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Special educational needs and teachers' professional development: a study of the implications for higher education in the light of national policy initiatives

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND
TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
a study of the implications for Higher Education in
the light of national policy initiatives

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Oscar Wilde, who wrote:

'All morning I worked on the proof of one of my
poems, and I took out a comma; in the afternoon
I put it back'

I now understand precisely what he meant.

STATEMENT

No part of the material in this dissertation has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification of the Open University, or any other University or institution. The research described is the sole work of the author. Use should not be made of the contents herein without proper acknowledgement.

ABSTRACT

From the author's perspective of day-to-day involvement in the continuing professional development of teachers in the Higher Education (HE) sector, this study seeks to explore how some secondary schools are responding to the demands of the government reform agenda. The particular focus of the research is the professional development required to promote and facilitate delivery of the various initiatives, especially in relation to special needs and the move towards a more inclusive education system.

Through the medium of in-depth interviews, the relationship between rhetoric and reality is investigated by determining how teachers have responded to government policy, and by questioning whether there is a mismatch between the expectations of teachers and government agencies concerning the provision and nature of professional development. The professional needs of teachers are examined by identifying the most appropriate forms of professional development required to address barriers to learning in their classrooms, and by considering the contribution of Higher Education in enabling teachers to respond to a greater diversity of needs. A comprehensive, in-depth, literature review is presented which traces the development of teachers' in-service training; in particular it raises concerns about how professional development for special needs has become marginalised as a result of funding changes and new course structures.

Key findings include the existence of a rhetoric/reality gap between expressed government policies in relation to educational reform, and teachers' perceptions of them; in particular teachers were sceptical about the nature and content of the government's professional development proposals and the motives behind them. Teachers appeared to lack an appropriate discourse with which to properly express and discuss professional needs. Many teachers claimed to lack a repertoire of learning and teaching strategies appropriate for addressing barriers to learning. Teachers' notions

of special needs were centred round 'labels' and dominated by concerns about behaviour. Mixed messages from government were contributing to teachers' confusion about the inclusion agenda. The effects of 'quasi-market' forces appear to be acting directly and substantially against the interests of children with special needs.

Implications of these findings are considered in relation to Higher Education; a number of recommendations are made, which reinforce the responsibility of HE to the profession for its continuing development.

There is evidence to suggest that teachers may be adopting a restricted model of special needs in the face of pressure to raise standards. The study proposes that, in challenging times and lacking a clear lead from government, teachers are being forced to adopt a minimalist view of the concept of inclusion, rather than taking the opportunity to broaden their understanding.

The study concludes that high quality, focussed, education and training can play a significant role both in improving the status and morale of the teaching profession, and in helping to bring about equality in the classroom.

CHAPTER ONE

Training, Education and Development of the Educational Workforce;
Background to the Investigation

The Right Honourable David Blunkett MP, former Secretary of State for Education and Employment, in a keynote policy speech embraced one of the crucial debates of the post-modern age when he stated that a well-educated and innovative workforce equipped with up-to-date skills was necessary in order to compete effectively in world markets (Blunkett, 2000). He clearly considered training, education and development of the workforce to be issues for the whole of society.

Increasing competition, social change, globalisation and the development of information technology and e-commerce have transformed the way organisations manage themselves and their staff. Many have responded by restructuring; downsizing the work-force, de-centralising organisational structures and decision making, linking pay to performance and adopting less authoritarian, more facilitating and supportive management styles (Handy, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994).

As a consequence, individuals increasingly must adapt to constant change and take responsibility for their own continuing professional development. In view of the rapid spread of the knowledge economy, employees will have to accept that their patterns of employment may keep on changing, that their skills and knowledge will rapidly become outdated, and they must be committed to lifelong learning in order to survive in the employment market.

> Employment has changed and we can no longer expect to have a job for life. Nowadays most people will undertake several different jobs during the course of their career. To help people progress through their careers we must regularly equip them with new skills and knowledge. Education is not a 'one off' experience but a lifelong process (DfEE, 2000a, p. 16)

Claxton (1999) underlines the necessity for continuous development when he asserts that the ultimate life skill for the twenty-first century is the ability to face difficult and unprecedented challenges calmly and resourcefully:

> The world is changing so fast that we cannot be sure what specific knowledge and skills we, our children and our employees will need even in ten years time. People now have to be ready, willing and able to prosper in a world where technology, patterns of employment, the nature of leisure, lifestyle and family life cannot be clearly foreseen. And we cannot teach what we don't know. But we can learn to be better learners and help others to do so too (Claxton, 1999, introduction)

Tomlinson (1994) criticises the assumptions on which current education policies are based: that only 20 - 30% of the population need be academic and technical elites, with 70% receiving a minimalist education and low-skill training. She stresses that those who participate in 'work' of any kind, including leisure and family life, will need to overcome reluctance to master ideas and skills, and develop new attitudes to thinking and learning.

Higher and further education institutions can assist in the development of a skilled society by removing any barriers to access to education and making education and training available to all those who could benefit, thus widening participation. Flexible learning, open and distance learning, modular courses, credit and transfer schemes and the accreditation of prior learning all assist in making education available to a variety of client groups, enabling people to move in and out of the education system as the need arises, and will help equip them for the future.

> Higher Education has an important role to play in the continuous development of individuals and in providing ways for people to move in and out of education, updating skills and progressing careers, as part of normal working life (DfEE, 2000a, p. 16)

Schools too can help students meet the challenges of the future by maintaining high standards of teaching and learning, thus ensuring a high quality learning experience for all pupils. The quality and relevance of the contribution which teachers can make towards this will depend to a great extent on the quality of training and development opportunities which they themselves receive at a time of increasing financial demands, conflicting educational priorities and targeted funding. I was interested to find out how far such opportunities in the field of education match up to the sort of sentiments described above. How does the Government, through its policies and actions, promote the sort of training and the climate required to produce teachers who can rise to the challenges of the future?

The present study arose from my own professional concerns connected with my responsibility for continuing professional development in a higher education institution (HEI), and was developed from work done for the Open University (OU) course E835. At that time, major changes implemented by the government to the structure, funding and delivery of in-service training for teachers made an investigation into teachers' professional development needs a useful study in terms of my own professional thinking and development. Many of the concerns expressed by teachers in the pilot interviews for that course were about the lack of appropriate training and support for special educational needs. It therefore seemed appropriate to submit a proposal for the Doctorate in Education that, while remaining in the broad area of professional development, also reflected my teaching role in special needs.

Thus the general focus of my investigation centres on the professional development of serving teachers. Increasingly, teacher development is seen as crucial in attempts to improve the quality of student learning (Parker, 1995) and as one of the significant factors contributing to successful schools, as described by Hargreaves and Hopkins (1994) and Mortimore et al. (1994). Indeed a major contention of Michael Fullan's more recent work on bringing about useful and effective change in education is that 'school development *is* teacher development' (e.g. Fullan, 1991).

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From an earlier emphasis on INSET (in-service education of teachers), often viewed as 'going on courses' - usually either long, often award-bearing, courses at HEIs or short, practical or classroom focused inputs by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and other providers - the nomenclature has now changed to continuing professional development (CPD) which is intended to imply a focus on life-long learning, or at least career-long development (Shephard, 1995).

Accompanying this shift in terminology, there has developed in some schools a realisation that professional development encompasses many more activities than simply 'going on courses'. While courses endure, albeit with a wider range of providers and increasingly conducted on the school's own premises, factors such as schools' control over their own budgets and the creation of a 'market' in training have encouraged a plethora of other forms, including industrial secondments, management experience in business, mentoring, work shadowing, job rotation and use of the appraisal process. There has also been a growing realisation of the value of the curriculum development process itself as a tool for teacher learning, especially where it is accompanied by a process of evaluation and reflection which might be done formally using a model of experiential learning (e.g. Kolb, 1981). Many HEIs have been at the forefront of developing such reflective approaches, and have also encouraged practitioner research (often action research) as a means of directly affecting practice in the classroom. Gaunt (1999) stresses the essential role of higher education (HE) in strengthening the quality of the professions, and in relation to CPD in particular.

However this growing emphasis on the value of professional development has not been accepted uncritically. West-Burnham & O'Sullivan (1998) claim that the fundamental concepts of professional development have to be challenged:

> The past ten years have seen a profound and fundamental shift
> in the role and status of professional development in schools. It
> has been transformed from a marginal activity sustained by
> enthusiastic amateurism to what is often highly sophisticated
> provision comparable with the best practice in any organisation.
> ... The changing environment that schools are having to operate

in and new understandings of how we learn require that the
fundamental premises of INSET are reviewed and justified
(ibid. p. vii)

One such challenge came from the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). Claims of a
lack of systematic external monitoring and control, and questions about the
effectiveness of CPD in improving practice - and thereby pupil achievement - led
the TTA to propose a framework for CPD covering all stages of a teacher's
career, from newly qualified status to experienced headteacher, based on national
standards and introducing new national qualifications. This has resulted in a sort
of 'national curriculum' for professional development, perhaps influenced by the
view that 'in-service training of teachers has been ineffective and wasteful, more
times than not' (Fullan, 1991, p. 11). Despite a process of consultation, there is a
possibility – at least, at the time of writing - that this new framework will
dominate or supplant the largely school-focused movement providing the
diversity in career development described above. Changes to the funding system
for professional development have given rise to some suspicion that traditional
HE courses with an academic element, theoretical underpinning and research
orientation, regardless of their professional relevance, could be priced out in
favour of the new standardised professional qualifications - this in spite of the
fact that the TTA wants to promote teaching as a research-based profession
(TTA, 1996b).

It can be seen from the above that there has been a sea-change occurring in the
way that CPD for teachers is conceptualised and delivered, from one largely
locally conceived to a nationally standardised system. Questions arise about the
appropriateness of a nationally controlled agenda. Is it desirable that space
should be left and money still be available for diverse local practices, and also for
the traditional HE courses? Will teachers prefer to put all their efforts towards a
nationally recognised career track? Should schools continue to promote diversity
in development? If teacher development has such a profound effect on teaching
and learning as Fullan suggests, then there is much professional relevance in
obtaining the views of teachers about this debate and its likely future impact on
themselves, their schools and their classrooms. TTA consultation

notwithstanding, teachers have had little opportunity to affect the measures now being brought forward, adding perhaps to feelings of being de-skilled or disempowered which appear to be prevalent currently. This is a crucial issue as Barber, cited in West-Burnham & O'Sullivan (1998), emphasises. The teaching profession needs to take a leading role in the wider learning society:

> The teaching profession cannot rebuild its sense of purpose and self-respect by hankering after the past. It needs - soon - to think about the world that is coming and to prepare itself for the immense challenges ahead. The learning society cries out for the leadership of a learning profession (ibid. p. 186)

How are these issues likely to affect training and development for teachers in the field of special needs education? The pilot interviews for E835 all showed a high level of concern about inappropriate and insufficient training in this area. Teachers felt inadequately prepared for what they felt were increasing demands on the schools. The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997b) underlines the need for teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) to have better training and proposes a special qualification for special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs). As Thomas (1997b) points out, for newly qualified teachers, mention of special needs is all too often merely a token gesture in their training. He contends however that most training will inevitably have to occur as part of continuing professional development. So what form should this training take, to satisfy the concerns expressed by teachers? The proposed qualification for SENCOs as part of the new professional framework for teachers (TTA, 1997a), with its emphasis on national standards, does not immediately demonstrate in its structure how it will help *all* teachers to respond to the diversity of needs. Despite a consultation process it is not obvious how individual teachers can bring their influence to bear. Estelle Morris, Minister for Schools, in an interview which strongly emphasised the moves promoted in the Green Paper towards 'inclusive education', was less than clear about the sort of professional development needed to secure it (Gardiner, 1997). Moreover, teachers interviewed for E835 appeared unclear about the meaning of 'inclusion', and the implications of the introduction of a more socially inclusive education system.

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The establishment of 'inclusive' schools within a socially inclusive approach to education generally is clearly an important element of the current political agenda. I share the views of Barton (1998) and Mittler (2000) that the hallmark of an inclusive school is that it is actively seeking to achieve greater social and academic diversity; 'inclusion' should imply that schools, not pupils, change radically to make them more responsive to the needs of *all* children, and these concepts will be further discussed in chapter six. However, such development across the education system is unlikely to come about simply because it is strongly promoted by the government. Teachers will need to develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours; training must be an important part of this.

In order to address the above concerns, it is therefore the intention of this research project to seek from teachers themselves their views about professional development in general and special needs education in particular, and their reactions to the implications of Government policy in these areas. Accordingly the particular research questions have been arranged into two groups to reflect these themes:

1. a focus on the relationship between rhetoric and reality
   (a) How do teachers respond to the rhetoric of Government policies, both current and proposed, in relation to educational reform?
   (b) Is there a mismatch between the expectations of teachers and Government agencies concerning the provision and nature of professional development in general and that for special needs education in particular?
2. a focus on the professional needs of teachers
   (a) What forms of professional development do teachers identify as being appropriate in order to address barriers to learning in their classrooms?
   (b) How can Higher Education contribute to professional development so that teachers are enabled to respond effectively to the greater diversity of needs to be encountered in moving to a more inclusive education system?

Apart from the above-mentioned personal motivation for this study in terms of my own thinking and practice, and also my wish to hear and value the voice of

'ordinary' teachers who will be affected by these issues, rather than the filtered results of government consultations which purport to speak for the profession, there is also a wider rationale. Such an investigation as proposed here would inform policy-making in my own institution, a new (1992) university in a large urban area, with a strong tradition of teacher training and CPD due to the earlier acquisition of a 'monotechnic' teacher training college. The School of Education has a strong portfolio of both long and short part-time CPD programmes, but is also involved in delivering TTA initiatives on a consortium basis and additionally works in close collaboration with LEA providers.

It is all too easy in what is often regarded as the 'detached' atmosphere of an HEI to make assumptions about what teachers in general want. False perspectives can be gained from being closely involved in implementing a string of government policies; working with relatively small numbers of teachers committed to their own development and that of their schools can give a skewed picture. This may not be typical of what teachers need in general. Indeed it is not uncommon in delivering school-based INSET to find teachers who reject a theoretical basis to, or a systematic investigation of, their practice, claiming that their professional technology stems from their experience; are these teachers, perhaps, more typical? Decisions need to be made in my institution about the future viability of long academic courses for which government funding is becoming harder to obtain. Should delivery of government initiatives become a priority? Would more collaborative provision with LEA or other providers be appropriate, as opposed to increasing competitiveness? Should emphasis be put on the provision of short courses rather than award-bearing programmes? Talking to teachers in depth about what they currently do in terms of personal and professional development, and why, would be a significant aid to my institution's policy planning. Questions about the forms of CPD which are most appropriate to their needs, their reaction to successive government initiatives in this area, and, specifically, what is needed to help teachers respond to the diversity of needs in schools and how they can be better prepared for wider social inclusion as signalled in the 1997 Green Paper, would give valuable information.

I acknowledge that there could be some tension between my professional involvement in these issues and my position as researcher; this will be discussed in a later section. While any findings will inform my own institution, they may, with some caution, be generalisable to other situations; this would depend on the 'typicality' of the institutions in question (Schofield, 1993) and will be addressed in the conclusion to this work.

A further rationale is that this is a useful study to undertake in terms of its general contribution to knowledge in the area of CPD. Both Gaunt (1999) and Claxton et al. (1996) refer to the paucity of research in this area. Castle et al. (1998) summarise the position thus:

> CPD is a relatively under-researched area of activity. While there is a large sociological literature on professions and professionalisation, and a substantial literature on initial preparation ... there is much less relating to CPD (ibid. p. 338)

Also there is the potential contribution the study might make in relation to the theory of adult professional learning, again an area felt to be neglected (West-Burnham & O'Sullivan, 1998; Claxton et al. 1996). Gaunt (1999) points out that although HEIs may be 'centres of learning' they are less good at being 'learning organisations'; it is hoped that this work might make some small contribution to the learning ethos of at least one HEI in particular.

This, then, will be a practice-based investigation, which will attempt to discover the stance of 'ordinary' teachers towards these important professional issues and the relationship between them, with a view to informing future policy planning in an HEI. As a result, my personal objectives in conducting this study can be summarised as follows:

- to develop my own learning in respect of the practice of teachers' continuing professional development
- to contribute to the theory and practice of teachers' continuing professional development, with particular reference to special needs

- to establish the implications of the findings and make recommendations for policy development in HE, with particular reference to special needs

The following chapter will address the literature relating to the research questions in order to provide a theoretical underpinning for the study, to investigate the political and professional background, to trace the development and establish the nature of professional development, to illuminate pertinent issues and to steer the investigation itself.

CHAPTER TWO

Government Reform of Education, Professional Development and Special Educational Needs

Government education reform - the political underpinning for change

James Cornford, former director of the Institute of Public Policy Research, writes in his preface to Sally Tomlinson's critique of educational reform:

> The Education Act of 1988 was the culmination, but not the end, of reforms that were genuinely radical. They represented a break from a cumulative, consensual style of development to an alternative set of ideas that were imposed with little consultation and less consent from the mainstream of education. They included the introduction of a quasi-market among schools, the devolution of management, a reduced role for education authorities, and much stronger central control over finance and above all over the content of education (Tomlinson, 1994, p. xii).

Thus in a few words is described the sea-change in education policy and practice, conceived by a Conservative government elected in 1979 and implemented through a succession of Secretaries of State over the following eighteen years. It is ironic that it should have been a right wing government that was the architect of such radical, wide sweeping and far-reaching reforms and perhaps even more surprising that these have, in the large part, been adopted by the incoming Labour administration of 1997. The following analysis traces the history of these developments and explains how they came about.

Glover and Law (1996) outline the social, political and economic influences which have underpinned educational developments in the post-war period. In claiming that change now appears to be endemic, they describe how successive Conservative governments had established a range of initiatives in schools, and also in further and higher education. They identify three broad aspects of these changes, the first of which is that change has been driven by government legislation. Secondly, fundamental changes have been made to the organisation

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and management of education through the development of what Caldwell & Spinks (1988) call 'self-managing schools', which are characterised by more autonomous management and local financial control. Thirdly, substantial changes have been effected to the structure and nature of teacher education.

It was claimed by the government of the time that the landmark 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) (DES, 1988a) would enhance learning and achievement, improve school management and empower parents (Nixon et al. 1996). The central plank of the ERA was the establishment of the National Curriculum which provided an entitlement to broad and balanced learning for all 5- to 16-year olds. This was intended to lead to improved achievement by providing a clearer prescription of what was to be taught and learned, together with standard assessments to enable planned progression and to provide objective information for parents (Nixon, et al. ibid.).

Enhanced school management, not hitherto seen as a priority by government or teachers, was identified as the vehicle which would bring about improvements in the curriculum. This had for long been a subject of contentious debate since James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1977 - summarised in a subsequent Department of Education and Science Green Paper (DES, 1977) which criticised teachers' lack of understanding of the needs of industry - when he likened teacher control of the curriculum to that of a 'secret garden'. Curiously, the means of bringing about better management were not to be through improved management training - of which there was a conspicuous lack, particularly at senior level - but by creating the conditions for increased local management of schools. This would give greater responsibility and flexibility to headteachers for the prioritisation and deployment of resources, and also give more accountability to school governors (DES, 1988b). Significantly, that this was not sufficient to achieve political ends - as opposed to educational and social objectives - was highlighted by the subsequent, ever-increasing attempts by government to devolve more and more financial control to schools by limiting the amount which could be retained for central purposes by Local Education Authorities (LEAs). It was not until a much later stage that proposals were introduced which would

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ensure the provision of the approved training which was by then seen as necessary to deliver the political agenda, an agenda which underpins the rationale of this investigation.

The empowerment of parents as part of the drive to improving the quality of learning and teaching was to be achieved by introducing the dynamic of competition into the education system (Grey, 1993). Parents would be given the choice of moving their children to schools which could demonstrate good standards of achievement. A system of inspection would provide performance data about standards as well as simply enforcing the provision of the new curriculum (albeit in its several subsequent drastically modified forms, causing stress and pressure as teachers struggled to keep up with - and in some short-lived instances, resisted - the increased load of administration and bureaucracy). Open enrolment to schools, as opposed to controlling the intake through planning on the basis of catchment area, and resourcing schools by formula so that pupils were equated with income, would complete the conditions necessary for the introduction of free market disciplines into the education system. Choice and competition were to be enhanced by allowing schools to opt out of LEA control, and become 'Grant Maintained' (GM), financed by an agency which distributed funding from central government. Freedom, flexibility and favourable financing over schools remaining in LEA control were the inducements offered, in a move intended to strengthen the supply side of the market economy.

This was not however the end of legislation. The right wing policy agenda was driven by a further spate of White Papers and Education Acts on a scale never before seen in education and which resulted in an unprecedented accrual of powers to the Secretary of State. 1992 saw the Education (Schools) Act (DfE, 1992c) which put the responsibility for school inspection into the hands of private bodies, thereby disbanding a national system respected as experienced, impartial and influential in shaping policy. This demonstrated the government's promotion of a second political orthodoxy of the time, linked to the adoption of market forces, that of privatisation. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) implemented a system of inspection based on a new national

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framework in secondary schools from September 1993, and in primary and special schools from September 1994 (Holt et al. 1997). Evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning was based on performance indicators which, when published, would provide comparative data on schools, thus providing market information which could be used as the basis of choice by parents.

Inspection of teacher education in institutions of higher education was to follow. 1992 also saw the Further and Higher Education Act (DfE, 1992d) which led to the freeing of Further Education from local authority control (but placed it firmly under central government in funding terms). The White Paper 'Choice and Diversity: a New Framework for Schools' (DfE, 1992a) was enacted in 1993. This introduced a range of measures intended to stimulate the free market movement towards grant maintained schools independent of local authority control (leading at the time to predictions of the demise of LEAs altogether), and also allowed the development of specialisms in other sorts of school to encourage diversity. Also in 1993 proposals were brought forward (DfE, 1993a) for the restructuring of initial teacher training which would give far more responsibility to schools - regardless of the fact that these apparently would be the same schools where standards were felt to be inadequate - and also ensure that the future teacher force was well versed in the government's objectives with a lessening of the influence of academia. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) was established by the Education Act of 1994 (DfE, 1994a) in order to fund the provision of teacher training, and to accredit providers of courses of initial teacher training using OFSTED as their quality inspection arm (Holt et al. 1997). Thus, in the face of considerable controversy, a dual funding and quality control system was set up in Higher Education (HE) as these functions were removed from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which retained responsibility for the rest of the HE sector. Shortly after its inception, the TTA moved swiftly to tighten its grip on the whole area of teacher education by taking control of the funding for teachers' in-service education, and were soon to bring forward proposals for a radical new structure, the detail of which will be discussed later.

The above then encapsulates the right wing agenda promoted by the Conservative administration in power from 1979 - although it had been formulated by Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph as co-chairs of the Centre for Policy Studies, a 'think-tank' set up in 1974 following their election defeat - and perpetuated, although it may be argued that it lacked the same ideological intensity, by John Major from 1991 (Ball, 1994). Nixon et al. (1996) point out that the whole Conservative agenda of educational reform was predicated on assumptions about poor standards of teaching and learning which, it was claimed, had their roots in the 'mistaken' project of post war democracy - the pursuit of equality of opportunity through comprehensivisation - responsible for low expectations of teachers and underachievement in their pupils.

Political ideology in the 1980s and 1990s

The right wing agenda of reform, described above, results from the underlying political ideologies of the time, which must necessarily inform part of the context for this study. It is therefore worth considering these ideologies in more detail. The most significant was the attempt to introduce market 'realities' into public sector organisations in the 1980s. Prior to this, the predominant policy culture in education was what Ball (1990) refers to as a 'client based' system, where government policy-making was generally confined to finance and target-setting. Direct central impact on the curriculum was rare; the English educational system had traditionally given responsibility for determining the curriculum to LEAs and teachers. Such a 'pluralist' system involved a 'neutral' government, which adjudicated when necessary between the participants who were generating much of the policy.

Ball (ibid.) points out that by the early 1980s this pluralism, which had been supported by the 'public educators' who regarded the provision of a liberal education for all as a government's duty, was defunct. Taylor et al. (1997) explain that these liberal 'social democrats' never had enjoyed all-embracing public support. Those opposed to such a universal access orientation, for instance adherents of a narrower 'industrial training' model aimed at future adult work, seized upon the economic difficulties faced by western countries since the

mid-1970s to call for a different way of funding and organising education. As a result, increasing state intervention exemplified a conceptual shift from pluralism to neo-Marxism. 'Thatcherism' attempted at the same time to stand for modernisation and progress, and for tradition and stability. The tensions between the neo-liberal and neo-conservative wings of the 'new right' Conservative party brought central determination of the curriculum to ensure a common entitlement, together with the imposition of market indicators and a funding regime that took little account of pupils' needs.

Thus an educational market was established, albeit not a free market but one which was strongly politically regulated; a planned or 'quasi-market'. Professional control was replaced by managerial control. The adoption of such a market was seen to be the 'solution' to problems of cost, control and performance in the public sector. Like all markets, this one was intended to be driven by self-interest: the self-interest of parents as consumers and the self-interest of schools (or their senior managers) as producers (Gewirtz et al. 1995). Conservative ideology regarded education as a commodity with parents free to 'choose' the quality, location and amount. Knowledge must be carefully regulated and determined by central government, largely based on a late nineteenth century curriculum with distinct cultural barriers between academic, practical and technical learning (Tomlinson, 1994). Ball (1994) saw very little change with the advent of 'Majorism' in the 1990s, although he argues that the cultural restorationist agenda of the moral authoritarian right wing, marked by the 'back to basics' campaign, came to be in the ascendant. Notions such as 'standards' and 'literacy' were promoted against 'progressivism' and 'comprehensivism'.

While some of the reforms have gained support amongst the profession and the community, such as the need for a national framework for the curriculum and a focus on the quality of learning, others remain contentious - particularly amongst a sceptical teaching force that took the brunt of the changes. It is the underpinning notion of the reforms – the competitive nature of the educational market economy - that is still the subject of heated debate, and this concept is

worth a closer examination since much of what was done owed its raison d'etre to the doctrine of market forces. Can the demands of the market influence educational theory and practice and produce a higher quality output, or is education a genuine social service whose standards can be upheld by educational professionalism, untrammelled by the demands of private enterprise?

The operation of the educational quasi-market

Walford (1990) describes how, through the 1980s, successive Conservative governments pushed through a series of privatisations of various and diverse state owned enterprises and services. As the rigours of the market were seen to be the way by which higher quality and greater efficiency were to be achieved, he points out that it was inevitable that education would be the subject of similar measures.

He claims (in Walford, 1996) that the perceived academic success of private schools, seen to be thriving in a competitive market, was one of the factors which encouraged the introduction of the quasi-market into the state maintained sector and argues that the changes described have had important implications for educational equity. He traces the roots of this back to the 1980 Education Act (DES, 1980), which built upon the previous Labour administration's plans to give parents greater choice of schools (but in a context where much control was retained by LEAs). However, as explained above, the ideological emphasis of the Conservative proposals was towards the market, and generation of more competition between schools. Parents were given the right to express a preference for a school of their choice, with LEAs obliged to take this into account. The 1980 Act also introduced the Assisted Places Scheme, designed to give able children a wider range of opportunities by giving help with tuition fees at independent schools to parents who otherwise would not be able to afford private education. This was intended to replace the earlier Direct Grant arrangements which had been withdrawn by the previous Labour government.

In 1986 a new policy initiative announced the creation of a network of 20 City Technology Colleges (CTCs), which would be 'private' schools managed by educational trusts having close links with, and partly funded by, industry and commerce. This was an attempt to address the supply side of the quasi-market in a gesture that was of great symbolic significance, despite the low numbers involved. Seen in this context, the 1988 ERA and subsequent Acts described above can be viewed as hastening a move to market processes which had been building up for almost a decade.

What then of the implications of this for educational equity? Stillman and Maychell (1986) demonstrate that among Conservative and Labour LEAs alike, the effects of attempts to increase parental choice have been very variable. Edwards et al. (1989) show that the assisted places scheme has largely managed to assist children of middle class parents - a significant proportion of these with above average incomes - suggesting that the middle classes are able to hi-jack initiatives in which they perceive some benefit, even if they were not the intended recipients. CTCs have not been a resounding economic success since the target number was never achieved and the government has had to support them with much of the capital funding and most of the on-going current expenditure. Walford & Miller (1991) showed how entry procedures tended to select children on the basis of motivation of parents and children. Walford (1996) reports a range of research which, despite the publication of league tables of schools based on examination and test results (an important market indicator), shows that children's views and wishes in respect of a potential school were most influential, combined with nearness and the possibility for attendance of siblings and friends. GM schools also, although popular amongst parents whose children attend them, never achieved the numbers envisaged. Power et al. (1994) claim that there is little to suggest that the GM policy fulfilled the objectives of its advocates. GM schools subsequently have had their status changed by the Labour government, losing their central funding and reverting to LEA control, although they still retain more autonomy than they had under the earlier LEA system. Walford (1996) refers to the popularity of such schools to underline the essential contradiction of the educational market. Once a school becomes oversubscribed,

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it is the school which then selects the children and parents, not the other way round. If the quasi-market is to lead to a better quality of education, parents must be well informed to choose the 'good' school rather than the 'bad'; however it has been pointed out above that parents make their choices on a much broader range of criteria and that academic prowess features low on the list of priorities. Ball (1994) views the market reforms in education as a right wing class strategy which served to reinforce relative class advantages and disadvantages, pointing out that an education market will benefit certain class groups to the detriment and disadvantage of others. The market presumes that parents are equally skilled and knowledgeable and that they have comparable material resources. Politicians blame the family for not taking advantage of what the market has to offer; poor choosers are taken to be bad parents. A market in education cannot ensure fair provision for all young people in society; it is acknowledged by supporters, as well as opponents, that the logic of the market requires the creation of inequality (Tomlinson, 1994; Gray, 1993).

Walford concludes, in reference to the educational quasi-market:

> ... the main purpose of the recent moves towards greater choice is not to build a more democratic and fair educational system but to rebuild a more differentiated educational system which will more closely aid social reproduction. The ideology of the market and choice acts to partially mask this process and, while it may allow a few individuals to benefit, the majority have much to lose (Walford, 1996, p. 60).

Gewirtz et al. (1995) argue that the market system of education effectively ensures that resources flow from those children with the greatest need to those with least need, thus tending to promote a growing inequality of access to quality provision. They point out that the concomitants of the quasi-market – a highly regulated curriculum and a testing regime that encourages segregation – lead to devices of selection and exclusion as a means of controlling pupil composition. They conclude that the principle of equal value has been displaced by commercially based decision-making, driven by competition. It will be noted

later that it is an approach based on market forces, more than any other of the reforms in question, which has had a profound effect on the area of special needs and its associated professional development.

The effects of reform

Government reform has ensured that education is now a high profile and highly politicised activity. Tomlinson (1994) takes the view that the policies pursued by the Conservative government were based on an ideology more suited to the nineteenth than the twenty-first century. The economic market doctrine was driven by the belief that in order to deliver consumer choice, a democratically controlled education system had to be replaced by competitive schools with centrally controlled funding and curriculum. She points to a new educational climate where there is lack of debate, consensus or reference to educational research and suggests that the effects of this, together with the sheer speed and volume of change, have left critics powerless to influence the situation.

> Strategies for opposing reforms, slowing the pace of change, and presenting alternative policies have been difficult to find, especially as many potential academic critics have often had their attention diverted to securing their own, their colleagues', and in some cases, their institution's survival (Tomlinson, 1994, p. 1).

There has been much concern about the way in which the increasing power of state regulation has eroded educational opportunity and local democracy (Leend, 1988; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1995; Nixon, et al. 1996). Certainly current Secretaries of State, compared with those in the 1970s, have considerably more powers and preside over a far more centralised education system, despite claiming the post-modernist stance of devolution of power to the periphery in the form of local financial control. The stress apparent in school managers attests to the way in which local management has been used as the tool to deliver unpopular government policies.

Tomlinson (1994) cites two possible contrasting views. Firstly, because not only the structures and content, but also the principles and values underlying the educational system have been changed, many of the reforms are now entrenched and will be difficult to reverse. The second view is that as the costs of an inequitable system become apparent, the reforms will be amenable to change.

At the beginning of the second term of a 'new' Labour government, which many confidently expected would reverse much of what had been done in the name of social justice, there is little sign which gives much hope to adherents of Tomlinson's second view. Certainly the Assisted Places Scheme has been scrapped, together with plans for nursery school vouchers. The status of all schools has been changed in a way that has left GM schools with much of the autonomy they had, and which has moved other schools closer to them. More money is being invested in the infrastructure and all sectors, including pre-school, are feeling the benefit of some increased finance. However, as for the previous market-driven reforms, despite the rhetoric which claims to focus on combating social exclusion, they remain in place. Indeed some, including inspection and reporting, have been strengthened and the 'naming and shaming' of so-called failing schools has been continued with some enthusiasm, although the appointment (in late 2000) of a new Chief Inspector of Schools is generally expected to presage a more conciliatory tone.

As a result, 'new' Labour could be viewed as being to the right of the neo-liberals and sharing some of the values of the ideological right wing. (It is paradoxical that the current Conservative Party leadership contest – in September 2001 – is fielding one of two remaining contenders who is promoting a liberal-socialist policy position, which has already been abandoned by more forward-looking thinkers on the Left). The establishment of 'specialist' schools has been portrayed by 'old' socialists and those left of centre who have been left behind as the Labour Party moved its ground to the right, as a betrayal of the comprehensive ideal. Curriculum initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy hours have, literally, taken the curriculum back to basics. The Institute for Public Policy Research, a 'new' Labour think-tank, has been engaged in finding creative

ways to involve private investment in public services; this has led to the contracting out of part or all of the work of badly performing LEAs (e.g. Islington) – and the running of some failing schools - to private companies. Also a Labour Secretary of State for Education has called for universities to become more entrepreneurial and aggressive in seeking new markets (Blunkett, 2000). Thus Hatcher (1998) is able to argue that:

> After the experience of a Conservative government characterised by substantial social inequalities in education .... (the) Labour Government's economic and social policies will tend to sustain and recreate inequality, and ... its education policies are themselves governed by the same imperatives of competitiveness in the global market, human capital theory, corporate managerialism and electoral calculation (Hatcher, 1998, p. 485).

It would seem that the educational landscape has altered for the forseeable future. No wonder that Slater (1998) can claim that many of the 1988 ERA's once controversial ideas are now political orthodoxies.

This then is the political context which has been the background to the educational agenda for over two decades. It is legitimate to ask what effect all this has had on teachers' professionalism; how has this plethora of government induced change with little consultation, and even less agreement, affected the way in which teachers now feel and work? What effect has it had on opportunities for teachers' development, the traditional way by which teachers have sought professional advancement?

The nature of continuing professional development

The report of the results of a National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) survey into in-service training (INSET) and its organisation, conducted in 1967, declared that very little was known about this aspect of teachers' education. Its definition of in-service activity was wide-ranging, if somewhat vague:

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> In-service training is taken to include all those courses and
> activities in which a serving teacher may participate for the
> purpose of extending his professional knowledge, interest or
> skill. Preparation for a degree, diploma or other qualification
> subsequent to initial training is included within this definition
> (Cane, 1969, p. x).

The survey found considerable variation in the provision made for INSET. LEAs
were the chief providers of short courses while the Department of Education and
Science (DES), universities and colleges specialised in longer, usually full-time,
one term or one year courses requiring a period of secondment. The great
majority of teachers responding were positive about the need for INSET though
many declared a lack of provision in their particular area and available courses
were generally under-subscribed. Teachers' clear preferences were for training to
take place close to their own home or school, preferably during school hours.
Those wanting longer courses preferred to be seconded to centres which could
be reached by daily commuting (Cane, ibid.).

How much has changed after more than 30 years? A 1979 study of the training
of teachers in the European Community still saw the major task of INSET as the
(necessary) improvement of teachers' qualifications (Belbenoit 1979). Presently
terms such as INSET, in-service education, staff development, professional
development, and now continuing professional development, tend to be used
interchangeably (Fullan, 1992; Craft, 1996), although attitudes towards the
scope of, and what constitutes, such activities have been considerably modified.

Current definitions tend to be no less wide-ranging; Glover and Law (1996)
point out that there has been much debate over these specific terms and that the
present rapidly changing nature of development practice and process ensures that
there will continue to be difficulties surrounding their precise nature, meaning
and use.

Oldroyd & Hall (1991) define INSET as 'planned activities practised both within and outside schools primarily to develop the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance of professional staff in schools' - a definition which seems to have changed little from 1969, although there is an acknowledgement that development might be obtained in school rather than on an external course. A rider to this definition points out that the term could cover a visit to another school, participation in an action research project or study for a master's degree in education. Dean (1991) suggests that the term 'professional development' involves a process whereby teachers become more professional and cites a number of definitions which begin to suggest that professional training is not a series of sporadic events, but a planned career development path. She quotes Morant (1981) on in-service education as 'the education intended to support and assist the professional development that teachers ought to experience through their working lives' and Cawood & Gibbon (1981) on staff development which is 'an experiential involvement by a teacher in the process of growing. This process is not short term. It is a continuous, never ending developmental activity'. Bolam (1993) adopted the term 'continuing professional development' (CPD), which recognises teacher development as a long-term process, following on from initial teacher education. He views CPD as embodying three components, viz. professional training (short courses, conferences and workshops, largely focused on practice and skills), professional education (longer courses and/or secondments, focused on theory and research-based knowledge) and professional support (job-embedded arrangements or procedures).

These later views represent a considerable movement in the conception of professional training since the NFER survey in 1967. There is a realisation that development involves more than simply going on courses, that it is an activity that can legitimately and usefully be carried out in the workplace, that it is increasingly school managed, that experiential learning is important and that it should be career-long. CPD is integral to a professional approach to the job of teaching; as Nixon asserted in 1996:

Professional development is seen as integral to the school's practices and as the responsibility not just of the individual teacher but of the school as a whole. Teachers emphasise the importance of a variety of professional development experiences through, for example, departmental meetings and workshops, links with local institutions of higher education, exhibitions and displays, the opportunity to attend conferences and seminars, work placements and shadowing (Nixon et al. 1996, p. 99).

Others have emphasised the role of the dynamic between research and practice, and reflection on practice, as an important aspect of teacher development (Day, et al. 1993), the importance of action research strategies (Lomax, 1990), the importance of partnership and collaboration between schools and HEIs (Nicholls, 1997), that experience and reflection are important vehicles for development (Claxton et al. 1996) and that school development planning is a developmental activity in its own right (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1994). Such examples underline the varied practices that make up the modern view of CPD.

Clearly, as Oldroyd & Hall (1991) assert, 'Staff development has come a long way since the days before the 1970s when, for most teachers, it probably meant keeping up to date with their subjects, reading the Times Educational Supplement and the occasional book about teaching'. Even in the 1980s the nature of professional development was ad hoc, with practices varying wildly between different providers. However we have come to realise that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992). Bradley et al. (1994) stress the importance of professional development, particularly at a time of substantial change in schools and echo Fullan's (1991) contention in recognising that school development does not take place without teacher development.

We are now able to see that comprehensive career-long teacher development is the real agenda in relation to educational reform. The model of professional

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development that is emerging offers an opportunity to practitioners to extend their control over their own development (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Bell & Day, 1991), as long as that model is allowed to flourish. Harland (1987) however is concerned that such a teacher-centred model, influenced by the work of Lawrence Stenhouse, might *not* be allowed to flourish, claiming that the movement is called into question by government policies in relation to funding and control of INSET.

How far the professional, teacher centred view, of teacher development is fully supported by teachers themselves is open to question. A similar question can be posed about the government's stance; Harland's concern will be explored in the next section.

Government reform of continuing professional development

The late 1980s, which brought radical changes in educational policy and practice, also effectively swept professional development along in its wake (Glover and Law, 1996). However in order to examine the influences which brought this about, it is necessary to return to the situation prior to the 1970s when it was not usual for most teachers to engage in training beyond their initial studies. Gaunt (1997) describes how INSET was restricted to supplementary courses for non-graduate teachers with only one or two years initial training, longer advanced courses for the improvement of professional qualifications and short courses held by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and LEAs.

Longer supplementary and advanced courses were funded by the INSET 'pool' made up by contributions from the Ministry of Education/DES and all LEAs, from which LEAs could recoup most of the salaries of their seconded teachers and other costs. This had replaced an earlier post-war system of restricted per capita grants for what the McNair Report (Board of Education, 1944) described as 'refresher' courses at universities or training colleges, and led to a significant increase in secondment activity.

The James Report, entitled Teacher Education and Training (DES, 1972a), gave prominence for the first time to INSET, and gave priority to the expansion of a 'third cycle' of training - intended to follow earlier cycles of initial training and induction. It recommended an entitlement to regular INSET for one term every five years as well as improved access to shorter provision. A large expansion of INSET activities was envisaged, while the White Paper 'Education: A Framework for Expansion' published in the same year (DES, 1972b) further reinforced the need for more INSET.

As was the case with many educational reports of this era, the far-reaching policies contained in the James report never came to fruition - 'one more impossible dream' (Harland, 1987). Nonetheless there was a substantial increase in INSET activity following its publication, albeit of the familiar ad hoc variety, so much that the government became alarmed at the expenditure. Abuses of the 'pool' system meant that some LEAs were taking out much more than they had contributed; the fact that the pool was unlimited meant that central government bore a relatively larger and larger burden. By 1983 Gaunt (1997) reports that the situation had grown so serious that secondments funded by the pool were restricted to certain (government) priority areas. Circular 3/83 designated management training for senior staff, mathematics teaching, special educational needs in ordinary schools, prevocational education and craft, design and technology (DES, 1983). This was the first sign of government intervention to control the content of INSET; hindsight shows that it was not to be the last, by any means.

The next significant intervention came in 1984 when the Conservative Secretary of State of the time, Sir Keith Joseph, announced that the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers (ACSET) was to be disbanded, perhaps coincidentally just after ACSET recommended a large increase in LEA budgets for INSET. It was therefore no surprise when the White Paper 'Better Schools' (DES, 1985), claimed that the £100 million spent annually on INSET was not being used to best advantage and was favouring long courses when short courses might be more effective (Gaunt op. cit.). The 'pool' was to end,

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and with it most full time secondments, also as a consequence, many longer courses in HE. The right wing reform agenda was beginning to bite.

Harland describes the new arrangements which were introduced by the DES. They were based on two criteria which would change the whole balance of the structure and organisation of INSET, namely that:

> ... it is highly efficacious to identify areas for training which support DES curriculum priorities and secondly, that a high level of control can be maintained through the mechanisms of categorical funding which oblige LEAs and INSET providers to march in step with DES policy (Harland, 1987, p. 238).

Thus now were seen not only the effects of government intervention, but the seeds of government control of INSET. The available grant was specific, rather than general, to ensure for the first time that LEA INSET programmes were subject to the oversight, guidance and approval of the DES. Funds were to be bid for by LEAs against precise categories which reflected national and local priorities, with the national element supported by the government at the rate of 70% of approved expenditure, and local needs only supported at the rate of 50%. Thus was born Grant Related In-service Training (GRIST), quickly renamed the Local Education Authority Training Grant Scheme (LEATGS), with LEAs submitting their plans in the summer of 1986 for an April 1987 start. Circular 6/86 (DES, 1986), which introduced the scheme, declared the main purposes to be:

- the promotion of the professional development of teachers
- the provision of systematic and purposeful planning of INSET
- the encouragement of effective management of the teaching force
- the encouragement of training in particular national priority areas

(Burgess, et al. 1993, p. 2)

The government leaned heavily on experience with the TVEI-Related In-service Training (TRIST) programme, introduced in 1985 to support the Technical and Vocational Education initiative (TVEI), as a pilot scheme for LEATGS which helped to accelerate its introduction and meant that some LEAs had experience

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in bidding for this sort of categorical funding. INSET had a central role at last, with planning taking the place of ad hoc arrangements.

However concerns were already being expressed about the speed of the planning process, the lack of consultation and the fact that LEAs were subject to national rather than local agendas and government scrutiny - concerns that were to be expressed more frequently as the government reform agenda gathered pace. Five in-school training days per year for teachers were instituted in 1987, soon referred to as 'Baker Days' after the then Secretary of State. However, even by the following year these were being criticised in terms of quality and effectiveness (Bamber & Nash, 1988). Baxter (1996) suggests that the reasons for the unsatisfactory nature of many training days included a lack of connection between training and what happens in the classroom, the suggestion that secondary heads were losing touch with the training needs of their staff and, in many cases, that the days were not being used for training at all.

On the positive side, an HMI report in 1989 found that LEAs were supporting the provision with the appointment of new advisers and advisory teachers, that the devolution to schools of part of the INSET budget was having an energising effect and that the scheme had seen the use of a much wider range of INSET provision than formerly (Oldroyd and Hall, 1991).

As well as LEATGS, LEAs could bid for a separate Education Support Grant (ESG) fund established in 1984 to support the infrastructure of INSET - the provision of advisory teachers to give professional support to teachers, the financing of teachers' centres and the costs of managing the programmes - and in the interests of efficiency it was decided that a unitary grant mechanism was desirable. Therefore from April 1991 LEATGS and ESG were brought together as Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST) - with a reduced rate of funding, down to 60% and assigned to national priority areas only, and largely related to implementation of the 1988 ERA (Bradley et al. 1994).

The screw was indeed beginning to turn. GEST had major implications for LEAs. Without the ESG and the grants for locally assessed priorities, LEAs found it impossible to fund large numbers of advisory teachers, management and teachers' centre staff. Market forces operated and LEAs learned to become more cost effective and respond to a new client-led ethos as a greater amount of the INSET budget was devolved to schools and the focus of training became far more school-led. Harland et al. (1993) in their report of an NFER survey found that only a minority of educational managers supported free market INSET. The annual bidding cycle caused much insecurity in terms of forward planning. Bradley et al. (op. cit.) point out that a 15% reduction in the total GEST funding available for 1994/95 might reflect the economic and political climate, but could not increase confidence in a model that urged teachers and schools to be more systematic and purposeful in their INSET planning.

HE, too, took the brunt of these changes. Gaunt (1997) describes how staff trading in a new INSET market needed to develop new working relationships with LEAs, schools and teachers based on concepts such as partnership, product design and customer care. This had many important positive effects such as the forging of innovative partnerships between HE, LEAs and schools, greater off-site provision, more responsiveness of HEIs to the training needs of teachers and schools, assignments which encouraged the investigation of classroom practice and the development of courses set in a whole school context. Such courses were often organised on a modular basis so that credit could be accumulated on a basis convenient to the teacher, more easily allowing the award of credit for prior learning. However, a major disadvantage was a severe reduction in the client base. LEAs were faced with a situation where shorter courses in HEIs now had to be self-financing, with no financial support from HEFCE. At the same time LEAs had lost access to government funding for longer (usually award-bearing) courses and secondments which had previously been available through the 'pool'. LEA budgets, as indicated above, had to be spread more thinly and HEIs with their high overhead costs found it difficult to respond to the drive for cost- effectiveness; their provision, however good the quality, was simply too expensive. HEIs found themselves in direct competition with LEAs - and to an

increasing extent with private market provision - over shorter courses and school-based provision. The result of this as Bradley et al. (1994) assert was that, actively or passively, LEAs restricted the access of schools to HE provision; HE became marginalised with a large drop in registrations for long courses. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that schools with a larger proportion of the devolved INSET budget could not support expensive long-term award-bearing courses and in any case were more likely to promote expenditure with more direct school-related benefit. Nonetheless HEIs were learning how to repackage themselves, with the development of new innovative models of provision. As Glover and Law (1996) describe, HEIs, which could no longer count on being traditional 'expert providers', were moving away from the old 'provider-recipient' relationships towards professional training partnerships and 'customer-marketeer' relationships, where schools negotiate what they want to purchase in the marketplace. HEIs were progressively transforming - whether by conviction or through necessity - into 'learning support agencies'.

There was now more planning, purpose and structure to CPD than ever before. However this was not to be the end of government inspired change. The market ethic was further strengthened by the advent of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), which was established in 1994. Charged with the raising of standards in schools - which according to its Chairman depended crucially on teachers and headteachers (Parker, 1995) - the TTA concentrated initially on its brief for initial teacher training. However by 1995 it was discussing with the Secretary of State how it might pursue one of its key aims: 'to promote more effective, efficient and targeted professional development for teachers which has the maximum impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' education' (TTA, 1996a). A Mori poll was conducted with schools and INSET providers on behalf of the TTA to survey the nature of existing provision. The report defined CPD as ' development of teachers' professional knowledge, understanding and skills so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom'. Despite the advances in structure and organisation of CPD in recent years the survey found that CPD still operated 'on an ad hoc basis with no real linkage across school development planning, personal development

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planning and teachers' appraisals' (Page & Fisher-Jones, 1995). At the same time the TTA consulted widely about priorities, funding strategies and possible future models for CPD. Results followed very quickly. In 1995 eight areas were proposed as national priorities;

- school leadership and management
- subject leadership
- specialist teaching in the primary phase (subject co-ordinators)
- key stage 2 subject knowledge and pedagogy (particularly literacy, mathematics, science and design/technology)
- early years teaching
- effective teaching in the 14-19 phase
- information and communication technology
- special educational needs co-ordinators.

The announcement of the future strategic direction for CPD soon followed:

> The cornerstone of this work is the development of a national framework of professional standards and qualifications for the teaching profession. The framework has a central role to play in raising the professional status of teachers and establishing clear expectations at key points in this most demanding of professions (TTA, 1997a).

Based on explicit, national, professional standards, the framework proposed a radical new scheme of career long development (Tomlinson, 1997). The key points in the framework are:

- National standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) - the career entry standard with QTS representing the first national professional qualification in the framework from 1998. From 1999, new entrants with QTS will also have to demonstrate competence against a further set of modified standards at the end of the first year of teaching.
- Advanced Skills Teachers - to enable the best classroom teachers to play as full a part as possible in raising standards.
- National standards for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) - to clarify responsibilities arising from the Code of

Practice for SEN. Consultation occurred in 1997 and draft standards were published in 1998.

- National standards for subject leaders - for effective subject co-ordination and management. Consultation was held in 1997 and the final standards were published later in the year.

- National standards for headteachers - these were the first to be defined and underpin the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), launched in 1997 for aspiring headteachers, the Headteacher Leadership and Management Project (HEADLAMP) for newly appointed headteachers, already well established, and Training for Serving Headteachers, which commenced in Autumn 1998 (TTA, 1997a).

Thus with great speed the TTA established a radical new structure for a national system of CPD and had defined its content. It then moved to gain control of the funding for award-bearing courses for teachers in HEIs from HEFCE, which it did from September 1996, thus taking control of the last area of CPD which had been accountable to a different body. This controversial move was cautiously welcomed by Gaunt (1997) as she assumed that TTA funding would be earmarked for education rather than be vired to other parts of the institution. Before this assertion could be tested however, the TTA announced that henceforward HEIs would have to bid for future INSET funding on a three year cycle; to be successful, bids would have to closely follow TTA criteria and priorities (TTA, 1997b). Courses deemed not to meet the approved criteria would not be supported, thus threatening the traditional independence of HEIs. LEAs and outside (private) bodies were allowed to bid into this fund for the first time, and consortium bids were to be encouraged. The bidding process commenced in 1997 with the results announced early in 1998. Fury erupted when the results of the bidding were announced and it transpired that almost one half of the bidding HEIs had been totally unsuccessful and would have no new funding for at least three years (Kirkman, 1998) thus effectively terminating their award-bearing provision once current funding had run out. The TTA had

demonstrated the mechanics of the INSET market in a startlingly effective way. It remained to be seen what the long-term effect would be on HEIs.

While there was now a clear structure and strategic plan for the future of CPD a number of questions must be asked. Is the structure on offer what teachers really wanted? There was much unease about the speed of the consultation process and its rigor; the documentation offered for comment gave few real alternative choices. The same can be said of the content of training so far revealed. With the TTA's focus on training as opposed to education there are future threats to professional/academic development, as opposed to the acquisition of skills in particular contexts. There is no sign of any proposed *entitlement* to funding or secondment for teachers wishing to undertake CPD. With existing funding already being re-directed towards TTA criteria and priorities, will a lack of finance for anything other than approved courses run through a highly centralised system mean that teachers will be denied access to the wide range of professional and academic activities described above, which had developed quite independently of the new INSET market? Day et al. (1993) believe that this is so, stating 'in the market-led model of in-service education now predominant in English schools opportunities for long-term teacher growth are being lost'.

Special educational needs and continuing professional development

The measures described above - a huge increase in government initiatives and interventions, privatisation, central control and the adoption of market disciplines - as well as having an effect on CPD in general, have naturally had implications for the area of special educational needs (SEN). Indeed it may be argued that the affect of all this on professional development specifically directed at special needs has been enhanced in some particular aspects, resulting in a worsening of overall provision to a degree significantly greater than that experienced by other areas.

Garrett summarises the current position:

> ... half a century after the 1944 Education Act many children
> with special educational needs still do not have access to an

appropriately trained teacher and, with so many of those early pioneering campaigners reaching the age of retirement, as well as financial cutbacks and the closing of special education courses in colleges and institutions of higher education, the future looks bleaker (Garrett, 1996, p. 23).

Sandow (1997) endorses this, representing the views of teachers and teacher educators concerned with the education of children with SEN by claiming that they are becoming increasingly anxious about the dwindling supply of professionals with an understanding of, and commitment to, the twenty percent of children who experience difficulties in school. She highlights two areas where government policy has had a significant negative impact on SEN training and development. The first of these is what she describes as the dramatic reduction in the special education element of initial teacher education (ITE) courses, the content of which had developed following the 1981 Education Act but was now curtailed because of the demands on initial training after the reforms of teacher education starting in the early 1990s. This coincided with the phasing out of specialist SEN provision which comprised a major component of some ITE courses, usually in specific areas such as 'severe learning difficulties'. The corollary of this reduced emphasis on SEN at the initial training stage was the increased importance of the availability of appropriate and sufficient CPD. However Sandow draws attention to a second effect of government policy, the demise of long (one year full-time or two year part-time) in-service SEN courses in HE institutions, and their replacement often by short (5, 10 or 20 day) GEST-type courses organised by LEAs and/or HE, or as modules within longer award-bearing courses in HE. This has had the effect of reducing the overall amount of time devoted to an intensive consideration of SEN issues. Miller & Garner (1997) echo the concerns expressed about the training of teachers in the area of SEN, recognising the increased demand for teachers with additional skills and knowledge, yet emphasising that there currently exist few opportunities for access to appropriate post-experience training. They also indicate a third area of SEN training provision which has been significantly affected by government intervention, that of training in the specialist, lower incidence, areas of SEN.

They claim that here also the demise of the full-time courses, which have traditionally satisfied this demand, has not been compensated for by the increase in part-time, modular and distance learning professional development programmes. They provide figures which show, for example, that there has been a 50% reduction since 1989 in the numbers of teachers of the deaf trained each year and that professional development opportunities for teachers working in the area of severe learning difficulties had diminished dramatically.

How can this situation have arisen, since, as Davies & Garner (1997) point out, for the past 30 years, official advice, reports and Government legislation have called for advances in professional development to ensure improvement in SEN provision?

It was government action to end the INSET 'pooling' system, described earlier, starting with DES Circular 3/83 (DES, 1983) and then the White Paper 'Better Schools'(DES, 1985), which resulted in a virtual cessation of full-time teacher secondments with the consequent demise of specialist longer courses in HE. This hit special education particularly severely as these long courses were the traditional way in which teachers received intensive training or retraining in areas ranging from mainstream to very specialist provision. Sandow describes the nature of these courses as:

> ... discipline-focused, including sociology and psychology as
> well as identification, assessment and curriculum. Courses were
> thus a mixture of 'liberal education' with a curricular element
> .... (Sandow, 1997, p. 85).

While acknowledging limitations, such as a tendency to perpetuate 'within-child' models of special education, she points out that such courses allowed teachers the time and facilities (together with the opportunity to visit differing sorts of provision and to observe different models of practice) with which to rethink their own practice. Full-time courses also ensured relatively generous staffing in HEIs with the time and opportunity to update and reinforce their knowledge of provision and curriculum development. Such luxuries disappeared with the demise of the long courses and their replacement by ever shorter and part-time

provision, and already by the end of the 1980s they were being lamented by a concerned Inspectorate (HMI, 1990).

However one consequence of early government attempts to cap the INSET 'pool' had been the designation of certain priority areas for INSET funding and Circular 3/83 (op. cit.) established the criteria for one such area, that of professional development in SEN for mainstream teachers in the wake of the 1981 Education Act. Thus Cowne (1998) notes the establishment of one-term full-time courses for 'teachers with designated responsibilities for special educational needs in ordinary schools'. She describes how these 'Special Educational Needs in Ordinary Schools' (SENIOS) courses targeted teachers in ordinary primary and secondary schools who were able to effect change in their schools. The term 'designated teacher' was coined by the DES for participants; this was overtaken by 'Special Needs Co-ordinator' (SENCO) in the Code of Practice which followed the 1983 Education Act (DfE, 1994b). Mittler (1993) has pointed to the success of these courses, developed in partnership between teachers, headteachers, LEAs and HE, especially where the management of change was well planned and resourced. Sadly, he reports how these courses 'withered on the vine' due to a number of factors. Changes to the GEST funding of INSET meant that LEAs were unable to find an increasing share of the cost, and transfer of INSET budgets to schools under LMS, together with the effects of the quasi-market, resulted in schools determining their own needs and priorities and making their own choices as to how they would fulfil them. Some part-time provision survived, often necessitating teachers to pay their own fees.

The current trend is towards even shorter or part-time events. Mittler (op. cit.) states that long SEN courses have been replaced by a large number of short one day training events, mostly based in schools and delivered by other teachers and by advisers, often making use of the five statutory training days per year. Schools, taking advantage of the proliferation of private trainers encouraged by the development of the market in training, spend an increasing proportion of their LMS budgets on short external events conducted by consultants whose ranks contain a large number of ex-advisers, ex-HMIs or senior school staff who

have taken early retirement. Thomas (1993) points out the possible dangers of a model of professional development based within individual schools which could lead to 'recycled bad practice' and would not encourage collaboration or partnership with other schools, LEAs or HE. Further, since the establishment of the education market, it is easy for schools to assign a low priority to SEN in the face of the need to attract a high proportion of pupils who will enhance their position in the educational 'league tables'. CPD for special needs in this context is therefore likely to be neglected also.

LEAs, no longer able to finance full-time secondments and having to devolve more INSET funding to schools under LMS, have utilised GEST funding for short courses aimed at government priority areas, which were adjusted each year, with individual schools choosing whether or not to buy in to the provision. SEN priorities were aimed largely at the ordinary school, but the impermanence of the various categories and the consequent uncertainty about continuity of funding and personnel, led often to 'hand-to-mouth' planning. The government proportion of the funding for these courses reduced over time and the money for local priorities was then removed, leading to a significant decrease in provision. The GEST model was changed yet again, overtaken by the 'Standards Fund' from April 1998. This involved a bidding process, the success of which is based on proposed provision meeting pre-determined TTA criteria, largely in relation to school improvement.

The HE response to the demands of the market has been, in general, to develop modular award-bearing programmes often of a generic nature, with different pathways leading to Certificates, Diplomas and Master's degrees. An appropriate choice of units can lead to specific qualifications in particular subjects, or areas such as SEN. These have become cost-effective part-time replacements for the now unsustainable full-time tutor-intensive specialist courses. Such programmes are popular with teachers because of their flexible nature which allows different attendance modes, the facility to accumulate credit towards a qualification over a period of time which need not be continuous, and the possibility of gaining credit for prior learning. The unitised nature also means that payment can be made as

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individual modules are taken. This is an important facility since, as Davies & Garner (1997) state, the lack of financial support for these programmes by schools and LEAs means that a high number of teachers wishing to improve their qualifications or follow more substantial developmental courses must pay their own fees (currently over 75% of teacher students in some HE institutions do this). As they point out, this represents a situation which would not be tolerated in most other professions or commercial organisations. Sandow (1997) describes the advantages of a system where various SEN modules were part of a larger in-service programme, giving an element of choice to teachers who could construct their own learning package according to their needs within a convenient, flexible framework. The advantages to HE were economies of scale and larger and more viable teaching groups. Teachers with a wide range of experience and specialisms could come together and share their concerns. Nonetheless the new modular programmes can be subject to a number of criticisms. The coherence of a particular programme of study chosen by a teacher could be open to question, with a suspicion that the 'sum of the parts' was not necessarily an experience equivalent to the earlier specialist courses. Individual SEN modules, typically consisting of 15-30 hours (contact time), were felt to be not as substantial as the earlier courses. While there was a commendable emphasis on school based investigative projects and teacher reflection, there was less opportunity for a discipline-based approach or a thorough study of developmental issues. Wedell, in O'Grady (1995), points out that with such programmes it is often difficult to tell whether a teacher has a recognised qualification or not. As reported above, the change of responsibility for INSET from HEFCE to the TTA resulted in the termination of funding for such award-bearing provision in almost one half of HEIs (Kirkman, 1998). This clearly was to have a drastic affect on SEN INSET programmes across the country - as it did also for other types of provision – the full implications of which were to become apparent, as institutions considered how they could change their portfolios in order to make up the funding shortfall.

It is ironic that the same White Paper 'Better Schools' (1985) which led to the end of the 'pool', and the consequent dramatic affect on INSET opportunities, should also have accepted the recommendation of ACSET (DES, 1984), that all

specialist initial training courses be phased out. These courses were for teachers who intended to work in areas such as severe learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairment. Mittler (1993) describes how the ACSET decision was made in good faith; in the context of the 'integration' debate of the time it was felt that there was a need for all teachers to have experience of mainstream schools before committing themselves to narrow specialisation. However the expectation was that that there would be sufficient funded in-service opportunities available for teachers to take advanced courses. ACSET had been disbanded by the government by the time that it was realised that this would not be the case. The result of all this is a crisis in the supply of teachers with the required mandatory qualification in hearing or visual impairment, and for severe learning difficulties (Tilstone & Upton, 1993). Despite being government priority areas, LEAs are unable to fund their share and places are left unfilled and the situation worsens by the year (Mittler op. cit.).

Similar concerns are apparent about the special education content of current ITE courses. In the context of a 'national curriculum' for teacher training announced by the TTA (1997c), Davies & Garner (1997) make the case for a significant increase in SEN experience for students undertaking ITE courses, claiming that the evidence to date 'suggests that an important NQT (newly qualified teacher) need is being marginalised'. This has come about because the 'special education element' in subject or phase-based courses, which had become firmly established following the 1981 Education Act, has been severely eroded by the effects of DfE Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 (DfE, 1992b & 1993b). These required a much larger input of schools into teacher training courses, resulting in a transfer of resources from HE to the school sector, and a move towards 'on the job' training. Davies & Garner predict that NQTs will have less time to consider important conceptual issues in SEN and only nominal direct input on practical matters relating to SEN. The results of research by Garner, reported in Budge, (1996), show that NQTs are totally unprepared for the challenges posed by special needs pupils. Special needs training for most students is 'lightweight and largely inconsequential' and courses 'chaotic and piecemeal'. It is clear from the earlier debate that this state of affairs is unlikely to be ameliorated by the

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provision of adequate, appropriate and properly resourced INSET following initial training.

It would seem clear from the evidence considered above that government intervention in education and the attempts to develop a market-oriented system through the establishment of LMS and the dynamic for competition has resulted in a serious diminution of training opportunities in SEN in all aspects. In fact, as Housden asserts, the market driven approach described in detail earlier has had major, damaging implications for educational provision across the whole SEN sector:

> It is a simple issue, rooted in a basic tension between the logic of market forces and the requirement to provide a common educational entitlement for all (Housden, 1993, p. 10).

He points out that it is not truly a free market and parents of pupils with special needs present a doubly unattractive proposition to popular schools; in market parlance they will have less to invest and require a higher dividend. Likewise, Shaw (1996) asserts: 'the spectre of being unwanted pupils looms over children with SEN'. It might be held that the concept of the market has had a more deleterious effect on special needs in general than on any other area or phase of education (Nixon et al. 1996; Ball et al. 1994; Coulby, 1997). Vincent believes that:

> ... a market-oriented discourse, within a quasi-market framework, encourages an emphasis on individualism which is antithetical to the concept of a planned and pervasive approach to provision for 'vulnerable children' (Vincent et al. (1994), p. 275).

In response to widespread concern that teacher education for SEN across the range from initial to specialist training was not meeting existing demands, and that such training had become 'fragmented and poorly supervised, with the mechanisms of funding at the heart of the problem' (O'Grady, 1995), the Special Educational Needs Training Consortium (SENTC) was formed in 1993 from a number of existing widely representative groups. It was set up in order to collect

information, develop strategic planning, support trainers and generally to provide a forum for the promotion of all aspects of training and development for SEN (Miller & Garner, 1997). Approaches by SENTC to the DfEE led to funding being made available to establish a working party in February 1995, which at least appeared to give official recognition to the problems of teacher supply in SEN. The terms of reference were to:

- review the systems currently in place for the training of teachers of pupils with SEN
- make recommendations on how these systems might be improved to make more efficient and/or effective use of resources in the light of the respective roles and responsibilities of those involved in the provision of teacher training.

The working party considered the areas of ITE and induction, CPD, and funding issues. It reported one year later in February 1996 (SENTC, 1996). The report found major concerns with the quality and extent of ITE. Time for SEN issues in ITE courses was 'minimal' and much depended on the quality of SEN policy and practice in the partnership schools, and the expertise and motivation of the mentors. The report recommended core areas of competency for teaching pupils with SEN and acknowledged the importance of the induction phase for NQTs, in particular the need for an appropriate mentor. In terms of CPD, the report recommended a coherent approach to provision, flexible enough to address the needs of teachers, assistants, residential staff, governors and managers. Provision should be made for all teachers, since if all teachers are to be effective, opportunities should be made available to enhance their skills in teaching pupils with a wide range of needs. Target numbers of teachers needing specialist qualifications (including sensory impairment and severe learning difficulties) should be set and achieved. In terms of funding, a strategic policy is required and the establishment of a Special Educational Needs Training Advisory Group was recommended to offer support to the DfEE and TTA for the process of strategic policy formulation.

Certainly as Davies & Garner (1997) state, the SENTC report has provided central government with up to date information concerning the state of teacher

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education and professional development in SEN, and a set of helpful suggestions to move things forward. However Miller & Garner (1997) relate the response of the (Conservative) Secretary of State to the report made in August 1996. While the recommendations relating to ITE and induction have, in general, been accepted, the overall response is a 'mixed bag' and major recommendations were either ignored or not accepted. The implication could be drawn therefore that SEN training is considered to be a one-off event, occurring only at the start of a teacher's career. This was not an encouraging response to what is increasingly termed 'a crisis'.

The TTA followed SENTC by conducting its own survey, albeit over a considerably shorter time-scale, undertaken in order to 'establish a national picture of SEN training as currently provided by or through HEIs'. The stated intention was to use the information gained to assist with the development of an SEN action plan to be proposed by the new (Labour) government. In a generally descriptive report, the TTA adopted a significantly different thrust to that of SENTC. While asserting that HEIs in England and Wales make a 'significant' contribution to the provision of SEN training, nonetheless the report claims 'significant' variations in staffing, facilities and resources, in the extent and quality of partnership arrangements and in the range of specialist expertise. What is available to schools and teachers varies 'significantly' from area to area. Further, the profile of training staff is an ageing one, leading the TTA to conclude that the position in the colleges in the not-too-distant future is likely to be that of 'a declining base of trainers and a declining base of SEN expertise' (TTA, 1997d).

Perhaps the record of the Labour government will turn out to be different from that of its predecessor. However to date the only tangible developments have been the publication of the national standards for SENCOs, effective from May 1998, part of the TTA's CPD framework which defines expectations and expertise for teachers in key roles (TTA, 1998a), and the publication of consultation documents on national standards for SEN specialist teachers together with options for the delivery of training for SEN specialists. The latter

is defined as 'a teacher working directly or indirectly with pupils with severe and complex forms of SEN' and the standards when agreed will 'help clarify specialist roles and subsequently gauge the extent of training and development needs' (TTA, 1998b). The brief consultation period ended in December 1998. Nevertheless the publication of such documentation, however worthy the sentiment, does not in itself produce sufficient and appropriate training places with adequate funding and resources. However press reports then announced that the government was to launch a fundamental review of the future of the TTA, while David Blunkett, the Secretary of State, stated that the DfEE would be taking a more direct role in its 'key' training initiatives (TES, 1999). Thus the future of the TTA seemed to be in some doubt; the responsibility and funding for NPQH headteacher training was removed to the National College for School Leadership, although the TTA retained its role in other CPD areas.

Davies & Garner summarise the present position thus:

> 'teacher education in SEN ... has not kept pace with the reorientation in thinking and the notable developments for children with SEN subsequent to the 1981 Education Act and reinforced by the 1994 Code of Practice. This discrepancy may seriously impair any chances of maintaining the progress made thus far, not least in respect of inclusivity and the individual rights of children with learning difficulties' (ibid. 1997, p. 7).

The professional needs of teachers in relation to special educational needs

What do teachers want in terms of their professional development? Certainly since 1997 a plethora of information has been released by the incoming Labour administration telling them what they need.

The Green Paper 'Excellence for all Children. Meeting Special Educational Needs' (DfEE, 1997b) has been the defining document of the present Labour government in respect of the future of special education. This consultation document, prepared by the newly established National Advisory Group (a consequence of the SENTC Report) chaired by the Minister responsible for

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SEN, was described in the introduction as the first step in a fundamental government reappraisal of the way that special educational needs were met. Themes addressed included the raising of standards with an emphasis on target setting, reflecting the thrust of the earlier White Paper 'Excellence in Schools' (DfEE, 1997a), the improvement of literacy and numeracy, and a focus on the impact of information and communications technology (ICT). There was also a consideration of the need for improved support for parents and their greater involvement in decision-making. Proposals were put forward for a revised Code of Practice with less bureaucracy and fewer statements, with earlier assessments of special needs. Regional planning for SEN provision was proposed. Positive approaches to the issues surrounding emotional and behavioural difficulties were also discussed. However a major theme, and the one which attracted the most professional and media attention, was that of inclusion:

> ... while recognising the paramount importance of meeting the needs of individual children, and the necessity of specialist provision for some, we shall promote the inclusion of children with SEN within mainstream schools where possible. We shall remove barriers which get in the way of meeting the needs of all children and redefine the role of special schools to develop a network of specialist support (DfEE, 1997b, p. 5).

The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education was also endorsed; this takes a human rights stance, calling on governments to promote the approach of inclusive education by enabling schools to serve all children and thereby combat discrimination (UNESCO, 1994). A strong case for inclusion was made on social and moral, as well as educational, grounds; not only with pupils receiving their education in a mainstream school but wherever possible joining fully with their peers in the curriculum and life of the school.

Since this issue has most important implications for this study, of all those contained in the 1997 Green Paper, it is significant that a further theme addressed was that of professional development:

> ... we shall boost opportunities for staff development in SEN,
>
> and see that good practice is widely disseminated, so that the
>
> principles of this Green Paper can be put into practice (ibid.p.5).

The success of the proposals was seen to be how far they were reflected in the work of mainstream schools. The Green Paper pointed out that while the SENCO usually had the delegated responsibility for overseeing the day to day operation of the school's SEN policy, it was the responsibility of all teachers and support staff to be aware of the school's responsibilities for children with SEN, apply the guidance in the Code of Practice and work together to raise standards for all pupils. Emphasis was placed on the importance of ITE and it was pointed out that new standards in special needs training had already been announced which all trainee teachers would have to achieve in order to qualify. ITE courses were to be 'encouraged' to include a greater emphasis on SEN. The new induction year introduced in the earlier White Paper would 'allow NQTs to consolidate their skills in relation to the standards ... and to identify further development needs' (ibid. p. 62). SENCOs, it was claimed, would provide specialist support to new teachers in their first year. In terms of CPD (covered in two paragraphs), the Green Paper stated that all teachers would be 'encouraged' to develop further skills in curriculum planning, teaching and assessing children with SEN. Partnerships between LEAs and HE would be 'encouraged' to satisfy the training needs of generalist and specialist teachers in school. Training opportunities for Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) were recognised to be patchy, and needed to be improved, as the LSAs' contribution was seen to be central to successful SEN practice in schools. The possibility of developing the existing SENCO standards into a national qualification was mooted and a review of the mandatory qualification for specialist SEN teachers, to include the increasingly complex range of needs, was signalled. Training for headteachers already contained standards addressing their responsibilities towards SEN, the need for improved training for special needs school governors was recognised, while new patterns of training for educational psychologists would be needed.

The Green Paper was widely welcomed (Norwich, 1998; Lewis, 1998), and especially so for its emphasis on inclusion and collaboration (Daniels, 1998;

Wedell, 1998), with Gary Thomas (1997b) particularly approving the examples of good, practical ideas on how inclusion might be stimulated. While generally supportive, there were however specific criticisms. Moore (1998) claims that there is little that is new and was disappointed that there had not been a more radical and fundamental analysis of philosophy and practice. He laments the lack of emphasis on post-school provision in respect of inclusion and while he accepts that the Tomlinson Report (FEFC, 1996) dealt with this phase, he feels that it was not adequate enough in itself and should have been elaborated here. Norwich (op. cit.) is concerned about contradictory policy goals; the paper promotes more inclusion while supporting the continued existence of special schools. Wedell (op. cit.) is concerned about the implications for funding, relegated to an appendix of the document. The main opposition came, perhaps predictably from the teacher unions, Gardiner (1997) reporting the view that the government's good intentions could collapse without money, resources and training. The National Union of Teachers in particular was concerned about a possible mechanistic approach to inclusion, and the influx into mainstream schools of a large number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Gardiner, 1998).

As regards the proposals on professional development, it is hard to escape the feeling that there was not much that was new. The measures described for ITE, the induction period and headteacher training had been in operation for some time. These proposals will not change the fact that there is little enough time in ITE already for SEN issues. Despite the importance of preparing student teachers for inclusive education, so that it becomes an inclusive element of learning to teach (Thomas, L, 1997), it is not easy to see how more can be included without (further) radical amendments to the ITE 'national curriculum'. Hard-pressed SENCOs will not find it easy to support the induction year more than they do already. Little of a specific nature was said about CPD for both generalist and specialist teachers in mainstream schools. It is the generalist that perhaps has the most to learn; attitudes must change, and the cost and time implications are enormous. There is nothing new about the suggested strategy of partnerships between LEAs and HE, except that many of these had been

destroyed by the withdrawal of INSET funding from half the providers. The TTA approach would place a great reliance on adhering to the standards, with the possibility of a closely controlled national qualification with no scope for experimentation. Finally, there is a repeated use of the word 'encourage' when referring to proposed measures. How effective would *'encouragement'* be? More worrying, in the light of the way that teachers have been 'encouraged' previously, what form would this encouragement take? So, is the Green Paper merely political posturing? As Simmons (1998) asks, what is it really about? 'Is it … the most far-reaching review of SEN provision since Warnock? … or is it a money saving exercise under the guise of some warm words?'

Nonetheless, the government announced (TTA, 1998b) that responses to the Green Paper had supported the underlying principles. The schools minister, Estelle Morris, reported at the Association of Chief Education Officers' 1998 Spring Conference that 4 out of 5 LEAs welcomed the Green Paper, with none opposed. She indicated that the responses showed strong support for the principle of inclusion. Using the Green Paper as a basis, the Government published a 'Programme of Action' (DfEE, 1998b), which instituted a series of co-ordinated projects 'to kick start developments' and to promote inclusion wherever possible. These included: working with a group of LEAs and schools to establish the conditions for promoting inclusion; finding ways for staffs of special and mainstream schools to support each other; funding research to assess the relative costs, benefits and implications of educating children with special needs in mainstream and special schools (should not this have been done *before* publication of the Green Paper?); consulting LEAs and schools about courses and qualifications for LSAs; issuing guidance on Governors' training needs; deploying National Lottery funding for teachers' ICT training in respect of children with SEN. The intention was to ensure that all teachers should have the support and training they needed. Significant extra funding was made available through the Standards Fund for these initiatives, with a financial boost of £21 million for the training of staff.

As Davies & Garner (2000) point out, the Programme is being operationalised in a most unpromising context; Wearmouth et al. (2000) note the absence of discussion on the nature of the professional development needed to embed changes in practice in order to support inclusion. There appears to be little provision for the extensive training needs of mainstream teachers other than SENCOs and LSAs.

Government proposals for continuing professional development

Aldrich (1999) reporting the arrival of a further Green Paper 'Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change' (DfEE, 1998a) cites this as evidence that since the advent of a Labour government, the pace of change has quickened rather than slowed. He claims that teachers have learnt to accept change as a permanent feature in their lives. However, the particular challenge referred to in the paper is the introduction of performance related pay (PRP) for teachers, and although Millett (1999) has tried to emphasise aspects in the paper such as improvements in ITE and opportunities for systematic and regular training at every stage, it is the proposals for PRP that have dominated professional opinion. Rafferty (1999) reports the result of polls showing teachers' outright opposition to linking pay to pupils' results. This reaction is likely to overshadow the accompanying proposals for professional development, designed to support the introduction of PRP. While not specifically related to SEN, the 1998 Green Paper introduces the concept of sabbaticals, the creation of the National College for School Leadership, a national Code of Practice (and more inspection) for training providers, and an emphasis on INSET for the whole profession, with a contractual duty for teachers to keep their skills up to date, albeit with the sting in the tail of 'more training out of school hours to minimise disruption'. A new (and welcome) concept is the identification of three priorities - national, school and individual - for CPD, although it remains to be seen whether these are equal, and achievable, priorities. Hart (1999), putting the union view, points to the enormous training and development demands associated with the Green Paper, requiring a high quality investment.

No further details were released until some two years later when the government launched a major consultation exercise (DfEE, 2000b) on the professional support needed for teaching and learning. The document was described as 'work in progress' and asked questions rather than offering answers. It stated that all teachers should have an entitlement to high quality learning opportunities, essential if the introduction of PRP is linked to performance management, since teachers will need to rely on improving their skills to meet annual targets. Moon (2000) points out that the paper contains a number of gaps: no impression is given of what high quality professional development might look like, and the issue of entitlement and resources is 'ducked'. Indeed no firm financial commitments are made. After a further year, the government announced a number of measures, arising from their consultation, to develop training opportunities for teachers (DfEE, 2001a). These included sabbaticals for teachers working in challenging schools, professional bursaries and 'best practice' research scholarships. These do not appear to represent the large-scale development needed to embrace the mass of serving teachers. At the same time, a code of practice for 'good value' CPD was published (DfEE, 2001b). However, at the official launch of these documents, the Secretary of State for Education acknowledged that the recruitment shortfall was limiting his capacity to expand professional development.

Conclusion

The various Green Paper proposals have much ground to make up, since as Horne points out:

> Professional development has slowly but inexorably moved away from the personal to become institutional. This shift of emphasis raises questions about whose training needs are being fulfilled. The Government has a national agenda rooted in effectiveness and improvement. Each school sets targets based on these criteria, leaving little room for manoeuvre. Individual teachers' targets are thus filtered through national priorities, school needs and curriculum demands (Horne, 1998, p. 32).

Nonetheless, as Bines (1998) claims, 'teachers are not generally resistant to change. Indeed they have accommodated a huge amount' and points out that the problem of low teacher morale has not been addressed; insufficient attention has been given to creating the right climate for future developments. That this climate is far from being achieved, at least in terms of CPD, was demonstrated by the pronouncement from the now ex-Chief Inspector for schools at the 1999 annual Office for Standards in Education lecture, in which he suggested that teachers should not question the government about the undermining of their professional autonomy, but instead should 'learn to accept democratically determined education policy and get on with raising standards'. He himself undermined teachers' confidence in their training by suggesting that they abandon their dependency on experts in universities and town halls. The challenge is 'to rescue the debate about education from the convolutions on academic discourse and the empty rhetoric of management jargon'. Good teachers 'do not need to travel to the nearest university to soak up the wisdom of the professor of professional development' (Passmore, 1999). Presumably they should simply and quietly accept the government's view of their needs?

If teachers face an 'inclusive' future, how far does the training on offer - if it materialises - fit? Gary Thomas (1997a) claims that many teachers have the will to accommodate and educate children with serious disabilities in their classes but are overwhelmed by the prospect of not being able to cope or not knowing the right thing to do. Special needs should be an element of the pedagogy of all teachers (Ainscow, 1997), indeed, teacher development in SEN needs to be career-long.

However, despite the publication of two Education Acts, a White Paper, two Green papers, frequent consultation exercises, several sets of national standards, a framework of qualifications, a list of priority areas and criteria for the development of acceptable courses, the *reality* remains the under-funded, under-resourced, diminishing professional development arena highlighted by the SENTC report. There seem to be a lot of words and little action. Between the pronouncements of successive governments and their deeds, there appears to be

a rhetoric/reality gap and it is the intention of this study to explore the nature of it.

How does the 'freedom' of the market equate with increased government control of CPD? Do teachers really want what they are told they need in terms of their career development? Do they want what the TTA itself refers to as the 'heavy touch' of prescription? (TTA, 1998b). Do they want a more 'liberal' education' (Sandow, 1997), more opportunity for reflective learning (Schön, 1983), or do they want 'quick tips' as opposed to lifelong development? Despite the consultation exercises, the pilot research conducted for this study suggests that the voice of the individual teacher has not been heard. However, as Tilstone & Upton (1993) point out, teachers working in the area of special needs have accomplished major achievements during a long period of turmoil; they alone are acutely aware of what they need. Therefore it is teachers' views about what is appropriate for their development in terms of the future direction of special needs education that this study seeks to elicit.

Summary

Thus the major underpinning themes of this literature review include those of rapid and radical educational change, particularly that engendered by the 'new right' ideologies leading to the predominance of the educational quasi-market, together with the associated increase of state intervention in education. Similar issues affect the provision of continuing professional development; there are tensions within a market oriented delivery system that imply the loss of opportunities for professional growth, and a concern that teacher education for special needs is not adequate to meet current demands. There is considerable unease about market forces that appear to act directly and substantially against children with special needs, and that market values may serve to inhibit the move to a more inclusive education system.

As the State tightens its grip on the education system, it is legitimate to enquire what effect all this is having on teachers and pupils; how it is influencing

teachers' practice, and what are the implications in terms of educational opportunity and equity. These issues, as they impinge on teacher development and children's access to the curriculum, will inform the investigation and will be taken up again in the discussion in chapter six.

CHAPTER THREE
Methodological Considerations

Theoretical perspectives

The intention of this research, as stated in chapter one, is to elicit teachers' views about what is appropriate for their own professional development. In order to operationalise this intention it is proposed to highlight and focus upon the issues which are of importance to the teachers; it is therefore necessary to select an appropriate methodology which will allow the expression of teachers' views without allowing the preconceptions and constraints imposed by others to shape the agenda.

My consideration of available methodologies was informed by the relationships between the five phases which define the research process as proposed by Denzin & Lincoln (1994). These phases are described as: the researcher as a multicultural subject (including locating the research within the depth and complexity of various historical perspectives, and confronting the ethics and policy of research), theoretical paradigms and perspectives, research strategies, methods of data collection and analysis, and the art of interpretation and presentation. These will be addressed in the course of this chapter.

The word 'research' involves finding out, and always implies a systematic investigation. Anderson (1990) defines research in education as a disciplined attempt to address questions or solve problems through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of description, explanation, generalisation and prediction. Such research can take a wide variety of forms and serve a wide variety of purposes, with a great diversity of method and data. As Goodwin & Goodwin (1996) state, there are many ways to slice the research pie - many different typologies have been advanced - but the types or methods have in common the generation of knowledge at varying levels of detail, sophistication and generalisability. Anderson (op. cit.) summarises this position by stating that research is fundamentally a problem-solving activity which addresses a problem

or tests a hypothesis. He goes on to state his personal preference in terms of, specifically, educational research:

> I prefer the problem-solving formulation which relies on a series of specific questions addressed by data collected for the purpose. In the traditional research approach, the researcher derives hypotheses which are tested under various conditions and then accepted or rejected, generally in accordance with pre-established conventions. This approach is best suited for certain problems and methods rooted in experimental studies, but is of limited use for more general problem solving ... The formulation of research problems and questions is a more general and generalisable approach to research (Anderson, op. cit. pp. 4-5)

The traditional approaches referred to by Anderson were derived from the rise of educational research in the late C19th and early C20th, where developments were firmly rooted in the belief that improvement must be based on empirical knowledge produced by scientific method. Involvement with psychology led to a particular interpretation of the scientific approach, since termed 'positivist', which placed emphasis on the need for *quantitative* measurement of characteristics and behaviour. Later sociological research and educational evaluation, while not experimental in nature, employed a quantitative approach.

However, from some quarters there was a reaction to positivism, and a later interpretative approach, which relied on verbal rather than numerical data, gave rise to a *qualitative* methodology. Atkinson et al. (1993) describe how this new paradigm developed in Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a result of what were seen to be the failings of the earlier methodologies derived from psychometrics, systematic observation, survey research, etc. A number of new approaches emerged, including symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology and qualitative evaluation which did not take conventional educational wisdom for granted, and set out to explore what happened in school from the point of view of the participants. These techniques came to the fore most strongly in the fields

of sociology and curriculum evaluation. The Open University E835 Study Guide (1996, p. 16) points out that while a number of overlapping terms are used, in general, qualitative work has the following characteristics:

- a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular educational phenomena
- a tendency to work with unstructured data
- a small number of cases investigated in detail
- analysis of data ... mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations

Qualitative methodology allows researchers to learn about the social world they are investigating by means of involvement and participation in that world, in order to focus on what people say and do. Hitchcock & Hughes (1989) point out that a key assumption of this approach is that the characteristics of the natural (scientific) world and those of the social world are different and therefore the ways of investigating these worlds must be different. Individuals regularly interpret and make sense of their social worlds and so investigation must relate these interpretations to the natural everyday situations in which people live. Social life can only be understood from the point of view of the 'actors' themselves. Further, human beings are not passive; they are capable of choice and can act upon the world and change it. Subjective experience is manifested in what they do and say, thus language and meanings, observations and first-person accounts typify interpretative research.

Qualitative methodology adopts the philosophical position that multiple realities exist and so any investigation must pay regard to individual constructions and perceptions of reality. An inductive process is used to interpret phenomena; process and context are important, and findings are reported in narrative form. Analysis involves ordering of data in some sort of systematic way, usually by classifying and categorising (Open University E835 Study Guide pp. 106-9) leading to the construction of models and typologies.

Interpretive paradigms - constructivist theory

From the above, it is therefore felt that it is interpretive paradigms employing qualitative methodology that would appear to offer the best way forward for this study, which needs to understand the views or interpretations of the 'actors' involved; in this case, teachers in their 'naturalistic' setting, the school.

Denzin & Lincoln (1994) summarise the current status of qualitative research in a post-modern age. They claim that over the past two decades a blurring of disciplinary boundaries has occurred with the social sciences and humanities drawing closer together in an interpretive, qualitative approach to research and theory:

> Where only statistics, experimental designs, and survey research once stood, researchers have opened up to ethnography, unstructured interviewing, textual analysis, and historical studies .... All of these trends have fallen under the rubric of 'qualitative research' (ibid. p. ix).

They go on to offer a generic description of qualitative research: that it is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Qualitative researchers therefore study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. They point out that such research involves the use of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, observation, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Researchers must be adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing, observing and interpreting documents to intensive self-reflection and introspection. However, they caution that the field of qualitative research is far from a unified set of principles; it is characterised more by a series of essential tensions, contradictions and hesitations.

Guba & Lincoln (1994) view a paradigm as a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates, or first principles. A number of interpretive theoretical paradigms make use of qualitative research methods and strategies, ranging from

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constructivism to cultural studies, feminism, Marxism and ethnic models of study. It is intended in this study to employ the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, one of four major paradigms as described by Denzin & Lincoln (op. cit.). This is because the nature of the study is best captured by the criteria they apply to this paradigm; that it assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (the knower and subject create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. The type of narration involved in the description of such research is an interpretive case study. Terms such as 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability' and 'confirmability' tend to replace the usual positivist criteria of 'internal' and 'external validity', 'reliability' and 'objectivity'.

Schwandt (1994) interprets the term 'constructivist-interpretive' as 'naturalistic inquiry'. The nature of this type of inquiry is that it begins with issues and/or concerns of participants and unfolds through a 'dialectic' of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis and so on, that leads eventually to a joint (among inquirer and respondents) construction of a case (i.e. findings or outcomes). Constructions are attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, experience. The nature or quality of a construction that can be held depends upon the range or scope of information available to a constructor, and the constructor's sophistication in dealing with that information (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The joint constructions that issue from the activity of inquiry can be evaluated for their 'fit' with the data and information they encompass, the extent to which they 'work' or provide a credible level of understanding, and also the extent to which they have relevance. It is this process that will be followed in the present study.

Research strategy - interpretive case study

This phase of the research process begins with the formulation of the research design and is concerned with:

> 'what information most appropriately will answer specific research questions, and which strategies are most effective for obtaining it' (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 30).

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Denzin & Lincoln (1994) describe research design as a flexible set of guidelines connecting theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material. It situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions and bodies of relevant interpretive material. They further define a strategy of enquiry as comprising a bundle of skills, assumptions and practices that researchers employ as they move from their paradigm to the empirical world. At the same time strategies of inquiry connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analysing materials: for instance, the case study method relies on interviewing, observing and document analysis:

> Research strategies implement and anchor paradigms in specific
> empirical sites, or in specific methodological practices, such as
> making a case an object of study. These strategies include the
> case study, phenomenological and ethnomethodological
> techniques, as well as the use of grounded theory, biographical,
> historical action and clinical methods (ibid. p. 14)

While qualitative methodology within a constructivist-interpretive paradigm had seemed, as described above, the most likely way to achieve my intention of eliciting the views and issues which were of importance to teachers, I had been influenced in my research design by the work of Nias (1993). Her study of primary school teachers centred round teachers talking at length and in detail about their jobs. *Letting teachers talk freely seemed to be a powerful tool for* collecting appropriate material which addressed the research questions:

> It did not take me long to realise that there was a mismatch
> between what they wanted to tell me and what I wanted to
> know ... It would not be impossible ... to listen to what they
> wanted to tell me and, at the same time, also to acquire some
> information about the relevance ... of their professional
> education (Nias, 1993, p. 133)

Letting teachers talk would also help to avoid the imposition of the researcher's own values and thus reduce the effects of bias. Thus I wanted in-depth interviews to comprise the major focus of my methodology.

As noted previously, the major strategy connected with the constructivist-interpretive paradigm is some form of interpretive case study. Yin stresses the importance of the interview in such studies:

> Overall, interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well-informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation (Yin, 1994, p. 85)

First thoughts suggested that the interpretive case study would be an appropriate vehicle for an investigation which was likely to be studying aspects of teacher development across a number of schools. However, as Stake (1994) points out, the concept of 'case' is ambiguous; the case is specific, a bounded system. The proposed investigation would seem most closely to approximate to what Stake calls 'collective case study':

> ... researchers may study a number of cases jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population or general condition .... It is not the study of a collective but instrumental study extended to several cases. Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest the common characteristic .... They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorising, about a still larger collection of cases (ibid. p. 237).

Methods of data collection tend to be eclectic:

> Naturalistic, ethnographic, phenomenological caseworkers seek to see what is natural in happenings ... What the researchers are unable to see for themselves is obtained by interviewing people who did see or by finding documents recording it (ibid. p. 242).

Therefore it is these features of Stake's particular variant of the interpretive case study which will characterise the research strategy to be employed here.

Methods of data collection and analysis

As has been discussed above, the major data collection method will be that of the in-depth interview. Cohen & Manion (1994) point out that it is the direct interaction of the interview which is the source of both its advantages and disadvantages. While it allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection, a disadvantage is that it is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the researcher. Bell (1987) explains how many factors can influence responses; the manner of the interviewer, the procedures employed and the context can skew answers, known as the 'response effect'. The researcher's own views, background and status can also influence the outcome. Bias can easily creep in and has to be recognised and controlled.

Critical to the process is to determine who will be interviewed. Morse asserts that the main criterion affecting the choice of sample in such qualitative study is that it is determined according to the needs of the study, not according to external criteria such as random selection:

> Participants are representative of the same experience or knowledge; they are not selected because of their demographic reflection of the general population (Morse, 1994, p. 229).

She describes a good informant as one who has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed and is willing to participate.

Patton (1990) also maintains that the sample should be information rich and proposes a number of different sampling methods which can be used to select informants. Extreme or deviant case sampling is used to choose participants who exemplify the characteristics of interest to a high degree. Intensity sampling chooses participants who are experiential experts, authorities on a particular experience, with less emphasis on extremes of experience. Critical case sampling selects participants who are significant for the identification of critical incidents which can be generalised to other situations. Maximum variety sampling deliberately selects a heterogeneous sample in order to observe commonalities in

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their experiences. Patton claims that this latter method in particular gives high quality case descriptions and can identify significant shared patterns which may exist among participants. It is this method of sampling which would appear to offer the most appropriate context for the present study; it will be discussed again when the selection of participants is addressed in chapter four.

Having selected the sample, the question of how they will be interviewed is the next concern. Fontana & Frey (1994) point out that interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways used to understand our fellow human beings, and yet asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it seems at first. They identify the major types of interviewing as structured, group and unstructured. Structured interviews involve asking a series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories, with little room for variation in response except where occasional open-ended questions may be used. The defining characteristic is that there is very little flexibility in the way in which questions are asked or answered. The group interview involves the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in formal or informal settings, in structured or unstructured ways according to the purpose, and is frequently used in market research or by political parties in the form of 'focus groups'. They define the traditional type of unstructured interview as the open-ended ethnographic (in-depth) interview, although they also describe other forms such as oral history, creative, post-modern and gendered interviews. They summarise the main differences between structured and unstructured interviewing. The former aims to capture precise data of a codable nature in order to explain behaviour within pre-established categories, and contrasts with the use of the latter in an attempt to understand complex behaviour without imposing any a priori categorisation that might limit the field of inquiry. While unstructured interviews do not use closed questions or a formal approach, some degree of direction and control from the interviewer is legitimate where it is necessary to stay within a general focus. Wilson (1996) states:

> Although naturalistic, interviews such as these are managed to a large extent by the interviewer, who sets the agenda of questions, probes more deeply into issues of interest with

supplementary questions ... they do not use standardised schedules ... but the interviewer will use a list of topics even if the wording of specific questions is not standardised (ibid. p.95)

Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) develop this rationale:

There must still be structure ... in an unstructured interview. The key difference between the different interviewing techniques ... (is) the degree of negotiation between the interviewer and the interviewee. In the unstructured interview there is scope for the interviewer to introduce new material into the discussion which had not been thought of beforehand but arose only during the course of the interview ... the unstructured interview allows the interviewer greater scope in asking questions out of sequence and the interviewees of answering questions in their own way. The aim of the unstructured interview is to provide for a greater and freer flow of information between the researcher and the subject (ibid. p. 162).

Given the intention of 'listening to teachers talking' and concentrating on their views and the issues they feel are important, unstructured interviews would appear to offer the best opportunity of obtaining appropriate data in this study and thus will be used as the primary data gathering method. Such situations have the advantage that they are flexible and data rich. They are less constraining of the respondent than more artificial structured interviews. Wilson (1996) points out that less structured interviews tend to minimise the 'response effect' described earlier, or 'procedural reactivity', defined as changes in the expression of beliefs and attitudes, also behaviour, which come about simply through knowing that one is a research subject. However, 'personal reactivity' - the effect that a researcher's interactions with respondents may have on the research - tends to be maximal in less structured interviews and minimal in highly structured ones. Another danger is that the researcher's interpretations during data analysis, which are crucial, may be flawed or subject to bias. In the end, the credibility of the findings is a matter of trade-offs, for instance between

procedural and personal reactivity, whichever form of interview is chosen (Wilson ibid.).

In addition to unstructured interviews, it is also proposed to use some secondary methods of data gathering. Original respondents will be re-interviewed after the initial data analysis stage, in an informal, unstructured situation, in order both to confirm points made in the first interview and interpretations made from them, and to check out and discuss emerging concepts. Where possible at least one in-service training session will be observed in each school used for establishing the sample, and subsequently a group interview held with those taking part. This will provide the opportunity to gain additional perceptions and perspectives, and to discuss issues arising out of the analysis. These secondary methods are important as a means of verification, acting as a means of triangulation. Huberman & Miles (1994) define verification as checking for biases that can steal into the process of drawing conclusions, such as missing important information, skewing the analysis, selectivity and unreliability of information. Triangulation is the term most often used in connection with confirmation issues, and has, according to Huberman & Miles, multiple meanings. It may imply using different data gathering methods or finding different sources of the same phenomenon, or could also mean, simply, convergence between researchers:

> ... triangulation is less a tactic than a mode of inquiry. By self-consciously setting out to collect and double-check findings, using multiple sources and modes of evidence, the researcher will build the triangulation process into on-going data collection (ibid. p. 438).

Triangulation increases the credibility of the outcomes of research, and:

> ... has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But, acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen (Stake, 1994, p. 241).

It is also proposed to employ a research diary and a 'reference group' as part of the research process. The diary is a useful tool to record facts and impressions of the research process as it proceeds, essential at the writing-up stage, together with on-going perceptions and reflections. It can record useful information gleaned from press cuttings and informal sources, and can be used to formulate thoughts about emerging trends. It is anticipated that this will inform the context and provide a rich source of background material for the subsequent report as well as developing my own understanding. I also intend to use an existing professional group to which I have access, comprised of CPD lecturers, LEA officers, headteachers and teachers as a sort of 'reference group', which by discussing the nature of the data and the way in which it was obtained, can help to serve as a check on any possible bias in my data collection and interpretation, another form of triangulation. The group will also help to inform the choice of schools and sample.

Fontana & Frey (1994) point out that no matter how organised the researcher may be, he or she slowly becomes buried under a growing mountain of field notes, transcripts, newspaper clippings and tape recordings. Huberman & Miles (1994) stress that how data are stored and retrieved is the heart of data management; a clear working scheme is needed to avoid mistakes.

Data collected can be used either descriptively, or analytically to support interpretations. The main purpose of analysis and interpretation in qualitative practitioner research such as this is to move from description to explanation – and in some cases, theory – and then to recommendations (Open University E621 Methodology Handbook 1991, p. 97).

Thus the subsequent analysis in this study will be qualitative in character, employing the technique of thematic analysis. Full transcriptions will be made from audio recordings of each interview. Analysis will start while data collection is still proceeding to aid in focusing the research, if possible, as it continues. Data will be coded and arranged into tentative categories. These categories will then be reviewed as the data is re-explored until finally a number of major

categories are established, under which all the data can be organised without overlap for subsequent interpretation/explanation, and which are capable of being illustrated by data extract. However, it should be remembered that:

> The interpretive practice of making sense of one's findings is both artful and political ... there is no single interpretive truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 15).

How these theoretical considerations were put into practice is described in the following chapter, on implementation.

Research ethics and politics

At first sight there might appear to be some irony in the juxtaposition of the words 'ethics' and 'politics' which appear in the title of this section. However it is necessary to take both into account at the design stage of any study. The act of research does not constitute automatic permission to invade the privacy of those researched without the operation of safeguards. Qualitative researchers are invited as guests into a context; this requires good manners and adherence to an ethical code. Without this, the subjects of the research and/or their employers run the risk of embarrassment, or worse, loss of self-esteem or possibly their jobs. Limits to research behaviour need to be discussed and agreed in advance, and adhered to; care must be taken to avoid risks to human subjects, even to avoid damage to the research process itself for the sake of those who may come after. In order to obviate these problems as far as possible, the ethical principles of the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2000) for conducting research with human participants, will be followed in this study, as appropriate.

Punch (1994) discusses the nature of these ethical and political dilemmas, suggesting that the researcher:

> can unwittingly become an unguided projectile bringing turbulence to the field, fostering personal traumas ... and even causing damage to the discipline (ibid. p. 83),

although he argues against leaning too far towards a restrictive model which prevents the exploration of complex social realities. The research process is not,

he asserts, smooth and unproblematic but rather one which demands multiple negotiations and continual coping with ethical dilemmas. Punch claims that politics affects all social scientific research, whether the micro-politics of personal relations, the culture of research units or the powers and policies of the central state. In some way these issues will constrain or influence the design, implementation and outcomes of research.

Sapsford & Abbott (1996) maintain that a fundamental ethical principle is that nothing should be done to the subjects of the research without their agreement, which should be based on an adequate knowledge of what is implied by consenting - the notion of 'informed consent'. Silverman (2000) considers that initial consent may not be enough; it is often proper to obtain further consent as to how data, such as recordings, may be used. Punch also considers ethical dilemmas, such as the protection of subjects versus the freedom to conduct and publish research. He states that most concern revolves around issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality. He also asks a series of questions: does the end of seeking knowledge justify the scientific means? What is public and what is private? When can research said to be harming people? To what extent do betrayal of trust, deception and invasion of privacy damage relationships, make the researcher cynical and devious, enrage the participants, harm the reputation of social research and lead to malpractice in the wider society? (Punch, 1994, p. 89). All these elements will need to be borne in mind in the present study.

CHAPTER FOUR
Planning and Implementing the Research

Introduction

Thus, as described in the previous chapter, in order to reflect the focus of the research questions, the research strategy was drawn up to comprise in-depth interviews with the SENCO, together with a sample of three or four members of staff from different subject areas and at different stages of their careers in three secondary schools. I had also planned to interview an LEA Special Needs Manager who, I anticipated, would be able to interpret Government policy in the light of local needs. I left the option of interviewing either three or four members of staff, partly as a contingency measure but also to leave some scope to include a support teacher or LSA if feasible. Thus the total interview load was envisaged to be between 13 and 16.

I had originally considered a much larger sample, both of schools and teachers, feeling that this would give greater legitimacy to the generalization of findings to a wider population. Quite apart from the enormous quantity of data that would be generated, making analysis difficult, the view of Schofield in his consideration of multi-site studies moderated my thinking:

> ... there is typically a trade-off to be made between the increased potential for generalizability flowing from studying a large number of sites and the increased depth and breadth of description and understanding made possible by a focus on a smaller number of sites (Schofield, 1993, p. 102)

Schofield also makes the point that 'typicality' of the sample is an important factor in the generalizability of findings - the fit between the situation studied and others to which the conclusions of a study might be applied. Therefore, after taking advice, I cut down on the number of schools and subjects in the expectation of improved project manageability and data handling without significant prejudice to the credibility of my findings.

It had been my original intention that the main study sample would comprise non-selective schools, known as High Schools, in a particular shire county adjacent to my own HEI and where the School of Education was active as a provider of professional development. As a consequence it was hoped that access to schools and the selection of an appropriate sample of teachers would not prove a problem. Choosing one school from an urban, urban fringe and rural area I thought would give a representative spread, typical of the county. In the event, however, the main study sample was comprised very differently for reasons described below.

Although I wanted to study mainstream schools in particular, because the effects of recent policy proposals were likely to be most pronounced in this sector, I decided after some consideration not to include primary schools. This was partly because I am more familiar with secondary schools through my professional experience, but also I was influenced by English (1995) who claims that there are likely to be different perceptions in development terms between teachers in primary and secondary schools because of their different cultures. I chose secondary schools only, so that my investigation would not be complicated with an extra variable.

I acknowledge that my position in the field, responsible for professional development in the School of Education of my University, could be a source of potential bias. My intention - of course - was to be as objective as possible and I have tried to avoid my own presumptions from influencing the research. However the OU E835 Study Guide (p. 21) discusses the concept of objectivity and cites the work of Eisner and Phillips who take different perspectives. Eisner criticises the traditional concept of objectivity in research, while Phillips claims that both the concepts of truth and objectivity are legitimate and desirable. I am persuaded by Eisner:

> What we see and understand .... depends upon both the features of the world-out-there, a world we cannot directly know, and what we bring to it. It is in the transaction between

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objective conditions and personal frames of reference that we

make sense (Eisner, 1993, p. 53)

Eisner goes on to state that as there is no single, legitimate way to make sense of the world, we must learn to live with this sort of relativism. Thus the findings of my proposed research must be viewed, to some extent, in relation to my professional role.

My role as an insider or as a participant observer at different stages of the research while being helpful in some aspects, such as familiarity with the situation and participants, could be detrimental in others, in terms of less objectivity and also 'response effect' (Bell, 1987), where interviewees were too eager to please, or because of how much (or how little) people were prepared to tell me. I hoped to find some advantage in my prior knowledge of the schools likely to be used, as did Bird in her study of the Open College policies where she states:

... I was not relying solely on what they were explicitly saying.

I was constantly interpreting what was being said in the light of

all the behaviour I had observed over a period of time (Bird,

1992, p. 57)

I arranged access to the 'reference group', as described in the previous section, comprised of University CPD lecturers, LEA officers, headteachers and teachers which would help to serve as a check on bias; permission to use the group in this way from time to time was willingly given by the members.

Pilot study

The purpose of pilot research is to inform the procedures necessary to implement the main study. My particular intentions here were to:

- develop an appropriate interview framework
- establish and practice appropriate procedures for interviews
- practice my interviewing style

- determine whether responses obtained were likely to inform the research questions
- trial recording and transcription techniques
- practice thematic analysis to establish whether the data is susceptible to coding and appropriate categorisation

Previous pilot work for OU course E835 had given me the opportunity to test out an interview format relating to continuing professional development in general across a range of staff in a number of different schools. I needed to develop this in relation to the particular area of special educational needs. An appropriate opportunity sample presented itself when my professional contacts led to an offer from a headteacher to conduct the initial study in his school, of the same type - a non selective, mainstream, secondary High School - which was under consideration for the main study. Having explained the nature of the research in person and in writing (Appendix one) - the notion of informed consent (Sapsford & Abbott, 1996) as discussed in the last chapter - the school's SENCO and a recently qualified teacher agreed to participate in in-depth interviews. This was without pre-condition or restriction on my use or publication of data; it was agreed that neither the LEA, school nor individuals would be identifiable by name or otherwise in any report.

While the interviews were intended to be conducted in a relatively informal and unstructured manner, nonetheless some amount of 'structure' was pre-planned by the preparation of an interview framework (Appendix two), based on the one I had used previously for E835. This listed a number of general areas, derived both from my research questions and from significant issues arising from my work on the earlier course, to give some shape and relevance to the interview, together with some prompts within each area (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Wilson, 1996).

It was *not* intended that the 'framework' should be used like a structured interview schedule which listed the questions to be asked. It was more an 'aide-memoire', serving to focus my attention when necessary on issues relating to the research questions. I hoped that the prompts would help me when an interviewee

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was straying too far from salient issues, or, when necessary, to intervene to introduce an issue which had not cropped up naturally. These procedures will be further discussed in relation to the main study interviews later in this chapter. I prepared two different versions of the 'framework' to allow for the fact that the interview focus would be somewhat different for each subject (for instance, experience of special needs issues in the classroom would be very different for a SENCO as opposed to a newly qualified teacher).

The interviews themselves appeared to proceed smoothly, with the interviewees apparently relaxed. I had planned for 45 minute sessions (my E835 experience had been that I had allowed an hour but didn't need it) but both lasted for well over an hour, probably because of the additional SEN focus. I had planned the interviews on different days so that I could amend/develop my procedures or technique if necessary, in the light of reflection. Thus for the second interview, I annotated my copy of the framework with marginal notes to remind me of the relationship of each area to the appropriate research question, for easier reference. I had also prepared a short written 'prompt' to explain, if necessary, the TTA's CPD initiatives which were not well understood in my E835 interviews: this allowed me to give a short factual description which could be delivered in a standard 'neutral' way, thus avoiding my own possible bias. In the event I found it necessary to do the same to remind subjects about the main thrusts of the 1997 Green Paper - even the SENCO was not too familiar with it.

At first, I found it difficult to pay attention to what the interviewee was saying, while also concentrating on the research questions, constantly scanning my areas/prompts to see whether the appropriate issues were being covered and, from time to time, checking to see if the audio recorder was still functioning. Nevertheless, by the end of the second interview I had gained sufficiently in confidence to feel that I would be able to handle this kind of interview procedure in the main study.

Permission to audio-record the interviews had been given willingly by the subjects and although I had speculated previously that use of a recorder might

prove inhibiting to the interviewees, with the machine out of their line of sight and the microphone in an unobtrusive position, this did not seem to be the case. The fact that the machine had an index counter meant that I could make occasional written notes, for instance about the subject's body language or to mark a significant point, and to link it to a particular point on the tape for later attention. From a position of being uncertain about employing an audio-recorder, as I had no previous experience of its use in this way, I found it indispensable.

At the conclusion of each interview, I invited feedback on the process from the subject so that I might make appropriate modifications to the questions or my approach. In fact both were more concerned with their own performance, anxious to know if they had responded appropriately and whether I had gained the information I needed. They expressed satisfaction with the proceedings and so I learned little of value. Perhaps they were being overly polite to their guest.

The resulting tape recordings were then transcribed for me using the services of an experienced research secretary. I was given a disc and hard copy; it is difficult to see how I would have coped with the size of the task otherwise. This was a significant factor, as the main study was to produce several times the volume. Following transcription, the technique of thematic analysis was employed as described in the previous chapter, with data coded and assigned to provisional categories. These were then reviewed to establish a number of mutually exclusive major categories to which all the data could be assigned without overlap. Finally, five major categories emerged, albeit tentative because of the extremely small sample involved, which exemplified the responses and could be illustrated by data extracts.

Thus it was felt that the pilot research had achieved its intentions, not only in terms of the aims set out at the beginning of this section, but also by demonstrating that data collected could be seen to be directly relevant to the questions under discussion. Further, it was felt that the techniques used - in particular the in-depth interviews and the format of the interview framework - had been appropriate as they had given rise to a rich source of verbal data

susceptible to coding and classification which was directly relevant to the research questions.

Main study

Following the successful experience of the pilot study, it was decided to proceed on similar lines. However, during preliminary thinking and planning for the main study, an issue arose regarding the nature of the sample of schools to be used. The intention, as stated earlier, was that the secondary schools in question would be non-selective schools in a particular shire county, with one chosen from an urban, urban fringe and rural area to give a representative spread, typical of the county. However the 'reference group' of CPD colleagues described above, which was acting as a 'critical friend' and serving to help me diminish threats to the credibility of the research, pointed out that the particular shire county was hardly typical in itself (it retains a large number of Grammar schools), nor was typical of the CPD 'catchment area' of the University. I accepted this; it was then suggested by the group that the same procedures should be followed, but using one school in each of three nearby LEAs in which my University is active, namely an inner city borough, a unitary authority and a shire county, which taken together were considered to be more representative of the University's area of influence and therefore the results would be more pertinent. Discussion with my tutor confirmed that this amendment to the sample was acceptable.

I asked the 'reference group' to nominate appropriate schools to approach (to help to eliminate as far as possible my own sources of bias) and it chose three schools which had some level of involvement with the University already - they were all partner schools for initial teacher training - in order to facilitate access. A fourth was kept in reserve in case one was unable to accommodate me. The group felt that each of these schools was 'generally successful' in terms of overall pupil achievement, but they were *not* especially chosen for any particular expertise with special needs or inclusive practice. These criteria were employed by the group as it wanted me to use schools which were, as far as possible within the limits of a small sample, generally typical of those secondary schools in the

University's geographical area of influence. Each choice was agreed upon by all members of the group, using their experience and knowledge of education in the area. It was felt that these schools would provide a far more representative spread of opinion than my initial choices. One was an urban school in an inner city borough which was working closely with the university on CPD programmes, another was an urban fringe school in a unitary authority whose headteacher was attending an MA programme at the University, while the third was a rural school in a shire county which had no significant CPD involvement with the university. This process provides an example of the way in which the 'reference group' was able to give me invaluable advice regarding the implementation of my research. Initial approaches were made and details of the research were given, verbally and in writing, to the three headeachers in question. Their permission was sought to conduct interviews with members of staff, which was willingly and unconditionally given in each case; the fact that I was generally well known in the field locally probably facilitated entry. This avoided the sorts of pitfalls reported by Walford (1991) concerning access to schools at a politically sensitive time. The headteachers were asked to suggest appropriate staff for interview in different categories, which I supplied, to give a spread of experience, a variety of subject expertise and varying familiarity with special needs, a form of maximum variety sampling (Patton, 1990). The criteria within the categories which I stipulated for the final selection followed Morse (1994): that informants had the appropriate knowledge and experience, had the ability to reflect and that they were willing. The final selection was as follows:

Learning support assistant	X	X	
Newly qualified teacher		X	
Experienced teacher	X	X	X
SENCO	X	X	X
Head of department	X		X
Staff development co-ordinator	X		
Senior manager/headteacher		X	X

The inner city school was unable to produce a learning support assistant and so there were altogether fourteen school interviews to schedule, together with an SEN adviser in an outer city borough who replaced the LEA SEN manager originally approached, who was by now unwilling to be interviewed 'on the record', or even off it. She explained that 'in the current political climate' officers were strongly discouraged by Members of the authority from expressing views which might end up in the public domain and which could be construed as critical of local policies and procedures (this was at a time when OFSTED was about to inspect the LEA). Despite my assurances of confidentiality - which from an ethical point of view I had to admit could not constitute a cast-iron guarantee - she could not be persuaded, and referred to the very tight political control within the authority which was stifling individual initiative. My replacement, from a different authority, had no such scruples declaring that in any case he was considering applying for a severance package in view of 'yet another LEA reorganisation'. However, in the event, this respondent was able to add little or nothing to inform the study, only being willing to talk in generalities and, despite my efforts to keep him to the point, was more inclined to reminisce, in somewhat pejorative terms, about his experiences as an officer in a number of LEAs. As a result, I abandoned my attempts to include a local authority voice, and decided to let the teachers alone speak for themselves. I concluded, at a time of considerable educational uncertainty, that LEA politics were more volatile than those of schools.

The nominated teachers were all approached individually and, following the principle of informed consent (Appendix one), were given verbal and written details of the research. They all indicated their willingness to be interviewed with the proceedings tape recorded, and agreed to a follow-up interview if appropriate. None had reservations about my use of any data obtained by transcript. One week (in the Autumn term, 1999) was scheduled for each school, with 90 minute slots programmed at the end of the school day (increased in length as a result of the pilot study), since it proved impossible to find enough time in lunch-time or during the working day, otherwise the procedures for the interviews were as pertained for the pilot study. The interview framework

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(Appendix two) was used as developed during the pilot. The interviews once again went smoothly, with the respondents all very willing to talk freely and fully. The view of Nias (1993), cited in the last chapter, was confirmed; teachers were indeed happy to tell me about the many different aspects of their work, even though in the event most sessions lasted around two hours (I suspect I was getting more adept at drawing out the interviewees).

My introductory remarks and probes for background information, as set out at the start of the interview framework, were usually enough to prompt the interviewees into talking about their careers; indeed they seemed to welcome the opportunity to share their experiences of the education system. My intention was to intervene as little as possible. I found (like Nias) that I was able to judge whether I would be able to extract points of relevance to my study out of the wider information given, as the interview proceeded. I was usually able to seize an opportune cue and 'encourage' the interviewee into elaborating where appropriate. When I felt that the conversation was straying too far from the areas of my research questions – for instance into non-professional areas, irrelevant personal experience/anecdote or professional experiences far removed from, or unconnected with, issues of educational change/reform, professional development, training, etc. – interviewees did not seem to mind being gently 'steered' back by use of the appropriate reminder from my interview framework.

I found that having these reminders or prompts close at hand invaluable for refocusing both the interviewee, and myself where necessary, if I became too involved in what was being said. Many of the interviewees expressed an interest in the aims of the research and asked to be kept informed of its progress. Respondents certainly appeared to fulfil the criteria for appropriate interviewees asked for above. The only hitch was when one informant had to attend a conference on behalf of the headteacher at short notice, and so the session had to be re-scheduled.

At the end of each interview I checked whether there had been any information volunteered which the teacher would prefer not to be used; there was none. One

potentially significant ethical issue arose when a teacher wanted my help on what appeared, as described, to be a serious professional matter, unconnected with my study, which might possibly prejudice the teacher's employment. I felt however that it would be inappropriate for me to intervene within the school, and advised the teacher to keep a careful record of events and to take advice from a professional association. At a follow-up visit I learnt that the teacher had done this, and while the situation was not yet resolved, support and legal advice was being received.

Transcription of the interview tapes was again carried out on my behalf by an experienced transcriber, and I was supplied with a disc and hard copy of each interview. I then undertook a thematic analysis following the procedures described earlier in relation to the pilot study. An example of this process is given at the beginning of the next chapter.

I considered the use of computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data (CAQDAS), using a programme such as NUD.IST. However, after reviewing the limitations and disadvantages of these programmes (Seale, 2000), including the fact that they are more use in analysing large volumes of data rather than the relatively modest amounts which characterised my own findings, I rejected the idea. Also, I felt that my own educational experience would be better able to detect some of the professional nuances involved in the study.

As tentative categories were identified upon analysis, follow-up interviews with the original respondents were arranged to clarify or focus emerging issues, and also to assist with triangulation of information by cross-checking data. I also took the opportunity to check the accuracy of my transcripts in some cases. I was able to re-visit in every case (in the Spring and Summer terms, 2000), sessions ranging from a few minutes to over two and a half hours. In addition I attempted to arrange to join a school-based in-service session in each school, with the intention of conducting a group interview with the participants. I was subsequently able to do this in two of the three schools, sitting in on the session and then conducting a half-hour slot at the end with the participants, only one of

whom had participated in the original interviews, making brief field notes which I transcribed in full afterwards. I was not specifically intending to gain further information in terms of my original interview framework, but rather was able to gain valuable insights by discussing and cross-checking some of the issues which were emerging from my analysis, thus again increasing the element of triangulation.

CHAPTER FIVE
Responses from the Schools

Following transcription of the tape-recorded interviews, the technique of thematic analysis was employed, as outlined earlier in chapters three and four. Data from the original interviews and, where pertinent, from the follow-up interviews, were read and re-read, and a first attempt was made at organisation by coding. I used a colour-code system for marking directly onto the text to highlight relationships between the responses of different interviewees, and also to link together common areas which might coalesce into provisional categories. The use of marginal notes also helped to identify tentative relationships (Open University E835 Study Guide, 1996, p. 103).

The next stage involved constantly reviewing provisional categories as they emerged; assigned data were re-explored and categories manipulated, with some being rejected and new ones adopted. This iterative process, I found, was best taken over a period of time (several weeks) with the data being re-examined and re-assigned until finally a number of mutually exclusive major categories were identified, within which all the data could be accommodated without overlap, and without significant omission. In the end, six major categories emerged to my satisfaction, which appeared credible, which could be illustrated by data extracts, and which seemed to provide an appropriate vehicle for subsequent explanation and interpretation.

While the final categories had been defined through analysis, rather than using pre-established categories that might have artificially limited the field of enquiry, the fact that there had been some *small* amount of *general* structure to the interview framework used for this investigation, ensured that there was some relationship between the categories and the original research questions.

The final categories were:

- **reactions to the Government's reform agendas** (linked to research question 1(a), see page 7)

- **the realities of professional training** (linked to research question 1(b))

- **experiences of meeting pupils' special needs** (linked to research question 2(a))

- **responses to the concept of 'inclusion'** (linked to research question 2(b))

- **teachers' professional development needs** (linked to research question 2(a))

- **the Higher Education contribution to professional training** (linked to research question 2(b))

In this chapter these six categories will be addressed in turn and illustrated by data extract; discussion, interpretation and a consideration of the implications will follow in a separate section. Since, as explained previously, it is my wish to hear the voices of the teachers, I have wherever appropriate used direct quotation (cited in bold lettering) to enable them to speak for themselves.

(a) Reactions to the Government's reform agendas

There was certainly no lack of reaction from respondents to the subject of governmental reform in education. Indeed it was very clear that the strongest feelings of all those topics discussed in interview were evinced in this area. The most vehement responses were made, not so much in connection with the actual reforms themselves, but concerning the amount of paperwork which these had generated; increased bureaucracy and 'red tape' were felt to have added unreasonably to already high workloads. The time and effort taken to process the required measures took teachers away from what they considered to be the prime task, that of teaching. A typical view was expressed thus:

> **The paperwork takes over from the teaching ... the days of being able to go in and teach in the classroom and actually**

> **enjoy your teaching without, you know, the fear of all the**
>
> **paperwork that then mounts up, have long gone.**

Special needs were not immune:

> **There is much more paperwork with the Code of Practice.**
>
> **The good thing is it is much more structured but the bad**
>
> **thing is there is much more paper.**

This in turn was felt to have had an adverse effect on morale in the teaching
profession in general. This view appeared to be held consistently throughout the
different levels from newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to headteachers, and was
seen to contribute to what was perceived as a strongly negative image for the
teaching profession, particularly as it is currently portrayed in the media. Feelings
of being undervalued were common:

> **There's an antipathy within the profession now which says**
>
> **'hang on a minute, you don't recognise our value enough'**
>
> **so why should I do all this stuff? I'm doing my job well**
>
> **enough as long as OFSTED doesn't say I'm not**

and

> **... our job is very much 'hands-on' and I think the**
>
> **Government, as good as they are, don't realise and**
>
> **recognise the problems we have so much.**

While workload was an issue raised by almost all, it was particularly the more
experienced teachers who raised fundamental objections to the nature and pace
of change. This group demonstrated what in the first instance appeared to be a
general antipathy to government inspired reforms of any sort. However, on
closer questioning, the objections appeared to be somewhat selective. There was
a rather grudging acceptance of certain of the reforms such as the introduction of
the national curriculum (although not in its earlier manifestations), the operation
of the local management of schools and, with some qualification, the use of
Standard Attainment Tests (SATS) as a standardised measure of achievement
and progress. However, the publication of test results, the compilation of 'league
tables' of schools and, especially, OFSTED school inspection - all providing
significant market indicators - were roundly condemned as counter-productive

without a single voice in defence. Even the way in which the government was attempting to focus attention on teaching and learning in the classroom, through its literacy and numeracy initiatives, was not welcomed, being seen to be too contrived, mechanistic and restrictive. A common view was that there was a lack of coherence in policy initiatives in favour of expediency. What were perceived to be frequent changes in policy direction had served to frustrate teachers:

> **... Government initiatives, great, but they're changing all the time, they seem to be changing over a number of months. I've been in this job, I've been in teaching for 15 years and every year there seems to be a different reporting system. We do things this way, oh no, we won't do it like that now, it'll save you the paperwork, after you've spent hours and hours on the paperwork, so these new initiatives, yes, great ... wonderful, but you'll just put an initiative into place and then it'll change again. So I don't, I'm again, very sceptical with a lot of what the Government's proposing.**

None of the reasons cited for such opposition, however, involved fundamental objections about the operation of market forces in education, nor indeed because of flawed educational principles or processes. Rather the reasons advanced for such opposition were more managerial, such as a lack of ownership of the reforms by the intended recipients in a situation of externally imposed change, a lessening of autonomy and a diminution of collegiality and professionalism:

> **It seems that we are the ones in the classroom ... we are the ones who are told, right you will do it this way ... we have very little say as a classroom teacher.**

Respondents were at pains to point out that they were not making party political points; while many had hoped for better under the present administration, they had found, despite the rhetoric, very little difference from the last one. The reforms advanced by the previous right wing government were felt to have been adopted, and in some respects strengthened, or developed, by the subsequent left wing one. The introduction of performance management and performance-

related pay (PRP) by the present government (a big issue just at the time that follow-up interviews were being conducted) had resulted in strong feelings of injustice, particularly in middle managers and experienced teachers. They felt let down by a political regime that they never had expected would bring in such measures. By contrast, senior managers were in favour of such a move, pointing to the rewards which were on offer for effective teachers.

However it was noticeable that newer (not necessarily younger) teachers did not share these concerns about policy reform. In general the attitude was summed up, albeit with a measure of resignation, by:

Well this is the job we've got, so we've got to get on with it.

Even though the newer teachers will not qualify for PRP for some years, they were willing to agree that this was an acceptable way forward:

> **... that's the way it is in the modern workforce. If the teaching profession is to have any credibility it has to accept that there should be greater rewards for a bigger effort, for working to agreed norms.**

However there were a few voices - all senior staff - which took a broader view and conceded that there was a useful aspect to government intervention. A headteacher said:

> **I need to be able to have the time to continue to reflect and to think about what's happening in my own school and what is happening in the educational world and I need to be continually refreshed and excited by that. I do need the challenge of the Secretary of State or other such people who will produce thoughts and will hopefully listen to professional feedback about them. I must avoid being overtaken by the day-to-day minutiae ...**

and another:

> **... what the government agenda is doing for the school is making us all sit up and keep up with the trends so it's not just up to individual teachers.**

It was somewhat disconcerting to discover that, in general, the long published proposals for the INSET framework were very little known or were inaccurately understood. One reason advanced for this was:

> **TTA information stays with (the head) rather than passing**
> **it down to me.**

although others regretted that they felt unable to keep up with the welter of information passed down about the various initiatives:

> **... with the best of intentions you tend to switch off after a**
> **while and just get on with it.**

After explanation, teachers seemed intuitively not to welcome the implications of the various components. They were unwilling to accept the limitations of a framework which appeared to be prescriptive, and which might restrict freedom of choice.

> **I'm just wondering, the (TTA) courses ... are they actually**
> **the best around? Do they know best?**

speculated one teacher. Another felt that:

> **It could potentially be a good thing ... but it depends how**
> **much it limits what you want to do.**

Others were concerned that TTA standards would become compulsory (as the NPQH has already become for aspiring headteachers), to the exclusion of other opportunities:

> **... to be actually required to do something is probably the**
> **wrong way to go about doing it ... unless you've got the**
> **motivation there, you're not going to be wanting to put the**
> **effort towards it ... if you can actually come to the decision**
> **yourself that you want to do your own professional**
> **development, you're going to be far more motivated.**

Those (generally senior staff) who had some more detailed knowledge of the proposals rejected the logic of such a framework based on standards which could become a straight jacket. The various headship qualifications were strongly opposed, even by headteachers themselves. One had attended the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH), and:

> **I actually found the whole thing a waste of time. We were supposed to have business partners and they never materialised ... we have had no contact with any of the training providers since last November ... I am not impressed.**

While, regarding the NPQH, another said:

> **I think the NPQH is a mistake ... heads have to have certain skills that have to be developed ... they are much better learnt through experience ... qualifications and exams are not the way to build it**

also:

> **(a colleague) has a lot of experience and has not found it of any great value.**

An aspiring headteacher summed it up:

> **Heads are not produced by government agenda.**

Other elements of the framework, such as the proposed qualification for subject leaders, were criticised because they had never got off the ground. Many felt that there were alternatives:

> **The MBA (Master of Business Administration) might be better for some, or an MA for subject leaders.**

A common view was that:

> **... the TTA is re-inventing the wheel.**

A constructive solution was proposed by one senior manager:

> **I would rather see more money coming into schools through the Standards Fund to enable me to put together a programme of packages, rather than staff going out on day courses which don't necessarily address their individual training needs. I am almost saying I would prefer training vouchers.**

One saving grace was felt, at least by two senior managers, to be the new standards and qualifications for NQTs; however one NQT had reservations, not about the concept, but about the operation. A headteacher said that she was:

> **... impressed with the Career Entry Profiles the NQTs are**
> **bringing with them. That was very useful in terms of being**
> **able to look at almost instant training needs they may have.**

The NQT in the same school however reported:

> **I came into this job with an NQT profile ... passed it on to**
> **the head. She kept it and then it went to the Head of**
> **Department. I haven't seen it for a year.**

Again there was a split in views according to seniority. Middle managers and experienced staff strongly rejected the concept of the INSET framework. Senior managers, while expressing reservations, declared (cynically?) that nevertheless they would encourage their staff to participate. Newer teachers, while showing no great enthusiasm, declared (pragmatically?) that they would embrace the framework as and when necessary to advance their careers. Typical was:

> **If that was the only way forward, to pursue my career, then**
> **yes, I'd have to go along with it.**

More worryingly for the subject matter of this study, the detail of the present government's agenda for increasing inclusion, in particular through the proposals put forward in the 1997 Green Paper, was very little known, other than by two of the SENCOs and one senior manager. The usefulness of the SENCO standards in relation to the actual practice of the job was questioned and training proposals to support future inclusion were felt to be unclear.

> **The problem with standards is that, because they are there**
> **they have to be met. But how useful they are, how that's**
> **going to be provided, and how the time and funding of it all**
> **is going to be provided, I can't imagine.**

The point was made strongly by a number of respondents - not solely those whose main responsibility lay in special needs - that many aspects of the government's reform agenda were substantially inimical to the interests of inclusion. The competitive climate engendered by OFSTED inspection, the testing regime and the resultant league tables put pressure on a school to perform highly regardless of the composition of the pupil intake and the local environment. This was expressed by one senior manager as:

> **... an irreconcilable tension, really. There are great pressures on a school to perform highly nowadays, a very public expectation, and very severe sanctions if you don't. A lot of the things we have to do as a school to succeed, must do, must necessarily be very much against the interests of our special needs pupils. We know this but we still have to do them and try to bring them along as best we can. We could do a lot better if it weren't for these sort of constraints.**

These factors, together with a rigid national curriculum, were seen potentially to combine to the disadvantage, and frequently the social or physical exclusion, of pupils who could not contribute significantly to what the school and society perceived as success, regardless of the attributes such pupils were able to bring.

More detailed responses about the framework, professional development in general and special needs, as opposed to a general consideration of the reform agendas, will be addressed specifically in the following sections.

(b) The realities of professional training

The predominant view of professional development gleaned from the interviews would at first sight support the view that INSET is about courses. Respondent after respondent declared that the most important aspect of professional training was to go on courses. The sort of courses preferred were almost invariably short, subject-based sessions with (preferably) practically oriented inputs by acknowledged specialists. One session that went down very well was described thus:

> **It was good because he played out certain scenarios .... His resources were good, he had good OHPs, he gave us good handouts but really he kept the audience alive with his play-acting.**

The quality of handouts was important and seemed to give the teachers security:

> **I have only done days ... you get a big fat folder to take away. It's good, it helps the memory and is like a reference book.**

Teachers were often able to relate long lists of such courses that they had attended. These were usually half a day or one full day in duration, very often organised by a private provider, held in some central venue such as a conference hotel. The quality of the lunch was invariably seen to be important.

> **We mostly use private firms or trainers ... you get a good lunch, a nice hotel usually, but one day is enough, they're very good, lots of handouts and practical tips but that's what they do, we call them the hit and run merchants because they do their day and then they're off to do it for someone else.**

LEA-provided courses, although with some exceptions, tended not to be so well regarded. One view was that:

> **It is often the Local Authority ones which are the least successful .... (they) are run by people who have not got the professional competence.**

The general preference for training events amongst teaching staff was that they be held in school time at a convenient location (near to home or school). Senior managers preferred short training events, as these enabled the available money to go further as the market in training charged ever higher fees while the available school budgets were shrinking fast:

> **There are financial tensions because it's all jolly fine for the government to say they want us to do all this but they don't provide enough.**

New teachers, experienced teachers and middle managers alike saw attendance on this type of course as essential for survival in the classroom. It was also acknowledged, especially by newer teachers, that going on courses was necessary for career development, especially with PRP in operation, where a lot of highly visible short courses were a facile way by which to satisfy performance management assessors. This was summed up briefly by one new teacher:

> **... training is definitely an important way of progressing**
>
> **your career and that's important to me.**

However the prime need, teachers felt, was for information of immediate use in the classroom and, if appropriate, to pass on to colleagues:

> **I love courses. I get a lot from them and I use what I learn**
>
> **as well, I make sure that, you know, it's not a waste of**
>
> **money, I do actually use what I bring back with me**

and

> **courses are important so you can pass the information on.**

In-house courses and school training days were viewed by many teachers to be most convenient in terms of location and timing. It was recognised that there was a lot of expertise in schools which could be tapped for the benefit of the wider staff. However it was a widely held view that the quality of such events could be variable; they could be inward-looking and teachers participating were denied the opportunity to share a wider practice, which was felt to be important. Often, training days were used for departmental administration or preparation, which, it was conceded, while felt to be necessary and justified, did not necessarily contribute to professional development. Sometimes outside specialist speakers could be invited to such occasions but these were not guaranteed to appeal to all the staff. The general impression of teachers (other than senior managers) was that the potential of these in-school events was not being realised. One middle manager put it diplomatically:

> **... some departments get a lot more productive work and**
>
> **development done on an INSET day than others**

although another was more forthright:

> **Our INSET days ... I have a big criticism about them. We**
>
> **are very inward-looking and don't invite people from other**
>
> **areas. I think we should be more open in sharing practice**
>
> **with other schools. I have friends in other schools who talk**
>
> **to me but there is a danger of being too close.**

In terms of special needs staff, the position was much the same. None of the SENCOs interviewed had a specialist qualification nor had done a long SENCO course, either as a stand-alone programme or as part of a longer award-bearing course. Such long courses were felt to be too much of a 'luxury', taking up precious personal time or taking the teacher away from the classroom for too long. One-term full-time courses, which had been popular previously, might have been appropriate (for which long-term supply cover could be organised) but were now largely unavailable because of funding restrictions. One had strong feelings about the best way to learn:

> **...anyway I think it's far better for me and the school to learn on the job, it means the children are not missing out with me always being away**

and another:

> **since becoming a SENCO I have done quite a number of one-day courses. No longer ones or HE courses. Time doesn't allow. I have gone on courses when they were pertinent to what we were doing.**

One who was new to the role described the difficulties encountered on the way:

> **I started to look into ... going back to teaching special needs ... (I) had no idea then I would become a SENCO as such, but (I) put myself on a couple of weekend courses and ... this job came up and I fell into it .... It was realised that I would be on a steep learning curve for my first year there .... I feel that, you know, this year I really have learnt an awful lot.**

Again the SENCOs favoured short courses, typically those that endorsed the 'medical' model of disability giving specific information about such 'conditions' as, to quote only some of those mentioned, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder (ADD), Asperger's syndrome, Perthes Disease, Whiscott Aldridge Syndrome and Tourette's Syndrome. This was summed up by the new SENCO who had:

> **... been sent on a lot of day courses mainly, things like dyslexic pupils, dyspraxic pupils. I've been very fortunate**

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> **in the fact that the school has paid out for quite a wide**
> **variety of courses.**

This SENCO felt that:

> **... a long SENCO training course would be a bit of a**
> **luxury, right now I need short, very practical inputs for**
> **survival.**

However, it was conceded that:

> **... if I need a qualification, I might do one but I've yet to**
> **find out how that will work, you know, how the funding of**
> **that's going to work and what time will be available for**
> **such a course.**

Other staff too felt that they needed information on such 'syndromes'; the SENCO might organise specialist speakers to visit the school but otherwise teachers felt too pressured to attend courses apart from those on their own subject and so they relied on help and advice from the SENCO or the LSAs.

> **It's support I really want, not so much training, I often**
> **consult the LSAs .... Having a SENCO is good because it**
> **means she can deal with a lot of it.**

Hearing of such experience it is hard to avoid the impression of a 'hand-to-mouth' existence in terms of training. On prompting, the potential of forms of professional development other than courses was acknowledged, but despite this rhetoric, for many the everyday demands of the job precluded anything but what was of immediate value in the classroom.

However, newer teachers were seen by others to be more aware of their own needs, and better able to express them; it was thought that they could cope better than some longer established staff because of a better initial training. Despite their current perceived need for short, sharp injections of knowledge, newer teachers recognised that in the future they would want to consider a longer course, such as an MA, not particularly to enhance their careers but rather to develop themselves in general:

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> **I'd really like to do an MA sometime ... I'd still like to have**
> **an MA on a par with being a Head of Department. So**
> **hopefully I can get to do the two round the same time. The**
> **MA would be for me, the Head of Department would be for**
> **the school.**

However a minority of middle managers and senior staff were also considering such a step - two were involved in an MA already and a school-based programme run by an HEI was in operation in one of the schools under study - but in these cases purely for career development. The requirements of these teachers were that the programmes should be flexible with plenty of choice and *closely* related to work. It was because of the absence of such criteria that the TTA framework was rejected by middle managers as an option; however it was rejected by newer teachers because of the lack of general personal development opportunities in the tightly focused and instrumental government standards. A common view was that there should be an entitlement to, and funded opportunities for, personal development as there were in other professions; while this possibility had been raised a number of times (for instance in the 1998 Green Paper), it was felt that it was now more than time for the government to deliver.

LSAs too recognised the need for training. They were particularly concerned that no initial training was required or indeed generally available.

> **I hadn't a clue what it was going to be about to start with ...**
> **I would say as I've got three sons of my own, my middle boy**
> **is cross lateral which is similar to dyslexia, he's right**
> **handed, his brain's left handed but it comes out like being**
> **dyslexic; lot's of common sense and I'm a mum. But no**
> **training, there wasn't any.**

Like the teachers they valued short courses on specific subjects; again the medical model prevailed. LSAs resented the fact that courses provided by the Schools' Support Services which employed them were invariably in their own time and at their own expense. They were concerned at the lack of planned training opportunities, and felt the need for a career 'ladder' with qualifications at appropriate points:

> **... we are perfectly happy with a career as an LSA and we would like to go further rather than just being - if you've been in the job for instance eight years - being the same as somebody who comes in on day one.**

On probing for recognition of wider forms of professional development than courses, despite being highly educated, skilled and patently involved in many forms of continual learning, many of the teachers (with the noticeable exception of those on, or having done, MA or similar courses) struggled to find words with which to conceptualise such processes. On prompting, they were able to acknowledge a number of activities which were integral to their practice but which they had not perceived as 'development'. They seemed not to be familiar with discussing their own development (although several remarked that they had enjoyed the opportunity offered during the interviews for this study). Many freely acknowledged that they did not know enough about modern views on the processes of teaching and learning. They were unfamiliar with models of professional development that used research evidence about what works in order to inform provision. Some however were able to articulate the sharing of what teachers find to be effective and were in fact starting to express a collegial model of development, where teachers worked together as colleagues, talked to each other and learned informally from each other. It was recognised that development could also be:

> **... general interaction with other members of staff. Discussing things. Sitting down and having a chat with someone can be helpful**

or

> **In my classroom, yes I think there's been quite a few where I've heard something or someone's mentioned a strategy and I've thought oh I could do that, I could try that and that might work.**

Teachers recognised the value of supporting each other:

> **... I think in a way I've learnt more informally than I have on a formal INSET day. Just by chatting ... it's much**

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**better that if you have a particular boy or girl in your class
that is giving you a problem and you are sat in the staff-
room or wherever and somebody says oh so and so has been
a swine today and you think - it's not just me ... I think
that's far more use sometimes than that tomorrow is
INSET day when you sit there and you think - why am I
here?**

Although not expressed as such, this was the start of conceptualising a learning
organisation with a collegial culture and effective teacher learning networks. Just
one teacher was able to explain this:

**My belief in professional development is that it should be
corporate and that teachers should work together, learn
together and reflect with one another. I have always been
anti going out on courses ... my focus has been on collegial
work, not an individual one .... Courses are supplementary
only. We like to aspire to be a learning organisation. Where
teachers are seen as learning.**

(c) Experiences of meeting pupils' special needs

The responses in this section were remarkably similar, and the messages very
clear, from nearly all respondents. The first point made by most teachers was the
poor preparation they had received in respect of special needs in their initial
teacher education. Training in this area had, at best, been minimal, whether
teachers were recently out of training or whether the initial course had been
many years ago, and regardless of whether it had been a short postgraduate or a
longer undergraduate one. Most struggled to recall just one significant input
concerning special needs during their training, while memories of other parts of
their training were far easier to recall:

**I remember we had one lecture as part of our professional
development on special needs (in a two-year PGCE
programme). I can't actually remember that much about it
... I don't think I learnt much from the lecture, because**

> **that came before we knew we had to do an assignment,**
> **whereas I think if we'd known we had to do the**
> **assignment, I'd have made more notes.**

This had clearly led to problems for some, when they started their practice in the classroom:

> **In terms of my training I was aware but until I met the**
> **children I did not realise exactly what it was like. I didn't**
> **know what I would be dealing with.**

Staff, in general, had to find their own ways to cope. Some managed on their own while others looked for assistance from the SENCO or the LSAs. Senior staff particularly were strongly of the opinion that teachers were, in general, not well equipped to deal with the problems they were likely to encounter. A SENCO felt that:

> **Not all staff are coping, no, I'll be honest … they are made**
> **aware and they have easy access to all of the special needs**
> **files and all of the individual education plans, which can tell**
> **them a certain amount about what to do … but I often**
> **have members of staff asking for strategies, of which I can**
> **help to a certain degree but I do find that I am myself**
> **asking for advice from my assistant, from my line manager,**
> **and some of the LSAs as well.**

One very experienced teacher related a lack of awareness throughout a long career:

> **There was no training in special needs whatsoever as far as**
> **I can remember. The awareness of special needs - no. I**
> **chose the PE course. We were being taught to teach for**
> **special achievement but not the one we are discussing. The**
> **only time I was aware of special needs was when the**
> **OFSTED inspection came along. They had a number**
> **against them on the register. I try to motivate them to enjoy**
> **their lesson.**

Lack of experience with appropriate teaching and learning strategies for dealing with a diversity of need, or at least an inability to articulate them, was apparent:

> **I differentiate for pupils' special needs, I do it intuitively, I can't explain.**

One senior teacher however was able to pinpoint the pressing career need:

> **There should be more awareness of the range of pupil learning. This is a pre-career need ... Then teachers should have a knowledge of needs, knowledge of difficulties. An understanding of the way they would have to adapt their teaching style. The interaction of the less able child and the able child. To consider and understand the nature of the child's disability or lack of ability.**

The next most significant feature of the responses was what most teachers perceived to be the nature of special needs when asked for a definition. Almost invariably the first response was expressed in terms of behavioural problems or disruptive behaviour in general. Typical comments - among many - included:

> **Behaviour is a big problem here.**
>
> **The main thing is behaviour. There is a lot of confrontation.**
>
> **We are now getting an awful lot of behavioural children.**
>
> **I'd classify number one as being behaviour problems.**

The everyday reality for staff was keeping control of the class sufficiently to be able to teach as planned. If they could do this then they felt able to cope with other forms of special need. Experienced and newer teachers alike expressed these concerns; knowing how to control behaviour was their own special need. Disruptive behaviour was a threat to authority, good order and the ability to satisfactorily deliver a lesson, although the extent to which behavioural problems were perceived as threatening tended to vary with experience, newer teachers feeling more vulnerable than the others. One new teacher reported:

> **I am frustrated already as it is. There are pupils here who could achieve so much more if it was not for the behaviour of others ... there are certain pupils who will ruin the lesson. It is all very well having SEN pupils who want to learn but who haven't got the ability, but the behaviour thing is totally different. I really get frustrated when pupils,**

> **like yesterday, stole the rounders posts in the middle of the**
> **lesson. I want to concentrate on the people who want to**
> **learn ... If more of this type of pupil come into this school**
> **with behaviour problems, not learning difficulties, I would**
> **not be happy.**

Nevertheless, NQTs were often thrown in at the deep end:

> **Sometimes the NQT gets dumped with them but the experts**
> **can handle them much better.**

After behaviour, special needs were again, as described in the previous section, perceived in terms of a 'medical' model. This seems to reflect the fact that those who are influential in terms of awareness raising in the schools are those whose work might reflect such a model, for instance the staff of off-site behavioural units or health officers were often the ones invited by schools to advise staff. Private trainers too have been quick to exploit this market opportunity. Teachers therefore perceive that their need is to understand the syndrome in order to be able to plan and teach for it, hence the previously described demand for specific courses, thus setting up a self-perpetuating spiral. A new teacher demonstrated how labels dominate discussion of special needs:

> **Dyspraxia would help me obviously, being a Maths**
> **teacher, even the attention deficit thing, is it AD and D? -**
> **because I do actually know a boy in my Maths set who**
> **suffers, only a mild case.**

A SENCO described the needs thus:

> **... mainly the various levels of dyslexic pupils we have ...**
> **the majority of the statemented pupils are severe dyslexics**
> **and some of them have the dyspraxia element as well ... on**
> **the actual learning needs as such it tends to be the various**
> **levels of dyslexia.**

An appreciation of the need for the development of teaching and learning strategies appropriate for a wide range of needs was not apparent. As long as teachers were enabled to understand the nature of these syndromes they felt they

would be able to cope. Pupils with low literacy levels were also recognised to have special needs, but were not perceived to be a problem:

> **I think they tend, not to get neglected, we are aware of their**
> **needs, but we tend not to bring it to the attention so much,**
> **like we have to do with the disruptives, we just get on with**
> **helping them.**

Teachers were happy to 'cater' for them, with the help of the LSAs, so long as they were not disruptive or displayed behavioural problems, perhaps because they were undemanding. Teachers interviewed had less experience of pupils with physical disability; teachers felt they would be able to cope without the need of any special learning strategies, although none of the schools was seen to be wheelchair friendly:

> **We have a pupil in a wheelchair who loves PE. He could do**
> **something like basketball, catching, throwing and so on,**
> **but he can't actually get to a PE lesson.**

The use of LSAs to help with pupils was seen as essential by teachers. Not all staff felt that they were good at working with another adult in the classroom however. LSAs too saw big variations in the ability of staff to use their services effectively. One LSA had decided views on the relationship:

> **We carry them, I don't mind what the teachers say, we**
> **carry them .... I think now, they recognise our worth, they**
> **realise we are not trying to take over their job which was a**
> **big battle at the beginning.**

Some teachers felt that the ideal scenario was for the LSA to deal with the special needs thus freeing the teacher to get on with the teaching. Most recognised, however, that the most advantageous situation for all was for the teacher and the LSA to work in partnership. A science teacher described her relationship with LSAs thus:

> **They tend to help generally. I particularly like to use LSAs**
> **to say 'right, could you go and help so and so who is**
> **struggling', particularly if I know the LSA is competent**
> **and likes science.**

Some felt that this sort of relationship worked well while others saw a training need to enable the best to be gained out of such a collaborative learning situation.

(d) Responses to the concept of 'inclusion'

In general, teachers proved not to be well informed about the contents of the 1997 Green paper in particular, or Government proposals regarding 'inclusion' in general. Two of the SENCOs had discussed these issues with a senior manager in respect of the implications for their own school, but even one of these stated:

> **I do feel that with the Green Paper I am not as prepared as**
> **I need to be.**

Another SENCO reported:

> **I went to a conference on the Green Paper. I found it very**
> **bewildering and made me feel very out of touch. I couldn't**
> **understand what they were talking about. I hadn't got the**
> **context right. It started with the DfEE giving an overview -**
> **I suppose I got something out of it. I hope (the Staff**
> **Development Co-ordinator) will disseminate some**
> **information from it.**

However there did *not* seem to have been much dissemination to the teaching staff. The majority of teachers in each of the schools knew very little of the specifics of the Government's social inclusion agenda, except in the most general terms, nor had considered what this might mean for their own professional practice, their classrooms or the school as a whole. A typical response was:

> **I'm sorry, I'm not really familiar with the Green Paper you**
> **mention; I've heard about it of course and I think there**
> **was some reaction in the staffroom at the time, I can't**
> **remember. I don't recall any thing specific it said about**
> **including children with special needs .... No, there's not**
> **been any debate about it that has included the staff as far**
> **as I know.**

The concept of inclusion as set out in the Green Paper was often not well understood. An astonishing number confused inclusion with the exclusion policies exercised by schools for pupils whose behaviour was considered too problematic for them to remain in school. Inclusion was often seen as the process of allowing 'excluded' pupils back into the school. One teacher confused the situation thus:

> **We are quite good at excluding people from the school and suspensions and, and even actually ... just taking them out of the classroom.**

Many of the respondents could make no distinction between the terms 'inclusion' and 'integration'. One of the SENCOs, when asked for an explanation of inclusion explained:

> **... just now we have nine pupils integrating from (a behavioural unit), from our hospital school and from a special school .... One from the learning difficulty school ... he integrated full time actually ... but it was too much for him so he's now back on part-time integration, so we are quite used to dealing with this integration idea ... we integrate them on a very sketchy timetable to start with ... with possibly one or two subjects and then as the child becomes more aware of what's expected of them and as they become more confident we introduce more subjects, if we feel it's relevant for that particular child.**

Only a few were able to articulate some of the characteristics of an inclusive policy. One senior teacher said:

> **... the old ways of special education - I can remember when we had a remedial department - were rather insulting in retrospect, although done with the best of intentions at the time. We shouldn't be giving them a remedy, to give them something to catch up all the time ... we should be creating the right conditions for them in their learning environment so they can learn on their own terms ... they need a more level playing field.**

That teachers had not been prepared for the prospects of including a more diverse range of needs within the school was demonstrated by the immediate reactions of some after explanation of the key Green Paper proposals. Comments included:

> **... the staff would react with uproar, I think, to be honest.**
>
> **I don't think we could cope, this idea (would be) unacceptable to parents.**
>
> **I'm for it and against it ... I don't think they'll cope, tell you the truth.**
>
> **I don't want to sound lazy but it'll involve a hell of a lot more planning.**

When pressed, one considered the effect on other children:

> **If you needed a yes or no answer, I would say no, I can't see it working because for one, you, you are not going to still get the best out of the other pupils**

while another thought of parents:

> **I don't think we could cope. This idea ... being unacceptable to parents .... I think it would be fought here. We are a comprehensive. The ethos is such that we have a range of abilities and if the school were overbalanced with too many special needs children ... I think there would be a problem.**

Most mentioned behaviour problems as presenting particular difficulties for inclusion, some voicing the suspicion that the government agenda was more about getting mainstream schools to cope with increased numbers of pupils with behavioural problems. One teacher expressed her feelings thus:

> **I think if it were about challenging behaviour I think it would be resisted quite strongly. Especially kids with ADD. I think this is all about getting us to take more kids like that, under a policy that makes it look like they're doing something else, for different reasons.**

There were reservations too about potential pupils with more serious disabilities. A SENCO said:

> **... some of the children, their needs are so specific that I really don't feel that mainstream schooling will ever supply them with some of the specific help they need.**

A newer teacher felt that:

> **It would be difficult to have physical difficulty, behaviour difficulties and learning difficulties altogether. I don't think I could teach properly.**

Physical access in all the schools was seen to be a problem for pupils with restricted mobility. One teacher felt that ability would determine how much inclusion might take place:

> **As long as the ability was OK, say just partially sighted for instance. But I think that we would find very low ability hard to cope with. There are schools for the blind and they are much more acceptable disabilities.**

Another felt:

> **The number of kids who will not fit into an inclusion policy is going to be quite high.**

However, despite these immediate reactions, during interview a majority of the teachers tempered their first thoughts to some extent and were able to concede that, with considerable reservations, they might be able to consider the inclusion of a wider range of abilities in their classrooms. The main proviso was that these did *not* include behavioural problems:

> **... we can deal with them if they are co-operative, but if they aren't and the parents don't care ... you haven't got a lever**

and:

> **... the boy in a wheelchair doing his work is no different to the one next to him, but the one swinging on the lightshade may be the brightest one in the class, but that is an**

> **immediate assault on the teacher's ability to handle the class.**

Another fear was the prospect of increased workload for the classroom teacher. The main concern was that teachers did not feel equipped to deal with the situation. They felt they needed a lot of help. Typical comments included:

> **... really, we need to know what we're doing.**
>
> **We need help ... more assistance in the classroom.**
>
> **I need more training on how to deal with their learning.**
>
> **We would need multi-disciplinary teams in school.**
>
> **It would work with support from outside ... Major resources would be required.**

Even so, responses which described the necessary school structures demonstrated that the basic concept of inclusion was not well understood. Many suggested that it would be necessary to introduce, or extend, the system of streaming in order to cope, or to set up a special unit. For instance:

> **... it is quite good ... to have children mixing together in social time ... but have it streamed or have your special classes where you can just identify those children who have special needs who are taught separately apart from those children who have no special needs, because I think it's totally different to try and cater for special needs within your own classroom, unless they've got an assistant with them who can work on a one to one**

also

> **Years ago when there were 'sink' groups, they probably got the best attention of anybody.**

A view expressed by some more experienced teachers was that younger teachers were able to cope better with a wider range of abilities in their classrooms, feeling that their training had equipped them better. This however was most emphatically *not* borne out by the comments of newer teachers when this was put to them.

Just a few teachers could see the possibilities, without the reservations. One senior teacher said:

> **Given time, yes. Because we have such a diversity of cultures and backgrounds anyway, and without sounding patronising, our children live in a much bigger world outside than we appreciate. For the good of the special needs children it's the right way forward and I strongly believe that.**

(e) Teachers' professional development needs

When asked to discuss their professional development needs and to identify the forms of training which would be most advantageous to their work, the responses differed very little from the menu that teachers were already receiving. As their experience consisted substantially of short courses, it was hardly surprising that they wanted more of the same. They wanted short, practical events:

> **I need short informative courses that are going to keep me up to date in science and that I can pass on to my colleagues.**

Some experienced teachers wanted the opportunity to go on middle management courses with a view to eventual promotion. None of them were currently attending such a programme and it was generally agreed that good ones were hard to find - the lack of appropriate courses for aspiring deputy heads was particularly mentioned as an unfulfilled training need. However no-one felt that courses based on the TTA standards would be very appealing. In one of the schools a senior manager had a different view, considering that there were plenty of good opportunities, and instead questioned the real intentions of such teachers:

> **... there is a lot more push at middle management to consider their role in development and to encourage them to be more developed in terms of their own professional life. We have a large chunk of middle management in this**

> **school who have been here a long time but have never actually considered that they could do their job better if for instance they did some official management course.**

Longer HE courses would be considered by some more experienced teachers, and the MA was felt to be the particular vehicle which would help to progress a career:

> **I would like to do a Masters but I don't know what in. It's a future goal and another thing to write down .... It always shows something about the person ... it looks good to employers.**

When invited to express their development requirements in respect of special needs, and with the prospect of increasing inclusion in particular, not surprisingly better preparation in initial training was felt to be a priority. This was most altruistic in view of the fact that the respondents had all passed this stage and would not directly benefit, but it was felt to be essential that new teachers were better equipped than they themselves had been:

> **... it's important for the future that NQTs come into the profession who are well prepared for the future. Their training could help them to deal far better with the wider needs and they would then accept them as the normal way for schools ... their enthusiasm could help the rest of us.**

However training of some form for existing teachers was felt to be necessary by most:

> **... anyone who didn't have any training at all would find it very difficult.**

Many, given the views they had expressed earlier, of course thought that the biggest issue for classroom teachers was:

> **...what I'd like to see and what we'd need most is a big training initiative on behaviour for children with severe difficulties ... it might be good for us in any case**

and

> ... it all boils down to behaviour problems and how I'd go
> about it ... it's certainly something I'd need, it's how to
> deliver my lessons effectively to them.

Again, many felt that even more targeted training which gave knowledge of the various 'syndromes' or conditions would be needed:

> I'd need to know about ADHD, this disorder where they
> can't sit still

and

> Yes, autism, etc. There are all sorts of things - much more
> specialist training.

Some saw the pressing need was that of raising awareness of the issues, although it didn't go a lot further:

> ... the SENCO and similar type teachers would have to
> have a special needs course, you know, quite intensive, but
> for the rest of us we need to be alerted to what is involved;
> of course we would also need to be aware of certain aspects
> of those special needs, but I expect the SENCO and the
> LSAs would be responsible for most of it.

Also:

> We will need to look far more closely at classroom
> management techniques and those sorts of things ... we do
> have a lot of expertise in the school which we could put to
> use.

Training from people with experience and credibility was seen to be important; a SENCO saw the solution to be special needs teachers running a regular series of workshops for staff.

SENCOs too felt that their pressing need was short, authoritative, up to date courses about specific problems as they felt that they served in an informational role to other staff and therefore they had to be knowledgeable. There was resistance to doing a specific long course or qualification from two SENCOs. For one, it would take too much time out of the classroom; alternatively an

evening course would be problematic in terms of time and energy. Another felt that taking a specific SENCO qualification would:

> **... typecast me. I don't want to be seen as too specialised in this area because I don't think it would help my chances of promotion to Deputy Head.**

One however would contemplate - at a later stage - taking a longer course, but preferably as part of an MA to combine the best opportunities of each although time and funding were still seen to be problems.

LSAs were very clear about their training needs:

> **We'd like basic training before we start. We'd like to know a little bit, for instance, dyslexia is the main thing but when you're suddenly thrown in and you're told a child's got dyspraxia, or other words we've never heard of you suddenly think, crikey, how am I going to cope?**

After that, LSAs want a career structure:

> **I have always felt there is not enough structure in learning support ... No development or progression ... there ought to be a career structure ... You can be an LSA for donkeys years and be committed but you all get paid the same money ... what incentive is there?**

LSAs had a clear perception of their importance to the school:

> **... the teachers rely on us and our experience ...I mean they are so pushed at the moment aren't they? What would help as far as LSAs are concerned if we are to get more severe cases, is if we were allowed to run things for them while they concentrate on their teaching.**

One LSA saw a need for training for the teaching staff on how to work with an LSA in their classrooms:

> **... most teachers find it scary at first, especially newly qualified people. However, once they've had them they wouldn't be without them.**

A senior teacher felt that:

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> **the role of the support teacher should be clarified. A lot of teachers don't understand why they are in there. They feel they are an intrusion.**

However, in discussing the prospects of increasing inclusion, some teachers were aware that simply going on courses was not enough. Comments included:

> **I need support and advice from my HOD and other colleagues.**
>
> **I'll need help more than training**

and

> **I want to learn from other people, watch successful departments.**

There was some realisation that teachers felt that they were not equipped with the necessary professional skills in the face of a diversity of needs:

> **I need training on how to deal with learning.**
>
> **I want to know about the different strategies for these kids ... observation strategies, looking at children and classrooms and each other, and learning from that**

and

> **... the idea of teaching styles and learning styles and how to deliver and interpret the curriculum ... We have to be more geared up to look at the way they learn. Not just present them with the way we have been teaching and assume it will be successful.**

A senior teacher summed up the need for more diverse forms of development:

> **There are teachers ... doing today what they did yesterday and doing it again tomorrow and not reflecting and developing. I think they limit their own potential and we can't afford to let this happen where there are vulnerable children.**

(f) The Higher Education contribution to professional training

Higher Education certainly received much of the blame from teachers for the poor state of special needs training within initial teacher education:

> **... it's got to be down to the education departments, they're the ones that do the training. They've got people who know about special needs so it shouldn't be difficult to do something about it if they wanted to.**

Notwithstanding the fact that these teachers acknowledged that teacher trainers operated under the same pressures of time and workload as themselves, thus limiting what could be done, many felt that HE should be able to ensure that the necessary preliminary work in this area was covered effectively. Teachers did not feel it was satisfactory to leave coverage to the vagaries of a professional development programme in a first appointment or beyond.

It was also felt that in general HE was not good at providing the short, instrumental, subject-based courses that were preferred by the majority of teachers, especially those which involved a study of classroom practice. This seemed to be not so much that the colleges lacked the essential expertise, but more a matter that teachers felt confident where courses were delivered by an acknowledged classroom practitioner:

> **I think teachers respect those (trainers) who obviously show they've got relevant experience of what they're talking about and show they can 'hack it' it in their classroom.**

Those two areas apart however there was a generally positive view of the contribution that HE made to professional development:

> **... as long as they do what they do best, what they are good at.**

There was a consensus about what it was that they did well. Teachers felt that HE Colleges made a valuable contribution to the imparting of knowledge, in the form of (again) short, informational inputs of the day conference/seminar format where they could be up-dated on current policy or initiatives, or share in the

dissemination of new ideas. However, the best area for colleges was felt to be the provision of long courses for awards or qualifications. There was a strong proviso to this; experienced teachers insisted that programmes must be easily accessible and closely related, or clearly relevant, to practice:

> **They (HE colleges) know now that they have to be relevant to their clients, and the clients are much more vocal about what they want. There has to be a direct spin-off for their work, higher degree or not.**

Concerning the needs of teachers particularly in the area of inclusion, HE was seen still to have a role in professional development, even if there were deficiencies in the ITE field. It was thought that HE could take an important, more proactive, part in raising awareness of the issues for all teachers, giving information about the Green paper and its implications and helping to prepare schools. It was thought that SENCO courses and specialist modules within MAs should be the preserve of HE, especially because of the possibilities of accreditation or qualification. Courses on classroom management, in cases where there was a diversity of need, should be undertaken by HE as an appropriate range of expertise could be gathered together more easily. It was also suggested that a more prominent role could be taken by HE in the training of support assistants. One LSA said:

> **There's room for colleges here, an opportunity for colleges to offer that sort of qualification. If a university were to back up a career structure, it would do a great deal for our image, which is lacking at the moment, we're really sort of dogsbodies at the moment, without the recognition.**

Where HEIs had been able to provide school-based programmes, especially those leading to an award or giving academic credit for professional experience, these were much appreciated.

> **In my last school I was given the job to establish a school training centre where we could work in partnership with (an HE institution) and where teachers could come and**

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> **study courses towards a Masters degree. I was co-tutor on those courses and it worked well, and I'm now establishing the same thing here.**

This teacher felt that partnerships between schools and HE were important, enabling the establishment of professional networks and the sharing of good practice, as long as other schools were involved so that a school-based HE programme did not become inward looking. Other roles which it was felt that HE could perform well, and which would help schools adapt to a wider range of pupils, was the undertaking of research and the dissemination of research findings in an accessible form. Senior teachers in two schools believed that the expertise of HE institutions in evaluation could help schools to monitor their training needs matched to provision so as to ensure a more effective training programme.

Some of the teachers who, as reported above, recognised a lack of the necessary professional skills needed to respond to increasing inclusion, felt that the natural source of this sort of information was in Higher Education:

> **There's such a lot I need to know about the different techniques that will be necessary, that I should know really, and they should be able to do this at the university, they should be able to give us a lot of that and I think staff would really appreciate that if they saw it was going to help them through.**

CHAPTER SIX
Discussion and Analysis of the Findings

This chapter is structured around the six major themes which were linked to the original research questions, as identified by the data analysis and listed on page 81. Therefore the section headings reflect those used for the findings in the previous chapter.

Reactions to the Government's reform agendas

That there was no great enthusiasm for the reform agendas of the previous and present governments was readily apparent in the sample of teachers interviewed. Despite, as Bolam (1999) contends, that the 'policy climate' has improved under 'new' Labour, and notwithstanding that substantial extra funding is being made available for education under the present administration, these teachers, like Hatcher (1998) whose views were reported in the literature review in chapter two, remain deeply suspicious that the earlier right wing policy agenda was being pursued in most respects by the present government. In the face of government rhetoric about rising standards in schools and greatly improved career prospects, teachers were more concerned about the erosion of their professional standing and the increasingly demoralising climate characterised by increasing levels of central control, heavy workloads and negative criticism from the (then) Chief Inspector of Schools (Stainton, 2000). Docking's critique of the promises and realities of educational change in Britain under the present government summarises their 'we know what works' attitude that teachers believe is marginalising them (Docking, 2000). McCulloch et al. (2000) describe how the former Secretary of State, David Blunkett, declared that 'professionalism is back at the heart of teaching'. They point out that this followed years of teacher resentment since the passing of the ERA, which teachers saw as an attack on their autonomy, integrity and professionalism. However, teachers were not convinced, suspecting that Blunkett's new professionalism would not be in their interests. There seems currently (September 2001) to be evidence in the teacher recruitment and retention figures that the low morale indicated by many of the

respondents, together with public perceptions formed by a generally poor media image, is adversely affecting attitudes towards entering the profession. Thus there appears to be a deep divide between the rhetoric and the reality of education policy.

However, another divide showed itself in the responses. While more experienced teachers could at best express only grudging acceptance of some of the reforms, it was apparent that more recently qualified teachers were rather more accepting, albeit with some element of resignation to the inevitable. Could this be the result of a deliberate, but un-stated, policy by successive governments to embed reforms through increasing control of teacher training, rather than by trying to carry the profession with them by reasoned argument? If so, the findings here would appear to suggest that it has been a successful policy. The distress of the teacher training institutions in response to central imposition of a training curriculum, severe budget constraints and the policing of changes through a heavy-handed inspection regime by OFSTED on behalf of the TTA, bears witness to the effectiveness of such a strategy. Having secured the compliance of new recruits, thus ensuring that an increasing number of future middle managers would embrace the new order, the introduction of performance-related pay (PRP) for more experienced teachers might be seen as an attempt to 'buy them off'. However cynical a ploy this might appear, and despite the fact that experienced teachers have maintained their professional objections, this too seems to have worked as the great majority of eligible teachers overcame their initial objections and submitted their 'threshold' applications.

The lack of knowledge of teachers at all levels, except for a few senior managers, concerning the detail of the TTA's professional development framework was surprising, and not a little worrying given the concern teachers had over loss of their professionalism and status. The access to information, the evaluation of it and the means to engage in an effective dialogue with their employers are ways by which teachers can attempt to remain in control of their own profession. Whether it is because the information is not made available to them, or because they are too busy to take it in, its absence makes reasoned

criticism impossible. Nonetheless, experienced teachers know enough to be critical about the framework because of its reliance on 'standards', the way it threatened professional freedom and flexibility in development and its imposition by central decree after consultation. Change is more likely to be successful where the participants can claim some 'ownership' of the proposals. Successive governments have claimed that there has been considerable consultation and agreement with their proposals; teachers however insist that they can see through tokenism in consultation as opposed to a proper professional dialogue. By contrast, new teachers did not voice these concerns but were critical of the failure of the framework to provide for personal - as opposed to school - development opportunities. Again there was a significant difference between newer and more experienced teachers; newer teachers showed much more willingness to accept the framework if it should be required to advance their careers.

For Rowe (2000) the notion of a framework can become a straightjacket. He points out that the danger is that the framework could easily be reduced to a checklist of skills and competencies to be demonstrated. West-Burnham & O'Sullivan (1998) trace the development of 'standards', which define the various elements of the TTA framework, from earlier work on what they describe as 'a focus on the demonstration of narrow, can-do, functional skills and competencies' (p. 12) derived largely from the Management Charter Initiative in the 1980s. They emphasise that the major problem of such approaches is the tendency to reductionism resulting from the fragmentation of what is, or should be, a holistic set of skills. A further contentious area was the involvement of accountancy firms and external consultants such as Coopers and Lybrand who pioneered the LMS performance indicators following the 1988 ERA, and Hay McBer who produced competency clusters for headteachers, thus fuelling suspicion that the teaching profession was being sidelined in the development process.

The general lack of knowledge about the government's proposals for increased inclusion, particularly as set out in the 1997 Green Paper, was also disturbing. It

is surprising that this initiative has not made more impact on teachers since social inclusion has been one of the present Labour government's flagship initiatives. Some staff, principally the SENCOs, understand the implications and it is hard to understand why more effort has not been made to sensitise schools to this far-reaching agenda; clearly there are training opportunities in-school that could have been used for this purpose. Certainly teachers interviewed clearly indicated that they were already preoccupied with difficulties presently encountered in the classroom; perhaps this precluded their consideration of a further cohort which would increase the diversity of needs. Perhaps managers were sensitive to these concerns and preferred not to advertise the possibilities until absolutely necessary. Certainly one SENCO reported that the practical 'Index for Inclusion' (Booth et al, 2000), distributed to schools by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) in collaboration with the DfEE, had not got past the Head's study in many cases. In any respect it is a serious concern that the schools involved had given no serious thought to the prospect.

Also of concern is the view, advanced by a number of respondents at all levels, that the 'market' in which the schools in question found themselves, together with the steps that schools had to take to succeed within that market, was seen to be very much against the interests of providing for a diversity of needs. League tables, test results and the like, which are key indicators giving market information to parents, were felt by teachers in each school involved in the study to ensure that available resources were directed to those who could enhance the ratings, or at least, not to depress them. This position, if widespread amongst teachers and teacher managers, could very possibly be encouraging an unhealthy climate of opinion about the value of pupils who were not likely to contribute significantly to a school's academic results. The views of Housden (1993), Ball (1994), Gewirtz (1995), Shaw (1996), Walford (1996), Nixon et al. (1996), and Coulby (1997) have already been cited in the literature review in chapter two, indicating that current government economic and social policies tend to reinforce relative class disadvantage in schools, and that competitive market devices lead to pupil selection and exclusion. Interestingly, although the evidence from this study demonstrates that league tables and the inspection regime are heartily

disliked, no arguments were advanced by interviewees against the concept of the educational market itself; it seemed to be accepted that this was the most likely model for the foreseeable future.

Gewirtz et al. (1995) take the debate further by claiming that the pressures of the market in education have resulted in increased differentiation and segregation both within and between schools, and a redistribution of resources away from those with the greatest learning difficulties. If this is so, it must be asked whether the establishment of the educational market is compatible with the move towards increased inclusion. Garner (2000) points to the shortcomings of teacher training, itself a casualty of government intervention and market forces, as demonstrated by Day et al. (1993) and others in the literature review in chapter two, and concludes that the pursuit of inclusion is an irrelevance without concerted attentions to the shortcomings of ITE. Lunt & Norwich (1999), in addressing the implications for schools of the present Labour government's policies on inclusion, examine the evidence which suggests that in practice schools find it difficult to be both effective and inclusive. Corbett (2001), concerned about the negativity expressed around the issue of inclusion, recognised an impetus to make schools as inclusive as possible, but also noted a strong counter-current, creating barriers to this process. She examines the ethos necessary to create an effective pedagogy for inclusion, but adds that in order to achieve this, teachers need to feel confident in themselves. However, it must be said that such confidence is not easy to achieve in view of the current climate in the teaching profession, as described earlier in this work. The evidence of this study supports the view proposed by Walford (1996), Hatcher (1998) and others in the literature review in chapter two, that political ideologies, both those of the 'new left' and those bequeathed to it by the 'old right' which embrace competitiveness in a number of forms, appear to be incompatible with the rhetoric of an 'equal opportunities' model of special needs, and may be combining to prevent the actualisation of the government's policies towards achieving a more inclusive school system. The new Chief Inspector of Schools, in an address to the Local Government Association's education conference in Liverpool (June, 2001), felt that the focus on raising achievement seemed to sit

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uncomfortably with the inclusion agenda. Although not explicitly articulated in the interviews conducted for this study, the implication of teachers' views about the effects of such competitiveness must support the proposition that while market forces remain the criteria for success, the prospects for more inclusive schools cannot be favourable.

The realities of professional training

With regard to professional development, a first consideration of teachers' responses might very easily suggest that little has changed since the NFER survey of INSET conducted in 1967, described earlier in the literature review. First and foremost in teachers' perceptions was that 'INSET' was about going on courses, generally short, which were subject-based and gave useful information. The utility of these courses was measured firstly by their potential to ensure day-to-day survival in the classroom, however ephemeral this goal might be, and then by their capacity to enhance a CV for possible future career advancement or for PRP application purposes. Courses with local venues and in school time were preferred. Very few of those interviewed alluded to concepts such as 'continuing' professional development or lifelong learning. This view seemed, to a very great extent, to be compounded by the attitude of staff development co-ordinators, LEAs, private trainers and HEIs who heavily promoted and/or delivered such training. Perhaps there is an element of vested interest in such behaviour? Schools find that the process of funding short training events of this kind spreads the available money around the staff and is, moreover, an effective, but above all accountable, way to allocate the available budget. LEAs and HEIs find that such provision is an efficient method of income generation without the attached strings of government grant or funding council monies. For private trainers, the short course is easily replicable and cost-effective, avoiding the lack of flexibility resulting from getting tied up with other, less formal, activities which could be time-consuming over and above their contracted hours. In view of such high profile marketing, it is probably not surprising that teachers embrace this somewhat expedient and utilitarian model of provision. It must be stressed that a great deal can be learned from short

courses and that they can serve a valuable purpose. However the point here is that the limitations of a training model which relies heavily, or exclusively, on one-day events should be recognised. There is much more to professional development than such a restricted conception; as one of the major themes in the earlier literature review demonstrated, a market-oriented delivery system can lead to loss of opportunities for professional growth.

Surprisingly, teachers saw little relevance for the school's appraisal system in connection with their professional development. Appraisal was largely seen as a management tool which monitored progress towards set targets; staff development was only an incidental, rather than an integral, part of these annual procedures. Whether the new performance management structure now being introduced will be more constructive, remains to be seen. Certainly the training process will be essential for teachers in order to satisfy the targets required to achieve their PRP.

Provision for development in special needs was not immune from restricted attitudes. SENCOs, LSAs and other teachers preferred short inputs either in-school or with private trainers. The most surprising finding here was the almost universal articulation of special needs training in terms of a 'medical' or 'within child' model. The use of 'labels' abounded. Teachers felt that they needed information about the various 'syndromes' they had been alerted to; given this knowledge, they felt, their difficulties in providing for these various groups would be alleviated. However, the realities of a busy professional life meant that teachers, in general, were happy to leave it to SENCOs and LSAs to attend such training, who would then pass it on. Again, this approach seems redolent of an earlier age when special needs was conceived in terms of 'treatment', and again it might be apposite to question the motives of trainers who are seemingly perpetuating such a model. The attribution of difficulties to a treatable syndrome might be attention-grabbing, enable the trainer to deliver bite-sized chunks of authoritative-sounding information and provide some short-term needs satisfaction for teachers. It is hard to see however how this approach adds to a fuller understanding of appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

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There was some appreciation however of the need for more substantial professional development. MA courses of the sort run by local HEIs were the most favoured, despite some suspicion that HE lecturers were not always close enough to the classroom. The school-based MA programme was popular because of its accessibility and relevance, but could be accused of the same parochialism which was seen to beset school INSET days; in this case the criticism was counteracted by involving teachers from nearby schools. Higher degrees by distance learning would be considered by teachers, as such courses were felt to be accessible, but some made the proviso that they must be made relevant to the school context. None of the respondents however had personal experience of this mode at higher degree level, although those who had studied by distance learning previously at a lower level were most receptive to the possibility in the future. Accessibility, time and relevance to classroom work were the most frequently quoted criteria for taking up higher study. The difference observed here between more experienced teachers who wanted higher study for more instrumental reasons of career development and newer teachers who seemed to be more interested in personal development for its own sake might, however, be a spurious one. While perhaps able to be more altruistic at an early stage, less experienced teachers too will be looking for promotion as their career progresses and may well find, particularly as they become eligible to apply for PRP, that their motives and personal objectives change. They may, however, have little choice in the matter. Barnard (2000) reports that the School Teachers' Review Body in its deliberations for the 2001/02 pay settlement will recommend that teachers be compelled to undertake on-the-job training as part of the requirement to satisfy PRP criteria. That the prospect of having to adopt the TTA's professional development framework generally is not popular, is perhaps explained to some extent by the poor reports given of the existing initiatives by those who have had some acquaintance with them. The various programmes for headteachers and aspiring headteachers were particularly criticised (Arkin, 1998, Rafferty, 1998). Together with the reported apathy about the NQT profile, it is hardly surprising that these initiatives in general are receiving a bad press within the profession.

It was disturbing to find that while teachers clearly were involved in many forms of training activity, such as mentoring, classroom observation and work-shadowing, the majority were apparently unable to recognise wider, less course-based activities as contributing to their development, although some were beginning to articulate the value of sharing and learning with colleagues across the school. They were unable easily to describe the teaching and learning strategies which they were employing, nor could they envisage different models of professional development. As teachers were evidently, by their own description, employing these skills already, this might be explained, not by a lack of competence, but by the lack of an appropriate professional discourse - defined here as a shared professional language whose meanings and nuances are commonly understood - with which to describe and conceptualise their development. This view is supported by the findings of Carnell (1999) in her investigation into teachers' learning. She found that teachers' perceptions of their professional development needs fell into three broad categories, viz. pedagogical skills, working with colleagues and working across the organisation. Certainly the first two, and to a lesser extent the third, were identified by teachers in this study (although with the emphasis very much on the first). Carnell however found that teachers were only able to use mechanistic language to describe these experiences, citing Bottery and Wright (1996) as 'co-operating in their own deprofessionalisation'. She considers the need to shift teachers' learning experiences from intuitive to overt, and identifies three contrasting models for teachers' professional development in current practice. These are: a 'competence-based' model, with attainment targets and precisely defined measurable outcomes, analogous to the TTA standards, a 'personal development' model, which places teachers at the centre of their own learning, and a 'collaborative/social community' model which embeds a process of working in organisations with 'on the job' support. She considers that it is an understanding of this latter model which would help teachers to overcome 'the culture of isolation which typifies teachers' practice' (p. 71).

West-Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998) also consider the importance of understanding that adults in school must recognise themselves as learners, but

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point out that the means by which adults learn are, to some extent, still elusive. They consider that an andragogic model - involving the theory of learning as applied to adults - would be appropriate to promote with teachers, in order to produce:

> a holistic and integrated approach to learning which recognises
> and respects the individual and demonstrates consistency in
> relating learning strategy to individual need, irrespective of age
> (ibid. p. 49)

To achieve this, they stress that teachers should be fully aware of the importance of a range of development strategies which includes attendance on courses and conferences but also involves the use of experiential learning, reflective practice and teacher/action research. It is this awareness that leads to the development of the school as a learning organisation.

Experiences of meeting pupils' special needs

If the issue of 'courses' dominated teachers' responses about professional development, then there were two issues which dominated their experiences of special needs. The first was the poor quality of teachers' preparation in this area within their initial teacher education. Even allowing for the fact that teacher training courses were a long time ago in some cases and memories might be fading, the experiences of respondents were remarkably similar. In this respect things would appear to have changed little since the alarming situation described by Davies & Garner (1997) in chapter two. Indeed they might have got worse, since newer teachers allude to the small amount of the curriculum devoted to teaching studies of any kind now that there was less college-based time and a great many TTA-derived competences to be achieved. Teachers found 'on the job' learning about special needs to be difficult, perhaps explaining their perceived need for understanding the various 'conditions'. Charles Gains, at the International Special Education Conference held in Manchester, 2000, reinforced this poor impression of the state of teacher education, going as far as to say that the lack of teacher training in special needs, both initial and in-service, is a national scandal. Certainly one of the major contentions of the earlier literature

review, that teacher education generally is inadequate for meeting special educational needs, appears to have been upheld by the respondents to this study.

The other main issue raised was that of behaviour. Dealing with difficult behaviour, and trying to maintain an orderly teaching regime in the face of disruption, dominated teachers' perceptions when asked to describe the nature of special needs, even though the schools used in this study, on observation and as confirmed by my 'reference group', did not appear to be significantly better or worse than other schools in this respect. Teachers' preoccupation with behaviour problems seemed to block out much consideration of special needs in general. Again, except in a few instances, a professional discourse which might have allowed teachers to put behavioural problems into perspective, and allow a dispassionate consideration of the actual nature of the special needs they were experiencing, was missing. This clearly was operating to the disadvantage of pupils whose difficulties in school were not behaviourally derived.

The frequent use of 'labels' in teachers' talk to describe pupils' problems was indicative of the operation of a 'medical' model of disability, implying that the problem was 'in' the child, although again this might be an issue of discourse. This perhaps reflects how teachers have been informed, since many gave examples of their practice which fell into a 'contextual/curriculum' model where the environment or curriculum was modified to 'compensate' for the child's difficulty. Only one respondent (not a SENCO) was able to describe a future aim for the school which could be described as approximating to an 'equal opportunities' model, where it is perceived that the problems lie in the discrimination of society against disabled people and that provision must be planned from an inclusive standpoint.

There was not much appreciation of the existence of appropriate teaching and learning strategies for special needs; the demands of the national curriculum and the need to raise standards with more able pupils tended to dominate teachers' perceptions. They understood that some children had special needs, but were often content to leave the resolution of these to the SENCO or LSAs, evoking

memories of the earlier 'remedial departments' to which problems could be referred, or pupils despatched, for their specialist 'treatment'.

Responses to the concept of 'inclusion'

That teachers felt uninformed about the 1997 Green Paper - and that there appears to have been little dissemination of its contents - had been apparent in their responses to government reforms in general, documented earlier in this chapter. In particular, a closer focus on 'inclusion' in the interviews showed that few had thought through the implications of the government's social inclusion agenda in terms of the potential effects on their own classrooms, nor did there seem to have been much attempt to inform teacher opinion in any systematic way. The sense of 'beleaguerment' which had characterised teachers' descriptions of the day-to-day problems, which they perceived to need addressing in their classrooms, seemed to blinker them to further possibilities. First thoughts showed them to be unenthusiastic about the prospect of teaching groups containing a wider range of ability than hitherto; many felt that the school's current roll of special needs was enough and that to go further would be a step too far. There was a much voiced suspicion that the inclusion agenda was solely concerned with a tacit government attempt to get mainstream schools to accept a greater degree of responsibility for behavioural problems, which might have contributed to a fear of considering other groups of pupils for inclusion. The findings of a recent up-dated study by Davies and Garner (2000) give support to the contention, confirmed in this work, that teachers are not prepared for the implications of inclusion policies. They report that new teachers in particular are unready for inclusion because of a lack of time, resources and support, concluding that the Government's message on the drive to include special needs children in mainstream schools is failing to get through.

In view of a general lack of preparation, it is not surprising that questioning revealed that the concept of 'inclusion' itself was either not properly understood or confused with other initiatives. Indeed, judging by some of the responses in this study, there seems to be a misconception amongst some teachers that the

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term 'inclusion' is being identified with the process of attempting to reverse the prevailing trend for the exclusion from school of pupils for behaviour reasons. If this is so, there is a serious communication gap which must be addressed. Many teachers thought in terms of 'integration' where pupils might be absorbed socially to some extent, and levels of learning-need could be dealt with by streaming, or the use of special classes and units, a model primarily concerned with assimilation and accommodation. There was little perception of a model which could adapt the mainstream to enable the participation of all children and the removal of exclusionary practice, so that the school could respond to a greater social and academic diversity (Barton, 1998); nor was there evidence of any formal professional discussion between the staff which might have helped to inform the issue.

It is perhaps understandable that teachers are unsure about the meaning of inclusion. A National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) policy document (1999), referring to the 'on-going debate' concerning the nature of inclusion, points out that it is not a simple concept confined to issues of placement. It considers the definition to be problematic; it must encompass broad notions of educational access and recognise the importance of catering for diverse needs. A further NASEN policy paper (2000) draws attention to the dilemma of providing a curriculum that is not narrow and restrictive but, on the other hand, is not so broad that it denies the opportunity to adequately meet individual needs. NASEN welcomes the increasing commitment in recent government documents to a curriculum that includes all children, but recognises that achieving such a curriculum is not a simple matter.

Mittler (2000) takes this debate further. He points out that inclusion is not only about schools, but about society:

> Inclusion is not about placing children in mainstream schools. It
> is about changing schools to make them more responsive to the
> needs of all children. It is about helping all teachers to accept
> responsibility for the learning of all children in their school and
> preparing them to teach children who are currently excluded

from their school, for whatever reason. It concerns all children who are not benefiting from schooling, not just those who are labelled as having 'special educational needs' (ibid. p. vii)

He claims that the aim of inclusion is now at the heart of both educational and social policy, involving a radical rethink of policy and practice. He draws a clear distinction between 'integration' and 'inclusion'. Although these are terms often used interchangeably, they actually represent real differences of values and practice. Although he accepts that there is not a full consensus about the differences, and at the risk of oversimplification, he regards 'integration' as preparing pupils for placement in ordinary schools. 'Inclusion' however implies a radical reform of the school in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of pupils, based on a value system that welcomes diversity arising from many different causes. Mittler has no doubt about the commitment of the present government to the principle of inclusion and to its determination to achieve positive changes for children with exceptional needs.

Thomas (1997c) too feels that 'an inclusion philosophy is rising again and prospering' (p. 106) and that inclusion will certainly happen increasingly over the first part of the new century. If schools are not convinced by argument they may have to respond to anti-discriminatory legislation. He sees a stark choice for schools and administrators: that they fight a rearguard action in maintaining segregated provision, or implement planned programmes of inclusion.

However, despite this expressed confidence in government intentions, there can often be ambiguity or a lack of clarity in government documentation and pronouncements, especially when problematic definitions such as inclusion are involved (Farrell, 2000). Indeed, Kilfoyle (1997) used the terms 'integration' and 'inclusion' interchangeably in his work which was used by the incoming Labour government to inform the drafting of the 1997 Green Paper. The NASEN (1999) paper points out that it is the responsibility of central government to provide a clear policy lead. Further, existing and new legislation should not undermine - or act as a disincentive to - the inclusion process. Published policy should not leave uncertainty about the scope and nature of what is intended; this could be

contributing to the confusion about the meaning of inclusion found amongst teachers in this study.

NASEN (ibid.) asserts that inclusion will not develop spontaneously and needs to be actively planned for and promoted. It emphasises the importance of teachers' professional development in this respect, the central thrust of this research, by pointing out that inclusion requires both the extension of the application of existing skills and the development of new ones. Hall (1997) claims that there is a deep institutional resistance to including certain children; it will take more than one inclusive education workshop to convince many professionals, and their employing LEAs, that they should change their traditional beliefs and practices. Change will certainly be required in any event; after all, as Barber (2000) points out, it is by no means clear that the characteristics which defined the successful education systems of, say, 1970 are those which will define success in the future.

However, there was some indication that the process of the interviews themselves, which were conducted for this study, might be helping to change teachers' attitudes to inclusion. Many modified their initial reactions to some extent during the course of the interview to indicate a slightly more tolerant stance. With a lot of reservations - given time, a lot of help and as long as behavioural problems were not involved - it was conceded by some teachers that they might be able to cope in an environment of increasing inclusion. Perhaps it was a 'knee-jerk' reaction to sound 'macho' about an initiative which was not well understood and which was perceived to threaten the already pressured status quo. In an atmosphere of distrust and low morale, commitment and co-operation in taking up new initiatives is unlikely to be given liberally. Nevertheless, there seemed to be some indication - despite gloomy first impressions - that teachers' professionalism can overcome initial prejudice. If a relatively short interview can help to start this process, then the planned and systematic dissemination of information and a full professional dialogue, including discussion of an appropriate pedagogy, would help considerably. Again, the development of an appropriate discourse would enable an informed

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discussion and assist in forming a more balanced appreciation of the way forward.

Teachers' professional development needs

In relation to teachers' perceived professional development needs in respect of inclusion, it is not surprising in view of the sentiments expressed earlier that improved initial training was high on the list. The fact that it was generally perceived that the consideration of special needs within initial teacher education was at best inadequate, was clearly felt to be having a seriously deleterious effect on practice. Although nominally outside the scope of a study which is concerned with professional development, the state of ITE cannot be ignored. The concept of CPD implies a situation where there is continuity from initial training; career profiles and NQT standards are intended to provide a seamless progression from teacher education into professional development. If the first stage of this process is not working then an intolerable strain is put upon the later stages, when early training gives way to development undertaken during a professional life which is subject to many other pressures. An understanding of all that is involved in the special needs field cannot be left wholly to post-qualification development when there is no guarantee that all teachers will access it.

Davies and Garner's recent (2000) research, reported earlier, strongly supports the bleak summary of the state of training found in this study. They claim that for a number of years there has been evidence that SEN training and professional development have not kept pace with either new thinking on, or the underpinning statutory guidance for, educational inclusion. They cite the DfEE's Programme of Action (1998b) which, following up the 1997 Green Paper, talks of new opportunities for professional development and training in the field of SEN. They point to an almost total absence of fully-funded places for teachers on full-time award-bearing courses during their careers. In consequence, much professional development, as found by this study also, has been reduced to 'one-off days of quick-fix staff training' (p. 1). These events, they claim, offer little opportunity for critical reflection concerning personal beliefs and decision-

making in SEN. They conclude that the movement towards educational inclusion is being prejudiced by the persistent shortfall in requisite skills, experiences and values of teachers in mainstream schools.

Again, given the earlier findings, it was inevitable that teachers expressed their immediate training needs in terms of short courses. They wanted more of the same, possibly because this was the expectation; these were the courses that were promoted in school and these were the ones that were talked about. In their pressured environment, the thinking perhaps is that short, practical courses can have an immediate impact on classroom practice. Longer, award-bearing MA courses might be entertained for career development; only a very few teachers were able to describe how these too might have an influence on practice. As far as inclusion was concerned, teachers felt they needed a lot of training and once again the rhetoric was of the need for information about 'conditions' and 'syndromes'. As above, more of the same was felt to be needed and the medical model appeared to be the predominant discourse. This does not seem to be very realistic when the practice hitherto had been that teachers concentrated on subject-based courses and were content to let the SENCO and LSAs take responsibility for gaining the specialist input. The reality appears to be that teachers, faced with a terminology that makes them feel that they lack the 'necessary' information, are content to leave it to the specialists. Whether the specialists themselves are getting an appropriate input from their short courses is questionable. As Lacey and Porter (1998) assert, whilst it is clear that teachers would like training to help them work with pupils who have learning difficulties and challenging behaviour, it is not even completely clear as to what the most effective training might be. Some teachers however were more realistic, expressing a need for the raising of awareness as opposed to inputs which targeted specific syndromes.

The language of 'syndromes' and 'conditions' used to describe training needs was also common enough in many teachers' general professional conversation. What is the consequence of the use of these 'labels' by teachers? Is it a useful shorthand to facilitate communication between them? Does it reflect commonly

held perceptions about needs and the appropriate provision? Norwich (1999) points out that it is clear that the perceptions, judgements and expectations of people with difficulties and disabilities can be influenced by the use of labels, which may be employed in ways that stigmatise and devalue. He asserts that labels 'stick' and have powerful negative impacts on others' actions to the labelled person, especially labels with medical associations. In this way, a labelled person can have his or her failures explained in terms of personal deficiencies, and his or her successes dismissed as due to external circumstances. He cautions that there is no necessary connection between labels of impairment and labels of required educational provision. While it is necessary to identify needs before provision can be made, this particular exclusive discourse, while found to be commonplace among the teachers in this study, is unlikely to promote the cause of inclusion.

It is perhaps not surprising that the SENCOs interviewed felt a specific qualification to be problematic; as Desforges (1998) claims, what little information there is suggests that few schools have trained or qualified SENCOS. Roaf (1998) suggests a possible reason for the reliance on short, specialist courses. She points out that particularly since the 1988 Act, teachers have relied heavily on SENCOs and LSAs to help them differentiate the curriculum and provide them with the detailed background knowledge of the children in their classrooms. This in turn has put pressure on SENCOs and support staff to deliver. Perhaps the one-day event, as opposed to a more substantial course, is the best opportunity to do this when time is at a premium. Lack of time and funding are general problems for all teachers wanting to do longer award-bearing courses. In the case of SENCOs however, there were added issues. They did not want to attend part-time day courses because of the feeling that they would be 'deserting' their pupils, not wanting regularly to leave them in less experienced hands or with the inevitable supply teacher. A specialist qualification as such was not felt to be necessary; the feeling of one SENCO was that this would not be helpful in terms of a future senior management position. It is a sign of the times that the specialist skills of a SENCO in supporting vulnerable children might be seen as disadvantageous in aspiring headteachers or

deputies, who needed to accumulate more wide-ranging experiences relating to the required TTA standards as they progressed through the ranks. A specialist module within a longer award-bearing MA course however was seen as an acceptable compromise in one case.

The clearly expressed needs of LSAs were predictable given the accounts of their experience to date. Roaf (1998) asserts that LSAs take a prominent role in schools and accept a great amount of responsibility, making a major contribution to the progress of students they work with, but their role is changing rapidly. Indeed, recent research described by Marr (2000) suggests that many assistants (in primary schools) are doing teaching work, albeit on far poorer terms and conditions than qualified teachers. The Government envisages an expanded role for classroom assistants, suggesting that they could take control of a class thus freeing the teacher to focus on pupils who need special help. Roaf (op. cit.) points out however that little is known about how they operate and what would help them to develop a sharper focus in their work. An initial training and a career structure are essential in order to maximise their contribution, and, by all accounts would be enthusiastically taken up. From the sentiments expressed by LSAs - and a few teachers- there is some indication that there is a danger of them becoming isolated from the teaching staff if they take on more responsibility for dealing with special needs on their own. Appropriate training would help to dispel this. Training for LSAs and teachers together in collaborative working would also be beneficial in this respect.

In a situation of increasing inclusion, there was some realisation by teachers that they would also need developmental experience that was not course-based. It was recognised that help and advice would be wanted, and that this might be obtained by sharing good practice. It was a shock to find that teachers professed to lack knowledge of classroom management strategies and teaching and learning styles. This again points to deficiencies in ITE, although it is difficult to believe that teachers are not exposed to these in their training; perhaps they are unable to generalise their experiences in order to relate them to special needs. In

any case, there is a clear training need here which will be discussed in the next section.

The Higher Education contribution to professional training

Higher Education took much of the blame from teachers for the shortcomings in special education within ITE. Teachers felt that HE could be doing a much better job in this respect, although there was little appreciation that colleges were under increasing pressures and constraints to the same extent as the compulsory sector. There was some suspicion expressed that lecturers may not be up-to-date enough and consequently were unable to prepare students adequately. The thought was expressed that school-based training schemes (SCITTS) might be better than college-based training, as trainee teachers would be able to be involved in 'real' situations and learn better how to cope. The same suspicion might have been responsible for the rejection of HE short course provision for the sort of external subject-based events generally preferred by teachers.

However the same teachers who complained about HE in these aspects expressed surprisingly strong support in others. Colleges were seen to be authoritative in the dissemination of information such as new professional or curriculum developments, or the implications of policy initiatives. However, in view of the comments made earlier about the lack of awareness regarding the 1997 Green Paper and the concept of inclusion, it might be thought that these teachers were being generous as, assuming that colleges had been active in providing information in this area, the message clearly had not got through to the schools in question. The other area where HE was seen to be particularly effective was in the provision of longer courses, preferably award-bearing, which comfortably prevailed over the equivalent TTA courses/qualifications, despite the increasing financial restrictions imposed on the HE sector as described earlier in chapter two. In terms of special needs in particular, teachers saw a specific role for HE in awareness-raising, SENCO training, the provision of specialist modules, classroom management courses and LSA training. This would indicate

that there is still much scope for HE in a situation where growth in professional training has been inhibited.

A telling comment came from the teacher who used the word 'client' in respect of HE students, the implication being that colleges are taking notice of professional needs in a professional way. While acknowledging that theory had a place, teachers appreciated college courses that were relevant to the classroom. School-HE partnerships and HE delivery of school-based programmes were popular where they were made available. In short, HE is learning how to exist in the training market-place, despite the shortcomings of such a market as discussed in the literature review.

Perhaps the best opportunities for growth in HE provision lie in the non course-based training needs identified above. There appears to be a growing realisation among teachers that with the advent of increasing inclusion they need to know more about classroom strategies for special needs, and about teaching and learning styles. They want to know how to observe what goes on in their classrooms to good effect. They want to learn from their professional experiences and from each other. Higher Education is well placed to deliver these professional skills; these are, after all, the business of teacher trainers. The lack of an appropriate professional discourse with which teachers can describe their development has been noted here. Similarly the teachers in Allan's (1999) research demonstrated 'a passion for ignorance' with regard to pupils with special needs, not because they were unprofessional but because of an inadequate discourse. Ainscow (1999) found also in his work on inclusion the need for a common language with which colleagues can talk to one another, and indeed to themselves, about detailed aspects of their practice. This too implies a role for Higher Education. There is an increasing emphasis in HE on promoting reflective practice, on working collaboratively with teachers in schools, and on encouraging and supporting teacher research, all activities which contribute to the development of a learning organisation (Beatty, 2000; Brundrett, 1998; Nind, 1997; Wearmouth et al. 2000). The implications of all this will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Implications and Recommendations for Higher Education

The discussion in the previous chapter clearly implies that teachers perceive a very different reality from the policy rhetoric of both the present and the previous governments. In answer to the first research question posed in the introduction to this work: *'How do teachers respond to the rhetoric of Government policies, both current and proposed, in relation to educational reform?'*, it must be said, 'with some vehemence'. There appears to be a considerable rhetoric/reality gap. On the one hand this is illustrated by the DfEE publicity campaign 'Nobody forgets a good teacher'. On the other, it is emphasised by teachers' perceptions, recorded in the findings here, of unreasonably high workloads, ever increasing bureaucracy, paperwork and form-filling, continual criticism from the Government and media, a loss of professionalism and unwarranted interference with what is seen to be the primary task of classroom teaching.

However, teachers have their own rhetoric and in spite of their strongly expressed views, they seem to be getting on with the job and making the best of it, newer teachers being somewhat more enthusiastic than most about the reforms. Perhaps teachers have given in to the combined assaults of successive governments and what they perceive to be the force of the 'the market'. Perhaps they are facing up to what are thought to be the realities of a post-modern age in education. Certainly they have been influenced by the lure of PRP in return for even more concessions to their contractual conditions, and newer entrants to the profession have been shaped by close government control of the teacher training agenda. The lack of awareness and detailed knowledge on the part of teachers, and the lack of any real consultation, must too have played a part. This tacit acceptance of the centralist agenda as described in the literature review, demonstrates the success of the strategies of successive governments and shows how far a large professional force can be controlled. However there are signs that this has been at some cost. Poor levels of new recruitment to the profession, and disturbing trends in retention rates once new teachers are recruited, presage major problems to come. The evidence in this study, which implies that teachers

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are being forced into a narrow, instrumental view of educational need, may well influence future patterns of provision for special needs. This latter factor will be addressed in more detail later in the chapter.

In terms of the second research question: *'Is there a mismatch between the expectations of teachers and Government agencies concerning the provision and nature of professional development in general and that for special needs education in particular?'*, it would certainly appear from this work that the answer is 'yes'. This study has found teachers very sceptical about the content and nature of the Government's CPD framework and the motives behind its imposition. There is suspicion about centrally determined qualifications and an imposed curriculum. An approach based on standards, with the accompanying lack of flexibility, belies an alternative, more holistic, approach which might be felt better to suit the objectives of professional lifelong learning. Doubts are raised because of the lack of consultation and professional control, and experience of the operation of elements of the framework so far has not been encouraging. Personal anxieties are expressed about the need to train in teachers' own time and often at their own expense, rarely the case in other comparable professions. However, as noted above in respect of reforms in education, teachers, especially the newer ones, were prepared however strong their reservations, to take up the initiatives if necessary for career development; another example of the effectiveness of the central agenda.

In respect of special needs in particular, teachers showed no great enthusiasm for the government's CPD proposals. SENCOs did not feel a strong need for a specific qualification or a long course based on the SENCO standards. Other teachers, however relevant such standards might be, preferred to rely on SENCOs and LSAs. Short courses were favoured by all groups for immediate needs, with MA or other award-bearing courses viewed as useful at mid-career stage for advancement purposes. However, the lack of an appropriate discourse with which to properly express and discuss professional needs has been found here. It suggests that were teachers to be more aware of the possibilities, their response might have been very different.

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Is CPD back on the national agenda, or not? There has been much comment that, after heralding the publication of its professional development proposals, and introducing widespread consultation on the future shape of teacher development, the Government seems to have made little progress on developing many of its aspects. If a compulsory training requirement comes to pass as a condition of PRP, it is more likely that this will be in the form of short inputs rather than the longer commitments implied by the framework. Does this suggest a lack of resolution on the part of the Government about their adherence to such a rigid curriculum? If so, there is an opportunity here for the profession, in the shape of the new General Teaching Council (GTC), perhaps aided by HE, to take the framework and shape it with the advice of teachers into a developmental tool which would help to restore confidence. In this way it could prepare them for the demands of a system which would respond to the call for higher standards but which at the same time was also genuinely inclusive of all.

Responses to the third research question: *'What forms of professional development do teachers identify as being appropriate in order to address barriers to learning in their classrooms?'* were somewhat dispiriting, tending to demonstrate a restricted professional view, both of development and of special needs in general. For many of the teachers interviewed, the lack of an appropriate discourse with which to discuss and articulate their professional development needs – although unacknowledged by them – would appear to be a barrier in itself. The potential of wider forms of development, as opposed simply to attendance on short courses, was not fully appreciated. Another such barrier, which however was acknowledged explicitly, must be the lack of an appropriate repertoire of teaching and learning strategies. There are serious implications here for teacher trainers and the profession in general. Furthermore, as this problem was particularly apparent in respect of newer teachers, a closer scrutiny of the effects of the Government reform of the teacher-training curriculum is called for.

Teachers' notions of special needs, centred round 'labels' and behaviour, are inimical to an understanding of the concept of inclusion. Talk of 'leaving it to the specialists' or recourse to special units, classes and more closely defined

streaming is a throwback to earlier 'remedial department' days, or an 'integration' approach where it was necessary for the child to fit into the prevailing system. Indeed Mittler (2000) cautions that in this respect: ' ... history is not so easily abandoned' (p. 94). Teachers, at least the secondary school teachers in this study, have not been prepared for, nor have they been much informed about, the demands of moving towards an inclusive system of education. Indeed most do not fully understand the concepts involved, or have confused them; the issues have not been thought through, and consequently the unknown is not welcomed. Again, the lack of an appropriate professional discourse with which to conceptualise notions of special needs and inclusion is clearly inhibiting. Nonetheless, there were encouraging signs during the interviews to suggest that, despite a 'macho' rhetoric, many teachers were prepared to conceive the possibility of a somewhat more inclusive classroom, albeit with provisos particularly concerning behaviour. It seems that at present they are simply not in a position to take an informed, professional view.

There are clear training implications here, for SENCOs, LSAs and teachers, including senior management. However, the Government as well as the teaching profession must share responsibility for the fact that the inclusion message does not seem to be getting through. Suspicions that the Government might be half-hearted about moving to a fully inclusive education system were reinforced by the issue of a press release by Jackie Smith, Schools Minister, on 7 July 2000. While stating that the Government supported a more inclusive approach, she stated that 'special schools can often be more appropriate', and went on to refer to adaptation of schools to include extra ramps, lifts and hearing induction loops. Does this suggest an element of backtracking, by implying emphasis on an 'integration' model rather than full inclusion? It is not at all clear *how far* the Government wants to go in terms of including more pupils in the mainstream. Ainscow (1999) found that LEA officers also defined inclusion in a variety of ways, some no different from earlier definitions of integration. Mixed messages such as this do not serve to clarify the situation for schools.

Farrell (2001) points out that much is to be done if we are to gain a consensus about inclusion. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill, recently introduced to the House of Commons, could significantly affect education, as in its draft form it includes provision for anti-discrimination legislation for disabled pupils and students in Further and Higher Education. However, as Ruebain (2001) points out, while this should strengthen parents' rights to choose mainstream schools for their children, it will not be easy to gain effective compliance without reconsideration of provision and the consequent training of staff.

A major barrier at present appears to be the issue of challenging behaviour. As Wearmouth (1999) states, including pupils whose behaviour seems threatening to the system is not easy; the exclusionary pressures resulting from the current competitive climate are very strong. Coping with disruption is seen to be a major source of teacher stress, explaining why the question of behaviour has become so contentious (Corbett, 1998). It will be necessary to address the issue of teachers' perceptions of, and reactions to, the 'behavioural' label, before significant progress can be made in this area.

With regard to the fourth and last research question: *'How can Higher Education contribute to professional development so that teachers are enabled to respond effectively to the greater diversity of needs to be encountered in moving to a more inclusive education system?'*, the implications are many, should HE be prepared to grasp the nettle. Despite tight Government controls on the teacher-training curriculum and funding restrictions on its delivery of in-service training, HE cannot absolve itself from a responsibility to the profession for its continuing development. Although acknowledging my own vested interest, there is a major contribution for HE to make arising from the training implications of what has been found here. Teachers, for the most part, were surprisingly positive about the place of HE in professional development. Indeed, HE - with the proviso that staff must be up to date in the relevant discipline - might make greater strides to take the lead in an area where there seems at the present to be little in the way of leadership.

While nominally outside the scope of this work, it is impossible to ignore the state of ITE, especially since it is now (or should be) inextricably bound up with CPD. It is simply not good enough to provide only two one-hour lectures on special needs during the course of a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme, a typical experience of newer teachers. ITE is where aspirant teachers learn the attitudes and values which will shape their future professional responses. While HEIs will cite restrictions of time because of the greater amount of time spent by trainees in school placements, and restrictions on what can be taught because of the requirements of so many imposed competencies to demonstrate, they must enable a fuller, even *inclusive*, study of special needs. Although there might have been some excuse for HEIs to keep a low profile during the zenith of the Government's reform of teacher training and OFSTED's inspection regime, it is important for HE to continue, and to reinforce, its attempts to influence the Government in respect of the best way to involve the profession in bringing about inclusion.

HE is in a good position to inform. It could certainly help to correct misconceptions about the true nature of inclusion. Teaching and learning strategies and the development of appropriate discourses should be at the core of its work, and it may be necessary for institutions to be more proactive in these respects. Courses for SENCOs, LSAs and other staff could help to interpret the TTA's national SENCO standards, seen by Mittler (2000) to be ' ... awesomely impressive and burdensome' (p. 91), in a more realistic, practical and effective way. This might help to counter the impression the standards give of:

> ... a paragon of professional perfection rather than a harassed
> coordinator with an hour or two a week in which to deploy
> these attributes' (ibid. p. 91)

HEIs should strive to overturn the view, expressed by teachers in this study, that they are not good at delivering pertinent, focused short courses. The Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative for Training (SENJIT), organised by the University of London, has been successful in this respect, but there is scope to reach out to more staff in more schools. It is necessary for HE to persuade schools more effectively that such programmes are good investments on which

to spend shrinking development budgets. Longer courses need to avoid the
fragmentation of special needs, brought about by the modularisation of
provision, by increasing module length or by grouping together aspects to enable
longer, more in-depth study. Award-bearing courses should more readily give
due credit for prior learning and relevant professional experience (Goddard et al.
1999). HE should be prepared where appropriate to deliver more school-based
CPD provision, an option much favoured by schools. HE could initiate a forum
with schools designed to establish best practice in the area of challenging
behaviour. Above all, HE could work collaboratively with teachers in the
classroom where appropriate, and could promote – and assist in – teachers'
classroom research, and reflective practice, to a greater extent than hitherto. It is
these latter non-course activities that are powerful in developing or changing
attitudes, and it is essential that the HE funding regime recognises this.

It is the above issues that have shaped the recommendations to be made as a
result of this research. The sub-title of this work is: 'a study of the implications
for Higher Education ...' and so, while there are implications for many parties,
the recommendations to follow are directed at what HE might do. These
implications were drawn from an investigation of secondary schools, which
examined the area of influence of one HEI - my own - an area with which I am
closely connected, and so clearly the recommendations are aimed at my own
institution. To some extent they will reflect my own professional involvement as
well as my position as researcher and they must be viewed in that light. To the
extent that the situation examined is 'typical' - and my 'reference group' feels
that, in general, it is - with some caution the recommendations might be
generalisable to other HEIs, more particularly 'new' University sector provision
with large teacher training departments covering mixed inner city/urban/urban
fringe schools. This view will be further discussed in the final chapter.

Recommendations

Therefore, based on the findings and the above discussion, it is recommended
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- through the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP – recently changed to 'Universities UK'), and other appropriate fora, pressure is put on the TTA to review the teacher training curriculum, in order that it can focus upon the preparation of new entrants to the teaching profession so that they might work effectively within a fully inclusive education system. It is essential that the Government recognises that current curriculum demands have squeezed out much of the time that used to be available for consideration of SEN-specific issues. The opportunity should also be taken to obtain clarification of future Government intentions with regard to inclusion and patterns of provision for all pupils in mainstream schools.

- Departments of Education review SEN provision within current ITE timetable constraints to include consideration of appropriate discourses, teaching and learning strategies, and an examination of the socio-economic context of social exclusion. This is particularly pertinent for secondary training courses, which tend to devote little time to these issues, where even within the limitations of the required curriculum there is some scope for re-ordering priorities.

- Departments of Education include an experienced SEN tutor to advise and be involved with *all* professional courses; this would help to redress teacher suspicion about the lack of recent and relevant experience amongst HEI staff. Joint school/HEI appointments can be very successful in this respect.

- Departments of Education seek to ensure that *all* their teaching staff involved both in ITE and CPD are conversant with current thinking and issues concerned with SEN and the development of a fully inclusive education system. This is necessary to bring about the permeation of SEN issues throughout the curriculum and will help to demonstrate that in an inclusive education setting, these issues are the responsibility of all teachers.

- a programme of information events be organised by appropriate HE staff to acquaint schools with the implications and issues involved in respect of inclusive education. In the first instance, secondary schools in existing ITE partnerships with the HEI could be targeted, as an extension of the mentor training schemes already in operation. Sessions would preferably be school-

based, probably taking advantage of school training days, adopting the form of staff conferences or workshops.

- relevant staff from HE and teachers in schools work together to develop the TTA national standards for SENCOs into a pertinent, coherent, short-course CPD programme for teachers, LSAs, senior school managers and governors, as opposed to a series of 'one-off', or disconnected, events. These courses should carry academic credit and be capable of being amalgamated into a framework of longer, award-bearing provision leading to a higher degree if required. The structure of longer modular courses should be reviewed to enable the study of SEN components in appropriate breadth and depth.

- more emphasis is put on the development of an appropriate professional development discourse, and on teaching and learning strategies in order to identify a pedagogy appropriate for inclusive education, in all CPD programmes. The former is necessary to address the need, identified in this study, for teachers to be able to conceptualise diverse models of professional development, while the latter would again facilitate the permeation of these issues as a whole school responsibility.

- the new Foundation Degree should be explored as a vehicle for providing a relevant award and career structure for LSAs. This new two-year equivalent programme is strongly vocationally oriented, designed to supersede Higher National qualifications. It is intended to be offered in a variety of modes: full-time, part-time, distance learning or by electronic media, and must include work placement with credit given for appropriate experience. This would appear to be very appropriate for those LSAs who want to progress from a basic level. It will be possible to convert the Foundation Degree into a full Honours Degree, thus opening a future route into teacher training for those LSAs who wish to take this opportunity.

- Departments of Education should aim to increase the provision of school-based CPD where practicable. This would address teachers' views in terms of locality and relevance; however for practical and resource considerations, HEIs should consider providing both short and longer, perhaps award-bearing, courses for clusters of local schools, based in a central school or

teachers' centre location. This would also help to break down the parochialism involved in delivery to a single school staff.

- Departments of Education should engage in a dialogue with teachers in order to identify and disseminate successful practice in including pupils with challenging behaviour

- Departments of Education should seek to develop working partnerships between SEN staff in schools and in HEIs, with a view to the development of collaborative work in classrooms, teacher research and also to promote reflective practice. These should be real working partnerships, rather than 'rhetorical' ones (Davies & Garner, 2000). It would be necessary for the HEFCE funding regime, presently based on course provision, to be revised in order to facilitate such activity.

It is felt that these recommendations are relevant both to the findings of this study and to the professional context in general, and that they are practical and achievable, capable of translation into an action plan with time-line. However, there is one other, more general, suggestion for action which should be made. This small-scale investigation, limited in scope, has discovered many problematic issues in connection with the state of training for special needs in general and in relation to inclusive education in particular. The above recommendations, if taken up, will go some way to alleviate the situation within localised areas. However the experience of conducting this study has demonstrated to me the urgent need for a larger-scale, independent, research study into the current state of special needs education in ITE and CPD, in order to furnish substantial evidence that the Government would find difficult to ignore. The relevant professional associations, together with the new GTC, could unite to back such a measure.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Reflections, Evaluation and Conclusion

In chapter one of this work, my personal objectives in conducting the present study were set out as follows:

- to develop my own learning in respect of the practice of teachers' continuing professional development

- to contribute to the theory and practice of teachers' continuing professional development, with particular reference to special needs

- to establish the implications of the findings and make recommendations for policy development in HE, with particular reference to special needs

In terms of the first of these, *'the development of my own learning'*, my reflections on a process which started some three years ago lead me to think that I have indeed learned a great deal both professionally and personally during the course of the study. I have learned most, I feel, from the teachers concerned; this is satisfying as my intentions were to listen to the voices of teachers themselves. It was remarkable to note how far teachers were willing to accommodate me when they were informed of my research intentions, and how unstintingly they gave of their time despite the demands of their job. Indeed my research diary, on several occasions during the pilot and main study field-work, and the follow-up, records my pleasant surprise at how much trouble teachers would take to make sure they had contributed all they could. I was impressed by their efforts to do their best for special needs education. Despite the lack in many cases of an appropriate rhetoric or knowledge of the most appropriate teaching strategies, they were overwhelmingly well-intentioned towards providing as well as they were able for all their pupils; it is this that must suggest that, with the right preparation, there is a future for inclusion policies. I have learned much too, from the close contact with teachers, about the processes of staff development in schools as well as the teachers' own views, and all this will be useful professionally, both to myself and to my institution. Furthermore I have learned

much about myself as a learner, coming to recognise how I adopt - and adapt - the processes involved in the reflective learning cycle described by Kolb (1981).

I have also learned a great deal about research; not only about the process and the tools, but also about the sensitivities involved in conducting fieldwork within the professional workplace. After the event, I believe even more in the power of in-depth interviews and the technique of 'letting teachers talk for themselves', even though high dependence on one type of information source means that great care must be taken regarding the credibility of material gathered, and its subsequent analysis; triangulation assumed great significance. I feel that the compilation of a substantial literature review during the course of the study has contributed to a specific and comprehensive consideration of the growth of professional development in education in this country, particularly with reference to special needs, and is a valuable resource in itself. I think that I learned a greater personal discipline in collecting and analysing information efficiently, even though research may not be innately a tidy affair (as discussed by Bennett, 5 November, in the OU on-line seminar 'Data Analysis', November/December, 2000). I acknowledge a significant advantage during the research process from my own position of working in HE, particularly in terms of access: to library and search facilities, to appropriate data sources and to an invaluable 'reference group'. If I were conducting a similar study in the future, I would give more prominence to group interviews. Used here largely for triangulation purposes, they proved to be informative and effective for raising and discussing issues. Of course, in retrospect, I would have liked to have gathered more data from more teachers in more schools, to obtain a wider picture. However, again in retrospect, more data would have been a logistical problem; within the limits of a restricted study it would have been unrealistic to give extra time for more field-work and more analysis, notwithstanding the additional wordage required in the writing-up. The feeling that there was a need for more information inevitably gave rise to the recommendation, made in chapter seven, that a substantial independent investigation is required in order to further illuminate the implications of some of the issues raised here.

In terms of the second objective, *'the contribution to theory and practice'*, this study has identified a number of concerns of professional relevance. It has confirmed the views of others concerning the serious lack of appropriate training in SEN at the initial stage, and has raised concerns about the effectiveness of CPD in this area too. It has identified a rhetoric/reality gap between government intentions with regard to training, and the professional acceptance of them, and also a dangerous information gap between the DfEE and schools. The latter is judged to be particularly serious in terms of the inclusion agenda, and is deleterious to debate and a hindrance to proper preparation if government proposals are to stand any chance of effective implementation. Teachers are confused about this agenda and this might be forcing them to regress to inappropriate conceptions of special needs and inclusion. The study has highlighted the lack of a suitable professional discourse with which to conceptualise both development and special needs, and the need for much more attention to be paid to pedagogy, in respect of appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

The third and final objective, concerning *'the contribution to policy development in HE'*, has been addressed in terms of implications drawn and recommendations made on the basis of the study findings. These will certainly help my own HEI in particular to draw up a priority training-related agenda, in general terms as well as being specifically related to special needs. My work has quite clearly been conducted from my own perspective on, and involvement in, HE; consequently the results will also inform my own thinking and the way I approach the job. I believe that the recommendations as set out in chapter seven are realistic, have an immediate relevance and make a useful contribution to practice. I also feel that with the identification in chapter six of the need for professional discourses with which to express both development needs and special educational needs, the analysis of the long-term influence of market forces on these areas and the consequential effects on the way teachers view concepts such as social inclusion, this study has made a contribution to academic knowledge. I hope to develop a dissemination strategy for my HEI which will include the possibility of publication in these areas.

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By listening to teachers, the future direction for the delivery of CPD in my institution – a question which was part of the rationale for this study advanced in chapter one – has been clearly indicated. There is still a demand for traditional HE courses, but as the recommendations in chapter seven demonstrate, there must be some non-traditional development in the HEI to sustain it. Staff must be prepared to work more in schools, and in collaboration with teachers. Suites of relevant short courses must be developed which can link together and carry credit into award-bearing programmes, to give a practice-related higher qualification. New areas to develop include a career structure for LSAs and a research-based programme which explores successful practice in the area of challenging behaviour. A development programme for HE staff in relation to current issues in SEN and inclusive practice should be a priority.

Thus I feel that my proposed objectives have been achieved; further, it can be seen from the last chapter that during the course of this, the particular research questions posed in the introduction have also been answered. It should be emphasised again that such findings can only be related to practice in secondary schools. Indeed my 'reference group' suggests that a similar investigation in the primary sector, which, it felt, was more disposed to accommodate a wider range of special needs, might have yielded very different results. However, that is another investigation. How generalisable are these findings? Can they be interpreted to have any wider significance than the limited context of this particular study? The views of Schofield (1993) in terms of the typicality of the research situation have already been cited in chapter four and further discussed in the last chapter. How typical was this situation? Again, I was guided by my 'reference group'. The consensus was that the secondary schools in question were, in general, a reasonably typical cross-section of those within the HEI's sphere of influence, although with so small a sample it had been impossible to reflect every type. Clearly there will be some schools which are more attuned to the inclusion agenda than those studied; the sample schools were *not* chosen because they were particularly noted for their inclusive practice. However it was felt that schools such as the ones included in the study comprised a large proportion of those in geographical proximity to the HEI, and that the views

evinced were likely to represent the majority opinion amongst secondary teachers in the area. With some caution, it might be assumed that the findings could apply to other city-based education departments in HEIs with similar mixed catchment areas.

This study has shown that teachers, schools and HEIs, despite their misgivings, are learning to live with the educational quasi-market in training and development. However, serious concerns have been raised about the efficacy and appropriateness of these measures; the quasi-market has had a baleful influence, both on CPD and special needs. This market must be 'bucked' if substantial progress is to be made. Davies and Garner in their researches (1997 & 2000) into the subject have described teacher education in SEN to be at a crossroads. My own research would suggest that it has gone further; that in fact it has lost its way. The consequences of this would appear to be having a considerable effect on the promotion and development of inclusion. Davies & Garner sum this up when they assert:

> The movement towards educational inclusion, a deeply problematic notion but nevertheless a central component of New Labour education policy, is being prejudiced by the persistent shortfall in requisite skills, experiences and values of teachers in mainstream schools (Davies & Garner, 2000, p. 2)

My research bears out this contention; training and development at present appear to be totally inadequate to bring about the necessary climate for inclusion to flourish.

Acceptance of the notion of inclusion is also being prejudiced by the lack of a clear message to teachers from government. Despite the rhetoric, attempts to influence practice seem to be, at best, half-hearted. The inclusion debate must move from rhetoric to reality if teachers are not to become even more confused and equivocal. This study clearly confirms the view of Davies & Garner (ibid.); the inclusion cause is not advanced if the concept itself is received with varying degrees of understanding, commitment and enthusiasm from school to school and, indeed, within an individual school.

As a result, it is perhaps not surprising to note the reactions of teachers as described in this study. In difficult times, with challenging reforms, high workloads and a poor image, the lack of any clear lead may be forcing teachers to take a minimalist view of the concept of inclusion, rather than taking the opportunity to broaden their understanding. Perhaps they are clinging on, or being pushed back, to a more restricted model of special needs as an easy alternative in the face of pressure to raise standards.

Mittler (2000) points out that the government is now pursuing policies that are directed both to reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage and to achieving a more inclusive agenda in schools:

> The changes now proposed and still to come could change the face of education in this country from one that catered well for the needs of its ablest students but failed to meet the needs of the majority to one that is designed from the outset to prevent failure and marginalisation and to offer richer opportunities for growth and development to all (ibid, p. 94)

It is interesting to note the use of the conditional tense here. If this worthy contention is to become a reality then it has to be operationalised. Higher Education, with others, has an important part to play here. High quality, focussed, training and development can have a significant role in improving the status and morale of the teaching profession. Employed sensitively, it can also be instrumental in bringing about Mittler's conception of equality in the classrooms of the future.

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APPENDIX ONE

'Informed consent' – format of introductory written information for interviewees

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'Informed consent' – format of introductory written information for interviewees

Dear

I understand from your headteacher that you have agreed to allow me to interview you in school as part of a research project I am conducting towards my Doctorate in Education course with the Open University. Thank you very much; I am very grateful for your offer of help, and would like to give you a few more details.

The focus of my research is on the experiences and views of teachers, concerning their professional development activities (also known as INSET, staff development, training days, etc.). I am also interested in opinions about government education policies in general, and professional development policy in particular. A special emphasis will be on how these issues affect pupils with special educational needs.

The interview will take about 90 minutes, at a time convenient to you. I believe that a room has been set aside for us. The session will be on the lines of an 'informal' conversation and I hope that you will feel free to give your full and frank views; I am very anxious to learn about these issues from the 'chalk face'. If you have a 'log' or list of professional development activities you have attended over the past year or two, it will be helpful if you would bring it along (or a verbal list if you prefer). I am seeking information for my research only, and will not be making judgements about you, the school or its procedures.

I will treat all that you say with professional confidence. Extracts from the interview, together with any discussion of implications from it, will be confined to a written report, which will be seen by my tutor and other

examiners. If successful, it may be made generally available in an academic library, and there is the possibility of publication of information from it in academic journals. However, neither you, the school, nor the LEA will be identified by name, and I will try to anonymise any extracts as far as possible, so they are not attributable.

I would like, however, if you agree, to tape-record the interview, so that I can retrieve what has been said for accuracy and later analysis. I will also take some written notes. This data will be confidential and kept by myself; it will not be released to the school or any other party. I will give you the opportunity at the end of the interview to tell me if there was anything said that you did not want me to use. I hope that you will also agree to a further interview in due course when I have started to analyse the material, so that we can agree on the accuracy of what I have recorded, and perhaps to discuss the implications of what you have told me.

I will ring you shortly to arrange to meet you briefly at school before we proceed, to give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the process. If at that time you are still happy to proceed, we can arrange a convenient date for the interview itself.

Thanks again; I look forward to meeting you.
Yours sincerely,

Graham Fisher

cc Headteacher

APPENDIX TWO

'Interview framework' – annotated exemplar of areas and prompts, used 28 September 1999, 'experienced teacher', as an 'aide-memoire' for the interviewer

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'Interview framework' – annotated exemplar of areas and prompts, used 28 September 1999, 'experienced teacher', as an 'aide-memoire' for the interviewer

Introductory remarks

Welcome

Purposes/use of interview – remind

Confidentiality

Background information

Professional context/career details

Previous schools/responsibilities

This school/responsibilities

Initial training/subsequent professional/academic training/qualifications

Topics related to research questions

Professional development involvement in career/definitions?

What sort of opportunities for professional development in this school?

Organisation/funding of professional development in this school?

What involvement with professional development over last two years?

Discuss professional development 'log'

Providers: school/LEA/private/HE

Own needs – personal/school

RQ 1b

MISMATCH

GOVᵀ /PROF

PROMPT ?

Government/TTA initiatives for professional development – aware?

Examples/impressions

Involvement/possible involvement/implications?

RQ 1b

MISMATCH

GOVᵀ /PROF

Experience of special needs/what do special needs include/involve?

Special needs in initial training/subsequently?

RQ 2a

BARRIERS

TO

LEARNING

↓

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What barriers to learning are there for pupils here?

Opportunities for special needs professional development here?

Do you do this/is it enough/what else do you want/need?

Providers: school/LEA/private/HE

Other staff needs/LSAs?

RQ 2a

RQ 2 b
IMPLICATION
HE

Inclusion/integration

Aware of 1997 Green Paper?   PROMPT ?

Proposals for increased inclusion – own/school view?

How could this be brought about?

What sort of professional development would be needed/own needs?

Providers: school/LEA/private/HE

RQ 2 b

DIVERSITY
HE

What other government policies affect your work/the school? – examples?

What changes would you recommend?

Is there an effect on special needs/inclusion?

RQ 1a

RHETORIC /
REALITY

Finally

Any other issues you would like to share that we haven't touched on?

Anything else to add?

Any questions?

Anything you've said that you don't want me to use?

Thanks – further interview in due course?