences of inclusion in relation to Education White Paper 6. It was most appropriate method as it allowed me to obtain written responses simultaneously from the principal, parents and teachers. Mulder (1989, p. 39) is of the opinion that a questionnaire is one of the best available instruments for obtaining information from widespread sources or large groups simultaneously, if they are administered properly.

I used open-ended questions as well as questions requiring Likert type responses. This format required the respondents to agree or disagree with particular statements of beliefs, attitudes or judgements. As previously indicated, data from these questionnaires were interpreted descriptively rather than quantitatively or statistically.

Three sets of questionnaires were developed for principals, teachers and parents respectively. The questionnaire for the principal (Appendix D) consisted of four sections focusing on the personal details and teaching experience, information on the school, perceptions and views on Inclusive Education and the perceived levels of knowledge and skills required in addressing the barriers to learning.

The questionnaire for teachers (Appendix E) also consisted of four sections. These included questions on personal details and teaching experience, details of perceived barriers identified in the current class they taught, perceptions of inclusion and perceived knowledge and skills needs as well as classroom practices they deemed necessary for an inclusive classroom.

The parents' questionnaire (Appendices F & G) described their perceptions and experiences with regard to Inclusive Education in general. In particular, parents were required to respond to statements about their experiences of having their child in a classroom that included those with disabilities. Open-ended questions were included where parents were allowed to give opinions freely.

### **3.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the two Grade 2 class teachers, the teacher assistant at Swallow Primary School and the five parents whose children had the disabilities. Patton (1990) describes four different types of interviews. These include informal conversational-type interviews, an interview guide approach, standardised open-ended interview and a closed, fixed response type interview. These can be viewed as a continuum from the first as the most unstructured to the fourth as the most structured and inflexible.

I used the interview-guide approach as it allowed flexibility in the process and sequence of questions. First, I wanted to allow the conversation between researcher and respondent to flow and second, enable teachers and parents to include aspects they considered important to report. This type of approach is also referred to as the semi - structured interview, as it consists of a broad framework, which allows for space and flexibility. Neuman (2000) indicates that interviews allow the interviewer to (a) select and sequence the questions for a particular interviewer depending on the context, (b) control the interview by using open - ended questions and encourages elaboration, (c) conduct the interview in a language of choice and at the appropriate language level and (d) control the pace and direction of the interview.

As I interviewed, I kept in mind the broad questions I wanted to ask and thus only referred to the guide now and again as the interviews proceeded. Using a guide rather than a structured schedule allowed me to adapt the questions according to the needs and responses of each participant as well as to use the information parents and teachers gave to probe.

Using the interview-guided approach or semi- structured approach allowed me to gather data in a systematic way, yet also keeping the interview fairly conversational and situational. This approach was less stressful and unnerving to the respondents. A good rapport was established and I was able acquire the fullest, most accurate information from the respondents (Glesne & Peshkin 1992, p. 79). During all the interviews, the respondents' answers were recorded in note form and read back to them to check that they agreed with what had been written. I expanded on the notes in more detail once I returned home. In some cases, I visited or telephoned teachers and parents for a follow-up to the interview to obtain clarification on aspects I was not clear about.

### ***The Teachers***

Two Grade 2 teachers (Mrs Simons and Mrs Noble) were interviewed, one from each school. As already indicated, their inclusion was due to them having children with special needs in their respective classrooms. I negotiated dates and times for the interviews. In each case, the interviews were conducted in the staff room after

school hours. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using a set of prepared questions (Appendix H 1 & 2) to assist me in controlling the pace and direction of the interview. The questions used dealt with issues such as their perceptions and experiences of inclusive education, the decisions about school choice, what they regarded as the advantages and disadvantages of inclusion. These probing questions were used merely as a guide to stimulate the flow of information and also to keep the interview moving in the right direction.

In addition, at Swallow Primary School, an interview was conducted with a teacher assistant who was employed by the parents of the visually impaired learner. I also negotiated the date and time for this interview that lasted an hour. The interview was conducted using a set of prepared questions (Appendix J).

### ***The Parents***

I interviewed five parents. Three parents were interviewed from Eagle Primary School (Kenneth's parents, Mr and Mrs Lincoln and Hannah's mother, Mrs Joseph, a divorced mother) and a couple (Jonathan's parents, Mr and Mrs Marsh) from Swallow Primary School. After I had contacted all the parents, suitable dates and times for the interviews were arranged. These interviews were all conducted in the evening at their homes and each interview lasted for approximately two hours. For the parents' interviews, I used an interview schedule (Appendix I) as a broad frame of reference to guide the discussions.

Conducting the semi-structured interviews made it possible to obtain useful information from parents that included children's developmental milestones and the processes involved in the enrolment of their children into mainstream classes. These aspects were extremely useful as they gave me an understanding of rationale for parent preferences as well as the choices they made regarding their children's schooling. Although I could gain quite a lot of relevant information from these semi-structured interviews, the respondents still had the advantage to limit or 'filter' the information given to me during the interview. The semi-structured interviews were all conducted in the homes of the learners (i.e. the natural setting), rather than at the

school where the learners were observed. This gave me another opportunity to observe the learners within a different context.

### **3.5.3 Classroom Observations**

The third method of data collection was classroom observations. Neuman (2000, p. 2) indicates that field research is a type of qualitative research in which the researcher directly observes the people being studied in a natural setting for an extended period of time. The researcher combines the intense observation with participation in the people's social activities. Observations also allow the researcher to access information first-hand in the context of its natural settings.

There are various methods of conducting classroom observations: This can be either an open system of observation, which includes narratives, field-notes and videotapes; focused observation; structured observation or systematic observation. As there is not one best method of observation, I used the open system of observation, which allowed me the freedom to observe the 'subjects' freely and record key points of the classroom management and practices at 10 to 15 minute intervals. The information was recorded on a prepared recording sheet (Appendix K). In addition, field notes were kept.

These observations were conducted during the normal school day and I was cautious not to create a disturbance or cause a distraction. I developed a good rapport with the teachers and learners and created an atmosphere of acceptance and trust. A passive participative approach was used during the observations. This implies that the researcher was present, but did not interact with the participants (Mertens 1998, p. 317).

Observations were conducted in each class from 8 o'clock to 1 o'clock everyday over a period of two weeks. These focused on the interaction between the teacher and the learners experiencing barriers to learning as well as between the learners experiencing barriers to learning and their peers. I paid particular attention to the pedagogical strategies teachers used in dealing with the 'special needs' learners. I also focused on how the respective teachers managed the class behaviourally.

I observed the classroom practices of the Grade 2 teachers had been influenced by the inclusion of 'special needs' learners in their classes.

A further analysis of the learners' portfolios and workbooks assisted me in ascertaining the methods of assessment utilised by the teachers. It also reflected if any adaptations or other special strategies were utilised for the assessment of the learners experiencing barriers to learning.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

According to Patton (1990, p. 297) "[t]he data generated by qualitative methods are voluminous. Sitting down to make sense out of pages of semi-structured interviews and whole files of field notes can be overwhelming." This work generated data from three forms of data collection mentioned in the previous section.

Wolcott (1994) describes a three-stage approach to qualitative analysis that includes first, a description or an outline of what has been witnessed during the process of data collection; second, an analysis or identifying the essential features and recurring themes and third, the interpretation or a search for meaning and understanding. These three stages were useful as a template for the management and analysis of the data in this work.

Managing the data meant being organised and having a good data and time management strategy. The data from each school was managed separately. Within each school, data derived from each method was initially managed and recorded separately but in the final analysis, some of it was combined, as the next chapter will illustrate.

Open coding was performed during the first phase of the data analysis. This involved the researcher in reading and writing analytical notes or memos.

Thereafter, a second round of coding, namely axial coding was done whereby I organized the codes, developed links among them, and discovered key analytical categories.

In the final phase, selective coding was applied in which I re-examined previous codes to identify and select illustrative data that will support the conceptual coding categories that have been developed.

In organising and analysing the data, I used the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into categories by grouping themes that relate to each other (Tesch, 1990).

### ***Structured Questionnaires***

The questionnaires from Phase 1 were analysed by group and section-by-section. Since I was interested in describing the responses, I grouped similar responses from teachers and parents respectively on separate sheets and developed frequency tables as the initial analytical tool. Comparisons within each group (amongst teachers themselves) were made during this phase but comparisons between groups (teachers and parents) were only made in the analysis detailed in the following chapter.

The open-ended questions were read to identify similarities and differences in responses. Here again, teachers and parents' responses were kept separate so as to allow for comparison in the final analysis.

The results of the questionnaires, as already suggested earlier, provided the focus for further questions in the interviews and classroom observations.

### ***Semi-structured Interviews***

No electronic recordings of the semi-structured interviews were made as requested by the interviewees. Shorthand notes were taken during the semi-structured interviews and these were later expanded and processed on a word processor. I read these notes repeatedly in order to develop categories of analysis. A process of open coding was applied whereby units of meaning (sentences or phrases) were identified. These units were listed and during this process similarities and differences within and between respondent groups were identified.

### ***Classroom Observations***

The field notes taken during the classroom observations were first written by hand and later recorded on a word processor. I read through these notes and used a system of open-coding to identify categories of analysis. Here I applied what had emerged from the two methods above as a frame of reference. I did, however, find differences and, therefore, had to record these separately.

In the presentation of these findings, issues of ethics and confidentiality emerged as crucial aspects to be considered by the researcher. The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informants. In the next section, I indicate the procedures that were followed in securing the rights and privacy of the informants in the study.

### **3.7 Ethics and Confidentiality**

As already stated in section 3.4, written permission to conduct the study was sought from the Western Cape Education Department. I submitted a research proposal outlining my intentions and also requesting permission from the Director of the Research Directorate. After obtaining the necessary written permission from the Research Directorate, the Director of the Education Management and Development Centre (EMDC) and the Circuit Managers of the two schools, I made written application to the School Governing Bodies requesting permission to conduct the research in the two selected schools. Both School Governing Bodies granted their permission. Letters were sent to all the parents of the selected Grade 2 classes informing them of the research and requesting their permission to participate in the study. Parents were informed that their participation was voluntary. Meetings were held with principals, teachers to introduce the study. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary

The school principals and teachers were assured that the findings of the study would be made available to them. Such a strategy for dissemination is supported by Rose (2002, p. 47) who indicates that, "[r]esearchers have a further responsibility to publish their findings and discuss their research approaches in a language and

format which is accessible and which identifies the relevance of their work to school-based practices.”

I completed and signed the University’s Research Code of Ethics. All the information gathered, therefore, was treated confidentially using the above code of ethics as a guide. Pseudonyms were used to protect the rights of the individuals used in this study. The informants were thus assured of anonymity, which is the ethical protection that they will remain nameless and that their identity will be protected from disclosure.

### **3.8 Limitations of the Study**

The following were identified as the main limitations:

The small sample used in this study was not representative of learners in all primary schools since the data was limited to only two primary schools in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town. The contexts of the primary schools did not reflect the contexts of all primary schools in the Western Cape or in South Africa. It, therefore, meant that the results are not generalisable to a larger population.

Classroom observations were conducted over a two-week period only. This was in part due to the researcher’s work commitments and in part due to constraints placed by the school. A longer period, it was felt, would cause unease and disrupt the class too much.

Due to the ages of the learners with the identified special needs, I was unable to gain their perspectives, experience and feelings about their inclusion in a mainstream classroom.

Finally, only a small sample of teachers completed the questionnaires at both schools, thus compromising the final analysis of each case.

### **3.9 Personal motivation for the study**

As previously indicated, White Paper 6 describes the barriers as occurring on different levels and it includes the systemic, pedagogical and societal barriers as well as the medical disabilities. These classifications are offered to indicate that the barriers are not only located within the learner but as a result of other circumstantial and external influences as well.

As a result of my training and many years of experience as a specialised education teacher and consultant, I was particularly interested in the inclusion of the learners with medical disabilities into the mainstream classes.

Although it was evident in the sites used in this study that the learners in the identified classes experienced a variety of learning barriers, I focused my research on investigating the inclusion of learners with the specific medical disabilities, i.e. visual impairment and Down's syndrome.

The inclusion of learners with medical disabilities in mainstream classes was one of the challenges that most mainstream teachers feared and in order to allay some of their fears, I chose to investigate this aspect of inclusion in my study.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter shed light on the research design. It included descriptions of the research methodology, methods of data collection and analysis, the sites and sample as well as the ethical considerations. The limitations of this study were also highlighted.

What follows in the next chapter is a description of the findings. These are presented as two case studies. Adelman (1984) indicates that case studies present research data in a more publicly accessible manner than does any other.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This study examined the understandings, perceptions and experiences of inclusion by teachers and parents in two differently resourced, urban primary schools in the Western Cape through a multi-method approach that included surveys, interviews and observations.

The results of the study are presented as case studies of each school including the responses of teachers, principals and parents. Each case is presented in two parts. The first section reports on the more general results emanating from the surveys conducted with the principal, staff and parents of the selected Grade 2 class in which learners identified with particular barriers were placed. This section begins with an outline of the context of the school, the perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion by the cohort mentioned above.

The second section of the case study provides evidence of the perceptions and experiences of inclusion of the Grade 2 class teacher, the parents of the learners whose children were identified as having barriers to learning. I describe the interview data and classroom observations.

In each case study I present the findings in each section in two broad categories of description. These include perspectives on inclusion as well as the concerns and challenges teachers and parents addressed.

Each case ends with a summary of the main insights the study offers.

### **4.2 Eagle Primary School**

#### **4.2.1 The School Context**

Eagle Primary is a mainstream primary school that is more than thirty years old. It is situated in an established, sub-economic area. According to the school records, most of the learners travel in from the neighbouring communities and a small percentage of learners come from the immediate environment of the school.

As a school that was established to cater for Coloured children prior to 1994 (described in detail in Chapter 2), this school too may be classified as under-resourced. With a total enrolment of 1006 learners, it accommodated learners from Grade R (Reception Year) to Grade 7. The language of learning and teaching is English and the first additional language is Afrikaans. The staff consisted of 24 teachers who are paid by the Education department and 3 additional staff members, who are paid by the School Governing Body.

The principal indicated that at least 15% of the learners experienced barriers to learning at the school. These, he suggests, were as a result of differences in intellectual ability, socio-economic deprivation, particular life experiences, and inappropriate language development or the mismatch between the learners' home language and the language of learning and teaching at the school.

The school initiated the inclusion of learners with specific barriers to learning years before the promulgation of such an initiative by education departments. In other words, this school was known to accept learners with barriers to learning not regularly accepted in 'mainstream' educational contexts. It had an established education support team consisting of six personnel who met once a month to discuss issues pertaining to learners experiencing barriers to learning as well as to offer support to teachers.

The principal indicated that the school's policy had always been to address the needs of learners to the best of their ability. The class teachers gave extra tuition to learners who were experiencing barriers in any particular learning area.

The next section presents the findings of the teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion at Eagle Primary School.

#### **4.2.2 Perceptions of Inclusive Education**

Perceptions of inclusion amongst teachers and parents in this school varied. These included perceptions ranging from inclusion as either mainstreaming all learners; the

closure of special education schools or as the basic human right of children not to be discriminated against on the basis of their disability.

Commonly teachers understood inclusion to mean either mainstreaming or the closure of special schools. The general trend amongst parents on the other hand, was that inclusion is a basic human right and as such, children cannot be denied access into mainstream classes.

For three of the eleven teachers, inclusive education meant the mainstreaming of all learners including the learners who are currently in special schools. For example, they stated that inclusive education “refers to mainstreaming special education children and making provision for learners with learning problems.”

Interestingly, three other teachers felt that inclusive education meant the closure of all special education schools. One teacher stated, “inclusive education means the closure of special schools, (and) absorption of all learners into mainstream.” Only four of the parents also perceived inclusion as the mainstreaming of learners.

Four of the eleven teachers had no clue as to what ‘inclusion’ meant and stated that they “(h)aven’t seen it (White Paper 6) nor heard about it and my understanding of the concept is limited” and as a result they were unable to express an opinion of inclusion.

The principal, though acknowledging, “that all learners can learn and in “recognising and respecting differences the barriers to learning would be addressed” and felt that inclusive education is a human right issue. Like the principal, two teachers also indicated that it is a basic human right. For example, Teacher K stated, “(e)ducation is supposed to be a right for every child. Therefore mainstreaming of all learners, including those with handicaps is essential”, Teacher J also indicated that, “[i]ncluding learners with special needs will give the learners a greater measure of appreciation and acceptance of each other. Learners with special needs will fit more easily into society.”

Interestingly few if any of the parents considered inclusion as mainstreaming. Like the principal and Teachers K and J above, the majority of the parents (thirty-three of the thirty-six parents), felt that inclusive education was a basic human right and that children should not be excluded as a consequence of whatever barrier they experienced. One parent was of the opinion that "all children, no matter what the learning barriers are, have a right to interact with all types of children."

Generally, the parents felt that their children would learn to respect the rights of all children, irrespective of their differences and inclusion afforded all children an opportunity to have a better future. One parent expressed the following view. He said, "[m]y feelings towards inclusive education are, to give our children a better future", while a second parent stated that, "all children in different age groups (should) overcome our past prejudiced attitudes." A third parent believed that, "[s]ince the two Down's syndrome kids are in [his] daughter's class, she looks at kids with disabilities differently. She has learned to accept that every kid is not perfect."

While most of the teachers perceived inclusive education as the mainstreaming of all learners including learners with 'handicaps' and the closure of all special schools. There was, however, a small group of teachers who were not exposed to the concept of inclusion and could not give their views. On the other hand, the principal and most of the parents perceived inclusive education as the right of the child. Lastly, most of the parents viewed inclusive education not only as an educational right, but also as a social benefit for their children. The parents indicated that they valued the importance of acquiring good social skills that would assist their children in adapting to society. They felt that their children would acquire sound values such as respect, tolerance, patience, humility and the ability to accept differences, without any prejudices or biases having mingled with children with barriers to learning.

#### **4.2.3 Concerns and Challenges of Inclusion**

As the teachers' and parents' perceptions of inclusion varied, so too did their concerns and challenges. Both teachers and parents acknowledged that teaching learners with specific barriers in mainstream classes posed challenges. In the main, teachers indicated that they lacked the skills in addressing these barriers, while

parents were concerned that their children who did not experience learning barriers would be marginalized. Teachers and parents also unanimously agreed that the school would require additional funding and resources for the implementation of inclusive education.

#### **4.2.3.1 Training**

The principal and nine teachers acknowledged the need for specialised training. They indicated that workshops should be arranged that would provide them with strategies for coping with children who have special needs. They also felt that the classes would definitely have to be smaller in order to give all learners the quality education that they deserved as the following excerpts indicate. Teacher S stated, “(w)e need proper training and skills. Only if we have received training, may Inclusive Education work” and Teacher M indicated, “(t)raining of educators in preparation for coping with children who have special needs would be required.”

While six of the teachers indicated that they required guidance in developing the curriculum according to the child’s ability and disability, the majority of the teachers expressed their need for additional training to empower them to deal with learners experiencing learning barriers. Two teachers indicated that they would require more professional, psychological and emotional support from the Education department if they were to implement an inclusive programme. Teacher Q believed that “(i)f we are given the correct training, knowledge, funding, resources, teacher aides and fewer learners in our classes then we can implement Inclusive Education. We’ll even need psychological training to make it even more successful” and Teacher P agreed, “(i)’ll (also) need professional, psychological and emotional support from parents, colleagues and most importantly the support of the Education department.”

Twenty-two parents were concerned about the teachers’ ability to teach all learners, i.e. learners with or without learning barriers. They felt that the inclusion of learners with barriers could jeopardise their children’s education and it would place an additional burden on the teacher. One parent indicated that he did not “foresee a problem provided that the attention and focus of the teacher is not solely on those pupils.”

Fifteen parents felt that the teachers did not have the specialised training in addressing the needs of learners with learning barriers, while the majority of the parents felt that the teachers are trying their best to cope with the diverse needs of learners. One parent expressed her concern by stating, "(m)y only reservation is that I feel sorry for the teacher who is already overburdened with large classes because of rationalisation (of teachers)", while a second expressed his concerns as follows, "(t)he number of learners per class, the level of the Learner's assessment and the qualifications of the teacher in coping with the learners with LB (may be problematic)." The third parent raised a question, "(w)ill the teachers be able to have the patience to teach the other children to be tolerant and learn to accept it as part of their future?"

#### **4.2.3.2 Supporting Inclusion in the School.**

The principal and some of the teachers felt positive about the implementation of inclusive education, but they indicated that all structures, support and training should be in place before the full implementation could realistically take place. On the other hand, parents, while supporting inclusion, were of the opinion that the teacher would need the support of a teacher assistant, as the teaching of a large class including learners with learning barriers would be challenging for teachers.

Some parents indicated that they would be willing to support the teacher if they knew how to do it. Parent F believed that " (i)f parents are taught how to help the teacher, inclusion wouldn't be impossible and a teacher-aide wouldn't be necessary. It could be a learning process for parents and teachers."

On the other hand, the majority of the teachers felt that if they had the support of the parents, they would be able to cope with all learners. They also indicated that the parents did not always accept that their children experienced learning barriers.

One of the teachers indicated that, "(s)upport will be needed from the principal and most of all from the parents of the children with learning barriers. Sometimes they do not always want to believe that their children have problems."

The principal and some teachers felt that parents also needed support in dealing with their children who have learning barriers. Parent support groups needed to be established, as very often (they) the parents do not know how to cope with their children who are experiencing various learning barriers. The principal confirmed this, "(p)arents need to be introduced to various support groups. Not all parents know how to support their children. In the immediate area surrounding our school, there are however very few support groups."

Thirty of the parents were empathetic to teachers whom they suggest were already overburdened because of large classes. They suggested that if teachers had the assistance of a teacher-aide, this would assist them in coping with 'disabled' learners in their mainstream classes. Parent L was convinced that "(i)f the attention required by the learners with 'LB' is causing the teacher to neglect or not spend enough time with the others, then yes, an assistant would be required and paid for by the department."

Most of the teachers also agreed that the number of learners per class had to be reduced, as the large classes would affect the effective assessment of learners and the efficient recording of their progress. If teachers could manage the assessment of all learners, then the identification of barriers and the intervention strategies could commence earlier.

#### **4.2.3.3 Resources and finance**

Six of the teachers and most parents indicated that the school required more funding and a decrease in the teacher-learner ratio, which is currently 39:1. The principal also agreed that "teacher aides, fewer learners, better resources and a much bigger budget" would contribute to the successful implementation of Inclusive Education. The principal was positive about the implementation of inclusive education, but re-emphasised the need for "extra funding for special education needs" at his school.

All teachers expressed a need for more learning and teaching materials for learners with special needs. One teacher indicated, "the resources needed are numerous and

very expensive and unless the funding is made available, the lack of these resources could hamper the success of implementing Inclusive Education.”

The majority of the parents suggested that the education department should pay the salary of the teacher assistant, as they were already paying their children's school fees, but the school fees were insufficient to cover the assistants' salaries as well. Parent D indicated that “(t)he assistant should be remunerated by the government because this is one of the reasons that we are so heavily taxed!” Parent S agreed, “(y)es, I do think that the Department must move forward in accepting pupils with special needs into mainstream and where that is the case, provide extra funding for special education needs at the school.”

#### **4.2.3.4 Curriculum**

Nine of the teachers indicated that they would need extra time for planning lessons that would accommodate the levels of all learners. Planning for the diverse range of learner needs and abilities would require careful planning and sufficient resources. For the successful implementation of inclusive education, the teachers felt that they needed curriculum support from the education department.

Eight of the eleven teachers indicated that their knowledge of adapting and modifying the curriculum and assessment for learners experiencing learning barriers was limited. The teachers for example suggested that they need, “(a)ssistance and guidance in drafting curriculum according to the child's ability and handicaps.”

Five teachers also indicated that their skills in applying different teaching strategies for these learners were limited and that there was a need for specialised training. Even though, nine teachers indicated that they are unable to assist these learners, they felt confident to identify learners who experience learning barriers, since they already referred some learners to the school's Teacher Support Team.

The evidence suggests that a concern about the capacity of the teachers was at the forefront of both teachers' and parents' responses. Teachers indicated the need for specialised training and support in addressing the learning barriers would assist

them in providing quality education, while most parents were concerned that the teachers were unable to cope with the extra burden if they had large classes including learners with learning barriers and felt that the assistance of a teacher-aide would bring some relief to the teacher. They felt that their children's education should not be compromised as a result of the phenomenon of inclusion.

Other key issues that emerged from the data are: the training needs of the teachers, the support for the implementation of inclusion that is required by both parents and teachers and lastly, sufficient resources and more funding.

In this first section of the case study, I outlined the context of the school, the perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion of the principal, the 'other' staff members and the parents of the 'other' Grade 2 learners at Eagle Primary School.

In the following section, which is the second section of the case study, I introduce the main informants of this study and present the findings. The findings were based on the field notes of the classroom observations as well as the interviews that were conducted with the Grade 2 class teacher, Mrs Simons, the two sets of parents, Mr and Mrs Lincoln and Mrs Joseph whose children experienced barriers to learning.

### **4.3 Grade 2 Teacher and learners**

Mrs Simons is the Grade 2 class teacher at Eagle Primary School. She had 40 learners in her class, which included Hannah, a nine-year-old girl and Kenneth, a ten-year old boy. Both these children were born with Down's syndrome.

Mrs Simons is an experienced and qualified Foundation Phase teacher, but she had no formal training in specialised education. She had 14 years teaching experience, which included two years of dealing with learners experiencing learning barriers. This experience, however, did not include teaching learners with Down's syndrome. She did not have any assistant and taught Kenneth and Hannah from 08:00 until 12:00. Kenneth's mother fetched him at school and continued working with him at home, while Hannah went to an after-care facility until her mother fetched her at 17:00.

Hannah is the youngest of three children and her older siblings are 19 years and 16 years old. The mother, Mrs Joseph, is a single parent teaching at a school in one of the disadvantaged townships. Hannah attended a Grade R class at Eagle Primary School and the following year she started in Mrs Simons' Grade 1 class.

Kenneth is the youngest of 4 children. He has a sister who is 25 years old and two brothers, a 19-year-old and a 13- year- old. His father, Mr Lincoln, is an artisan and his mother, Mrs Lincoln, is a home executive. Kenneth attended a Grade R class at another school, but he was not admitted to Grade 1. He was home-schooled and only started in Mrs Simons' Grade 1 class in July of that year.

What follows below is a discussion of the perspectives of the Grade 2 class teacher and the parents of the learners who were included in the mainstream Grade 2 class.

#### **4.4 Perceptions of Inclusive Education**

Like her colleagues, Mrs Simons also shared the same sentiments about inclusion as described in the previous section. She stated that she believes all children should be included in mainstream classes and the success of implementation is dependent upon receiving in-service training as well as the full support of parents. In this regard, she stated, I agree that all children should be included and given an opportunity to have access to education. Inclusive education will work if you have the training in dealing with the different needs of the learners. The parents should also give their full support to you as the class teacher.

Although Mrs Simons seemed to understand the concept of inclusion and had a positive attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education, she was apprehensive regarding her state of 'readiness' in dealing with it in her classroom. In the interview, she indicated that she is trying her best, but would need some training and support.

Mrs Lincoln, on the other hand, felt that teachers were supportive and empathetic and stated, "(i)f teachers' hearts are in the right place, they can cope with any child. The school must be willing to accept the children and then find ways to help the

child. I do think if the teachers get some more training, this will help them to cope better. Inclusion is the best thing for all learners!"

Kenneth and Hannah's parents were of the opinion that inclusion was the right direction for education in our country. Kenneth's mother viewed inclusive education as her child's right to education and could see both the social and academic benefits for her son. She believed that the inclusion of her son within the mainstream class was the best option for his education. Mrs Lincoln stated:

Any child must have the right to go to any school. The parents with the school need to decide what is best for the child. Children must first get that opportunity to go to the local school. Schools must not judge the children before the time. It is better for the child to grow up in the community where he lives. To have friends in the community and so the community learns to accept the child/ren as part of the community and they do not tease them. We must learn to accept people who are different. They also learn to care for people who are different.

#### **4.5 Concerns and Challenges of Inclusion**

The concerns and challenges of inclusion expressed by the class teacher and the parents of the included learners concurred with those of the teachers and parents in the first section. However, the concerns and challenges raised by the class teacher and the parents of the included learners were more focused on the specific needs of the included learners, Hannah and Kenneth.

##### **4.5.1 Training**

Both Mrs Simons and the parents felt that the Education department needed to offer courses to assist teachers with the challenges of teaching learners with various barriers to learning. Mrs Simons expressed her need for "regular workshops and training to equip her with more strategies" in dealing with the included learners.

Hannah's mother was in agreement with the class teacher and stated:

The department also needs to offer courses to teachers to assist them in addressing barriers to learning. Schools have to become more inclusive in their approaches and that will only happen if they are prepared to make a mind shift. Inclusive education is here to stay!

Although Mrs Simons was inexperienced in teaching Hannah and Kenneth, she was willing to accept the challenge, seek support from professionals and also do some research. Her willingness to accept the challenge was indicative of her positive attitude towards inclusion.

#### **4.5.2 Support**

The parents acknowledged that the initial support given by other professionals and Non-Governmental Organisations was essential and valuable, as it assisted them in making informed decisions about their children's education. Mrs Joseph stated:

From the time Hannah was born, I got support from the hospital and my GP. I was also referred to a branch of DSSA (Down's syndrome South Africa) and I read the DSSA's convention report, articles and books to give me more information.

In addition to the support from DSSA, Mrs Lincoln also had the support from other professionals.

The regular meetings (of DSSA) helped me to deal with the changes in Kenneth's behaviour and the school clinic in the area where we lived had programmes for mothers' of pre-school children. I went there and the Speech and language specialist, Ms Oliver helped me with language games that I could play with Kenneth.

Both parents were in agreement that Eagle Primary School gave them the support that they needed at the time of their children's enrolment. Mrs Joseph, however, indicated that Hannah now needed additional professional support that the school was unable to provide. Mrs Joseph stated:

I feel that there are not enough support structures at the school, within the education department and no support group in the community. This is placing Hannah at a disadvantage as she also needs Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language therapy, but those facilities are not available at the school.

Through the classroom observations, it was evident that Mrs Simons was unable to integrate Kenneth and Hannah. She has to divide her attention among Kenneth, Hannah and the rest of the class. It appears that Hannah wants the teacher's attention more than the other children and tries to gain the teacher's attention in

different ways. The 'other' learners continue their work while the class teacher teaches Hannah and Kenneth. If the class teacher had a teacher assistant, s/he could supervise the 'other' learners while Mrs Simons teaches Hannah and Kenneth or vice versa. The support from a teacher assistant would not only have benefited the class teacher and Hannah and Kenneth, but also their peers. The following excerpt illustrates the point.

Hannah: Crying with her head on the table.

Mrs S: "What is wrong?"

Hannah: " I dow wanna do pattern"

Mrs S: "Which pattern do you want to do?"

Hannah: "No pattern!"

Hannah: Still has her head on the table.

Mrs S:" What do you want to do?"

Hannah: "Colour in"

Mrs S: "All right you can colour in."

Mrs S: Continues with the handwriting on BB

Kenneth: Doing his handwriting

Mrs S: "Class write down 4 words with ow sound"

Hannah & Noel are knocking their heads together

Kenneth: "Miss, Miss, Peter is calling me ugly names!"

Mrs S: " It is wrong to call people names! Don't call children ugly names. Call the children by their proper name."

Mrs S: " Kenneth fetch your reader and sit on the mat."

Mrs S: "Hannah, come to the mat.

Hannah: "Wanna go toilet."

Mrs S: "Don't forget to wash your hands, Hannah!"

#### **4.5.3 Resources and finance**

Like in the case of her colleagues, Mrs Simons also raised the issue of resources. Funding was a key concern since the School Governing Body already employed 3 additional staff members and would be unable to pay the teacher-assistant's salary as well. The parents could not be asked to contribute more school fees, as some of them are struggling to make ends meet.

Mrs Simons also indicated that she needed more learning and teaching support material. She needed more books, games, puzzles and concrete apparatus to reinforce the literacy and numeracy skills of the learners. She stated, "(e)xta funding for more concrete apparatus is needed for the learners with barriers."

## **4.6 Perspectives of Inclusion**

As indicated in the previous section, the class teacher and the parents of the included learners seem to hold similar views about inclusion and displayed positive attitudes towards it. However, the implementation at classroom level still raised some concerns and posed challenges. This, notwithstanding and as the next section illustrates; both the class teacher and the parents identified the benefits of inclusion for Kenneth and Hannah.

### **4.6.1 Benefits of inclusion**

The class teacher and parents concur that the most important benefit of inclusion for these learners is social inclusion in the mainstream class. Mrs Josephs stated, "They are able to acquire social skills, which is so important. They learn how to behave themselves within an 'ordinary' environment. They learn what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is. It also boosts their self-image being in a mainstream class."

Mrs Simons agreed that the learners had benefited from inclusion.

Even though I am exhausted as a result of having them and 38 other children in my class, it is also most rewarding when they are able to do things that they couldn't do before. Most of the time it is a joy having them in my class. The other children in the class also enjoy having them in the class and they are very protective over them.

Although Mrs Simons felt the strain of having a class of 40 learners and among them, were learners who needed individual tuition and attention, she indicated that it had been rewarding seeing Kenneth and Hannah progress at their pace. She also felt that Hannah and Kenneth's peers did not find their inclusion in the mainstream class distracting, but were extremely protective of them.

In my classroom observation, I also observed their willingness to support Hannah and Kenneth.

Mrs S: "Class, sing the litter song."

Class sings the song and demonstrate the actions.

Hannah & Kenneth hum the tune, but they don't know the words

Kelly: "You must do it like this, Kenneth!"

Kelly demonstrates the actions for Kenneth and Hannah

Class sings the song again. Kenneth and Hannah join with the actions  
Mrs S: Class, look at this picture (picture of the picnic spot that is spoilt by litter)  
What is wrong in this picture?  
Children give ideas how to clean the picnic spot.  
Mrs S: Writes the key words on the chalkboard  
Hannah: 'Miss, we mush pui ina bag.'  
Mrs S: " That's good Hannah. We must put the litter in a black bag."  
Mrs S: " Class, give Hannah a clap!  
Kenneth: "Miss, miss! Me and daddy and Tony went to catch fish."  
Mrs S: " Okay, Kenneth. You can tell that story later."

Both sets of parents viewed the inclusion of their children as beneficial not only for their own children, but also for the teacher and the 'other' learners in the class. Mrs. Lincoln, Kenneth's mother indicated that he had developed independence and good social skills. In reading, he was progressing satisfactorily. She felt confident that because he is so determined to succeed, he would be able to function effectively within society.

She stated:

He is learning to have a positive outlook on life. He is learning to be independent and one day he will be able to support himself. My husband is a boat builder and he is already teaching Kenneth how to make boats. Kenneth is also learning how to 'get along' with other children. He is reading very well and I help him in the afternoons. Kenneth does not give up easily. He becomes angry and frustrated when he struggles but eventually he gets it right.

Hannah's mother also confirmed that inclusion has benefited her daughter as well.

Hannah is in an environment that would stimulate her to gain self confidence. She is attending school in the community where she lives and this would help with her with socialisation skills. I know my child has limitations but I would like her to develop at her own pace and reach her full potential. I don't want Hannah to be fitted into a box, i.e. to be 'integrated' into mainstream, but the school should rather make provision for her inclusion on all levels.

Both parents indicated that their children were acquiring social skills that they view as important. They learn how to behave themselves within an 'ordinary' environment and learn what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was. Being in a class with different children boosted their children's self-image.

Mrs Lincoln felt that it was important for her son to be part of a community. She explained the importance thereof as follows:

Any child must have the right to go to any school. The parents with the school need to decide what is best for the child. Children must first get that opportunity to go to the local school. Schools must not judge the children before the time. It is better for the child to grow up in the community where he lives. To have friends in the community and so the community learns to accept the child/ren as part of the community and they do not tease them. We must learn to accept people who are different. They also learn to care for people who are different.

#### **4.6.2 Challenges of inclusion**

While both parents and teacher and the parents identified benefits, they recognized many challenges as well. Both indicated that the lack of support is the main challenge. While the class teacher's lack of support related to her classroom management and practice, the parents ascribe their need, as the need for learner support to that would enable them to function effectively within the mainstream class.

Mrs Simons explained that her challenges were the number of learners in her class, the planning of lessons to accommodate the different levels within her class and to give learners individual attention whether or not they had barriers.

##### **4.6.2.1 Planning**

Mrs Simons had to plan Hannah and Kenneth's work separately, as well as plan work for learners who were functioning at other levels. She stated that overall, planning lessons for learners who were functioning at different levels was extremely challenging.

Mrs Simons indicated:

The Individual Educational Plans (IEP) for Kenneth & Hannah are definitely different to the rest of the class. It is at a lower level than the rest of the class. Kenneth and Hannahs' IEPs also differ because they do not operate at the same level. Kenneth is able to understand much more than Hannah. In other words, their IEPs are written to accommodate their level of functioning.

##### **4.6.2.2 Methodology**

With regard to her methodology and teaching style, Mrs Simons stated: "I have had to make a number of changes to the way I teach them because they cannot concentrate for very long. I make use of concrete objects to teach Mathematics because that is what they find the most difficult to understand.

From my classroom observations, it was evident that Mrs Simons organised and managed her class teaching differently. Hannah, Kenneth and another boy, named Noel, were in a group by themselves. Even though they were in one group, Mrs Simons still needed to make allowances for the other learners' with different abilities. The following excerpt illustrates the challenges of her classroom management.

Hannah is holding onto the teacher. Kenneth is picking up the papers.

Mrs. Simons: Class come onto the mat.

Mrs. Simons: Count in 2's up to 50. Look on the counting chart.

Class: 2,4,6 .....50

Mrs. Simons: Now count in 3's up to 30 and in 5's up to 100.

Class: 3,6,9.....30

**Kenneth counts with the class, while Hannah covers her head with a jacket.**

**Mrs Simons takes the jacket off Hannah's head.**

Mrs Simons: Read the sum on the board.

Class: Reads the sum  $15 \times 3$ .

Mrs Simons: This is how you do the sum  $15 \times 3$ .

**Teacher demonstrates it to the class.**

**Kenneth is pulling Noel's jersey. Hannah's head is bent over.**

Mrs Simons writes the sums on the BB and asks the class to do it in their books (Learners return to their seats)

Mrs Simons: Has Kenneth & Hannah on the mat with her.

**Kenneth: Mrs Simons, my mother is going to buy a new car**

**Mrs Simons takes the clock and asks Kenneth to tell the time - 12 o' clock**

Kenneth: 12 o' clock

**Hannah is playing with her hair.**

**Mrs Simons takes the number chart.**

Mrs Simons: Count from 1- 20.

Kenneth & Hannah: 1,2,3.....20.

Mrs Simons: Good you two!

Mrs Simons: Kenneth, pack out 6 counters.

**Kenneth packs out the 6 counters and counts them one at a time. Packs out number 6 and word six**

Mrs Simons: Now pack out 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1. Pack out the counters, count them, and look for the number and the word.

Mrs Simons: Hannah pack out 5 counters.

Hannah packs out 7 counters.

Mrs Simons: Count 5 and point to 5 on the number chart.

**Hannah is unable to count correctly and cannot point to 5**

Kenneth: Miss, Hannah is looking on my work!

Mrs Simons: Hannah, leave Kenneth alone. Pack out 2 counters.

**Hannah packs out 2 counters.**

Mrs Simons: Good girl! Now pack out 4.

**Hannah was unable to pack out the four counters.**

In the first part of the lesson, the teacher consolidates the concept of multiplication with two-digits. Hannah and Kenneth were on the floor with the rest of the class, but were not participating in the lesson. They were physically 'included' in the room, but academically 'excluded' from the lesson. They could not participate in the lesson as their number concept was at a much lower level and as a result, they were not paying any attention to the numeracy lesson. Mrs Simons had to make provision for these differences in number concept in her planning. In the second part of the lesson, Hannah and Kenneth were assessed while the rest of the class had returned to their seats. Based on my observations, it was evident that Kenneth and Hannah needed more support than what the teacher was able to give them.

The parents on the other hand experienced the challenges of inclusion differently. Mrs Lincoln did not foresee any challenges of inclusion for her son, but felt that the benefits outnumbered the challenges. She indicated:

I don't see any challenges. When he(Kenneth) goes on class trips with the other children, I always ask Mrs Simons if I could go along to help her. He is learning at his own pace and I am helping him at home.

Mrs Joseph, however, views the lack of support structures and the unavailability of the services of other professionals at the school as Hannah's main challenge in being included in the mainstream class. As indicated earlier, Mrs Joseph stated:

I feel that there are not enough support structures at the school, within the Education department and no support group in the community. This is placing Hannah at a disadvantage.

#### **4.7 Summary**

The concerns and challenges for the class teacher and the parents of the included learners were similar to those identified by the 'other' teachers and 'other' parents.

Both groups stated that if learners with learning barriers are included in mainstream classes there are a number of concerns and challenges, which should first be addressed. These include (a) specialised training for the teachers, (b) adequate

support for the teachers, parents and the learners, and (c) sufficient resources and extra funding.

The class teacher and the parents whose learners are experiencing learning barriers highlighted some of the benefits of inclusion for these children. The class teacher felt that Hannah and Kenneth's peers did not find their inclusion in the mainstream class distracting, but were extremely protective over them, on the other hand, both parents indicated that their children were acquiring social skills which they believed were important for their children.

Both sets of parents also agreed that the inclusion of their children was beneficial not only for their own children, but also for the teacher and the 'other' learners in the class.

In the following section, I discuss the second case study. The perspectives and experiences of the principal, teachers and parents of Swallow Primary School are presented in the same manner as the case study of Eagle Primary School.

The findings are also presented in two broad categories of description, that is, perspectives on inclusive education as well as the concerns and challenges.

## **4.8 Swallow Primary School**

### **4.8.1 The School Context**

Swallow Primary School is a mainstream primary school, which is more than fifty years old. It is located in a well-established area and according to the school records; most of the learners at the school are from advantaged, middle class families.

Swallow Primary School was established to cater for White children prior to 1994 (described in detail in Chapter 2) and it may be classified as a well-resourced school. It has an enrolment of 714 learners from Grade R to Grade 7 and 13 learners in the learning support class. The staff consisted of 19 teachers who were paid by the

education department and 6 additional staff members who were paid by the School Governing Body. The language of learning and teaching is English and the first additional language is Afrikaans.

Mrs Bartlett, the principal, indicated that at least 12% of the learners experienced barriers to learning including the learner who is visually impaired. She suggested that these barriers were as a result of differences in intellectual ability, sensory impairments, particular life experiences, and inappropriate language development or the mismatch between the learners' home language and the language of learning and teaching at the school.

Over the years, the school had adapted its mission statement to be more inclusive and strove to address the needs of all their learners. The school had a proud history of accepting learners into mainstream classes, before the promulgation of such initiatives by the education department.

The school had a departmental learning support class (formerly known as the remedial class) and an established teacher support team. This team consisted of three personnel who met when there were specific requests from the staff. The school also had the support of the local school clinic.

The following section presents the findings of the teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences of inclusion of Swallow Primary School.

#### **4.8.2 Perceptions of Inclusive Education**

Four main perceptions of inclusion emerged from the parents and teachers. These included perceptions of inclusion as the mainstreaming of learners, the closure of all special schools, every child's constitutional right, but the last group had no opinion, due to their lack of exposure to the concept of inclusive education.

The perceptions of inclusion among parents and teachers at this school mirrored those of Eagle Primary in that, most teachers also perceived inclusive education as the mainstreaming of learners or the closure of all special schools and most parents viewed inclusion as every child's constitutional right.

Eighteen of the twenty-eight parents, the principal and two teachers felt that it was every child's constitutional right to be educated and that the parents had the right to choose the most suitable and convenient school for their children's education.

One parent stated, "I have no problem with Inclusive Education – if all needs are met i.e. the child with the 'learning barrier' and the rest of the class without 'learning barriers'."

This parent displayed a positive attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education, but felt that both the learners 'with' or 'without' learning barriers, needs must be addressed in the class. The inclusion of the learners within mainstream classes should not hinder the progress of the 'other' learners. The principal was also in support of inclusive education and believed that "IE is essential for our society." She was convinced that the "best place to start changing society was at school, as those children are the adults of the future."

The principal believed, "IE is essential. All citizens have a part to play in society. Tolerance and acceptance are essential if we are to succeed as a nation. The best place to start is with our children – the younger the better!"

Within the category of mainstreaming, two views emerged, the one group perceived inclusion as the mainstreaming of all learners, that is unconditional inclusion, and the other, as the mainstreaming of some learners with some additional support, that is conditional inclusion.

Two teachers perceived inclusive education as the mainstreaming of all learners irrespective of their disabilities, whether the disability is physical, intellectual, sensory or emotional. One teacher stated, "(a)ll children, no matter what age or learning ability to be included into a mainstream school."

The principal, two teachers and eight parents perceived inclusive education as the mainstreaming of some learners, but that this should be subject to a number of conditions, such as the availability of a support network, the willingness of the school to enrol these learners and availability of funds and other material resources. This

group felt that only the learners that would be able to succeed with the additional support should be included in mainstream classes. They suggested that additional support such as occupational therapy, speech therapy or remedial sessions could be given during school time using the 'pull out' or 'withdrawal' system. In other words, this means where the learner is intermittently withdrawn from the mainstream class to receive the additional support. One parent gave his perspective as follows, " (inclusive education) means that all learners who are able to, should be given an opportunity, with the required support, to attend a mainstream school and be included in all spheres of school life. Assistance should be provided where necessary."

The parent felt that the inclusion of these learners should not only be at a school level but also within society as a whole. The principal indicated, "(a)s a result of the inclusion of Jonathan into mainstream, tolerance, acceptance and co-operation have developed in learners and is part of the School's Vision, Mission and Ethos."

Two of the seventeen teachers perceived inclusive education as the closure of all special schools. They indicated that they had not seen White Paper 6, but had heard from other teachers that the implementation of inclusive education meant the closure of the special schools, such as the schools for the blind, deaf or physically challenged.

Teacher J stated, "I've heard, not read (White Paper 6). It is the abandonment of Special (Adaptation) classes at schools as well as Special Schools." The implication was that all learners who were in Special Schools would be placed in mainstream schools. These teachers perceived inclusive education as the inclusion of only the disabled learners.

Two of the parents and nine teachers had not been exposed to the concept of inclusion. The teachers indicated that they had not seen or heard about White Paper 6 and were unable to give their opinion on inclusive education. The parents, however, indicated that they had no idea of inclusive education and the only experience they had of it was, what was happening at Swallow Primary School.

Some for example, said "I have no idea what it is!" or "(h)aven't heard about it. No comment!" But from this experience, they thought it benefited all children.

### **Summary**

The perceptions of inclusion amongst teachers and parents varied. Half of the teachers and two parents were unable to give their perspective on inclusive education as they have never seen or heard about the policy, White Paper 6. A few teachers, who heard about inclusion, perceived it as the closure of all special schools, while others perceived it as the mainstreaming of ALL learners regardless of their ability or 'disability'. On the other hand, the principal, a few teachers, and eight parents perceived inclusive education as the mainstreaming of some learners who would be able to function adequately in the mainstream school, but only with the required support. The school should then also be in a position to offer these support services.

The principal, two teachers and more than half of the parents indicated that it was the child's constitutional right to be educated and that they, the parents, had the right to select the school of their choice for their children.

There were two parents who felt very positive about inclusive education and this was as a result of their children's exposure to the phenomenon of inclusion at Swallow Primary School. They stated, "(w)e as parents have no problems with the Inclusive Education and feel that our children have only but benefited from it."

In the final analysis, the implementation of inclusive education would largely depend on people's positive attitudinal changes. The impact of these changes should then permeate the fabrics of society.

In the following section, I discuss the concerns and challenges of inclusion, which focused on the support for parents and teachers in the implementation of inclusive education, in terms of resources, finance and training.

#### **4.8.3 Concerns and challenges of inclusion**

The principal, the 'other' parents and teachers raised many concerns and challenges of inclusion at classroom level. These concerns and challenges highlighted the

support they envisaged for the effective implementation of inclusive education. The types of support were identified as support for parents, training for teachers, curriculum support, more financial support and more human and physical resources.

#### **4.8.3.1 Training**

The principal and all the teachers indicated that they would require in-service training to teach learners experiencing learning barriers, since it had not been part of their initial teacher training. Some of the parents agreed that the teachers would need specialised training, as the teachers would now have to deal with a variety of learning barriers that they were previously not exposed to within their mainstream classes. One teacher expressed her concern as follows, "(t)he general educators need to be informed and enlightened about the learning disabled child. Many of us feel that we are not trained / qualified to teach these learners." The principal shared her concern and indicated:

As educators have little or no training in dealing with disabled children – we need to work carefully and slowly at this process. Don't alarm the teachers – give them time to adjust. It can work! In Service Training for Educators is needed.

#### **4.8.3.2 Supporting Inclusion in the schools**

Most of the parents indicated that they wanted to be informed if their children are experiencing any learning barriers and that the school should guide and support them in addressing these learning barriers. The principal agreed that frequent meetings should be held, as it would strengthen the support base for those learners. Other forms of communication, e.g. letters, telephone calls or parent conferences should also be utilised to keep the parents informed of their children's learning barriers and also to discuss any intervention strategies.

While one parent indicated, "I think it's (Inclusive Education) all right as long as there is enough support and someone to help the teacher. I think it's a good way of getting rid of negative attitudes towards those who are different", another parent agreed that the teacher needed support. Parent K indicated, "(y)es the teacher MUST have an assistant and should be paid by the government. Our children's education is for the future of the country."

All the teachers unanimously agreed that they needed the support of the parents to assist them with learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. They also felt that fewer learners in their classes or an assistant teacher could help them with learners needing individual attention. More than half of the parents felt that the inclusion of learners could have a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching received by their children and implied that the inclusion of these learners placed an additional burden on the class teacher. Parent B felt, "(i)nclusion of 'handicapped' learners is okay as long as it does not have a detrimental effect on my child".

Ten parents agreed that an assistant teacher and smaller classes would bring some relief for the teacher. One parent indicated:

Unless the parents of the pupil concerned is able to afford a tutor it is unlikely that the teacher will be able to cope with the regular pupils as well as the pupils with learning barriers. Who would prepare worksheets etc. for these pupils as the teacher already has enough preparation to do?

At Swallow Primary School, the learner who was included in the mainstream Grade 2 class had the support of a teacher assistant. The parents of this learner were paying for the services of the teacher assistant. This meant that the Grade 2 class teacher at Swallow Primary had the support of a teacher assistant. The parents argued that if they were unable to pay for the services of a teacher assistant, then the School Governing Body would have to pay the teacher assistant. Most School Governing Bodies of the primary schools in the Western Cape would not be in a position to do so. One of the more experienced teachers stated, "(w)e need facilitators/ teacher aides and smaller classes if we're going to have learners with barriers as well."

The principal and fifteen of the teachers indicated that the education department should review and reduce the existing teacher-learner ratio of 39:1 in primary schools, especially in the schools that have a high percentage of learners with learning barriers. They also felt that a more efficient support system for schools should be developed within the education department. The support services that are required are physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists.

Schools and parents were not always in a position to access these services or pay for the services that were needed by the learners. The teachers felt, "(b)etter

support systems, which extend beyond the staff at the school are needed. Like OT's and speech therapists."

#### **4.8.3.3 Resources and Finance**

Another area in which the Education department could offer support would be in the provisioning of resources, both human and physical. Most teachers agreed that the Education department should provide a wide variety of learning and teaching support material. Teacher M agreed, "IE will work if supported financially by community, institutions and government" and Teacher 9 J supported her and indicated, "(p)roper equipment would be needed for the learners who are deaf or blind."

The principal also agreed and argued that the inclusion of the visually impaired learner was extremely costly and the parents paid and supplied all the resources that were needed by their son, e.g. brailers, braille reading books and the paper for braille. Mrs Bartlett explained:

At our school Jonathan's parents supply the funds for equipment and outside sources to assist in the teaching of Braille and supplying the Braille readers. The parents also pay the salary of the Teacher Assistant.

If the parent did not provide the funding, then the Education department should provide the funding to purchase specialised resources, pay the salary of a teacher assistant and help to adapt the environment if necessary.

One parent felt if the education department supplied the funding for sufficient resources for the learners experiencing barriers, the money would be money well spent in the long-run. He believed:

Children grow up to be adults eventually and in the adult world you either make it or you don't, what better place to train our new generation to show more empathy to others than in inclusive schools! It could be costly initially but it will balance out eventually.

#### **4.8.3.4 The curriculum**

At Swallow Primary School, more than half of the teachers indicated that their knowledge of adapting and modifying the curriculum and assessment for learners experiencing learning barriers was limited. They also indicated that their skills in applying different teaching strategies for these learners were limited and that there was a tremendous need for specialised training. One teacher stated, "IE is very

difficult to implement as teachers would need special training and schools would have to adapt many activities.”

Even though teachers sometimes referred learners to the school’s teacher support team, they still required more support in addressing the barriers. Even though the teachers contacted the parents regularly, they did not always get their full co-operation in addressing the barriers. One of the teachers felt that if the implementation of inclusive education were going to be successful, there should be “teamwork and co-operation from parents, teachers, learners, school and the department.”

### **Summary**

While most of the parents indicated that they wanted to be informed if their children are experiencing any learning barriers, all the teachers felt that the parents should support them in addressing these learning barriers. The principal agreed that frequent communication between the parents and the school is an important factor that could contribute towards the effectiveness of the inclusion.

The principal, all teachers and some parents agreed that there should be fewer learners in the mainstream classes that catered for the learners needing a high level of support or the services of an assistant teacher should be obtained to assist with learners needing individual attention. More than half of the parents were concerned that the inclusion of learners could have a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching received by their children and acknowledged that the inclusion of these learners could also place an additional burden on the teachers.

The education department should provide schools with the required resources, funding as well as an effective support system that offer schools specialised support services.

As more than half of the teachers indicated that their knowledge of and skills in inclusive education were limited, they expressed a great need for in-service training. Some of the parents also agreed that the teachers would need specialised training,

in order to meet the needs of the learners 'with the learning barriers' as well as the learners 'without learning barriers'.

While the concerns and challenges of inclusive education at classroom level as raised by the principal, 'other' teachers and parents of Swallow Primary School are real, these concerns could be addressed in the long term.

As previously indicated by one of the parents: "Children grow up to be adults eventually and in the adult world, you either make it or you don't! What better place to train our new generation to show more empathy to others than in inclusive schools. It could be costly initially, but it will balance out eventually."

#### **4.9 Grade 2 teacher, teacher assistant and learner**

Mrs Noble is the Grade 2-class teacher at Swallow Primary School. She had 30 learners in her class, which included Jonathan, a nine-year-old boy who was born blind.

Mrs Noble is an experienced and qualified Foundation Phase teacher, but had no formal training in specialised education. She had 35 years teaching experience, which included teaching learners who experience barriers to learning. These experiences, however, did not include teaching learners who were visually impaired. She had the assistance of a teacher assistant, Mrs Harris, who was paid by Jonathan's parents.

Upon enquiring about Mrs Noble's experience in teaching visually impaired learners and also whose decision it was to place Jonathan in her class, she responded by telling me that before the Grade 2's start the new year, they are re-divided into 3 classes. The Principal and Head of Department felt that she was the most experienced Grade 2 teacher and would cope with having Jonathan in her class. Mrs Noble then had one day to prepare herself for the phenomenon of inclusion that was manifested in the inclusion of a visually impaired learner.

The teacher assistant, Mrs Harris started working with Jonathan when he was in Grade R at a local Pre-Primary School and she went to school with him everyday.

She had no teacher training or experience working with visually impaired children. She saw the advertisement in the local newspaper and applied for the job. She could not read Braille and was learning it with Jonathan. According to Jonathan's parents, "Mrs Harris had no experience but she was a natural, dealing with every situation intuitively." Mr and Mrs Marsh were highly satisfied with the support Mrs Harris was giving Jonathan.

Jonathan was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Marsh and he had two younger brothers, a newly born and a three-year old. His father worked in the medical field and his mother was a home executive at that time. Through networking, the parents met Mrs Peters, a braille teacher, at a local University. When Jonathan was 5½ years old, Mrs Peters taught him braille. She also taught his parents and the teacher assistant.

#### **4.10 Perceptions of Inclusive Education**

While Mrs Noble's perceptions of inclusive education were also similar to those of her colleagues in the first part of the study, Mr and Mrs Marsh were in agreement with the parents who viewed inclusive education as the child's constitutional right.

Mrs Noble agreed with the concept of Inclusive Education up to a point, but felt that every school still needed a special class for those learners who needed extra attention. She perceived inclusive education as the closure of all special schools and this perception was based on her discussions with other teachers. She also indicated that she had not seen or read White Paper 6.

According to Mr & Mrs Marsh the main reasons for them not sending him to a special school were:

We wanted our family to remain together. We did not want him to go to boarding school in a rural town. We wanted him to attend the local school, as it is his constitutional right.

The second reason is that we wanted him to be part of a sighted society because ultimately in life even though you are blind, you would be part of a sighted society.

The third reason is that we felt it would help the other children and adults to deal with a disabled person in a comfortable manner. It is the new way of learning and being. We were not exposed to disabled people and before Jonathan was born, we felt awkward in dealing with disabled people.

Besides the fact that Jonathan would gain valuable social skills in a mainstream class, he would also learn to function independently within a sighted society. Jonathan's parents also responded by indicating their unanimous support for inclusion and believed that it would benefit the community at large.

We need to educate the society to stop feeling 'sorry' for people who are disabled and they need to accept them as part of the community.  
We are all handicapped in some way or other; some (handicaps) are more visible than others. We just need to have love for all people and that would change our attitude towards people who are different.

### **Summary**

The class teacher and the parents of the included learner had different perspectives on inclusion. While the class teacher, like some of her colleagues perceived inclusive education as the closure of special schools and the inclusion of all learners into mainstream classes, Jonathan's parents viewed inclusion as their child's constitutional right to be educated in a school within his immediate environment. They believed that he needed to be socialised within his community and not be alienated or marginalized. Jonathan's inclusion in a mainstream class would not only benefit the school, teachers, learners, but also the communities. People would have a different attitude towards the 'disabled' and be more comfortable in dealing with people who are 'different'.

## **4.10 Concerns and Challenges of Inclusion**

Despite the fact that the school had included Jonathan in the mainstream Grade 2 class, the class teacher, Jonathan's parents and the teacher assistant still had some concerns and encountered many challenges. These concerns and challenges included the issues of support and resources, both physical and human resources that were needed for the implementation of inclusion.

### **4.11.1 Training**

Just like her colleagues, Mrs Noble also indicated that she required training in addressing learning barriers. She felt disempowered and indicated that she was unable to teach Jonathan. She explained: "I don't have any experience teaching a blind child. I need specialised training to help me cope. I don't feel as if I am teaching him anything. Mrs. Harris (the facilitator) is teaching him more than I am."

#### **4.11.2 Support for Parents and Class Teacher**

Jonathan's parents had the support of a number of people and organisations that assisted them in making the decision to enrol him in a mainstream primary school. Before he started school, it was necessary to orientate him to the layout of the building. This was crucial because mobility and independence education gave him the knowledge, skills, motivation and confidence to organise himself and move around safely in his environment.

As Mrs Harris was responsible for Jonathan's orientation, she indicated:

No special adaptations to the building or any other arrangements were made for Jonathan. He was taken around the building just like the other children to familiarise himself with his new environment. I showed him where the toilets, playground, tuck shop etc. were.

I also spoke to the children to encourage them not to fuss around him but to treat him as they would any other friend. The teacher also stressed that all the time. I told them to give him help only when he asked for it. This year, he had to get use to the stairs. Because Jonathan needs his hands to help him, I had to speak to the principal to ask the cleaners to keep the toilets clean at all times.

In this excerpt, Mrs Harris emphasises the importance of Jonathan's independence and mobility within the mainstream school. During my observation period, I was amazed by Jonathan's ability to move unaided up and down the stairs.

Although Jonathan needed to learn braille, the school was unable to provide that service. While his peers had computer lessons at school, Jonathan went to the local university for braille lessons. According to his parents and teacher assistant, he was progressing very well. Mrs Noble could not read braille and the teacher assistant supported her by transcribing and marking Jonathan's work.

Jonathan's inclusion in a mainstream class was challenging and if Mrs Noble did not have the assistance of 'reading mums' and the teacher assistant, then it would have been even more challenging.

#### **4.11.3 Resources and Funding**

As indicated in the first section the principal stated that the resources and funding required to address Jonathan's needs were not available at the school and the

parents provided it. A huge financial burden was placed upon them and Jonathan's mother explained:

The biggest challenge is the financial implication we have, but if we look at Jonathan, it is worth it. We pay the teacher assistant's salary, bought the brailers, braille paper, paid for the cost of braille his reading books at the school for the blind and he still needs the JAWS software for the computer and a Braille printer that costs R40, 000.

However, Mrs Marsh proposed, "(i)f learners who are blind are included in the mainstream, the resources and funding should be provided by the education department and not the parents of that learner."

#### **4.12 Perspectives of Inclusion**

While Jonathan's inclusion in a mainstream class raises concerns and poses challenges for the school, his class teacher, teacher assistant and parents, believed the benefits of his inclusion far outweigh these challenges. These benefits, as discussed in the following section, were not only for him, but also for the school and the broader community.

##### **4.12.1 Benefits of Inclusion**

Within the mainstream class, Jonathan gained both social and academic skills. His mother felt that being in a mainstream class has motivated him to progress at a much faster pace. She commented, "(h)e is confident and secure. He has good spatial skills and his mobility is excellent. He craves for knowledge and being in a mainstream class stimulates and challenges him. He is very lucky to have good teachers, i.e. in Grade 1 and Grade 2."

Mrs Harris also agreed that by being with children who can see he was "getting a 'real world experience'". The children have learned to accept him as a person. They can deal with Jonathan's differences. During interval he sits with the 'eaters' [the children who only eat their lunch and do not run around]. He cannot run around with the other boys, but talks, tells jokes and has fun with the 'eaters'.

During my observations at the school, I saw him climbing to the top of the 'lookout' tower where he, sat with four girls and two boys. They ate their lunches and would tell each other some jokes. Jonathan thoroughly enjoyed the jokes.

The class teacher also felt because he attended a local school, he was part of the community and was able to forge friendships. Mrs Noble stated:

He has a wider circle of friends living in his neighbourhood. He is also learning how to cope in a 'normal' world with sighted people. He does not have to stay in a hostel and be separated from the family. I also see the advantages for the other learners. They learn to respect children who are different and become more tolerant towards them.

During the reading period, Jonathan's peers in his reading group would take turns in helping him with his reading words and as a result, they have also started learning Braille. Besides this experience of learning Braille, the teacher also took them on a nature trail, which was designed for visually impaired people. The learners were blindfolded and walked along the trail, touching the trees, flowers and other objects. Both the teacher and teacher assistant indicated that Jonathan was so thrilled because his peers were "just like him" and he did not feel marginalized or excluded. If Jonathan had not been included in their mainstream class, his peers would not have had these experiences. They have not only gained respect for children who are different, but have also become more tolerant.

#### **4.12.2 Challenges of Inclusion**

Apart from the many financial implications that I already alluded to, the class teacher and teacher assistant also indicated that Jonathan's inclusion posed many challenges in terms of the classroom organisation and management. Mrs Noble explained:

Jonathan gets less individual attention if the teacher assistant is not there because I cannot help with him with Braille. Before the teacher assistant takes time off, she usually prepares Jonathan's work in advance. The classroom is very small and there is not much space for him to move freely. If the learners or I move the furniture, we have to tell or guide Jonathan around the classroom. My class is extremely active and there is always a lot of noise. Sometimes the noise level and the movement of the other learners is a disturbance for Jonathan, who finds it more difficult to hear and concentrate.

Mrs Harris agreed that should the classroom be re-arranged, Jonathan would need re-orientation. She indicated, "(t)he teacher cannot re-arrange her classroom without telling Jonathan otherwise he would bump into things."

Mrs. Harris ensured that Jonathan's inclusion was not a 'barrier' to the teacher or his peers. According to Mrs. Harris, sometimes Jonathan found the teacher's pace challenging. She explained, "(w)hen he cannot find his books as quickly as the other children can, I have to help him so that the teacher does not have to wait on him. He needs my support but not all the time."

Throughout Mrs Noble's teaching career, she has always been the only adult in her classroom. She indicated that having a second adult in the class made her classroom management difficult and also found the situation challenging. She stated:

The main challenge for me is to get used to having another adult in the class. I have always been alone in the classroom and in control, but with Mrs. Harris there, I sometimes find it a disturbance, especially when the other children go to her for assistance while I am busy. When I teach Handwriting, Phonics or Sentences, I have to say what I am writing on the board for Jonathan's benefit and the other children would listen and not look at the formation of the patterns or words.

In Chapter 2, I indicated that teachers play a vital role as implementers of the policy. They often need strategies and skills for working successfully in inclusive classrooms and often need support in developing a comfort level for collaborating with other role players. In this case study, the teacher has indicated that she is not accustomed to working alongside another adult in her classroom. Westwood (1993) has stated that the ability to collaborate effectively has emerged as an important skill to be developed especially by the experienced teachers, who have been experts in their teaching practices. Even though Mrs Noble was unaccustomed to collaboration, she valued Mrs Harris' support in the classroom, as the next section indicates.

#### **4.12.2.1 Planning**

With regard to the planning of lessons, Mrs Noble indicated that since Jonathan was included in her class, she discussed the lessons with Mrs Harris on a daily basis. Mrs Noble indicated that it was not necessary to have an individual education programme for him. If there were activities that he could not do, Mrs Harris would substitute the activity or find an alternative way of doing it. Mrs Harris prepares his activities on the braille. Mrs Noble explained:

There is no separate planning for Jonathan. He does the same sums, phonics and reading as the rest of the group that he is in. Mrs Harris helps him with measurement, he feels the shapes, uses counters for counting and he has a special calculator to assist him with the calculations. Jonathan uses the braille for word problem sums.

From the evidence presented, it seems that very little, if any, adaptation to the teacher's planning needed to be done. Academically, it appeared that he was functioning at the level of the majority of his peers. In spelling and reading Jonathan was performing exceptionally well and in the weekly spelling tests, he was achieving an average of 70%.

In the following extract, Mrs Harris assisted Jonathan with all his tasks and also helped him to keep up with the pace of the rest of the class. If Jonathan, due to his barrier, could not do a particular activity, Mrs Harris selected alternative activities.

**Mrs N: "Grade 2, come onto the mat. "**

She explains that they were going to have a quiz on their outing to the forest. She divided them into two teams. She asked certain children to answer the questions. If the question is answered correctly, they score a point for their team. The game ended, but Jonathan did not get a chance to answer a question.

Mrs N: "Go back to your seats."

Mrs N: Writes the words: FOREST PROJECT on the chalkboard.

Mrs N: "Now you write it on your black paper. You are making a cover for the project.

**Ms H: Spells the words for Jonathan.**

Jonathan: Does the words on his Braille.

**Ms H: Guides Jonathan's hand to write the words using the pastels.**

**Ms H: Chooses the colours and tells Jonathan which colours they are using.**

Mrs N: "Draw a picture of the objects that are on your tables."

[The objects were brought back from their excursion.]

**Travis (one of Jonathan's peers suggested that Jonathan does rubbings instead of drawing the picture.**

Ms H: "Thank you Travis. That's a good idea."

**Ms H: Guided Jonathan's hand as they do the rubbings of the bark. Questions him about the colours of the leaves and bark.**

Mrs N: "I want the BEES to come onto the mat." [Calls Jonathan's group onto the mat.] Writes the maths problem on the board. She tells the children to work it out and then she will call them to whisper the answer in her ear. [There are 5 trees in the forest. Each tree has 12 branches. How many branches altogether? ]

Ms H: Reads the problem for Jonathan using his fingers for the 5 trees.

Jonathan: Uses his special calculator to find the answer.  $12+12+12+12+12=60$

Jonathan counted in 12's and gave the correct answer.

Mrs N: Writes the second problem on the board. [There were 36 trees and 17 were chopped off. How many are left?]

Ms H: Reads the problem

Jonathan used his calculator again and had the correct answer.  $36-17=19$

**Ms H: Cuts out the word FOREST PROJECT that Jonathan did in braille and pastes it above the hand written words on the cover.**

Mrs N: "Class, tidy your tables. Monitors collect the books. Get ready to go home."

Jonathan: Puts his folder and braille in his case.

#### 4.12.2.2 Methodology

Since the class teacher's planning was not affected by the phenomenon of inclusion, I was interested in ascertaining to what extent her methodology had changed.

Mrs Noble explained:

I had to change my approach this year. I have to speak more. I must explain and describe things. I sometimes forget, and then Mrs Harris would whisper it in Jonathan's ears. When doing Maths, I have to say the sum as I write it on the board. The same thing is done when I do Phonics. When we put things on the Nature table, the children or I will give him the objects to feel.

Mrs Noble confirmed that her approach had to change to accommodate Jonathan. She also indicated that she had to verbalise whatever she was doing on the board. Although Mrs Noble's teaching style had changed, she is still of the opinion that Jonathan's inclusion has helped her "to be more aware of children's learning needs, especially a blind child."

In the excerpt below, gives another example of Mrs Noble's classroom practice. Mrs Harris assists Jonathan with his spelling and also teaches him that 'ph' in the word photo sounds like an 'f'.

Mrs N: Writes the words on the board to be learnt for the Spelling test on Friday.

Ms H: Spells the words for Jonathan. Full; kept; piece; going and cooldrink.

Mrs N: Says the words.

Mrs N: Scolds two boys who are misbehaving.

Mrs N: Asks the class to get ready for a spelling test of the words they had to learn.

Mrs N: Asks Jonathan if he is ready.

Jonathan: I'm ready Mrs N

Mrs N: Says each word and tells the children to write it down. Yellow, brown, count, collect, and walk.

Mrs N: Writes and spells each word as she now writes it on the board for the learners to check their spelling.

Jonathan: Checks his work. He got all his words correct.

Ms H: Tells Jonathan to get a clean piece of paper to write his message for the message book.

Mrs N: Writes the date and the message. Library and sandwich. Raffle money. Photo.

[Mrs N forgot to say the words as she was writing it on the board.]

Ms H: Tells Jonathan how to write the date and what the message is: "Library and sandwich. Raffle money. Photo."

Ms H: Tells Jonathan that the ph in photo sounds like f.

Ms H: Tells Jonathan to pack his message book in his bag.

Jonathan: "What about my brailier? Am I going home now?"

It is evident from the classroom observations that both Mrs Harris and Mrs Noble wanted Jonathan to develop independence. In the class they gave him opportunities to develop this independence. Mrs Harris indicated that she discouraged the learners from being "too helpful" and "over-protective." According to Hainninen (1975, p. 345),

" Visually impaired children should be required to care for their own material as part of the effort to foster a sense of independence. A sighted learner can sometimes act as guide as long as the visually impaired learner does not become too dependent on his or her peer. The visually impaired learner should be treated like their sighted peers; the same general expectations should be maintained for all learners. Interpersonal interaction between visually impaired and peers should be encouraged. Visually impaired should be encouraged to participate in as many activities as possible. Alternative activities should be arranged if it is not possible for them to join in with the rest of the class. Visually impaired should be given the same kinds of special class duties, for example, watering the plants, given to other children."

#### **4.13 Summary**

Jonathan's inclusion into the mainstream class presented a number of challenges and triggered a number of concerns. The biggest challenge for his parents was the financial burden that they had to deal with, but both parents agreed it was for their son's benefit and in his best interest.

On the other hand, the class teacher expressed her need for training, as she believed she was not equipped to address Jonathan's needs. Even though his inclusion required more effective classroom management, practice and organisation,

she believed that this would not have been possible without the invaluable support of the teacher assistant and the 'reading mums'.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the implementation of policy makes demands on teachers and very often these are in conflict with their personal identities and the realities at the chalk-face. Mrs Noble, an experienced Grade 2 teacher, found that her perceptions and experiences of inclusion were far more challenging than she had conceptualised.

However, in the final analysis, the class teacher, teacher assistant and Jonathan's parents unanimously agreed that his inclusion in a mainstream class was not only beneficial for him, but also for his peers.

#### **4.14 Comparison of the Findings of the Two Schools**

Although Eagle Primary and Swallow Primary Schools differed in terms of their school contexts, there are, however, some similarities and differences in the findings relating to their perspectives and experiences of inclusion. In the section below, I summarised the main similarities and differences between the two schools.

##### **4.14.1 Similarities**

At both schools, more than half of the teachers viewed inclusive education as either the mainstreaming of learners or the closure of special schools, while the rest could not express an opinion because they were not exposed to the concept.

On the other hand, the principals of both schools and the majority of the parents viewed inclusion as the children's constitutional right. The parents identified the social aspects of inclusion, normalization within societies and life skills as the key benefits for their children. They were not only concerned with the short-term effects, but also the long-term effects of inclusion on their children.

The findings of both schools yielded the same concerns and challenges. One concern focused on the types of support that the teacher would need, while the other

concentrated on the support that the parents would need in dealing with the phenomenon of inclusion.

Both principals felt that their greatest challenge for the implementation of inclusion was the lack of resources and insufficient funding.

The Grade 2 class teachers indicated that their concerns focused on their inadequacies in dealing with learners needing specialised teaching. They were of the opinion, that they lacked the necessary knowledge and skills and also-indicated their need for training. They expressed a need for smaller classes, curriculum support and sufficient resources supplied by the Education department.

Lastly, they also had to change their classroom practice and organisation in order to accommodate the learners experiencing barriers.

Although the 'other' teachers at each school were not directly affected by the inclusion of the learners, they expressed the same concerns and challenges about the implementation of inclusion as their colleagues who were teaching the learners with learning barriers. They agreed that the Education department should prepare them adequately for the implementation of inclusive education.

The 'other' parents were concerned that inclusion would impact on the quality of teaching and learning of their children, because teachers are already overburdened with bigger classes and would not have sufficient time to cope with learners experiencing barriers as well. They also felt that some teachers lack the skills that are required to teach learners with barriers and suggested that they needed some training. Most parents believed that the teachers and learners would benefit from the support of a teacher assistant.

As a result of inclusion, both the parents whose children were included as well as the 'other' parents were of the opinion that their children would learn how to deal with the needs of others who are different, acquire sound moral and ethical values, develop friendships and be more tolerant and patient.

#### **4.14.2 Differences**

At Swallow Primary, the Grade 2 class teacher had a class of thirty-two learners and had the support of a teacher assistant and 'reading mums', while the Grade 2 class teacher at Eagle Primary School had forty learners with no additional classroom support.

For the Grade 2 class teacher at Eagle Primary School, the planning of lessons was challenging as she had to develop individualised education plans for the learners who were included her class, while for the class teacher at the other school no separate planning or individualised education plan was necessary for the learner included in the mainstream.

The parents of the 'included' learner at Swallow Primary School provided all the resources and funding that their son required, while at Eagle Primary School the teacher used the resources she had in her classroom, which included word and number games, puzzles, books and coloured counting blocks.

The evidence also indicates there were differences in the amount of support, which the parents of the included learners expected from the school. The one set of parents at Eagle Primary School was satisfied with the amount of support they were receiving, while the other parent indicated her child was not getting sufficient, specialised support that she required to function effectively within the mainstream class.

On the other hand, the parents of the included learner at Swallow Primary School sought the help of organisations and other professionals to assist their son to function independently.

Despite the fact that Swallow Primary School is a well-resourced school, the Grade 2 class consists of thirty-two learners, the parents of the included learner are very supportive and provided all the resources that were required, the class teacher still found the inclusion of the learner with learning barriers in her mainstream class challenging.

The evidence suggests that while the intentions of White Paper 6, as indicated in Chapter 2, are laudable, the understanding and implementation of the policy still pose a number of challenges and concerns for both the class teacher and the parents whose children are included in the mainstream class.

In the final analysis, the findings suggest that a number of conditions have to be met to facilitate a more inclusive education system and the concerns of the teachers must be addressed. Lomofsky and Lazarus, (2001, p. 314) argue "it is evident that in South Africa inclusive education is considered to be the way forward, but the implementation of these policies is the real challenge."

In the following chapter, the concluding one of this study, I summarise and analyse the findings and relate it to my research aim and question.

## **CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

As previously stated, this study sought to investigate the perceptions and experiences of inclusion of the teachers and parents in two differently resourced primary schools in the Western Cape. In this chapter the findings of my investigations are summarised and analysed.

This chapter is divided into three main sections: firstly, the findings of the perceptions and experiences of inclusion of the principals, teachers and parents of Eagle Primary and Swallow Primary Schools are analysed; secondly, the implications for further research are considered; finally, recommendations for future research are discussed.

### **5.2 Perceptions of Policy Implementation**

In analysing the findings of the phenomenon of inclusion as perceived by the principals, teachers and parents of Eagle Primary and Swallow Primary Schools, I refer to Chapter 2 where the issues of policy implementation are outlined.

Assumptions were made that all teachers were exposed to White Paper 6, their interpretations of the policy were in line with what the policymakers had intended and they were sufficiently prepared to implement the policy. The findings confirmed that some of the teachers had no exposure to the policy; some misinterpreted the policy and the majority of them indicated that they lacked the knowledge and skills needed to address the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

While more than half viewed inclusion as the mainstreaming of all learners, some of them believed that inclusion meant the closure of all special schools. This is one of the myths that surround the implementation of Inclusive Education.

This myth is definitely unfounded as in White Paper 6 (2001, p. 15 & 2001, pp. 20-21), it clearly states "learners who require high-intensive educational support will continue to receive such support in special schools" and one of the key strategies envisaged for special schools is the "qualitative improvement of special schools."

Clearly then, in order to dispel myths and allay fears, the advocacy of the policy within schools, communities and districts should be addressed, as the success of inclusive education would largely depend on positive attitudinal changes, tolerance and the acceptance of diversity.

Other areas that should be considered are the implications of the teachers' understanding and experiences of the policy within their classrooms. The importance of this consideration cannot be overemphasised, since teachers are ultimately the ones who translate policy into practice.

As research indicates, the teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards inclusion influence their teaching practice and have an impact on the learner's educational experiences (Beach, 1994; Berry, 2006; Brantlinger, 1996).

When general class teachers are forced to accept and implement inclusion, this often results in resistance from them as they believe that they are incapacitated and inadequately trained. These inadequacies could result in negative attitudes towards policy implementation. To ensure that inclusive practices at school level are not fraught with frustrations, the implementation of White Paper 6 should rather be seen as a partnership among national, provincial and local education structures. Fullan (1999) argues that both the 'bottoms-up and top-down- strategies' are necessary for the successful implementation of policy.

In the section below, I briefly discuss the dichotomy of physical inclusion and exclusion, and curricular inclusion and exclusion as it was observed in this study.

## **5.3 Inclusion and Exclusion**

### **5.3.1 Physical**

During the classroom observations, I observed that the teachers included the learners experiencing the barriers as far as possible. At the Swallow Primary School, the teacher assistant played a vital role in supporting the learner to be 'part of the mainstream class activities. On the other hand, at Eagle Primary School, the

evidence indicated, that the class teacher, with a larger class, experienced difficulty in including the learners experiencing the barriers in all classroom activities and clearly needed the support of another adult. This meant that the physical inclusion of those learners in a mainstream class, could therefore, not be seen as relating to the goals of inclusive education. The learners were physically included in some activities but at the same time were physically excluded from others.

From the evidence of classroom observations, at Swallow Primary School, because of the nature of the learner's barrier, he was physically excluded from certain activities that placed him at risk. For example in the Life Orientation (Movement) and Arts and Culture (Eurythmics) Learning Areas, the learner did not participate fully as he felt unsure of his environment. In Eurythmics, the learners are required to run, walk or move around freely in time to the music. If Jonathan did not know in which direction the other learners were moving, this could have resulted in an accident. The physical exclusion of the learner was on the grounds of his 'disability' and again this does not relate to aims of inclusion.

I am of the opinion, therefore, that the physical inclusion of learners for the sake of including or the exclusion of learners from some activities due to their 'disability' does not warrant or constitute the implementation of inclusive education at a particular institution. Inclusion should be viewed as the full participation of all learners in all learning activities and not the inclusion in some activities and on the other hand, being excluded from others.

### **5.3.2 Curricular**

As indicated in Chapter 1, all Foundation Phase classes are required to implement the National Curriculum Statement, (Grades R- 9). At both schools, the class teachers are faced with the challenge of implementing the national curriculum as well as implementing inclusive education. According to Naicker, (1999, p. 115) the National Curriculum Statement, which is driven by the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) "is flexible and creates genuine possibilities for all learners to achieve success relative to their own pace and style of learning through the expanded opportunities principle." It is therefore assumed that, the class teachers

are sufficiently trained in the National Curriculum Statement as well as the OBE principles and methodology. This training would be essential for teachers who need to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. In this study, the evidence at both schools indicates that the teachers felt unprepared and inadequate to address the needs of the included learners and both teachers still found that differentiated planning was challenging.

At the one school, the evidence indicate that the learners were excluded from all learning activities that were based on the assessment standards for that particular grade, as their level of functioning was much lower than the majority of the learners. These 'included' learners, therefore, experienced exclusion as they had their own individualised education plans that catered for their needs only. Not only did the teacher find planning for learners who were operating at different levels challenging, but also the time required for quality teaching and learning.

Although the class teacher at the other school did not plan separately for her 'included' learner, there were some learning areas that he was excluded from. For example, in Art, the learner was given alternative activities, which were more suitable for him. The teacher assistant was the one who initiated the alternative activities and also assisted him with these activities. Thomas (1998) argued that careful consideration to the ways in which the additional class support for the included learner is utilized, as it could result in further isolation and exclusion. At Swallow Primary, the evidence indicated that the teacher assistant, rather than the class teacher, prepared Jonathan's tasks and as a result, she took the responsibility for the learner away from the class teacher.

In the Foundation Phase, the learners are required to be engaged in all eight learning areas and if learners were excluded from any learning area, s/he would experience curricular exclusion. As cited in White Paper 6 (2001, p. 17), "the barriers to learning arise from different aspects of the curriculum." These include the style and tempo of teaching, what is taught, the way in which the class is managed and organised, as well as the resources, which are used in the teaching and learning

process. Therefore, curricular exclusion could be as a result of any of the abovementioned issues.

The accessibility of the curriculum for all learners is an area, which needs investigation, as the findings would assist the teachers in the implementation of inclusive education.

#### **5.4 Implications for Further Research**

The parents and teachers at both schools stated that effective support structures at the school, in the district and within the communities needed to be in place to assist them in dealing with the barriers to learning. The establishment of School and District Support teams and also community-based support groups will give the parents and teachers the much-needed professional and specialists' advice and assistance. The establishment of networks with other NGEOs and tertiary institutions will further give the parents and teachers the support that is required.

Although both schools had established teacher support teams, the teachers still expressed that they needed more professional and specialists' support. It is evident then, that it is not just the establishment of these support structures, but the effectiveness and the maintenance of these structures, which is crucial. One of the challenges for the teachers in this study was the lack of support and training in dealing with learners experiencing learning barriers.

At Eagle Primary School, the class teacher did not have an assistant and found it extremely challenging to manage a class of 38 learners and 2 learners with Down's Syndrome, while at Swallow Primary School, the class teacher had fewer learners and a teacher assistant, who assisted the learner who was visually impaired. The education department should consider a smaller teacher- pupil ratio for schools that admit learners needing a moderate to intensive level of support.

If learners experiencing barriers to learning are to be included in the mainstream schools, the education department needs to provide schools with additional funding.

Not all parents are in a position to carry the financial burden and because of that, the children should not be marginalized.

The main benefits of inclusion recognised by all parents in this study, were the potential social and affective outcomes for their children and the positive effects of inclusion on their peers, who are likely to become more accepting and sensitive to diversity. The comments made by their peers and the caring way in which they interacted during the classroom observations justified the sentiments expressed by their parents.

On-going research should consider the types of support needed by both teachers and parents in the implementation of inclusive education. As emphasised by Rose (2002:47), "(r)esearchers have a responsibility both to identify successful practice and to demonstrate the means by which schools have confronted and overcome the obstacles that clearly remain in the way of inclusion."

Finally, the data in this study highlighted the spectrum of issues concerning the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning. These issues should be examined, as it would contribute towards the successful implementation of inclusive education.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

As outlined in Chapter One, specific research aim and questions to determine the course of this study were formulated. On the basis of the findings of this study, certain recommendations are now formulated. The following recommendations were identified as the key recommendations, which would promote the successful inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning into mainstream schools.

- PRESET and INSET Teacher training including the early identification and addressing of all barriers to learning as experienced by learners in the mainstream schools. At PRESET levels, all prospective teachers, irrespective of their learning area or subject, need to address the phenomenon of inclusion as part of their curriculum. At INSET level, accredited courses and monetary

incentives should be available for all teachers to encourage ongoing professional development.

- School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies should be encouraged to develop inclusive policies and practices, which include the vision and mission statements and code of conduct of the school.
- The establishment of fully functional school support structures at all schools as suggested in White Paper 6 (2001, p. 18) and Draft Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education (2002, p. 66).
- The establishment of fully operational district-based support teams at each District Office (EMDC) to give professional and specialists' support to all schools within the district.
- Effective, ongoing Advocacy campaigns to inform all stake holders and role players of the White Paper 6's implementation plan and the benefits of Inclusive Education.
- The establishment of community support groups offering sustainable programmes for parents who have learners experiencing barriers to learning. The programmes offered by these support groups should focus on informing parents of their role, responsibility and involvement in the education of their children.
- The education department should consider a lower teacher-pupil ratio for schools and / or classes catering for learners who experience specific barriers, as in this study, Down's syndrome or visual impairment.
- Education Management District Offices (EMDCs) or Provincial Offices should publish articles of successful inclusion in educational journals and on web sites.
- A video of best practices of inclusion should be filmed and distributed to all schools.

- The establishment of a database of service providers, who offer support in dealing with barriers to learning, for both teachers and parents.
- Ongoing researches, both qualitative and quantitative, should be conducted investigating the perceptions and experiences of parents and teachers with regard to the phenomenon of inclusion, as well as the accessibility and flexibility of the curriculum. The research should be extended to other urban and rural districts within the education departments.

## **5.6 Limitations of this Study**

As indicated in Chapter three, this study had a number of limitations. These were identified as follows:

- The sample used in this study is by no means representative of teachers and learners in all primary schools.
- The study was limited to two urban primary schools in the Southern Suburbs in the Western Cape. The one school was a well-resourced school, while the other was an under-resourced school.
- The context of the primary schools used in this study, is not a reflection of the contexts of all primary schools in South Africa.
- Due to constraints beyond my control, I was unable to spend too much time in the classroom.
- Due to the ages of the learners, I was unable to get the in-depth experiences and feelings of learners.
- Only a small sample of completed questionnaires from the staff members and parents of both schools could be analysed.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Although the phenomenon of inclusion has a long road ahead, we are on the right track if all role players view inclusion as human rights and social justice issues. Inclusion should therefore, not merely focus on physical inclusion, but also concentrate on academic, social and emotional inclusion.

It is hoped that this study would be of value to all educational authorities and stakeholders. It is my wish that the recommendations from this study would be implemented and thereby ensures the successful and effective implementation of Education White Paper 6, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in our schools.

I share the sentiments of Slee (2001, p. 142) who indicates, "(w)e need to continue to be reflective about the theory and the practice, which are indivisible, of inclusive schooling. The reflection, however, must continue to extend our thinking about inclusion and exclusion beyond the theoretical strait-jacket of SEN (special educational needs)."

This perspective on inclusion should be one that society should embrace, as inclusion is not just something, which should occur within education, but in every sphere of life. As indicated by Jonathan's parents, "successful inclusion also occurs when people have undergone some attitudinal changes."

In the final analysis, inclusion is about much more than the type of school those children attend: it is about the quality of experiences; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in life.

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## **7. APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Appendix A: Letter Of Authorisation**
- 7.2 Appendix B: Letter to Parents**
- 7.3 Appendix C: Letter to School Governing Body**
- 7.4 Appendix D: Questionnaire for Principals**
- 7.5 Appendix E: Questionnaire for Teachers**
- 7.6 Appendix F: Letter to Parents re. Questionnaire**
- 7.7 Appendix G: Questionnaire for Parents**
- 7.8 Appendix H: Interview Questions for the Teacher**
- 7.9 Appendix I: Interview Questions for the Parents**
- 7.10 Appendix J: Interview Questions for the Teacher Assistant**
- 7.11 Appendix K: Observation recording sheet**

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Western Cape Education Department

ISEBE leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Ms S Fortuin  
7 Daisy Hill Road  
RETREAT  
7945

Dear Madam

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY INVESTIGATING THE INCLUSION OF LEARNERS WITH LEARNING BARIERS INTO THE MAINSTREAM CLASS IN TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

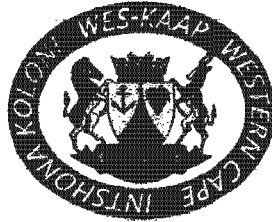
1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and learning sites should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Observation of lessons and interviews are allowed as long as these do not impinge on educators' programmes.
5. The investigation is to be conducted from 25 June 2002 TO 25 September, 2002.
6. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the schools, please contact F Wessels at the contact numbers above.
7. The investigation is not conducted during the fourth school term.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal of each school where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] schools.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag 9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.  
Kind regards.

*F. Wessels*  
**ACTING HEAD: EDUCATION**  
DATE: 24/06/2002

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **SUBJECT: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE**

Dear

I have requested permission to conduct an Inclusive Education Research at the xxxxx Primary School and as this research, involves your son, xxxxxx I also need your permission as his parents.

The research conducted at the school would serve a dual purpose:  
Firstly, as part of my role as Senior Curriculum Planner for learners with special education needs in the mainstream, I am expected to research practices and strategies for the implementation of White Paper 6 Inclusive Education Policy in schools in Western Cape. These findings, together with other research reports, would be used to inform the broader educational community of possible strategies and practices that could be used in the schools' Inclusive Education implementation programmes.

Secondly, the research would also greatly assist me in the completion of my dissertation, as I am currently completing my Masters of Education Degree at University of Cape Town.

In order to assist me with the data collection, I would like to:

- observe the learners in the classroom
- conduct informal interviews with the parents and the Grade 2 educator
- request the completion of a questionnaire by the rest of the staff

The data collection is scheduled to take place during the periods of xxxxxx and xxxxxxxxxx.

Please be assured that all information obtained would be dealt with confidentially, the identity of all the participants will not be disclosed and in the final report, pseudonyms would be used to protect all participants.

Hoping my request meets with your approval.  
Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Fortuin

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **THE PRINCIPAL, STAFF AND GOVERNING BODY**

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

### **SUBJECT: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE**

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to our telephonic conversation, I would now like to make a formal request for permission to conduct an Inclusive Education Research at your school.

The research conducted at your school would serve a dual purpose:

Firstly, as part of my role as Senior Curriculum Planner for learners with special education needs in the mainstream, I am expected to research practices and strategies for the implementation of White Paper 6 Inclusive Education Policy in schools in Western Cape.

These findings, together with other research reports, would be used to inform the broader educational community of possible strategies and practices that could be used in the schools' Inclusive Education implementation programmes.

Secondly, the research would also greatly assist me in the completion of my dissertation, as I am currently completing my Masters of Education Degree at University of Cape Town.

In order to assist me with the data collection, I would like to:

- observe the learner in the classroom
- conduct informal interviews with the parents and the Grade 2 educator
- request the completion of a questionnaire by the rest of the staff

The data collection is scheduled to take place during the periods of xxxxxxxx and xxxxxxxx.

Please be assured that all information obtained would be dealt with confidentially, the identity of all the participants will not be disclosed and in the final report, pseudonyms would be used to protect all participants.

Attached please find a copy of the letter of approval from the Research Directorate.

Hoping my request meets with your approval.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Fortuin

**APPENDIX D  
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS**

**SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS**

SCHOOL	
NAME	[Optional ]
GENDER	
AGE	
QUALIFICATIONS	
INSTITUTION/S OF TRAINING	
TRAINING IN SPECIFIC SUBJECT/ LEARNING AREA	
YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	
GRADES	
EXPERIENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	YEARS
TRAINING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	YES/ NO

**SECTION B: DETAILS OF THE LEARNING INSTITUTION**

NUMBER OF LEARNERS	
NUMBER OF TEACHERS	
LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING [LOLT]	
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF LEARNERS WITH LEARNING BARRIERS	
TYPES OF LEARNING BARRIERS	
NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS	
TEACHER SUPPORT TEAM	YES/ NO
HOW OFTEN DO THEY MEET?	
NUMBER OF EST/TST PERSONNEL	
DOES THE SCHOOL CLINIC SUPPORT THE SCHOOL?	
HOW OFTEN DO THEY SUPPORT THE SCHOOL?	

**SECTION C: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

**1. The following statement best describes my definition of inclusion:**

Literally placing every learner in mainstream classes	
Placing every learner possible in mainstream classes, while maintaining a continuum of learning support placement options	
Mainstreaming learners with mild disabilities, while maintaining special education placements for learners with moderate, severe and profound disabilities	
Acknowledging that all learners can learn, recognising and respecting differences and overcoming barriers to learning	

**2. Developing an inclusive school requires:**

A restructuring of special education services	
A restructuring of mainstream education	
Both of the above	
Little or no change from existing educational programming	

**3. Developing an inclusive school will:**

Save money	
Require no additional funding	
Require increased funding	

**4. Which of the following groups do you perceive as more supportive of the move toward inclusive schools?**

Mainstream teachers	
Learning support teachers	
Parents of learners with learning barriers/ disabilities	

**5. Which of the following do you advocate for your school?**

An inclusive school that provides a continuum of special services in both mainstream and learning support classes	
An inclusive school that places every child in the mainstream classroom full time	
Mainstreaming learners with mild disabilities, while maintaining special education placements for learners with moderate, severe and profound disabilities	

**6. What do you perceive as the impetus for inclusion?**

It is an International movement	
It is a National movement	
It is a Provincial initiative	
It is a human right	

**7. Who or what influenced your decision in admitting the learners with moderate disabilities?**


**8. What is your understanding of Inclusive Education as set out in White Paper 6 on Special Education?**


**9. Describe the amount and type of support given to the parents of the learners with learning barriers / disabilities?**


**10. Describe the amount and type of support given to the teachers of the learners with learning barriers / disabilities?**


**11. How has the inclusion of learners with learning barriers altered / influenced the Vision, Mission and Ethos of the school?**


**12. To what extent did the School Governing Body influence your decision in admitting the learners?**


**SECTION D: SKILLS**

1. According to the White Paper 6, Inclusive Education should be phased in over a twenty-year period. What is your opinion of the phasing in process?


2. What are your perceptions of the resources needed for the implementation of Inclusive Education?


3. . What do you think would be your greatest need for the implementation of Inclusive Education?


4. In your opinion, would the policy of Inclusive Education be a viable option for the future of South African Education System? Give your reasons please.


**APPENDIX E  
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

**SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS**

SCHOOL	
NAME	[Optional ]
GENDER	
AGE	
QUALIFICATIONS	
INSTITUTION/S OF TRAINING	
TRAINING IN SPECIFIC SUBJECT/ LEARNING AREA	
YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	
GRADES	
EXPERIENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	YEARS
TRAINING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	YES/ NO

**SECTION B: PRESENT CLASS DETAILS**

GRADE	
CLASS SIZE	
LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING [LOLT]	
SPECIFIC SUBJECT/ LEARNING AREA	
NUMBER OF LEARNERS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING LEARNING BARRIERS	
TYPES OF LEARNING BARRIERS	
METHODS OF INSTRUCTION USED	
AVAILABILITY AND USE OF RESOURCES	
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES USED IN CLASS	
METHODS OF RECORDING ASSESSMENT USED MOST OFTEN	

## SECTION C: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

### KEY:

1. EXTREMELY LIMITED
2. LIMITED
3. COMPETENT
4. HIGHLY COMPETENT

1. POOR
2. AVERAGE
3. GOOD
4. EXCELLENT

My knowledge of and skills in:

	Knowledge				Skills			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Concept of Inclusive Education as contained in White Paper 6 on Special Education								
2. Learning Barriers								
3. Learning strategies in dealing with learners with learning barriers								
4. Characteristics/ needs of learners with learning barriers								
5. Characteristics/ needs of visually impaired learners								
6. Characteristics/ needs of Downs Syndrome learners								
7. Adapting and modifying assessment for learners with learning barriers								
8. Adapting and modifying the curriculum for learners with learning barriers								
9. Supportive strategies in including learners with learning barriers								
10. Working with families of learners with learning barriers								

11. What is your understanding of Inclusive Education as set out in White Paper 6 on Special Education?


12. What are your perceptions of the resources needed for the implementation of Inclusive Education?


13. What are your perceptions of the support needed for the implementation of Inclusive Education?


14. What do you think would be your greatest need for the implementation of Inclusive Education?


15. In your opinion, would the policy of Inclusive Education be a viable option for the future of South African Education System? Give your reasons please.


**SECTION D: CLASSROOM PRACTICE**

**KEY:**

1. NEVER
2. RARELY
3. SOMETIMES
4. FREQUENTLY

	1	2	3	4
1. How often do you plan lessons for learners with learning barriers?				
2. How often are learners with learning barriers able to participate in regular class activities?				
3. How often do you take time to work individually with learners who are experiencing barriers to learning?				
4. How often do you use co-operative learning strategies?				
5. How often do you use peer tutoring?				
6. How often do you allow extra time for the completion of assignments/ projects?				
7. How often do you adjust the level of assignments/ projects to accommodate the learners with learning barriers?				
8. How often do you provide alternative assignments/ projects for learners with learning barriers?				
9. How often do you administer tests orally?				
10. How often do you provide alternative forms of assessment?				
11. How often do you use computer-assisted programmes for learners with learning barriers?				
12. How often do you accommodate the learners' preferred learning styles in your teaching style?				
13. How often do you provide additional resources?				
14. How often do you refer learners with learning barriers to the Teacher Support Team [TST]/ [EST]?				
15. How often do you contact the parents of the learners who are experiencing learning barriers?				

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Western Cape Education Department

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## **APPENDIX F**

### **SUBJECT: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE**

Dear Parents/Guardians

I have obtained the permission from SGB to conduct an Inclusive Education Research at xxxxxxx Primary School.

The research conducted at the school would serve a dual purpose: Firstly, as part of my role as Senior Curriculum Planner for learners with special education needs in the mainstream, I am expected to research practices and strategies for the implementation of White Paper 6 Inclusive Education Policy in schools in Western Cape. These findings, together with other research reports, would be used to inform the broader educational community of possible strategies and practices that could be used in the schools' Inclusive Education Implementation Programmes.

Secondly, the research would also greatly assist me in the completion of my dissertation, as I am currently completing my Masters of Education Degree at University of Cape Town.

Your child xxxxxxxxxx is in a class where the learners with particular barriers to learning have been included. My research focuses on the inclusion of these learners within mainstream classes. I would appreciate it tremendously if you could assist me in my research by completing the attached questionnaire.

Please be assured that all information obtained would be dealt with confidentially, the identity of all the participants will not be disclosed and in the final report, pseudonyms would be used to protect all participants.

Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible before the 19 September xxxxxx.

Hoping my request meets with your approval.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Fortuin  
084711225 ( C )

## APPENDIX G QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Use the key to guide you in answering the following questions.

**KEY:**

- 1. Strongly disagree**
- 2. Disagree**
- 3. Agree**
- 4. Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4
1. It is the child's constitutional right to be educated.				
2. It is the parent's right to choose the most suitable and convenient school for their child/ children.				
3. The inclusion of children with learning barriers in a mainstream class interferes with the education of the other children.				
4. The inclusion of children with learning barriers in a mainstream class places an additional burden on the class teacher.				
5. Learners with learning barriers should be educated in a special school.				
6. The inclusion of children with learning barriers in a mainstream class places an additional financial burden on the school.				
7. The school does not have sufficient equipment to accommodate learners with learning barriers.				
8. The school does not have sufficient personnel to accommodate learners with learning barriers.				
9. Children learn to respect the rights of all, irrespective of their differences.				
10. Children ridicule, tease or criticise learners with learning barriers.				
11. Children acquire sound moral and ethical values as a result of their interaction with children who are different.				
12. Children learn to deal with the needs of others who are different.				
13. Children should be taught how to deal with children who have learning barriers.				
14. Children develop friendships irrespective of the differences.				
15. Children should not be exposed to other children who have learning barriers.				
16. Children become more tolerant and patient in dealing with learners who are experiencing learning barriers.				
17. The school should support and guide parents who have children with learning barriers.				

18. Parents should be informed if their children are experiencing barriers to learning.				
19. Parents should co-operate with the school in addressing the child's learning barriers.				
20. According to the Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education, all children have the potential to learn given the necessary support at home and at school.				

What are your feelings, anxieties or questions about Inclusive Education?

Do you think the teacher who has learners with learning barriers should have an assistant?  
Who do you think should pay the assistant?

**NB. A LEARNING BARRIER could either be Physical, Sensory, Intellectual or Environmental.**

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sfortuin

9/14/2006

## **APPENDIX H TEACHER INTERVIEW**

1. Interviewer: Who decided that \_\_\_\_\_ should be in your class this year?
2. Interviewer: What experience do you have in teaching a visually impaired learner?
3. Interviewer: How have you changed your classroom practice in order to accommodate \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Interviewer: What are your perceptions and views of Inclusive Education?
5. Interviewer: In your opinion, what are the advantages for \_\_\_\_\_ within the mainstream class?
6. Interviewer: In your opinion, what are the disadvantages for \_\_\_\_\_ within the mainstream class?
7. Interviewer: How often do you and the teacher assistant spend time discussing and planning the lessons?
8. Interviewer: How often does the 'reading mom' assist you with the reading groups?
9. Interviewer: How do you think an educator at another school would cope with a visually impaired learner in the mainstream class without the assistance of a facilitator?
10. Interviewer: What do you think are your disadvantages as the educator, having a visually impaired learner with a facilitator in your mainstream class?
11. Interviewer: What do you think are your advantages as the educator, having a visually impaired learner with a teacher assistant in your mainstream class?
12. Interviewer: How does J's Individual Educational Programme [IEP] differ from the rest of the class?

**APPENDIX H  
TEACHER INTERVIEW**

- 1. Interviewer: Who decided that \_\_\_\_\_ should be in your class this year?**
- 2. Interviewer: What experience do you have in teaching learners with Downs Syndrome?**
- 3. Interviewer: What are your perceptions and views of Inclusive Education?**
- 4. Interviewer: How have you changed your classroom practice in order to accommodate \_\_\_\_\_?**
- 5. Interviewer: How does \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Educational Programme [IEP] differ from the rest of the class?**
- 6. Interviewer: In your opinion, what are the advantages for \_\_\_\_\_ within the mainstream class?**
- 7. Interviewer: In your opinion, what are the disadvantages for \_\_\_\_\_ within the mainstream class?**
- 8. Interviewer: What do you think are your disadvantages as the educator, having learners with Downs Syndrome in your mainstream class?**
- 9. Interviewer: What do you think are your advantages as the educator, having learners with Downs Syndrome in your mainstream class?**
- 10. Interviewer: How do you think an educator at another school would cope with learners who with Downs Syndrome in the mainstream class?**

**APPENDIX I  
PARENTS INTERVIEW**

- 1. Who / what influenced your decision to have \_\_\_\_ enrolled in a mainstream class at the local school?**
  
- 2. As \_\_\_\_ parents what type of support did you get in making this decision?**
  
- 3. What do you experience as the advantages for \_\_\_\_ being taught in a mainstream class?**
  
- 4. What are the disadvantages for \_\_\_\_ in the mainstream class?**
  
- 5. Do you think inclusive education is a viable option for south african education system?**
  
- 6. Do you think a teacher at another school would be able to cope with a visually impaired learner without a facilitator?**

## PARENTS INTERVIEW 2

1. From the time \_\_\_\_\_ was born what kind of support did you get from relatives?
2. From the time \_\_\_\_\_ was born what kind of support did you get from other people or organisations?
3. As \_\_\_\_\_ parents what type of support did you get in making the decision to place \_\_\_\_\_ in the 'mainstream' class?
4. What do you regard as the advantages for \_\_\_\_\_ in a mainstream class?
5. What do you regard as the disadvantages for \_\_\_\_\_ in a mainstream class?
6. Do you think inclusive education is a viable option for south african education system?
7. Do you think a teacher at another school would be able to cope with Down's syndrome learners?

**ANNEXURE J  
TEACHER ASSISTANT INTERVIEW**

- 1. Interviewer: When did you first start working with \_\_\_\_?**
- 2. Interviewer: What is your experience in working with visually impaired learners?**
- 3. Interviewer: Which special arrangements were made for \_\_\_\_\_ when he started at Swallow Primary?**
- 4. Interviewer: How do you and the class teacher do the planning of the lessons? How often do you and the class teacher discuss the lesson planning?**
- 5. Interviewer: Which of his reading books are already available in Braille?**
- 6. Interviewer: How have you managed the transcribing of the activities for \_\_\_\_\_?**
- 7. Interviewer: Who supervises his homework?**
- 8. Interviewer: In which learning areas does \_\_\_\_\_ need extra support ?**
- 9. Interviewer: What do you think the disadvantages of mainstreaming are for \_\_\_\_\_?**
- 10. Interviewer: What do you think the advantages of mainstreaming are for \_\_\_\_\_?**
- 11. Interviewer: How do you think a visually impaired child at another school would cope in mainstream without a facilitator?**

**APPENDIX K  
OBSERVATION RECORDING SHEET**

11:09	09:15	<p>Mrs Noble: Spelling words one by one. Jonathan 'writing' it on his braille.  Mrs Harris: Tells Jonathan that the word is Rahab.  Mrs Noble: Jonathan have you got the word?  Mrs Noble: Stop talking I can't hear Jonathan.  Mrs Noble: Writes and says "Rahab hid the two Israelite spies."  Mrs Harris: Tells Jonathan what to do  Mrs Noble: You must write the sentence neatly, start with a capital letter and end off with a full stop.  Mrs Noble: Walks around to check the other children's work and praises them.  Mrs Noble: Questions the class about the story of Joshua. Asks them to draw the picture underneath the sentence.  Mrs Harris: Questions Jonathan about the story and tells him to 'write' the story.[braille]</p>
	09:35	<p>Reading mom is busy with a group of children  Mrs Noble: has another group on the carpet.  Jonathan is still 'writing' the story of Joshua. Jonathan checks what he has written. Puts his head on the braille. Yawns.  Mrs Harris: Tells Jonathan to continue his story. Two friends sitting near Jonathan are talking.  Jonathan: "Hey. Stop it! [Says it 3x]  Mrs Noble: Stop making a noise you two boys.  Jonathan: Scratching a pimple on his arm.  Mrs Harris: Tells the observer that Jonathan is battling to write the bible story because he has not experienced it, but writing his news is not problematic. He wrote 20 sentences about his trip to Cavendish Square</p>
	09:55	<p>Jonathan shaking his head, hands and legs  Mrs Harris encourages Jonathan to finish the bible story while she is busy doing his reading card on her braille.  Mrs Noble: Listening to the reading of the reading group on the floor with her.</p>

	10:05	Reading groups change. Mrs Harris: tells Jonathan what to do. 1. Bible story 2. Reading 3. Maths Mrs Harris: Goes for tea.
	10:10	Jonathan's reading group is on the floor Mrs Noble: Listens to Jonathan reading the flash cards and reader. Mrs Noble: Tells the other children to play a game with their flash cards while she is busy with Jonathan
	10:30	Interval Jonathan walks down the stairs unaided and climbs up onto the platform and eats his lunch with 5 of his classmates.
	10:45	Conducted the Interview with Ms. Mrs Harris
	11:30	Observer is back in class Jonathan is doing his sum card. Mrs Noble is working with a group on the mat. Subtraction 36-4 38-4 40-4 49-5 39-5
	12:00	Mrs Noble calls Jonathan's group onto the mat. Jonathan takes his braille. Children take their pencils and papers. Mrs Noble writes and says the sum $58+49$ . Jonathan writes it on his braille [Mrs Harris does not assist him] Jonathan takes his answer to Mrs Noble. He was the ninth child to give the correct answer.
	12:30	Mrs Noble: Writes and says the next sum on BB 43-25. Jonathan took longer to work out the answer. Mrs Noble: Tells the class to take out Phonic Books. Tells Jonathan to take out a clean sheet of paper for the words. Mrs Noble: Asks Jonathan to read yesterday's words. She thanks him. Asks class to read the words.
	12:50	Mrs Noble: Says the five new words to be written down and learnt for the spelling test on Friday. Mrs Noble: Asks class to tidy tables and pack up. Jonathan: Packs his books in his bag. Puts the braille in a case.
<b>12:09</b>	09:00 10:00	The class was in the hall for assembly Mrs Noble: Writes the 6 sums on the BB for each group. Mrs Noble: Calls Jonathan's group onto mat. Double 16. Jonathan what did you get?

		Jonathan: Shows the answer and gets a bead. [reward] Mrs Noble: Revises halves and doubles
10:25		Jonathan: Back at the table. Continues with his maths worksheet Mrs Noble: Has the second group on the mat. Mrs Harris: Busy preparing Jonathan's next worksheet.
10:30		Interval
11:00		Jonathan: Still busy with 2 <sup>nd</sup> worksheet.
11:30		One of the classmates play with Jonathan Mrs Harris: Tells Jonathan to stop and get ready for Phonics Mrs Noble: Tells class to read the words to be learnt for Friday Jonathan: Putting paper into braille. Writes his words and spells it on his own. Mrs Harris: Checks what his is doing Jonathan: Scratches his pimples Mrs Harris: Tells him not to scratch
12:00		Jonathan: Expression changed. Frowned and looked cross. Mrs Noble: Tells class to pack books away Mrs Harris: Helps Jonathan to pack away and take out the Life Skills book Mrs Noble: Asks class to read the worksheet and find the word arum lily Mrs Noble: Draw a picture of an arum lily growing in the garden Mrs Noble: Tells the class to line up and walk to the garden
12:20		Jonathan: Walks in the line to the garden. Children help him to the quiet corner Mrs Harris: Helping Jonathan with the drawing of the arum lily 2 learners ask Mrs Harris why she is drawing the picture for Jonathan Mrs Harris: Explains that he cannot see but he can feel the lily Mrs Harris: Drawing the picture and discussing the picture with Jonathan
12:40		Jonathan: Feeling the arum lily. Mrs Noble: Checks what the other learners are doing. Mrs Noble: Tells class to walk back to classroom and do their duties Jonathan: Packs his things away but has no specific class duties like the other children