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STAFF SUPPORT FOR INCLUSION
AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY

by

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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The idea for this research emerged following previous experiences in schools in Germany and England, noting their differences and similarities, and their equally persistent problems responding to diversity inclusively. The thesis consists of an in-depth exploration of cultures, policies and practices in schools and their rationales regarding the development of inclusion in education.

At the core of the thesis are responses to diversity I perceived in two primary schools, one in London and one in Berlin, focusing in particular on the active participation of staff. My experiences were systematised through an international, ethnographic case study approach, which included six months fieldwork, as a participant observer, conducting semi-structured interviews and exploring school documents. I investigated the participation of children, parents and staff – the three main groups of people in the schools – looking at their roles, their interaction and the barriers they experience. I related my findings to current notions of inclusion and responses to diversity in education, both in the respective literature and in policy documents, highlighting local, national and international differences, their mismatch with educational practice and resulting discriminatory effects.

I found the active participation of staff to be an essential condition for inclusion in education, which has so far been treated peripherally. The barriers they experience to their own participation limit their capacity to respond inclusively to diversity and to establish communities in which everyone, all children *and* all adults, are valued equally. Additionally, parents and children were found to be potential contributors to developments towards inclusion, but were often excluded from contributing to developments in educational practice, so their potential strengths as resources for inclusion were lost.

Consequently, I argue that any approach to inclusion in education has to increase the participation of staff, as well as being supported through the contributions of children and parents. I suggest a model for inclusive school development: namely, a collaborative process between all concerned, to increasingly mobilise the individual strengths of adults and children to support the participation of all: children, parents and staff.

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GLOSSARY

| | |
|---------|---|
| DCSF | Department for Children, Schools and Families |
| DfEE | Department for Education and Employment |
| DfES | Department for Education and Skills |
| EMAS | Ethnic Minority Achievement Support |
| ESOL | English for Speakers of Other Languages |
| FS | Franz-Skarbina-School |
| IEP | Individual Education Plan |
| Mt E.'s | Mount Ephraim's School |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| Ofsted | Office for Standards in Education |
| PA | Personal Assistant |
| PPA | Planning Preparation and Assessment-time |
| SAPH | Flexible <u>Schulanfangsphase</u> (English transl. School Beginning Phase) |
| SATs | Standardised Assessment Tests |
| SenBJS | Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Sport, Berlin |
| SenBWF | Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, Berlin |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| TA | Teaching Assistant |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds (now: United Nations Children's Fund) |
| VERA | Vergleichsarbeiten (English transl. national assessment tests in Germany) |

If you're not included, how can you include others?¹

¹ Original: "If you are not inspired, how can you inspire others?" (Peacock, 2005, p.96)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE STUDY

I cannot remember when I first perceived otherness as promoting processes of exclusion: certainly when I did not want to go on class trips when I was in primary school, because I felt homesick, and I thought the teacher and children in my class would not understand; when I changed secondary school and the children in my new school criticised the length of my trousers; when my sister was born with Down's Syndrome and people initially reacted with less excitement than they had at my other sister's birth – to my surprise – as I had never heard of Down's Syndrome before; when my parents negotiated whether my sister should go to a mainstream primary school or a special school; or later when she was denied a place in a mainstream secondary school. I also experienced otherness when I moved to England for a year during my teacher education course: I stayed in a student hall for international students and had many friends, yet few were from England. When I lived in England the second time, as I have now for four years, working on my PhD, I had very close friends predominantly from England, as close as my friends in Germany. However, I never lost my feeling of foreignness in England, unlike others who had emigrated from Germany and told me it was possible to feel *more* at home elsewhere. Cultural differences have always been apparent, and I have never been more aware of my cultural background than when I lived in England, experiencing it as a potential barrier to my participation, but also as enriching to some of my contacts.

My recognition that processes of inclusion and exclusion have been part of my life, as much as anyone else's, was a result of this research, which is confirmed by Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton (1998, p.34):

“what our reflections have done, however, is to force us to recognise that we do not stand outside of those disabling discourses as commentators; they arise and are contested in our own personal and professional lives as well as in the lives of those with whom we engage through our writing and research.”

Since I studied for my degree as a teacher for special pedagogy, I had mainly regarded inclusion and exclusion as it applied to others, those identified through particular labels, such as “special educational needs” or “non-German background”.

My changing perspective on inclusion is also reflected in this study. I consider my exploration of responses to diversity in schools in England and Germany as part of my own experience of inclusion and exclusion throughout my life – emphasised in this thesis through the notion of a journey. Moreover, my research supports the idea of inclusion as a universal right, instead of a charitable and conditional act, applied in education or other parts of society to support the participation of certain groups that constitute diversity.

The thesis contains an illustrative account of my experiences in two schools and attempts to answer my four research questions (see Box 1). The wider focus of the first and second research question, looking at the participation of everyone concerned in the school and their rationales, revealed that most people, both adults and children, experienced some form of exclusion. Different degrees of participation were observable in roles – identified as structures that either supported participation or non-participation – and in their interactions – identified as influences on such structures. Therefore, adults and children did not only *experience* inclusion and exclusion, but were also recognised as *contributors* to this process.

| |
|---|
| <p>1st research question How do two primary schools, in England and in Germany, respond to diversity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How are their responses to diversity constructed in the roles of all those involved with the schools?○ How are their responses to diversity constructed in the interactions amongst and between adults and children? <p>2nd research question Why do schools respond in these ways?</p> <p>3rd research question How does the participation of staff affect their capacity to respond inclusively to diversity?</p> <p>4th research question How can the capacity of staff be increased to respond inclusively to diversity?</p> |
|---|

Box 1 'Research questions'

After considering the identification of staff as key to developments of inclusion in education, I apply a narrower focus in the third and fourth research question. Both are particularly concerned with the participation of staff and how it influences staff capacity to respond to children and other adults inclusively.

My initial idea for this study – to compare the contributions of staff to responses to diversity in schools in England and Germany – resulted from a visit to a primary school in England, where I became aware of the differences in staffing here to schools I knew in Germany. Furthermore, my research focus was motivated by persistent reports on difficulties and overburdening of staff in so-called “inclusive” school developments, and a widely noticeable suspicion of staff towards inclusion in education.

INTENTIONS OF THIS STUDY

My primary intention with this study is to initiate dialogue between all the people concerned with responses to diversity in education, such as staff, parents, children, policy-makers, teacher-educators and teacher education students. In this way I also aim to narrow the gap between academic research, policy-making and educational practice. In the beginning of my fieldwork, I felt hostility and suspicion of the staff towards me, based on their negative experiences of other educational research or external evaluations.

I regard my research as ‘action oriented’ in that it has been directed at understanding how things can be changed. By seeking, first and foremost, perspectives from inside educational settings, the research findings are supposed to inform policy and practice in a way relevant to practitioners. The study is meant to support locally initiated developments, instead of imposing a standardised model of ‘best practice’.

By researching two schools in depth, I mean to emphasise the uniqueness and individuality of each setting, and each person, as a source of strength for the developments of inclusion.

The study’s broad view on responses to diversity, giving due consideration to everyone concerned with educational practices in the schools, provides a starting point for subsequent studies focusing in detail on particular issues.

With my particular focus on staff, I aimed to contribute to the relatively rare discourse and research on staff participation and its influence on inclusion.

The thesis provides a wealth of practical accounts as evidence for my conclusions, and to reduce doubts regarding the potential for facilitating inclusion. Instead, I hope to motivate inclusive developments by highlighting the impressive individual efforts and strengths of staff, children and parents, which supported inclusive practices.

The international perspective of this study, in particular, should provoke questions and reflections on national developments and concepts in education. Moreover, my choice of England and Germany as countries of inquiry is a reminder that the flaws that exist in educational practice are not only the provenance of economically poorer countries, but of wealthier countries as well, which is often ignored in international discussions on inclusion. My research should also complement the surprisingly few contributions to research from Germany to the international discourse on inclusion – considering Germany’s otherwise more dominant position in global contexts.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis has three main parts. The first part outlines my approach to the study and places it in the wider context of research on inclusion. It includes the methodology (Chapter Two) and my exploration of literature (Chapter Three). The second part focuses on my case studies. It covers my first and second research question, addressing the issue of who is concerned with responses to diversity in the schools, and their rationales for being so (Chapters Four to Seven). In the third part of the thesis I draw further conclusions from the case studies by answering all four research questions, including drawing comparisons between answers to the first two questions in my case studies and the literature. I identify staff as a key influence on including and excluding processes and stress the significance of their participation in developing inclusion (Chapter Eight).

Chapter Two:

Approaching an inclusive methodology

Here, I describe the methodology I used to investigate, analyse and report on responses to diversity in the two schools. I have approached this chronologically in order to emphasise the continuous development of my research approach: I begin with negotiations about the methodology and research design as an international ethnographic case study. This is followed by preparations for the fieldwork and outcomes in the field. Finally, I describe the process of analysis of my collected data including the writing up of the thesis. My account outlines the challenges I perceived throughout all stages of the research – often unexpectedly – and my responses to them, at the same time aiming to support the participation of adults and children in my research.

Chapter Three:

Diversity, participation and education in England and Germany

In this chapter, I present my exploration of local and national literature, in England and Germany, and international literature on the subject, in order to locate my thesis in current discourses on inclusion. The chapter is divided into three sections: in the first section, I focus on the development of *concepts for diversity*, such as integration and inclusion in academic discussion internationally. This is followed by a section on *policies for diversity*; investigating how previously introduced concepts are accommodated in government documents. Finally, I look at *practices for diversity* and development in educational practice, particularly in regards to my two research themes, the roles of children and adults and their interactions in the schools.

Chapters Four to Seven:

These chapters are the first presentation of the case studies, in which I begin to put forward answers to my first and second research question. I particularly emphasised the notion of a journey in the overall structure of these chapters by following the cycle of a school day in each school – my journey into the life of the schools – as experienced many times during my fieldwork: beginning with my daily travel to each school, followed by a chapter on parent participation in educational practice. The next chapter is concerned with experiences I had during class lessons, and finally I discuss the responses to diversity I observed at staff meetings, which usually happened after school.

Chapter Four:

Beginning two journeys – introducing the schools and their contexts

In this chapter, I take the reader on my everyday journey to school during my fieldwork. By describing the impressions gained while travelling through the cities, I briefly provide information about each school and its contexts, including socio-economic, historical and political aspects.

Chapter Five:

Parent participation

This chapter focuses on the participation of parents in Mount Ephraim's and Franz-Skarbina-School, by initially outlining arrangements for parents in the schools, followed by the identification of barriers to their participation, in particular to their roles and interactions, the two main research themes.

Chapter Six:

Visiting two classrooms

Here, I illustrate my experiences during a classroom lesson in each school. The lessons are presented as scenes, aiming to give a vivid account of the dynamics between adults and children that influence their participation. Both scenes are compared in a subsequent international analysis specifically focusing on roles and interactions of adults and children.

Chapter Seven:

Staff meetings – responses to diversity outside lesson practice

In contrast to Chapter Six, where I looked at staff participation *in* the classroom, this chapter illustrates the participation of staff in another major part of educational practice, *outside* the classroom. I consider staff roles that do not have specific responsibilities in the classroom, but act across the school. This further provides an insight into the wider organisational

structures of the schools. As in the former chapter, its structure contains three sections: two scenes of staff meetings and an international analysis.

Chapter Eight:

Exploring responses to diversity – overcoming barriers to participation

This chapter looks at all four research questions, drawing further conclusions from my case studies and expanding on the current literature on my subject. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Firstly, I look at the first and second research question by doing a comparative analysis of my findings from all previous case study chapters, focusing in particular on barriers to participation experienced in the schools. I reintroduce the literature mentioned in an earlier chapter in relation to my findings. Recognisable similarities between barriers, perceived by both adults and children, suggest an interdependence between processes of exclusion. This will be explored in the second section on the third research question. Here, I will focus specifically on staff participation, as I found this the least considered in the literature on inclusion, and – in contrast to former analyses – draw together my research themes. I will investigate staff responses to barriers they perceive to their participation and how this impacts upon the participation of other adults and children. As a result, I find the interdependence of processes of exclusion confirmed, which highlights the support of staff participation as a major prerequisite for developments of inclusion in education. Therefore, in the third section of this chapter, I negotiate ways to support staff participation in developments of inclusion in education, which is the focus of the fourth research question. I look at the potential for making use of the untapped rich resources available for supporting inclusion in education, arising from the existing diversity of children and adults in schools, and argue for locally initiated school developments. I introduce collaboration between, and amongst, adults and children as a process of inclusion that supports equal participation, and mobilises individual strengths as contributions to developments of inclusive communities. Finally, I make suggestions on how to support collaborations as a whole-school approach towards inclusion.

Chapter 9:

Postscript – research retrospect and prospect

In this chapter, I return to experiences of inclusion and exclusion as never-ending. I reflect on the process of doing my research, what I learned from it and what I would have done differently, especially pointing out difficulties I experienced as a result of my research design. Finally, I will suggest research projects for further explorations of the issues raised in this study, and describe how I will proceed with my findings to support further developments towards inclusion in education.

CHAPTER 2: APPROACHING AN INCLUSIVE METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology and research methods I used in this study and my reasons for doing so. This is meant to clarify the guiding principles behind my data-collection, the data-analysis and its presentation. Moreover, the intended transparency aims to show advantages as well as disadvantages, thereby allowing the reader a deeper comprehension, not only about what this research is, but also “what this research is not” (Thomas, Walker and Webb, 1998, p.75).

For the subject of my study, inclusion and, therefore, individual participation, I perceived standardised research methods to be unsuitable. Instead it required an approach that gave equal value to the individuality of participants as well as of the researcher, and accounted for the constant changes I experienced in my research settings. I therefore looked for an ‘inclusive methodology’, including research methods that provided the flexibility to respond to participants and settings in individual ways, and to create shared understanding, between each one of them and myself, about the subject researched. Consequently, my research approach involved continuous development. I broadly identified four stages in my methodology, separated into three main sections in this chapter. In the first section, I describe my theoretical engagement in methodological approaches and the reasons for my choice of an ethnographic methodology and international case study approach. This is followed by preparations for the fieldwork and its practice, including ethics, first explorations of literature and applied research methods. I aimed, in particular, to highlight the discrepancy between my considerations of research methods, prior to the fieldwork, and their actual outcome in the field, which required various adaptations. The last stage of my research, in the third section of the chapter, was the analysis, which included the interpretation of my data and its presentation or writing of the thesis.

DEVELOPING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, I describe my understanding of an international ethnographic case study approach, its theoretical implications and the rationales underlying my choice of this methodology.

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

“The suitability and value of a methodological approach cannot be generalised but depends on the research question or, respectively, the approached aim of inquiry”² (Terhart, 1995 cited in Söll, 2002, p.47).

Alternatively I could ask: what methodology is suitable to investigate responses to all aspects of diversity in schools, to identify individually perceived barriers to participation and the reforms necessary to overcome them? To acknowledge the individual, in research, implies an underlying epistemology that recognises knowledge and reality as subjective, constructed in social contexts, and consequently rejecting a positivist notion of objectivity, independent of individual agency. For this reason I chose ethnography, which Pole and Morrison (2003, p.16) described as

“an approach to social research based on the first-hand experience of social action within a discrete location, in which the objective is to collect data which will convey the subjective reality of the lived experience of those who inhabit that location.”

This approach seeks understanding from inside a social setting, recognised as the social structures created by those researched. It fits well with growing calls for developments of inclusion in education that require “deep engagement with local communities, their education settings and the barriers that they face” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.5). While Pole and Morrison (2003, p.9) refer to “the privileging of a detailed insider’s view over that of the outsider” in ethnography, I consider the researcher’s perspective, who seeks understanding from others, as equally relevant, and a strong influence on the research:

“all research involves the researcher in making decisions about the choice of topic and how the research is to proceed. These decisions always involve individual choices, and often evolve from previous personal experiences and commitments” (Walford, 2001, p.89).

I first recognised the impact of my perspective when I developed the research questions. Realising that a narrower scope of the questions would direct my findings more strongly, I

² German original: „Tauglichkeit und Wert eines methodischen Zugriffs lassen sich nicht pauschal, sondern nur im Blick auf die jeweils verfolgte Fragestellung bzw. das jeweils verfolgte Erkenntnisinteresse beurteilen.“

decided to broaden the first questions (see Box 9, p.43). My research required constant reflection on myself as much as on other research participants, as Walford (2001, p.89) pointed out in regards to research in general: “all research is researching yourself.”

Furthermore, the equal consideration of the researcher’s viewpoint becomes necessary when researched worlds are seen to result from comparisons between the perspective of the researcher and researched. Many authors ascribed comparisons “an epistemological function” (Stake, 1998, p.97), that is to understand others’ perspectives through questioning one’s own (Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Pole and Morrison, 2003; Veck, 2003; Richards, 2005; Fuchs, 2007). Additionally, some specified comparisons require us to “move from the self to other selves” (Veck, 2003, p.1), thereby “‘including ourselves with others’ and ‘the ‘otherness’ within ourselves’ (Booth, 2001)” (Veck, 2003, p.1). In this way, we make “what is strange familiar and what is familiar strange” (Booth and Ainscow, 1998, p.5), which enables us to question, reflect and to come to generate new ideas by merging our different perspectives “within ‘common sense’(Arendt, 1968)” (Veck, 2003, p.3). Therefore, comparisons are not only to recognise but share individual “truths” (Simons, 1996, p.234) to serve a common good: Because, “‘to restrict truth to what one can claim is to claim too little for what we are able to know’ (Polanyi, 1966)” (Eisner, 2005, p.154).

CASE STUDIES

Case studies have often been used in ethnographic research and sometimes the term was even applied “as a synonym for ethnography” (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.9). However, I distinguish case studies as a method for data collection within the epistemological paradigm of ethnography. I decided to use a “qualitative case study” (Stake, 1998, p.99), following Stake’s definition:

“[it is] characterised by the main researcher spending substantial time, on site, personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting, revising meanings of what is going on” (ibid.).

My choice of this approach again follows my research intent, to give detailed attention to individuals, the individual school, and its contexts, as they all constitute educational practices, also noted by other researchers:

“the development of educational practice and the quality of pedagogic work is closely linked with the context of each school, with the possibilities of participation and the actual conditions of the school”³ (Bastian, Combe and Reh, 2002, p.424).

Case studies are a research approach under scrutiny (Pole and Morrison, 2003), which I found confirmed in my research, when I was asked how a study that involved ‘only’ two schools could be valid as such narrow focus seemingly prevented any generalisation. In response, Stake (1998, p.104) highlighted case studies “to establish the limits of generalisability”. No selection of cases would provide a sufficient basis for generalisation. Yet, they are illustrative examples of particular issues recognised in wider contexts: for example, the enduring tensions between selective and inclusive responses to children’s diversity. I perceived these as a common reality within education systems across Europe and internationally, following literature accounts and my own experiences in other schools. Correspondingly, Simons (1996, p.231) identifies any individual case as continuation of processes and dynamics that apply across the world: “by studying the uniqueness of the particular, we come to understand the universal”. It is also a basic human skill – we can use any single information we gathered to deepen our understanding of wider contexts. Moreover, ethnographic case studies do not aim for generalisation or objectivity, but find particular value in applying individual perspectives to an understanding of social contexts:

“...what is most meaningful is sometimes derived from the singular and unique; [...] and that the individual case can strip away the clutter of large contexts and allow recognition of a common shared humanity” (Bottery, Ngai, Wong and Wong, 2008, p.183).

In summary, we can seek understanding of the world through engaging in the case. Our findings can contribute to wider developments, for instance as the basis for further reflections, to confirm, question, inform and challenge other perspectives and to provoke dialogue. “The purpose of case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case” (Stake, 1998, p.104), in order to inform the world.

AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

My decision to undertake an international study derived from my final dissertation for my Masters degree in which I also looked at two primary schools in England and Germany. Furthermore, it was a response to the limited number of international case studies in education. As discussed above, I consider all research as comparative, though not as international. This carries particular characteristics that are illustrated in this section.

³ German original: “Die Entwicklung von Unterricht und der Qualität pädagogischer Arbeit ist auf das engste mit dem Kontext der einzelnen Schule, den Partizipationsverhältnissen und den jeweiligen konkreten schulischen Bedingungen verknüpft.”

“Why come from Germany to look at the failing English education system?”, I was once asked. The question illustrates two main dangers of international comparisons (Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Söll, 2002): firstly, the presumption that international comparisons are to identify successful practices in one country in order to adopt them in another, following “the notion that practice can be generalized across countries without attention to local contexts and meanings” (Booth and Ainscow, 1998, p.4); secondly, the pretence of only one existing national perspective on the research subject (Booth and Ainscow, 1998), which is even more surprising in studies of Germany where the difficulty in claiming a “national” perspective becomes particularly obvious through its federal structure.

But what are the particular benefits of international comparisons if they are not about merging different countries, their cultures, policies and practices, which Hoppers (2009) strongly criticised in developments of globalisation? They can recognise the uniqueness of countries as opposed to supporting their uniformity. They can initiate international dialogue following the recognition of international diversity as a potential to inform national developments and to help the conscious shaping of social development.

Additionally, in international studies, the researcher steps outside a national context and takes a critical stance towards it which, in contrast to other studies, facilitates another level of data analysis, in the light of characteristics of national systems, such as politics or economy. For instance, when I visited a primary school in England for the first time a few years ago, I was provoked by seeing a teaching assistant in a lesson, since the role of teaching assistants does not exist in Germany. As a result, I questioned the staffing in schools in Germany and England in regards to inclusion.

Apart from such benefits of international research, it also places particular demands on the researcher. The researcher is required to have detailed knowledge about each national context in order to gain understanding:

“without an understanding of the rules of particular educational, cultural and political systems it is very difficult to make sense of what is in front of one’s eyes. Visiting classrooms can be a disappointing experience in the most favourable circumstances since most of what is interesting about what is going on is locked away in the heads of teachers and students” (Booth and Ainscow, 1998, p.5).

For this reason, I moved to England. Yet, I knew that I would never feel as at home there as in Germany, where I had lived for twenty-five years. I had to remain aware of this differential effect on my research findings.

FIELDWORK: PREPARATION AND PRACTICE

The difficulties I encountered in defining my fieldwork, Stake (1998, p.87) described with regard to the definition of a case in case studies, which is “both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning.” Correspondingly, I found the boundaries of my fieldwork constantly put into question. For instance, was I supposed to consider those parents I met in the underground, who brought their children to school, or did fieldwork apply only to research activities in the school grounds, my official fieldwork location? In this respect, Wolcott’s rather open definition of fieldwork as depending primarily on the research purpose and one’s personal involvement, is applicable:

“to me, the essence of fieldwork is revealed in the intent behind it, rather than the label itself ... fieldwork is a form of enquiry in which one is immersed personally in the ongoing activities of some individual or group for the purpose of research. Fieldwork is characterized by personal involvement to achieve some level of understanding that will be shared with others” (Wolcott, 1995 cited in Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.10).

However, I chose a narrower definition: fieldwork is everything I learned, during the time I spent in the two schools carrying out empirical investigations, through a variety of methods in order to answer my research questions. In the following sections, I outline the methods for my fieldwork, the reasons and intentions for my choice, and their actual outcome in practice, requiring a continuous review and adaptation in response to the individual, and unexpected circumstances, I found in both schools.

EXPLORING LITERATURE IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIELDWORK, PART ONE

My engagement with literature continued throughout my research. It informed the study, my approach and my focus, and later was equally informed by my findings. Yet, I recognise two main phases of literature research, one prior to my fieldwork and one afterwards during my analysis (see below, p.42 ff.). My first exploration of literature was primarily in preparation for the fieldwork and, therefore, predominantly included literature on ethnographic research methods, research with children, international studies, ethics in social research and further reading to specify the location of my research focus in the field.

To find relevant literature I accessed different electronic library databases, mostly in England and Germany, such as the British Education Index (BEI), Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Subject Information System Bildung (FIS), Karlsruhe Virtual Catalogue (KVK), Inclusion Online, and Disability Inclusion Documentation (BIDOK). Furthermore, I searched local library catalogues of universities in Hamburg, Hannover and Berlin, Canterbury Christ Church University in Canterbury and the British Library in London. For policy documents, I looked at national and local government websites, and also

UNESCO and UNICEF websites for international papers. Additionally, I consulted my supervisors, colleagues and friends for literature recommendations, and also bibliographies and other lists of literature on inclusion provided by authors (Sandkull, 2005, p.9; Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.44), were a valuable source for further materials.

A FRAMEWORK FOR MY FIELDWORK AND GAINING ACCESS TO SCHOOLS

I decided to spend three days per week for twelve weeks in each school, interrupted by a break of one week in the middle: the days off school would give me time for the transcription of my field notes, for reflections on my approach and possible adaptations. I regarded three months as sufficient time "...to learn enough about the case to encapsulate complex meanings into a finite report..." (Stake, 1998, p.100), and also to develop trusting relationships with the participants which Veck (2003, p.4) saw as a prerequisite for developing shared understandings:

"before researchers can understand how social actors conceive and experience social settings, they have to instigate relationships with the actors within these settings."

While the timescale for the PhD required a limit to be placed on the fieldwork, I was open to the possibility of returning to the schools if further information was needed. Later I extended my fieldwork by one week, as I felt I had run out of time for my data collection.

The schools I chose for my research had to fulfil two conditions: they had to allow me to take part in their educational practices for three months and they had to be primary schools, since this is where most thinking about inclusion in Germany is being done. I preferred schools, which were not renowned for their inclusive practice, to emphasise that every school had to – and did – respond to diversity. Furthermore, the schools should be relatively easy to reach, but this was not a primary criteria for my choice.

To gain access to the schools and in return for welcoming me, I offered to work as an unpaid teaching assistant. Other researchers have done similarly. For example, Black-Hawkins (2002, p.29) saw it as "more ethically acceptable to contribute in some ways to the lives of those [she] research[ed] rather than just to extract a set of findings from them."

In England, a local authority in London, contacted through my supervisor, was the gatekeeper, which initiated the first contact with Mount Ephraim's School (Mt E.'s). After my fieldwork was agreed, I arranged a preparatory week – two months prior to my fieldwork – to inform the choice of my research methods and to check out the relevance and suitability of my research focus for this setting.

In Germany, I contacted three primary schools that other educational researchers recommended to me. Two of them, one in Hamburg and one in Berlin, indicated their interest in my research and I met with the head teacher at each school. By contrast, at Mt E.'s

I had talked to a teacher who spoke on behalf of the deputy head teacher – retrospectively I consider this as an interesting finding in itself. Finally, I chose Franz-Skarbina-School (FS) in Berlin, simply because I had accommodation in the city. I did not regard another preparatory week in FS to be necessary, because I had previously carried out my fieldwork in Mt E.'s, and regarded the applied research methods offered enough flexibility to be used in FS as well.

Without being intentional, both case study schools showed some striking similarities: the socio-economic circumstances of their catchment areas, as well as their striving for inclusive responses to diversity, especially regarding ethnic diversity and children categorised as having “special needs”.

DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS, PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION, SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

My intention to seek the individual perspectives of others, and to investigate what a PGCE student once described to me as, “everything that is going on in the classroom that is not measurable or quantifiable”, ruled out any quantitative methods. Therefore, I chose participant observation, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis as research methods. The application of multiple methods increased the information gathered (Clark and Moss, 2011), and, in triangulation, would reduce the above mentioned sensitivity of ethnographic research towards criticism regarding subjectivity and bias (Pole and Morrison, 2003). Another benefit of those methods was that they offered flexibility for spontaneous responses to the individual circumstances of people and settings, which Pole and Morrison (2003, p.11) recognised as distinct characteristic of ethnography:

“in ethnography’s attempt to understand social action within discrete locations or social collectivities, it needs to be in a position to respond to social action as it unfolds,... In this sense the extent to which the ethnographer can plan ahead, in anything but fairly general terms, is limited.”

As described in further detail in the sections below, I perceived the need for individual adaptations, particularly in my participant observation and in interviews – i.e. in all research methods that involved interactions. Such unforeseeable events left me with great uncertainty regarding the sufficiency of my collected data, my role in the school and my relationships with people, especially staff. Yet, it also increased my curiosity, and constantly reminded me of my influence on the research and the potentially excluding effects of research methods for some people.

Documentary analysis

Documents gathered during my fieldwork proved valuable as data in my research. They were an aspect of educational practice in schools that regularly provided staff, parents and children with a variety of information. It was particularly intriguing for my research focus, to find what information was available for whom, for what reasons, and how it influenced one's participation. They also gave me an increased insight into the individual structures of each school, such as the staffing, meetings or current school projects. Furthermore, documentary analysis, in triangulation with other methods, increased the reliability of the research as Lawrence (2005, p.21) described, because

“... documents are generally ‘non-reactive’ (Robson, 1993, p.272); that is, the data they produce is not affected by the fact that they are being used as evidence, as may be the case, for example, in an interview.”

Participant observation

“We cannot study the social world without being part of it” (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998, p.111). This applies to any observations in research. In order to distinguish my approach as participant observer from other types of observation, I found Atkinson's and Hammersley's (ibid., p.110) reference to “a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of the researcher” helpful. It refers to a certain way in which I chose to engage in my case study schools: namely by actively contributing to their educational practices, by taking on responsibilities and engaging in dialogue with people. Since I see myself as a communicative and sociable person, choosing participant observation was also an attempt to draw on this strength to benefit the collection of data.

I offered to work as a non-teaching support staff at both schools, despite my degree as a teacher in special pedagogy, in order to have more time to concentrate on my research. In this way, I would experience working in a classroom, attending staff meetings and be able to empathise more strongly with others' perspectives, roles and participation in educational practice. Furthermore, I would be more aware about how I was perceived and influenced the school dynamics. I considered it as crucial for the interpretation of the collected data to reflect on my role and influence on the research, and to know on what basis information had or had not been provided for me (Fuchs, 2007).

I arranged to spend time in one class in each year group: in England, from reception till year six, in Germany, year one till year six. Visiting all year groups would enable me to distinguish between individual practices in one class and those that were universally applied to the whole school (see Box 2 & Box 3, p.24). On the other hand, spending a longer time in only one class per year group could support development of relationships, and would offer

greater opportunities to follow the class and illuminate differing experiences of the school day (Booth and Ainscow, 1998).

| Time | First half of fieldwork | | | Second half of fieldwork | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. |
| | Year 1 | Reception | Year 2 | Year 3/4 & Year 6 | Year 3/4 & Year 6 | Year 5 |
| 8:30a.m. | Staff briefing | | Staff briefing | Staff briefing | | Staff briefing |
| 8:45a.m. – 12:30p.m. | PPA (Year 1 & Year 2) | PPA (Reception) | In class | In class | In class | PPA (Year 3/4) |
| 1:30p.m. – 3:30p.m. | In class | In class | In class | In class | In class | In class |
| 4:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. | | | Staff development (INSET) | | | Staff development (INSET) |

Box 2 'My timetable in Mt Ephraim's School'

| Time | First half of fieldwork (Week 1-3 in Elephant Class, Week 4-6 in Eulen Class;) | | | Second half of fieldwork | | |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. |
| | Year 1-3 | Year 1-3 | Year 1-3 | Year 6 | Year 5 | Year 4 |
| 8:45a.m. – 1:30p.m. | In class | In class | In class | In class | In class | In class |
| 2:30p.m. – approx. 4p.m. | | Staff meetings (irregular) | | | Staff meetings (irregular) | |

Box 3 'My timetable in Franz-Skarbina-School'

I established a list of areas of observation (see Box 4, p.25), prior to my fieldwork to support my observation focus. The list was orientated on my initial research questions developed prior to my preparatory week (see Box 9, p.43) and on the three dimensions, cultures, policies and practices, of the Index for inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) and also covered reflections on myself. Although it was not exclusive, the list confirmed the inevitable selectivity of the researcher's perspective:

“the minute we begin thinking about the field, the second we put pen to paper for field log entries, we are already selecting, dropping or figuring data from the far more complex real thing that we have witnessed, in order to tell a credible story” (Ely, et al., 1997 cited in Black-Hawkins, 2002, p.19).

I intended to note down all observations in a field notes journal that I would take with me into the schools. This was not only to remember my observations, but also to inform subsequent research activities.

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who belongs to the school? - School and community - Influences from local, national and international contexts - Current school developments - Classroom practices - School's routines and rituals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning development and support policies - Resources of the school - Different kinds of involvement in the school - Different perspectives on diversity, inclusion and exclusion - Policies and practices of categorisation - Contact between researcher and researched |
|---|---|

Box 4 'Areas of observation'

My participation in practice

My intention to work as support staff in the schools, not only to gain access, but also to support my insight in educational practices and the development of trusting and equal relationships with staff, was misleading. I was never seen as support staff; rather my chosen role caused a lack of clarity amongst staff, and I was aware of increased suspicion towards me, especially from teachers. There were primarily two reasons why I was not identified as classroom support: firstly, in contrast to my initial arrangements with the schools' leadership to work as support staff in the school, I was introduced to the staff as researcher. Only the deputy head teacher in Mt E.'s, Monica, carefully considered that I could "work as a kind of teaching assistant" (Mt E.'s/Wk 1/4). Secondly, my overt research activities conflicted with the role of support staff, as I once recorded in my field notes journal:

I do a lot of things which are unusual for a TA to do, and which, therefore, rather [indicate] my role as a researcher: scribbling down field notes in the school, swapping classes each day, doing interviews, my attendance at teachers' Planning Preparation and Assessment-time (PPA), ... (Mt E.'s/Wk 2/25).

On my last day of fieldwork in Mt E.'s, I recognised that staff perceived my writing of field notes as the most prominent area setting me apart, as a retrospective field notes account relays:

my last day of fieldwork in the school was amazing! I decided not to take any notes and just "be" in the school. In response, Nicole, the Assessment Coordinator and also a

teacher, highlighted my different appearance: “is this really Elisabeth? A completely different person!” Partially, I think she meant it as a joke, but I also think there is a little bit of truth in it, so I might take less notes in the school in Berlin (Mt E.’s/Wk 14/30).

However, apart from the staff’s lack of clarity about my role in the schools, there were other factors that promoted their distance and suspicion towards me and limited my participation. For example, Walford (2001, p.72) noted “a deep suspicion of educational research in general” , which I found confirmed in a teacher’s account in my research:

“they [researchers from the universities] do not seem to know what is going on in current schools and their practice. Academics usually have not been in schools for a long time and thus have not seen what the issues are” (Mt E.’s/Wk 2/29).

Central to this suspicion, was a perceived fear, by staff, of judgment on their work. For instance, when I approached a TA for the first time for a brief chat, she responded to me: “I didn’t do anything wrong, did I?” (Mt E.’s/Wk 6/7) And Jody, a teacher in Mt E.’s, initially asked me not to attend her PPA time with her year group partner, explaining that “she did not want me to write anything bad about them” (Mt E.’s/Wk 2/1). In FS, even a child seemingly understood my role as “judge”, following my frequent writing of field notes:

today Ron showed me a little note book that he had brought from home, proudly presenting what he had written in it so far: ‘Ben behaves badly. Kevin behaves badly.’ In response to my question why he would write down those things he explains that [...] I always wrote in my book as well. I hope, he, and possibly other children as well, do not think I would record ‘negative’ behaviour⁴ (FS/Wk 6/7).

The staff’s fear of judgement could not even be reduced through my research intention to find ways to support them in inclusive developments, because this had not been communicated to them, despite information I had sent out. The deputy head teacher in Mt E.’s introduced my research as being “about children with SEN and inclusion” (Mt E.’s/Wk1/4). In FS, the staff I was not working with in class, did not even know that I was a researcher until I officially introduced myself at a whole staff conference. This was three weeks after I had started my fieldwork.

Another reason some staff told me at the end of my fieldwork for their distance towards me, was their feeling that there had been few opportunities for them to object to my research and my placement in their classes, because this would have been against the decisions made by the schools’ leadership.

⁴ German original: „Ron hat heute einen kleinen Notizblock von zuhause mitgenommen, den er mir schon heute morgen stolz präsentiert hat mit dem, was er bisher aufgeschrieben hat: ‘Lug benimmt sich böse.’ ‘Bill benimmt sich böse.’ Auf meine Frage hin, wieso er Dinge aufschreibt, und woher er die Idee hatte, erklärt er mir, dass [...] ich doch auch immer aufschreiben würde. Ich hoffe, er und vielleicht auch andere Kinder, denken nicht, dass ich negatives Verhalten von Kindern in meinen Notizen aufschreibe.“

I experienced much less suspicion and distance from support staff, possibly because they had less responsibility in educational practice, and consequently felt less under scrutiny. But I could also imagine that some related to me better because they saw me as an ‘outsider’, which was similar to how they saw themselves. Perhaps they also appreciated my interest in their views, which were otherwise least considered in the schools.

Similarly, I also had closer relationships with children who were perceived as outsiders, or as particularly difficult in class. But I generally found my relationships with children very positive and trusting, which I noticed from the children’s excitement in working with me, or in their openness when they asked me questions about myself or the ‘book’ I was writing about them. When I started my fieldwork in a class, I introduced myself to the children as researcher who would also help them and the teachers during the lessons.

My contact with parents became increasingly open, especially after I had approached them in person when requesting interviews (see below, p.33).

Perceiving cultural differences as a barrier to my participation. In contrast to the previously described factors that caused a distance between me and the staff in *both* schools, my cultural unfamiliarity was a greater barrier in Mt E.’s. Correspondingly, I felt more included in FS, as a field notes journal entry illustrates:

Ms Mühlhausen and eleven teachers arrive at the staff meeting. Ms Mühlhausen and Julia are sitting down next to me, which I find surprising, because in England it was rather the opposite: at staff meetings the staff, especially teachers, rarely sat down next to me⁵ (FS/Wk 2/44).

Further indications of my increased participation in FS, were my greater involvement in educational practice and my more informal contacts with staff, some of which have continued to this day. In contrast, in Mt E.’s, all attempts to contact some staff members after my fieldwork failed. Moreover, in FS, the interest of staff and parents in my research, some teachers’ requests for feedback from my observations, and Ms Mühlhausen’s comment that she could not imagine a better and more in-depth evaluation of a school, also showed their estimation of my work. In Mt E.’s, my offer to do a presentation about my findings after my research has never been taken up.

In Mt E.’s, as a result of my unfamiliarity with the structures and organisation of the school, and because of my language difficulties, I felt more insecure in my interactions. I thought I might not be as verbally sensitive as in a German-speaking environment, and found

⁵ German original: „Frau Mühlhausen und 11 LehrerInnen kommen zu der Konferenz. Frau Mühlhausen und Julia setzen sich neben mich an den Tisch, welches mir auffällt, da es in England eher gegenteilig war: Bei Konferenzen im staff room setzen sich die Mitglieder des Schulpersonals, insbesondere Lehrkräfte, eher selten neben mich.“

it more difficult to understand not only what was said, but also what remained unsaid. I constantly feared breaking social conventions, recognising that my behaviour occasionally caused irritation, or even slight offense for the staff, such as forgetting to ask ‘how are you’, when I entered a classroom to get some materials quickly. My resulting increased caution towards others was possibly interpreted as reservation or distance. Yet, I tried to adapt to social conventions in England as much as possible, which I eventually, by mistake, also applied in Berlin with the opposite effect – seemingly ‘lost in translation’, as this field notes entry exemplifies:

I approached a teacher to ask whether she needed a particular room during the third and fourth lesson. She said yes, but if I would need it, she could also stay with her class in her classroom. In a manner I picked up in England, I asked her ‘Are you sure?’ to which she replied a little rudely: ‘well, I can’t do more than offering it to you’⁶ (FS/Wk 5/18).

The examples show, that my cultural background inevitably influenced my actions in the schools and, consequently how I was perceived, as well as my research focus. While this influence was unavoidable I decided to reflect on it in more depth. Especially for this purpose, I once arranged a meeting with a PhD fellow in England to compare our perspectives on a school in England and points of interest. He had an English background, was father of a primary school child, a former teacher and now a teacher-educator.

Establishing my role in the schools. In various ways, I tried to reduce people’s suspicion and distance towards me and establish more trusting relationships with them. Initially, the leadership placed me in one class, but subsequently I organised the classes to visit by myself. In this way I could be surer about the teachers’ agreement. I encouraged the staff to let me know if they felt uncomfortable, and reminded them frequently about their right to withdraw from my research, irrespective of what the leadership had told them. I tried to increase communication to find ways in which both the staff and my own research interests could be accommodated. For instance, in response to Jody’s worry about my attendance at PPA time, we arranged to give it a try and if my presence distracted her I would not come again (Mt E.’s/Wk 2/1). I increasingly asked staff whether I could write field notes during their lessons, offered my accounts of them to read – which no one else ever did – and reassured them about confidentiality in my research. Furthermore, I repeatedly emphasised my research intention was not about judging their practice as “good” or “bad”, as I believed that they

⁶ German original: „Ich gehe zu der Klassenlehrerin hin und frage sie, ob sie in der 3. und 4. Stunde in dem Raum ist. Sie sagt ja, doch wenn ich ihn bräuchte, könnte sie auch mit der Klasse im Klassenraum bleiben. Ich frage nach: ‚Sicher? Geht das wirklich?‘ Ein wenig harsch antwortet Ilona: ‚Ja mehr als anbieten kann ich es ja nicht.‘“

would always intend to do the best they could. I wanted to learn from them about how to respond to children inclusively.

The longer I spent in the schools, the more their suspicion and mistrust seemed to decrease, which I recognised when individual staff felt comfortable enough to express their vulnerability and insecurities towards me. For example, Karin, a teacher in FS, asked me not to be in the room when she was supervised by another teacher (FS/Wk 5/6ff.). Sue, the EMAS teacher in Mt E.'s, said to me after a chat: "god, I hope I did not say anything I shouldn't. You have to take that out then" (Mt E.'s/Wk 14/14). Correspondingly, my role slowly seemed to be established on a surer footing. I was given some assistant jobs in the classrooms, such as doing small group and one-to-one work, carrying out an English lesson once a week in FS and teaching a child guitar in Mt E.'s every Wednesday. Yet, in Mt E.'s, it had always been my part to offer help, whereas in FS, I eventually had to decline some of the many requests from teachers for my help. This was an interesting difference regarding the use of resources available in the schools, which I discuss in-depth in later chapters.

Collecting field notes: when do I stop?

In practice, neither the list of areas of observation nor my definition of fieldwork prevented me from experiencing the same difficulty as Lawrence (2005, p.28), on deciding "in observational research [...] what to leave out (or conversely, in)." The complexity of my research subject, the breadth of my first two research questions, and my aim for an in-depth approach, meant that I considered nearly everything to be relevant, inside and around the schools. This included descriptions of situations, including classroom spatial features, people's appearance and facial expressions, or personal background information, short direct quotes from people and further reflections of my own. Initially, my collection of data was mainly restricted to organisational issues, limited by the possibility to observe when I was already writing observation notes, and the fixed time frame for my fieldwork. Only at later stages of my fieldwork, like Wolcott (1982, cited in Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.27), I narrowed my collection of data and focussed in more detail on certain aspects that I found particularly relevant. On the one hand, I should possibly have done this earlier, to prevent the accumulation of such an overwhelming amount of data, but, on the other, this might have limited my experience of the unexpected, which proved to be an essential finding in itself.

In the schools I wrote field notes whenever I found time, and as soon as possible after my observation, to prevent forgetting the information. Secondly, I typed them up straight after school. In school, I had written most information in bullet points because I was usually pressed for time. I wrote the typed version as a detailed narrative to help me to recall the situations more vividly for later analyses. I added key words at the end of each typed-up

school day report, referring to key observations and potential themes for later analysis. Moreover, re-reading my field notes when I typed them up, supported my developing research focus and further investigations during fieldwork, for example, by highlighting inconsistencies between individual accounts or indicating potential misunderstandings. In London, I wrote most notes in English, and in Berlin in German. By leaving direct quotes, including for example information on blackboards or in the schools' news letters, in their original language, in order to keep them authentic, I deferred the issue of translation to a later time.

Semi-structured interviews

I chose 'semi-structured interviews' because they are less prescriptive than 'structured interviews', and therefore offer increased flexibility "not only to explore and recognize issues but, just as importantly, to develop new insights into themes emerging during the interviews" (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.35). While this corresponds well with my intention of an inclusive research approach that supports the participation of research participants (Friebertshäuser, 1997), it does not diminish my responsibility as interviewer to reflect on my increased power in the interview and its effects on the interviewee.

Another benefit of semi-structured interviews was a way of dealing with my potential difficulties with English as my second language. Their self-contained structure (see Box 5, p.31), with clearly worded key-questions, limited misunderstanding by the interviewee. Yet, the structure was flexible enough to allow me to ask further clarifying questions if I had difficulties understanding the interviewee. However, they could not lower all barriers of translation that could occur in any interview. As Friebertshäuser (1997) had emphasised, interviews require high linguistic sensitivity from the interviewer to question carefully, and listen attentively, to answers and the subtleties of verbal and non-verbal expression.

The interview structure I developed was based on examples in the literature (Söll, 2002; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Clark and Moss, 2011). The six key areas were the same in all interviews to allow for comparability and to support the focus on the research subject (Friebertshäuser, 1997). While most main questions were the same in all interviews, some differed in relation to the individual interviewee and/or information I had gathered previously in school.

| Initial areas of the interviews | Final areas on interview guidance sheets |
|---|--|
| 1. The perception of one's own identity in the school (roles in the school, including professional and/or individual background, etc.); 2. The perception of other people in the school (other's roles, interactions with others, etc.); 3. Views on the school as a whole (school cultures, policies, atmosphere, etc.); 4. Perception of external influences on participation in the schools (external communities, the children's homes, local, national and international policies, etc.); 5. Ideas for school improvements, desires and visions; 6. Anything the interviewee would like to add; | 1. The child/parent/professional - in school; - in the classroom; 2. Interactions with others; 3. Nature of the school; 4. External influences on one's participation, learning and teaching; 5. Ideas for school improvements; 6. Anything to add; |

Box 5 'Developing areas for interview questions'

I wanted to interview staff, parents and children from all year groups, as well as other people I recognised as concerned with responses to diversity in the schools. Initially, I had also intended to interview external professionals, teacher education students and teacher-educators (see Box 6, p.32). Because I experienced the time of my fieldwork as limited, I decided not to carry these out, as they seemed to be the easiest to separate from educational practice in the schools.

All staff and parents received written information about my research, inviting them to contact me with any queries, and mentioning that I might approach them individually. Children would be selected for an interview with their parents' permission, teachers' recommendations and finally the child's agreement. Preferably the staff, parents and children I interviewed would be from the classes I was working in, as this would be beneficial for my understanding of their accounts through triangulation.

Regarding interviews with children, various researchers had emphasised the application of particular methods (Greig and Taylor, 1999; Christensen and James, 2000; Lewis, et al., 2004; Greene and Hogan, 2005; Fraser, et al., 2006), and Clark and Moss (2011, p.10) specified:

“the important factors to remember are to find methods which begin from the starting point of children as experts in their own lives and which open up as many different ways of communicating this competency as possible.”

Summary of research methods originally intended in the study

- Explorations of literature (in two main parts, before and after the analysis)
- Two case studies (international)
 - o Documentary analysis
 - o Participant observation as a member of support staff in the schools (using a reflective field work journal)
 - o Semi-structured group and individual interviews in each school with
 - 6 teachers
 - 6 support staff members
 - approx. 3 children from each class (in small groups)
 - up to 18 interviews with parents in each school
 - 2 head teachers
 - external professionals connected with inclusion issues (approx. 4)
- Any additional written account produced by staff, pupils or parents
- Semi-structured group and individual interviews with teacher education students and teacher educators (from a university in England and in Germany)
 - o 6 teacher educators
 - o 6 teacher education students (from a university in England and in Germany)

Box 6 ‘Summary of research methods originally intended in the study’

Therefore, I negotiated diverse methods, such as photographs taken by the children, or pictures the children would draw about a particular topic (Clark and Moss, 2011), that were data in and of themselves, and could also support and complement further conversations (Heinzel, 1997). For older year groups, I considered whole-class discussions about a particular topic, and to offer children the choice to be interviewed by me individually or in small groups, or to interview each other. By applying the latter method I built on their increased familiarity with each other, hoping it would support their openness and the identification of issues relevant to them. The final choice of method I did not want to make until I had known the children for a while.

For adults, I also considered offering alternative forms of communication as beneficial for gaining their perspectives: They could choose to be interviewed on their own or in a group, or provide a written account for me. Personally, I preferred individual interviews, as I found it easier to listen to one person at a time. Lawrence (2005, p.24) perceived individual interviews to be also beneficial for the interviewee:

“I felt that individual interviews would give each participant the opportunity to take it at her own pace and to digress if she wanted to. This was important as I hoped to gain access to richer data if the interviews were more relaxed.”

I chose to use a digital recorder, instead of relying on my speed of writing. Moreover, I felt it would be difficult to engage in conversation with the interviewee if I was taking detailed notes. Yet, recorders could also have an influence on the interview and could not capture the atmosphere nor “non-verbal communication, which may be a valuable source of data” (ibid., p.25). I intended to note down these aspects straight after an interview as a “post-script”⁷ (Friebertshäuser, 1997, p.381). However, I could not prevent losing non-verbal information, especially my own, and their potential effects on the interviewee.

Carrying out interviews on fieldwork

With the exception of one mother in Mt E.’s, no parent or member of staff ever responded to the invitation in my information letter to approach me. In both schools, I was more successful in asking people in person for an interview. I arranged for all interviews to take place at the end of my fieldwork. This gave me more time to develop trusting relationships. This was important in gaining informed consent and in encouraging them to express themselves freely.

In both schools, following the teachers’ advice, I approached children individually during lessons. They were accustomed to being taken outside the classroom by an adult for individual or small group work, which I had also done with them previously. All interviews in reception till year three were planned as group interviews, including a game, drawing pictures or taking photographs. However, I told all the children, they could always leave our “conversation” or “game”. As a result, in reception in Mt E.’s, I was twice eventually left with only one child, which I found much easier. In year four till six, following my offer, some chose to be interviewed on their own, others preferred to be interviewed with a friend.

I had no difficulties in finding interviewees amongst the staff, and everyone I approached was willing to answer some questions. By contrast, I struggled to get hold of parents. In Mt E.’s, I hardly heard anything from parents regarding interviews with them or with their children, whereas in FS, many initially declined for themselves and their children to be interviewed. The teachers presumed they did not understand my research, hence I introduced it again in person to parents at class’ parents’ evenings (FS/Wk 4/47). As a result, the majority of parents consented to interviews with their children and also offered their own participation. Similarly, in Mt E.’s, most parents were willing to attend an interview after I had approached them in person with previous consent from the class teachers and following the recommendation of Sue, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Support teacher (EMAS).

⁷ German original: „Postskriptum“

I had aimed for a selection of interviewees that represented the diversity I perceived in the schools, including, for example, different genders, age-groups, socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, professional backgrounds, lengths of time in the school, different working contracts (part-time or full-time), different learning stages and types of support. Yet, in the end I had a majority of female interviewees in both schools, because there were more female staff and because some fathers refused to be interviewed (see Box 7).

| 47 Interviews in Mount Ephraim's School | 40 Interviews in Franz-Skarbina-School |
|---|--|
| <p>24 staff interviews (across year groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 interviews with primary teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 1 male o 6 female - 1 interview with an extended learning manager (teacher, male) - 1 interview with the Assessment Coordinator (teacher, female) - 1 interview with the ESOL teacher (female) - 1 interview with the EMAS teacher (female) - 1 interview with the Pastoral Care Manager (female) - 1 interview with the Inclusion Manager (male) - 1 interview with the Business Manager (male) - 1 interview with the Deputy head teacher (female) - 1 interview with the Head teacher (male) - 2 interviews with teachers with newly qualified teacher status (female) - 1 interview with a learning mentor (female) - 5 interviews with support staff (female) <p>1 interview with a parent governor (female)</p> <p>7 parent interviews (across year groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 female - 1 male <p>14 Children's interviews (13 female and 1 male):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 interview in a group of 4 (year 2 and 6) - 2 interviews in groups of 3 (reception and year 1) - 4 partner interviews (years 3/4, 5 and 6) - 5 individual interviews (reception and years 3/4, 5 and 6) <p>1 discussion with the whole class (year 6)</p> | <p>16 staff interviews (across year groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 interviews with primary teachers (one partner interview) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 8 female o 2 male - 1 interview with a teacher for special pedagogy - 1 interview with a School Helper (male) - 2 interviews with pedagogues (both female) - 1 interview with a personal assistant (female) - 1 interview with the Head teacher (female) - 1 interview with the Deputy head teacher (male) <p>11 parents interviews (across year groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 male - 6 female <p>13 children interviews (11 female, 17 male)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 interviews in groups of 4 (years 1–3) - 3 interview in groups of 3 (year 6 and years 1–3) - 5 partner interviews (years 4, 5 and 1) - 1 individual interview (year 1) <p>2 discussions with the whole class (years 5 and 6)</p> |

Box 7 'Interviews in Mt Ephraim's and Franz-Skarbina-School'

Furthermore, I experienced the potential problem that I was mainly gathering perspectives from those who were, in any event, more included in the schools. I noticed this especially in

regards to parents. The parents, who were more difficult to reach, were possibly those who also faced greater barriers to their participation in the schools. Yet, I still managed to meet with some parents who the staff previously described to me as very difficult to reach. In both schools, those parents often had a migrant background. Therefore, in England I perceived my own foreign cultural background as a commonality which facilitated my contact with them.

In the interviews, I found the advice of my supervisor for my role as an interviewer to be confirmed: most important was listening. Listening is “not just hearing but interpreting, constructing meaning and responding” (Clark and Moss, 2011, p.9). It required continuous adaptations to the individual interview situation and the interviewee, which I did, principally through the design of my interview questions and my role as interviewer. The interview questions that were established prior to my fieldwork, in some cases changed following the observations I made in the schools. On one hand my experience of the interviews was beneficial for verifying and exploring what I had observed in the schools. On the other, my observations also helped me to understand the interviewees, who sometimes had difficulties to verbalise their practices and their perspectives in the interview (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Lawrence, 2005). I explained this factor in my field notes:

“... a lot of practitioners (TAs, teachers...) find it hard to verbalise what they are actually doing in practice. [...] Some seemingly don't know where to start, their work is so complex, so multi-faceted [...]. It might also be that they are a little nervous in the interview situation, hence they cannot think of anything spontaneously. [...] There is so much content which cannot be captured in words and verbal communication” (Mt E.'s/Wk 14/11ff.).

Due to the fact that English is my second language, I was increasingly sensitive to the wording of my questions in English interviews, which I often reformulated for better understanding: for example, I often modified the question ‘is your work acknowledged in the school’, because the answers I received indicated that my question had been misleading. ‘Do people in the school value your work’ or ‘is your work perceived as important in the school?’ Eventually, my supervisor suggested asking: ‘do you feel valued in the school?’ I felt this formulation of the question was very personal, as it addressed the person rather than his/her work. My friends in Germany confirmed my impression. Consequently, I expected the interviewees to find this question rather odd hence I apologised when I asked it the first times. But beside irritated looks when I made initial apologies, their answers gave me the impression that they had finally understood the question I always intended to ask.

In a few interviews with parents, with whom I did not share any language, we ended up talking with hands and feet.

But even speaking the same first language did not necessarily prevent potential misunderstandings, as Richard Bandler (cited in Augé-Sollberger, 2001, p.75) noticed similarly:

“the mistaken assumption, that people understand each other just because they are using the same words, is widely applied.”⁸

Therefore, I also reviewed my questions prior to each interview in German in relation to the interviewee.

Apart from adapting interview questions, I also adapted my role as interviewer to the individual interviewee. In the interview with Ghedi’s father in Mt E.’s, for instance, my primary role was to develop a trusting relationship, as a field notes entry outlines:

“during the interview, he [Ghedi’s father] became more and more open, which I tried to support by letting him talk about anything he wanted to, yet trying to link his areas of interest to the subject of the research: we started talking about the Somalian education system which he seemingly missed, and moved on to a comparison between his experiences in the Somalian and English education systems, his criticism and preferences. At the end of the interview his shyness had disappeared: he gave me his mobile number so that I could contact him again if I had further questions. The next day he came into school to find me and told me his wife would like to talk to me as well” (Mt E.’s/Wk 6/11).

I never had to change my way of recording. When I asked prior to each interview, all interviewees accepted the use of two digital recorders, and, in most cases, the recorders seemed to be forgotten. Yet, I was aware of its potential influence on my data and occasionally, when I had switched the recorders off after the interview, the interviewees appeared to be more open. I added this information in my interview postscript.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The involvement of adults, and particularly young children, in my research, required careful ethical consideration. Because of my fieldwork in two countries, I had to seek ethical consent from two bodies: the ‘Senat of Bildung, Science and Research’⁹ in Berlin and the ethics committee at Canterbury Christ Church University in Canterbury. The ethics applications initiated my engagement with ethical guidelines (National Children’s Bureau, 2003; Alderson, 2004; BERA, 2004) and raised my awareness of potential areas of ethical concern in my study.

⁸ German original: „Der Irrtum, dass Menschen sich verstehen, nur weil sie die gleichen Worte gebrauchen, ist sehr weit verbreitet.“

⁹ German original: Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung

Most importantly, research should at the very least ‘do no harm’. This implied, for me, that everyone taking part should feel comfortable. Furthermore, I had to assure confidentiality of data to all participants, which I did by using pseudonyms, to maintain their anonymity, unless they were giving information that aroused suspicion that someone was being harmed. I had to consider that my role as support staff could mean that my research intentions would be forgotten over time (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.25). I needed to ensure participants’ ethically-informed consent, which I did through reminding staff and children about my research half way through my fieldwork.

However, I knew that despite engaging with ethical considerations prior to my fieldwork, the individual circumstances of each setting made it impossible to foresee all potential ethical issues. Therefore, I regarded it as of the greatest importance to be aware of my moral responsibility as researcher, which required me to be highly self-reflective and sensitive towards each individual participant in my research.

Ethical dilemmas

The staff’s suspicion towards me, as well as the children’s continuous questions about my research, re-assured me, that most people, who participated in my research, were aware of my study and my role as researcher in the schools. Yet, in other respects I realised that “maintaining an ethical stance is not always straightforward” (Black-Hawkins, 2002, p.28), as Black-Hawkins noticed in her research as well. Some of the ethical dilemmas I experienced were already recognisable in previous sections, such as my attempts to ensure that people in the schools were equally informed about my research. The information distributed to everyone, were not always understood by everyone. Another dilemma I experienced when I developed closer relationships with some children over time. While this was beneficial for my research, as those children frequently talked to me and were more open than others, I tried to avoid their increasing emotional reliance on me, by reminding them that I would only be in the school for a limited time. In one case, a child seemed to become particularly close to me, coinciding with conflicts in her family, hence I contacted the class teacher and stopped the research in this class.

In some situations, ethical considerations prevented me writing field notes, because it seemed to make people uncomfortable or because they talked to me in a critical way about other colleagues or parents, seemingly unaware of my research. In other cases, I left the room, for example, when members of staff were having very personal or emotional conversations.

In addition, the selection of interviewees involved ethical challenges, being a balancing act between my interest in people’s participation in my research, and their potential

unwillingness. This I perceived as particularly difficult in regards to parents, about whom I usually had little prior knowledge, and which, therefore, required increased sensitivity, as the following account exemplifies:

when I approached Ghedi's father the first time with Sue [EMAS teacher] to ask him for "a chat" he said, with an unsure look, that he has to check when he would have a day off work to come into the school to meet me, and that he would let the office know. He never contacted the office, which I interpreted as a sign that he actually did not want to speak to me. I waited for two more weeks and then approached him again. He said we could meet Tuesday at the school gate in the morning. That morning, when he brought his son to school, he passed me without saying anything, so I had to run after him. He looked surprised, as if he had forgotten our meeting, but said he would be in front of the office in five minutes (Mt E.'s/Wk 6/11).

Furthermore, I was aware of a need to regard any interviewee – although selected on the basis of their membership of a category – as, first and foremost, a person like all the others, as I discuss in later chapters in detail.

ANALYSIS: CONTINUING TO MAKE SENSE OF MY DATA

My analysis included the following elements:

- the development of research themes and a thematic structure, beginning with the first and second research questions and, subsequently, the third and fourth,
- a continuous review of my research questions,
- the location of my findings in current literature on inclusion, and
- my writing.

The way I chose to analyse my data was informed by established methods of analysis. Nevertheless, I experienced many doubts and struggles, which I overcame through ongoing reflection on my approach and discussions with my supervisor and other research fellows.

IDENTIFYING RESEARCH THEMES

My identification of themes in my data was guided by the three questions:

1. Is the content relevant for answering my first and second research questions?
2. Is this a new theme?
3. Is this an issue already existent as a theme (Richards, 2005)?

To support my identification of themes, I specified two further questions for the first research question:

- Who participates in the school and who does not?
- What barriers and support is perceived in the schools?

I placed in brackets, at the end of the respective paragraph in the field notes and interview transcripts, the themes and sub-themes identified. I chose the wording of each theme with care, aiming for clarity and lack of ambiguity. Sometimes I recognised a theme as too broad, thus requiring further specification. For example, the initially identified theme ‘diversity in the schools’, could have been allocated to every paragraph. I tried to apply the key words, used to refer to (sub-)themes, consistently in order to facilitate later text searches. This also helped to chart my changing perspective, when I suddenly introduced a different key word for a similar issue.

I rated each paragraph according to the degree to which it illustrated the allocated (sub-)themes: one star indicated little illustration, three stars a strong illustration. Moreover, an arrow (‘→’) placed at the end of a paragraph, referred to a linking source, such as interview transcripts or other parts in my field notes. This technique is orientated on “node systems” (Richards, 2005, p.90) applied in software for qualitative analysis.

The developed themes informed my ongoing analysis of the text. They were like pairs of glasses through which I identified related text passages, discovered inconsistencies and similarities and created new ideas about the research subject. In the literature, I found two

similar approaches to data analysis: the method of analytical coding, in which information is coded to establish contexts for meaning making and to develop new ideas (Richards, 2005, p.94ff.); and the “inductive method of structuring content”¹⁰ (Söll, 2002, p.59) in which it is aimed to stay as close as possible to the collected data in the analysis, rather than applying external theories of interpretation.

I had to be careful not to develop too many themes and lose the overview. Therefore, I kept a ‘spontaneous thoughts’ file in which I collected those ideas I was yet unsure whether to include in my developing thematic structure, such as critical views regarding my themes or writings about myself.

The comparison of interview transcripts, documentary evidence and field notes was particularly beneficial, as it challenged the themes I had identified in only one source, and supported further reflections on my own and other, also official, perspectives, and their verification (Stake, 1998; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003): for example, in my field notes I had noted staff using certain concepts, such as the concept of “special educational needs”. In my transcripts of their interviews, it became apparent that they were actually aware of its potentially excluding effect on children. This raised the subsequent question *why* they still applied those concepts in the context of inclusion.

During my time in schools, I overestimated the amount of interview material that I could work with subsequently. The analysis of my detailed field notes took a considerable time. Although I listened to all my interviews carefully, I selected a third of my interviews for transcription. This amounted to 17 staff interviews, 10 parent’s interviews and interviews with 12 children. In choosing the interviews to transcribe, I aimed to include the diversity of adults and children seen in the schools and their perspectives. They cover a range of ages, ethnic backgrounds, year groups, genders, and roles.

I am self-critical over the fact that I was unable to seek validation of my transcripts from each interviewee, due to time pressures. I had sought verification of my understanding of people’s views during my fieldwork in both schools, and used meetings and conversations with various staff, subsequent to my fieldwork in FS, to clarify uncertainties I noticed in interviews and in my observation notes.

Supporting my thematic analysis through the Index of inclusion

I used the ‘Index for inclusion’ (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), an instrument for schools to identify barriers to participation and to support developments towards inclusion in education, to explore my perception of the two case study schools.

¹⁰ German original: „induktives Verfahren als Form der inhaltlichen Strukturierung“

I applied the Index in two ways: firstly, I placed each school on a scale in relation to every indicator set out by the Index, outlining to what extent the practice of the schools matched the indicators. This was a very superficial comparison of the schools because many concepts used in the indicators, such as ‘partnership’ between staff, differed internationally. However, I still found it beneficial, as it underscored my overall perspective on both schools: generally I viewed FS in Berlin more positively and more progressive, regarding developments of inclusion, than Mt E.’s in London, which revealed my potential cultural bias. Furthermore, I realised that I felt more informed about FS than Mt E.’s, which, apart from cultural familiarity, was possibly because my fieldwork in Mt E.’s was longer ago than in FS.

Secondly, I wrote a paragraph for every indicator about each school. Here, I was more critical of FS, yet the results still indicated that, overall, I considered its practices more inclusive than Mt E.’s.

The clarity of the indicators were especially helpful in identifying further differences between the schools, in developing new themes and in linking themes already specified.

Structuring research themes

Finding a structure for the identified themes (see Box 8), and deciding which to present as main themes, sub-themes or permeating themes, was a prolonged process based on three questions:

- How did the themes relate to each other?
- How would each be best represented in the thesis?
- Which themes did I perceive as most and least relevant for responses to diversity?

| Themes developed from the data | |
|--|---|
| - Interactions | - Governmental influences |
| - Roles | - Hierarchies |
| - Understanding of learning and teaching | - Perceptions of the school (individual accounts vs. official accounts) |
| - Rules in the schools | - External worlds |
| - Flexibility-independence vs. rigidity-order | - Language and terminology used in the schools |
| - Identity and belonging | - Accountability, assessments and evaluations |
| - Organisational structures and resources in the schools | - Education courses for staff and parents |

Box 8 ‘Themes developed from the data’

I faced particular difficulty developing a structure in which themes and sub-themes were relatively independent of each other. In reality they were largely interdependent, which

needed to be conveyed so as to make sense of them. In order to find out whether a thematic structure made sense, I wrote about it, but in two instances this created more confusion. The third structure was workable. It included three main themes, 'interactions amongst and between adults and children', 'understanding of learning and teaching' and 'roles of all those involved with the schools'. Later, I realised that the three themes together required too much space for the thesis, hence I mainly deferred an analysis of 'understanding of learning and teaching' to a future study, though it continued to be a sub-theme in some chapters.

DEVELOPING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I formulated my research questions after my preparatory placement week in Mt E.'s. They guided my investigations and thinking, but also resulted from them, supporting consistency and focus in my research, while leaving enough space for critical reflection on my own presumptions. Therefore, the questions were under continuous development: modified, extended and subdivided, in response to new information and perspectives emerging from my engagement with the collected data and the literature (see Box 9, p.43). The two main research themes specified the focus of my research questions; explored separately in the first and second research questions, they were merged again in the third and fourth, "[turning] this multi-coloured data into a unified account" (Richards, 2005, p.180) (see Box 1, p.10).

Further modifications primarily included:

- a broadened notion of diversity and education: from questioning *staff* responses towards *student* diversity to the *schools'* responses towards *any* perceived diversity of adults and children;
- simplification of wording to support clarity;
- a shift from staff deployment to staff participation as a major influence on their capacities to respond inclusively to diversity;

However, the main research focus always remained on staff and their influence on responses to diversity.

EXPLORING LITERATURE, PART TWO

The second part of my literature exploration, in which I looked at academic and policy literature, both informed and was informed by my analysis and the discovered research themes.

I applied the same sources as in the first part (see above, p.20), using different key words and phrases to search for relevant literature. It was confirming for my research focus when I only found a small number of publications on certain themes or sub-themes, such as the inclusion of staff.

I briefly summarised each text, highlighting aspects relevant to my research, such as similarities and differences regarding my findings or my research approach.

Developing research questions

First research question

How are staff deployed in an English and German primary school? (February 2007)

How do staff respond to student diversity? (March 2007)

How do two primary schools in England and Germany respond to diversity? (July 2007)

Sub-questions of the first research question addressing the three discovered themes (March 2009)

How are their responses to diversity constructed through the roles of all those involved in the schools?

How are their responses to diversity constructed in approaches to teaching and learning? (later excluded from analysis due to limits in space and time; see above, p.39ff.)

How are their responses to diversity constructed in the interactions amongst and between adults and children?

Second research question

What are the historical rationales for staff's current practice? (February 2007)

What are historical and theoretical rationales for schools' current practice? (July 2007)

Why do schools respond to diversity in these ways? (September 2009)

Third research question

How should staff be deployed to respond to student diversity? (February 2007)

What support is required for staff to respond to student diversity more inclusively? (July 2007)

How does the participation of staff affect their capacity to respond inclusively to diversity? (September 2009)

Fourth research question

How can staffing be improved for diversity? (February 2007)

How can staff be enabled to support processes of inclusion in the school? (July 2007)

How can staff's participation be increased? (February 2009)

How can the capacity of staff be increased to respond inclusively to the diversity of children? (September 2009)

Box 9 'Developing research questions'

The seemingly endless literature in the field of inclusion made it difficult to decide when to stop reading. Knowing that my literature review was always going to be incomplete I stopped when I felt I had gathered enough literature to critically discuss my research findings.

It was particularly challenging having to present literature from two countries in the thesis. I originally intended to explore six key texts from each country in detail, and briefly link with other publications in the field. However, I felt unable to choose those key texts whilst trying to capture all aspects I wanted to discuss in the literature review. Therefore, I eventually decided for a more conventional structure for the chapter on literature, divided into three parts: *concepts for diversity* in academic literature in England and Germany; international, national and local *policies for diversity*; and *practices for diversity*.

WRITING THE THESIS: CONVEYING MY PERSPECTIVE

I wrote my thesis in the last two years of my PhD. It has been the last stage of a continuous process of writing. Formerly written articles, literature reviews and personal accounts, all fed into the thesis in different ways. I consider writing as part of my methodology and analysis. It is the way in which I decided to present my research and its findings and, as with Walford (2001), I experienced it to further my reflections on the data. My written accounts were merciless in showing up the inconsistencies in my thinking and insufficiency of analyses:

“...writing does not just improve my thinking, it allows me to think. It is only when a draft is finished that I begin to be clear about what I am trying to say – even if only at that particular moment. [...] What I write is always open to reassessment and development...” (ibid., p.177)

There were three particular challenges in writing the thesis. One was to make my perspective understood by the reader, including my own confusions, questioning as well as critical stances. The readers’ understanding of my study could support the validation of my research (Richards, 2005). I found it helpful to imagine the reader as a “foreign friend”, who was entirely unfamiliar with the contexts I researched, which I provoked by asking myself two core questions:

1. What information does the reader need to know to comprehend my perspective?
2. How do I present the information, that is my data, in a way that motivates the reader’s engagement and supports understanding?

I also considered a clear distinction between my perspective and that of others, presented in the literature, to facilitate understanding. For this reason, in the case study chapters, I left all literature, apart from some statutory documents, aside. They are reintroduced afterwards in Chapter Eight.

A second challenge was to write in English, as it is my second language. I often struggled to find a sufficient way to express what I wanted to say.

The third challenge was the difficulty in representing my research, i.e. my experiences of the schools as living, non-static, but dynamic and unique places, including all the messiness

and inconsistencies. Mel, a teacher in Mt E.'s, highlighted the limitations of written accounts regarding to a school inspection report, to present a false or inadequate picture of a school:

“written on paper, you might think of this school: ‘what?’ [...] When you come into this school I think [you] realise it’s great” (Mt E.’s/No. 7/S/9).

Consequently, the methodological question that constantly guided my writing of the thesis was how to “move beyond the label to the true words that express our lives, speak our existence” (Freire, 1997 cited in Hudak, 2001, p.10).

Applying scenes and the notion of a journey

For the representation of my experiences of the schools, particularly as living, constantly changing places, I used the notion of a journey, which also underlies my whole research project. In the case study chapters, I take the reader with me on my journeys into both schools. I begin with my literal journey to each school through their cities, illustrating my perception of the wider social contexts. Arriving at the school, the first impression the reader and I get is about parent participation, usually the first people I saw in the mornings. Next, we spend time in a lesson in a classroom in each school, and at last, attend staff meetings, which mostly took place during or after school (see Box 10).

| |
|--|
| <p>Presenting the case studies</p> <p><u>Chapters</u></p> <p>Journeys to each school (Chapter 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ to Mt Ephraim’s School○ to Franz-Skarbina-School <p>Parent participation (Chapter 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ comparing opportunities for contacts with parents in both schools○ international analysis of parents participation in the schools○ summary <p>Classroom lesson (Chapter 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ in Mt Ephraim’s School○ in Franz-Skarbina-School○ international analysis of responses to diversity in the classrooms○ conclusion <p>Staff meetings (Chapter 7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ in Mt Ephraim’s School○ in Franz-Skarbina-School○ international analysis of responses to diversity during staff meetings○ conclusion |
|--|

Box 10 ‘Structure of the case study chapters (Chapters 4 - 7)’

Each case study chapter, apart from the journeys to each school (Chapter 4), focuses on one of three groups of people I identified as primarily concerned with responses to diversity in educational practice: staff, children and parents. Yet, staff are part of every chapter, as their participation and responses to diversity form the specific focus of my study.

I presented the classroom lessons and the staff meetings as scenes, which I perceived as the best way to portray the complexity and dynamics of education practice in the two schools. Each scene is an amalgam of different incidents and quotes I extracted from field notes and interviews, which originally happened over the time span of my whole fieldwork, and not only within one lesson or staff meeting. The incidents present the diversity of perspectives I found in the schools and considered critical for answering my research questions. Most speech, presented in the scenes, are direct quotes. However, in the staff scenes, some speech was originally indirect in my field notes and I turned it into direct speech to maintain the character of a scene.

As the selected incidents and quotes originally involved different people, which could not all be included in one scene, I tried to allocate them to one or a few persons. I found this more difficult in FS because of the wider range of perspectives and differing practices I noticed in that school. This was less the case in Mt E.'s, hence it was easier for me to merge accounts and practices that were in reality from different people in that school. I reflected on it carefully and think it was more than an insensitivity to nuance in English.

Initially, I tried to apply a neutral writing style for the scenes, namely without describing facial or emotional expression, to give a less subjective account. But the results were faceless and sterile descriptions of situations, which had the appearance of unreality, and were more difficult to comprehend without the aid of physical, facial and verbal expressions. They were boring and without atmosphere, very much in contrast to my actual experiences. Thus, I decided to add these features to convey a more vivid impression.

I did not have enough observations of parents in the schools to create a scene. In both schools, the parents' presence was shorter and more episodic than that of the staff and children, who usually spent whole mornings and afternoons in the schools. As a result, I based the chapter on parent participation predominantly on reflections from staff, children and parents and on documentary evidence. Another distinguishing aspect of this chapter is that all its parts function on the level of an international comparison between both schools, whereas the classroom lessons and staff meetings firstly illustrate each school's practices separately. Yet, all case study chapters, apart from the introductory Chapter 4, follow a similar structure, in so far as the first parts are more descriptive, while the last parts are an international analysis of previously described responses to diversity and a conclusion or summary (see Box 10, p.45).

For the purpose of confidentiality, all names of people and places, as well as every other name that might indicate the place of the study, or people involved in it, were replaced by a pseudonym, which is maintained throughout the thesis. I call some people by their first names, others by their surnames, as this matched the way I was introduced to them. For example, I got to know the head teacher in FS as Ms Mühlhausen and the head teacher in Mt E.'s as Robert. I rarely heard names of parents in any of the two schools, and correspondingly refer to them as "mother/father of ...". I kept the national origins of names as I wanted to evoke feelings of familiarity or strangeness I observed in the schools. For a similar reason, I chose not to translate certain German terms, such as the term 'Kiez', especially used in Berlin for a particular kind of neighbourhood, as I wanted to support their identification as local or national concepts. Their meaning is explained in footnotes. To support anonymity, I occasionally changed genders and year groups. However, some official roles in the school were only held by one person, such as the head teacher.

I translated German interview quotes into English; for readers who can speak German, the German original is provided in a footnote.

A particular challenge was to find an adequate way to refer to cultural identities and difference. I found terms such as 'Turkish', 'English' or 'German' tended to ignore potential individual understandings of one's culture. I have not come to a satisfactory solution to this problem. For the purpose of my thesis, I decided to use those terms not as an indication of one's culture but of one's cultural background. Thus, for instance, a Turkish background only indicates that the person, his/her parents and/or grandparents were born in Turkey. It does not preclude other cultural influences. Additionally, I refer to *a* as oppose to *the* cultural background, implying that what is considered to be German is not singular but can differ from individual to individual.

Extracts from field notes are referenced in the end in brackets, indicating the school, the week of fieldwork and the page in the respective file, for example, (FS/Wk 2/35) is Franz-Skarbina-School/Week 2/page 35; or (Mt E.'s/Wk 12/2) is Mt Ephraim's School/Week 12/page 2. Interview quotes are presented in inverted commas with a reference in the end outlining the school, the interviewees, children (Ch), parents (P) or staff (S), the interview number in my files, and the page number of the quote. For instance, (FS/No. 3/Ch/3) refers to children's interview number 3 in Franz-Skarbina-School page 3; or (Mt E.'s/No. 12/S/7) is Mt Ephraim's School/interview number 12/staff/page 7. I refer to written accounts from participants in my research with the name of the school and the number of the document, for instance (FS/Doc.1) or (Mt E.'s/Doc.1).

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have described and provided rationales for my methodological approach, and the methods I applied to answer my research questions and to present my findings in this thesis. I regarded it as important that I strive to make my research approach inclusive, to support the participation of people. This resulted in a continuous process of development, with ongoing reflections on the participation of people in my research and of my own interactions, leading to various adaptations of research methods in the field. As mentioned throughout this chapter, I experienced some difficulties with my approach and learned valuable lessons on what I would try to do differently in prospective studies. The written information I provided for staff and parents was mostly ignored or misunderstood, and as a result, I experienced some suspicion towards myself and my study. I became aware that inclusion and exclusion could not be researched without my influencing these processes, and I learned the importance of ensuring that everyone understood my research. Subsequent personal approaches to people supported their participation in my study, providing flexibility and opportunities for me to consider the participants' individual perspectives, suggestions, questions or worries. This also increased their willingness to contribute to my research, for example, in interviews. Moreover, the difficulties I experienced over limiting my collection of data, had been caused by my insecurities about how much data I would need in order to substantiate my claims. During my study, I realised that a smaller amount of data does not necessarily reduce the validity of the research, and I gained increasing trust in my own perspective, through continuous challenge and reflection.

CHAPTER 3: DIVERSITY, PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND GERMANY

In this chapter, I explore the literature that influenced my research, including local, national and international academic literature and government policies bearing on discourses of inclusion and responses to diversity. At all stages of my research, my choice of literature and my fieldwork were interdependent.

The first section of this literature review focuses on *concepts for diversity*. These include segregation, integration, exclusion and inclusion, and their relations. In the second section, I look at international, national and local *policies for diversity*, which operate as mediators between theoretical concepts and practice as they “involve clear strategies for change” (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, p.8). I explore their effects on educational practice in the third section, which is a consideration of *practices for diversity*. Here, I chose to focus specifically on my research themes, ‘roles’ and ‘interactions’, in order to facilitate comparison of such literature with my findings in later chapters.

CONCEPTS FOR DIVERSITY

In this first part of the chapter, I look at the concepts for diversity in the literature that influenced my developing understanding of inclusion. Firstly, I look at the understandings of integration and segregation from a special pedagogic point of view, outlining my initial engagement with concepts for diversity in education. This is followed by a description of my changing focus from integration to inclusion, particularly exploring three concepts I perceive as central to inclusion: diversity, participation and education. In concluding this first section, I outline my current approach to inclusion underlying this thesis.

INTEGRATION: PART OF THE SPECIAL PEDAGOGIC DISCIPLINE OR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

I developed my first understanding of ‘responses to diversity/inclusion’ at the beginning of my teaching degree in special pedagogy in Germany, where I was introduced to the term ‘integration’ in opposition to ‘segregation’. Reiser, Klein, Kreie and Kron (1986, p.115) made the point that “different definitions [of the term ‘integration’] depended on the respective area of knowledge”¹¹. Thus, it was not surprising that my understanding of integration was primarily concerned with children categorised as having “special pedagogic support needs”. My selective focus reflected a perspective on responses to diversity, which remains one, if not *the*, most dominant of discourses on integration internationally (Booth, 2003, p.3).

The dominance of the special pedagogic discipline was recognised as part of a long tradition of segregation as a response to diversity in education, not only in Germany, but also in England and other countries (Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007). Yet, Germany’s secondary and special education systems, were seen to belong internationally to the most selective (Seitz, 2009), with three officially defined major functions: selection, allocation and qualification (Moser, 2007). Deppe-Wolfinger (2008, p.1) recognised “such an established system of institutional discrimination affects the attitudes and pedagogic practices of teachers.”¹² Yet, responses among pedagogues were different, and within the special pedagogic discipline in Germany, two broadly different approaches towards integration can be distinguished. The so-called “special pedagogic understanding of integration”¹³ (Hinz, 2004) views integration as part of the special pedagogic discipline. It

¹¹ German original: „...verschiedene Begriffsbestimmungen [...] je nach dem Wissensgebiet, in dem der Begriff verwendet wird...“

¹² German original: „ein so ausgeklügeltes System institutioneller Ausgrenzung mit Folgen für das Bewusstsein und pädagogische Handeln von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern.“

¹³ German original: “sonderpädagogisches Verständnis der Integration“

strongly justifies the continuation of special, as opposed to mainstream, education for certain children, through the concept of a child's "educational or social readiness" (Mittler, 2000 cited in Hinz, 2002, p.356). In this way it promoted a "stacked system"¹⁴ (Myschker and Ortmann, 1999 cited in Hinz, 2004, p.56) of integration, including arrangements for "partial" as opposed to "total integration"¹⁵.

In contrast, those, who are often called "critical special pedagogues"¹⁶ (Kriwet, 2005, p.193), demanded that special pedagogy becomes part of an interdisciplinary approach to diversity in education, also rooted, for example, in reform pedagogies, citizenship studies (Prengel, 2006; 2007; Vojtová, Bloemers and Johnstone, 2006), intercultural pedagogy (Deppe-Wolfinger, 2004), the 'Democratic Psychiatry'¹⁷ movement (Feuser, 1995a, p.141), and sociology and psychology (Reiser, 1986). One of the first interdisciplinary approaches to diversity in education in Germany was the "Pedagogy of diversity"¹⁸ (Prengel, 1993; Hinz, 1993). In all these approaches integration was seen as a "non-selective and non-segregating general pedagogy"¹⁹ (Feuser, 1995b, p.135) for all children (Muth, 1991; Haerberlin, 2007), and a wider social movement (Feuser, 1995b, p.137). This included "the social rejection of the exclusion [...] of people, who are considered as disabled and/or with psychological illnesses"²⁰ (Feuser, 1982, p.86), and required "the creation of social contexts which adapt to the person"²¹ (Feuser, 1995a, p.145). It implied an ideological change (Reiser, Klein, Kreie and Kron, 1986; Feuser, 1995a; 2005; Deppe-Wolfinger, 2002; Haerberlin, 2007). "Disabilities"²², and the ascription of the term "special pedagogic support needs" to children, have been regarded as results of processes of exclusion, as "a hindered and insufficient integration"²³ (Deppe-Wolfinger, 2004, p.31). Therefore, the persistent application of such labels, through special pedagogies, has often been seen to promote the exclusion of those they claim to support (Reiser, 2003; Haerberlin, 2007).

Within the view of integration as an interdisciplinary approach to diversity, I noted several foci. Three of these were most influential in developing my approach to responses to diversity: integration as a "culture of integration"²⁴ (Deppe-Wolfinger, 2004) in which everyone is equally valued (Sasse, 2004); as a process of reducing exclusion (Reiser, Klein,

¹⁴ German original: „gestuftes System“

¹⁵ German original: „totale Integration“

¹⁶ German original: „Kritische Sonderpädagogen“

¹⁷ German original: „Demokratische Psychiatrie“ Bewegung

¹⁸ German original: „Pädagogik der Vielfalt“

¹⁹ German original: „...eine nicht selektierende und segregierender Allgemeine Pädagogik.“

²⁰ German original: „Integration meint allgemein die gesellschaftliche Absage an die Aussonderung [...] von Menschen, die als behindert und/oder psychisch krank gelten...“

²¹ German original: „...die Schaffung von Lebenswelten, die sich dem Menschen anpassen.“

²² I put the term "disability" in inverted commas to indicate that not only are disabilities created by the social context of a person but also by the application of term.

²³ German original: „eine gestörte ungenügende Integration“

²⁴ German original: „Integrationskultur“

Kreie and Kron, 1986; Deppe-Wolfinger, 2004); and as a response to diversity as the dialectic of differences and similarities (Deppe-Wolfinger, 1985; Reiser, 1986; Hinz, 2002; Prengel, 2006; Katzenbach and Schroeder, 2007).

FROM INTEGRATION TO INCLUSION: FROM GERMANY TO ENGLAND

The term inclusion was introduced to the discourse on responses to diversity, in Germany, in 2000 (Hinz, 2010). It was primarily seen as a theoretical criticism of educational practices that were called ‘integration’, but still “following the aims of segregation”²⁵ (Feuser, 1995b, p.134) because of barriers identified on institutional, organisational and ideological levels (Biewer, 2000; Hinz, 2002; 2007b; Sander, 2004; Thomas and Loxley, 2007): for example, the persisting focus on presumed “homogeneous” groups, those of people seen to be “different” and those “normal” (two-group-theory); or the application of a medical model of “disability” in processes of labeling to get additional resources, as a condition for a child’s education in mainstream schools.

While most advocates of integration confirmed such barriers, they disagreed about the introduction of the term inclusion. Reiser (2003, p.308) stated critically:

“the concepts which were developed in German research on integration [...], according to my judgement, do not experience any relevant theoretical deepening, nor extension, through a concept of ‘inclusion’.”²⁶

Prengel (2007, p.49) saw a potential in the new term as an “insistence on the original idea of integrative pedagogy”²⁷, while some clearly distinguished the concept of inclusion as an advance on integration (Sander, 2004; Hinz, 2009).

Various articles were written internationally on the terminological development “from integration to inclusion” and potential effects in practice (Januszewski and Spalding, 1997; Feuser, 2002; Hinz, 2002; 2004; Reiser, 2003; Vislie, 2003; Wocken, 2009). In contrast, in the following discussion, I intend to explore understandings of inclusion on the basis of my international experience, moving from the German to the English discourse on responses to diversity.

Inclusion in England and Germany: diversity and participation in education

Just as for the term integration, the variety of understandings of inclusion in England and Germany requires clarification:

²⁵ German original: „mit Integration [...] die Sache der Segregation zu betreiben.“

²⁶ German original: „Die in der deutschen Integrationsforschung erarbeiteten Konzepte [...] erfahren nach meinem Urteil durch ein der Konzept der „Inklusion“ keine wesentliche theoretische Vertiefung oder Erweiterung.“

²⁷ German original: „...Insistieren auf den unverfälschten Grundgedanken der Integrationspädagogik...“

“... if we simply go along with the variety of ways the terms are used, we reproduce inconsistencies and contradictions in such practice” (Booth, 2003, p.1).

Because many authors already distinguished different understandings of inclusion (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006a; Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007), I chose to focus on three concepts central to inclusion in education which constitute different understandings of this term, namely, diversity, participation and education.

Understanding diversity

Internationally, there has been a growing awareness of diversity across disciplines. Krell, Riedmüller, Sieben, and Vinz (2007, p.9ff.) identified increasing demographic change and developments of globalisation that “make it more and more inadequate to talk about [...] ‘normal conditions’, a ‘normal-person’”²⁸. Other authors noted a broadening view of diversity in the discourse of inclusion:

“the process of inclusion involved schools in extending this diversity to include all students within their communities, and to counter all forms of selection and exclusion” (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006a, p.13).

Correspondingly, many authors implied the concept of inclusion to be a systemic, as opposed to a person-centred, approach (Ainscow and Booth 2002; Hinz, 2002; Nilholm 2006).

Diversity: moving away from a set of social categories. However, internationally, publications on inclusion reveal that there are persisting differences in definitions of diversity. The narrowest, yet mostly applied focus on diversity in discourses on inclusion, similar to certain understandings of integration that were meant to be overcome, is recognised to be the distinction between children with and without “disabilities” or labels of “special needs”:

“the dominant view of inclusion in education continues to associate the term with disabled children or those otherwise categorized as having ‘special educational needs’” (Booth, 2003, p.3).

The category of children with “special educational needs” does not exist in Germany. This raised my awareness of this, as well as the concept of “special pedagogic support needs” in Germany, as socially created in a specific cultural context and “a result of differentiation” (Fuchs, 2007, p.17) as opposed to a “natural consequence” (Booth, 1985, p.15; Gilbert and Hart, 1990; Asher, 2001; Hudak and Kihn, 2001b; Evans, 2007; Seitz, 2007). Similar

²⁸ German original: „...angesichts dessen erscheint es immer weniger angemessen von [...] ‚Normalpersonen‘ und ‚Normalverhältnissen‘ auszugehen.“

variations were to be found in policy documents and also regarding concepts of “disability” varying between, and also within, countries (DfES, 2001; Verordnung über die sonderpädagogische Förderung, 2005, hereafter cited as: SoPädVO, 2005; UN, 2007).

Other views on diversity were influenced by the concept of ‘social exclusion’, which New Labour in the UK emphasised after 1997 (Booth, 2003) and the concept of ‘social integration’ in Germany and other European Countries (Levitas, 2003). Such concepts were used inconsistently in the literature referring to different social categories of people (Sasse, 2004; Schumann, 2004; Vojtová, Bloemers and Johnstone, 2005; Weigt, 2005; Moser, 2007).

An even broader scope was presented by advocates who referred to inclusion as being about “all groups of learners who have historically been marginalized” (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006b, p.295). Yet, they set out lists of social categories, such as nationality, first language, races or classes, intending to highlight those groups “who have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to processes of exclusion” (Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007, p.19).

The application of social categories to define diversity, was viewed as establishing barriers for the participation of some people in certain respects. It promoted a selective focus on the person (Dillon, 2001; Prengel, 2007). Furthermore, the powerful act of labeling, namely “sorting out abstract individuals into preordained social, economic, and educational slots” (Apple, 1990 cited in Dillon, 2001, p.30), was described as discriminating *per se*:

“as social creatures [we are] all objects and victims of [...] processes of differentiation [...] and objectification [...] by others”²⁹ (Fuchs, 2007, p.20ff.).

And labels, such as “disability” and “special educational needs”, were criticised “[as reinforcing] these concepts of deficit and disadvantage” (Thomas and Loxley, 2007, p.48). They “reduced tolerance of difference”³⁰ (Haeberlin, 2007, p.3ff.), and thereby established the very barriers to participation they actually aimed to reduce.

Least considered in literature about research on inclusion appeared to be the researchers themselves as part of the diversity they researched. I found only two publications in which the researchers also reflected on themselves and their contributions to the processes of exclusion and inclusion they researched (Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 1998b; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004). “Otherwise they [would be] avoiding the possibility of confronting the real issue and their real responsibility”, Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (ibid., p.270) remarked.

²⁹German original: „als soziale Wesen [sind wir] alle Objekte und Opfer von [...] Differenzierungshandlungen [...] und Objektivierung [...] durch Andere.“

³⁰ German original: „...die Toleranz für Verschiedenheit eher verkleinert als vergrößert hat.“

Recognising “categorical diversity” (Fuchs, 2007, p.17) as potentially excluding, and as a managerial response to the otherwise continuously perceived problem that “such complex diversity is impossible to be defined”³¹ (Prengel, 2006, p.30), some authors had a non-categorical approach to diversity. Booth (2003, p.10), for example, did so by referring to “all aspects of diversity” and “all forms of personal and institutional discrimination.” He clearly rejected all categorisation in inclusion, as well as integration, which he described as:

“the process of increasing the participation of children and young people in communities’ [...] which neither categorises pupils nor values them differentially” (Booth, 1983 cited in Gilbert and Hart, 1990, p.20).

However, despite more and more references seemingly addressing everybody, such as in the ‘Education for All’ movement, inclusion remained predominantly focussed on selected groups of people. Therefore, various authors internationally have continued to highlight the excluding effects of labeling and categorisation, and re-emphasised the necessity of “making all mean all” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.49; Booth, 1985; 2005; Dixon, 1987; Eggert, 1996; Hudak and Kihn, 2001a; Ballard 2003; 2004; Fuchs, 2007; Deppe-Wolfinger, 2008; Hinz and Boban, 2009).

Diversity as difference. In my first approaches to integration and inclusion I focused on differences, and much less on recognisable similarities between people. This focus was also applied in various literature: for example, Prengel (2007, p.47) uses the term “dimensions of difference”³² to refer to “cultural diversity, diversity of religions, age diversity,...”. Fuchs (2007) talks about the relation of “diversity and difference”³³. Slee and Corbett (2000 cited in Corbett, 2001b, p.55) define inclusive education as a “celebration of difference”, and Haeblerlin (2007, p.3) demands “tolerance for difference”³⁴. Most policy documents focused on differences between people. I found only one that stressed the opposite: “... students’ similarities to one another are much more significant than their differences” (UNESCO, 1999, p.9).

I perceived at least three reasons for this “increased sensitivity towards [...] otherness and alterity”³⁵ (Wulf, 2007, p.74). Differences were recognised as being primarily constitutive of identities in “a process which does not aim for the unity of the subject, but

³¹German original: „Solche umfassende Verschiedenheit entzieht sich der definierenden Bestimmbarkeit.“

³² German original: „Differenzdimensionen“

³³ German original: „Diversität und Differenz“

³⁴ German original: „Toleranz für Verschiedenheit“

³⁵ German original: „...eine Sensibilisierung für [...] Andersartigkeit und Alterität [ist] erforderlich.“

which is a result of social differentiation”³⁶ (Luig, 2007, p.97; Kaufmann, 2001; Fuchs, 2007). Another reason for an emphasis on difference was in order to prevent recognised tendencies to “reduce diversity to sameness”³⁷ (Wulf, 2007, p.74; Prengel, 2006). In contrast, others focused on differences, in order to show them as overemphasised, and, therefore, potentially leading to “othering” (Seitz, 2007, p.27; Fuchs, 2007). Eventually, both of the latter reasons illustrate “the fight for valuation as different, in difference” (Fuchs, 2007, p.22) and “the fight against difference [...] to overcome differences”³⁸ and identify similarities.

However, Schönwälder (2007, p.164) regarded any exclusive focus on differences as increasing processes of exclusion, promoting the “fixation of boundaries” between people. Therefore, he considered it as important for non-discriminatory responses to diversity to recognise difference, without losing human commonalities (ibid., p.72).

Diversity as differences and similarities. “Sameness is a relation within which differing things relate to each other”³⁹ (Windelband, 1910 cited in Prengel, 2006, p.27). Various authors acknowledged this dialectic between differences and similarities as constituting diversity in their approaches to integration and inclusion (Deppe-Wolfinger, 1985; Reiser, Klein, Kreie and Kron, 1986; Hinz, 2004; Prengel, 2006; Katzenbach and Schroeder, 2007; Seitz, 2009).

I found this understanding, in particular, in the approaches to inclusion in which the advocates critically referred to the unequal application of human rights: such as Booth and Dyssegaard (2008, p.25), who claimed a “difference within a common humanity” or Prengel (2007, p.52), who stipulated the dialectic in her theorem of “egalitarian difference”⁴⁰.

Furthermore, differences and similarities have also been acknowledged as interdependent by authors who regarded inclusion or integration as interlinked with processes of exclusion (Reiser, Klein, Kreie and Kron, 1986; Booth, 2005). For instance, Reiser, Klein, Kreie and Kron (1986, p.120) described integration as the process of “discovering common possibilities while accepting the different”⁴¹.

³⁶ German original: „...ein Prozess, der nicht auf die Einheit des Subjekts abzielt, sondern ein Ergebnis gesellschaftlicher Differenzierung darstellt.“

³⁷ German original: „die Reduktion [von] Verschiedenheit auf das Gleiche“

³⁸ German original: „der Kampf um Anerkennung als different, in Differenz“ und „der Kampf gegen Differenz, [...] um die Überwindung von Unterschieden.“

³⁹ German original: „Gleichheit ist ein Verhältnis worin Verschiedenes zueinander steht.“

⁴⁰ German original: „egalitäre Differenz“

⁴¹ German original: „...die Entdeckung des gemeinsam Möglichen bei Akzeptanz des Unterschiedlichen.“

Understanding participation

Recently I was asked how I would recognise a child's participation? The question raised my awareness about the different, and often inconsistently applied, notions of participation in the literature, and, moreover, about the necessity to clarify the aim we are moving towards when we talk about "increasing participation" and which barriers we attempt to reduce.

Participation – "social" or "natural"? As shown previously, some authors apply concepts of social inclusion and/or social exclusion, in which they define participation and barriers towards it specifically as "social", consequently proposing others to be "natural". Booth (2003) noticed this regarding the concept of social exclusion, which did not include people with "disabilities", and therefore shifting the concept of "disabilities" to the "natural" corner, which strongly opposed a social model of "disability". Additionally, a concept of "natural exclusion" would relieve us from our responsibility for barriers to participation. For those reasons, I regard the specification of participation, and barriers to it, as "social" as potentially excluding.

Participation as a levelled concept. Some understandings of integration or inclusion in education, such as "full inclusion" (Devecchi, 2007a, p.219), "total integration" and "social integration" (Vojtová, Bloemers and Johnstone, 2006, p.113; Moser, 2007) suggest different levels of participation. Vojtová, Bloemers and Johnstone (ibid., p.113) define "social integration" as "reached when the child identifies itself with the social group it [...] belongs to"⁴². By contrast, other approaches to inclusion aimed primarily towards overcoming institutional discrimination, as Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) highlighted. Yet, both approaches share the recognition of physical attendance, as one level of participation, which was also part of understandings of integration and inclusion, described as a progressing continuum (Sander, 2004; UNESCO, 2005; Vojtová, Bloemers and Johnstone, 2006).

Concepts of "full-inclusion" or "total integration" may be intended to criticise notions of "partial inclusion" or "partial integration". Yet, thereby they legitimise such notions, in which a child's participation in regular education is seen to be limited by its individual conditions, for example, referring to its "...severity of needs" (Wedell, Stevens and Waller, 2000, p.100) rather than by the conditions in the school. In this way, these concepts of inclusion or integration legitimise and promote the continuance of different forms of

⁴² German original: „Die soziale Integration ist [...] erreicht, wenn das Kind sich mit der sozialen Gruppe, in die es formell gehört, identifiziert.“

exclusion, such as a child's "silent exclusion" (Lewin, 2006, p.49), a term Lewin used to refer to its physical placement in a mainstream school.

Participation as a value-based concept. Other authors considered physical access only as a pre-requisite for participation:

"access or being there, is only the start of participation within settings. Participation is about being with and collaborating with others. It implies active engagement and an involvement in making decisions. It involves the recognition and valuing of a variety of identities, so that people are accepted and valued for who they are" (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.7).

Similarly, Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2004, p.258) distinguish their notion of participation from that of taking part:

"...participation is an educational strategy that characterises our way of being [...] not just by taking part in something, but being part of it, part of a common identity, a 'we' that we give life to through participation."

Those understandings recognise that participation and barriers to it, lie in cultures and values, and therefore regarding institutional discrimination, and other processes of exclusion, as secondary effects:

"institutional discrimination is deeply embedded within cultures and influences the way people are perceived and the responses that are made to them..." (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, p.7).

This understanding of participation was advocated internationally in various responses to diversity calling for a paradigmatic change: for example, in those that referred to a "culture of integration" (Deppe-Wolfinger, 2004) or asked "how children and young people are valued and devalued" (Booth, 1997 cited in Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007, p.19).

I increasingly engaged with value-based approaches to participation in England (Corbett, 2001a; Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Ballard, 2003; Booth, 2003; 2005; Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008). I had found it difficult to comprehend the concepts of ideology, culture and values, particularly in regards to implementation in educational practice. Values are seen to "underlie all actions and plans of action, all practices within education and all policies for the shaping of practice" (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.30ff.). And Ballard (2003, p.13) noticed that "at present the dominant cultural position [is] that some children are of less value than others". Therefore, Booth and Ainscow (2011, p.46) distinguish "inclusive cultures" from other cultures:

“[they] encourage a recognition that a variety of ways of life and forms of identity can co-exist, that communication between them is enriching and requires differences of power to be set aside.”

The development of inclusive cultures implies “the task of putting particular values into action” (Booth, 2005, p.153). In various places, Booth specified those “inclusive values” (Booth, 2005; Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008; Booth, 2010; Booth and Ainscow, 2011), while always stressing that his “list is in a state of perpetual development” (Booth, 2005, p.153). The ‘Index for inclusion’ (Booth and Ainscow, 2011) is a tool that supports members of their institutions to develop their own, shared sets of values.

It has become apparent that unlike other notions of participation, following value-based approaches, neither physical presence nor physical separation necessarily indicate processes of inclusion or exclusion.

Inclusion and approaches to education

The international approach of my research, and thus the increased necessity of translation, furthered my awareness of the variety of approaches to learning and teaching in schools, and their inconsistent definitions, as apparent in the literature. I would like to distinguish four main concepts: in Germany, the concepts of “Bildung” and “Erziehung”, and, in English literature, the concepts of “schooling” and “education”.

The concepts appeared to differ in their location of processes of learning and teaching, and in regard to their aims. Moreover, some prove incompatible with the aim of increasing participation and Booth (2005, p.151) even described some interpretations as “morally obnoxious”.

From autonomous learning of the individual in any social context ... For a long time, learning and teaching have been viewed as never-ending processes, taking place anywhere in society and emphasising the development of the individual within social contexts (Jaspers, 1999, first ed., 1932; Halsey and Sylva, 1987; Prange, 2004; Booth, 2005; Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008). Prange (2004, p.501) ascribes this perspective to the original concept of ‘Bildung’, “...a key concept in the German tradition of educational theory [...], a national identity symbol”, and absent from discourses on education in England. But the inflationary use of the term in various educational contexts, for instance in terms like ‘Bildungssystem’ or ‘inklusive Bildung’, ‘Weiterbildung’ (English transl. ‘in-service education’), ‘Bildungsauftrag’ (English transl. ‘Task of Bildung’), obscured its original meaning:

“the classical paradigm of Bildung [...] of individually responsible learning and character formation, [indicating] a specific state of mind and ideal of perfection, [...] is lost ...; nonetheless, it serves as a label for education business [...] a symbol of the

unity of whatever refers to the field of education, particularly organisational and functional aspects” (p.501ff.).

Prange’s (2004, p.505) understanding of Bildung, seen as “a value itself” (ibid.), associated with “autonomous learning” (ibid.), “liberty and human dignity” (ibid.) and “spiritual independence” (ibid.) of the individual, resembles some “inclusive values” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.29), such as “participation”(ibid.) or “respect for diversity”(ibid.).

Jaspers (1999, p.94ff.) discusses the concept of “Erziehung” in Germany in a similar way, to be every person’s “becoming through the receiving of traditions.”⁴³ It is a culturally entrenched, never-ending and non-institutionalised process, experienced through:

“the factual historical world in which one grows up [...] through a planned Erziehung by parents as well as school and through other voluntarily attended institutions, and finally life-long through all that one hears and experiences...”⁴⁴ (ibid., p.95).

In England, some authors conceptualise education in a similar way to the concepts of Erziehung and Bildung outlined by Jaspers (1999) and Prange (2004). Booth (2005, p.152), for example, refers to a “democratic, participatory education”. And according to Booth and Dyssegaard (2008, p.25), this aims

“to prepare children and young people for sustainable ways of life within sustainable communities and environments. [...] Education is about enhancing the human spirit, [...] about joyful engagement in teaching, learning and relationships. [...] it is a place to be, as well as to become.”

... to training of functionaries in exclusive institutions. As early as 1932, Jaspers already criticised “education” systems were dominated by state interests and the economy:

“Either [the state] frees Erziehung [...] or seizes hold of Erziehung for a silent, forced shaping according to its purpose. Hence develops a uniform paralysis of spiritual freedom ... the standardisation of the human being”⁴⁵ (Jaspers, 1999 (1st ed. 1932), p.98ff.).

More recently, other authors, have added their perceptions regarding the growing impact of economies in the sphere of public education:

⁴³ German original: „Werden durch Überlieferung“

⁴⁴ German original: „...die faktische geschichtliche Welt, in der der einzelne aufwächst, [...] durch die planmäßige Erziehung seitens der Eltern und der Schule, durch frei zu nutzende Anstalten und schließlich lebenslang durch alles, was er hört und erfährt...“

⁴⁵ German original: „Entweder [der Staat] lässt Erziehung frei [...] oder [er] bemächtigt sich der Erziehung zu stiller und gewaltsamer Formung nach seinem Zweck. Dadurch entsteht die einheitliche Lähmung der geistigen Freiheit.... die Typisierung des Menschen.“

“in this economic context public education is the ‘competence producing’ industry. [...] persons are [treated as] aggregates of competencies, [assessed by] the common standards of learning irrespective of their historical and cultural background. ... [it] has nothing whatsoever to do with Bildung” (Prange, 2004, p.503ff.).

“...often education settings may not be joyful places. They may be characterised by neglect and ill-treatment or viewed only for their contribution to the national economy” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.25).

Internationally, advocates of inclusion confirmed the detrimental effects of these developments for the support of equal participation and democratic societies (Tomlinson, 1991; Hart, 1998; Fielding, 2001; Deppe-Wolfinger, 2004; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006b; Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007). They criticised the “narrow view of attainment” (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006b, p.296) oriented on a fixed ability template (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004) and imposed in “a directive relationship between government and schools” (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006b, p.296).

Underlying such “marketisation of education” was a particular understanding of learning and teaching, which was often referred to as ‘schooling’. Fielding (2001, p.696) critically distinguishes “schooling-as-performance” as opposed to “education-as-exploration” (ibid.). The term schooling suggests learning and teaching are primarily located in institutions, mainly schools. This contrasts non-institutional approaches to learning and teaching: “...while schools play an important role in education they do not monopolise it” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.22). However, I found a few authors who argued that there were other notions of schooling, including “democratisation of schooling” (Leitch and Mitchel, 2007, p.55) or “democratic schooling” (Noyes, 2005, p.553).

I have portrayed two extremes of a continuum of approaches to learning and teaching applied in Germany and England: from a holistic, never-ending development of a person’s identity within a democratic society, to a focus on children and young adults to develop social functions, by acquiring standardised technical skills to serve the economic interests of a state. Irritatingly, both extremes were not represented consistently by the same terms, but by all four: education, Bildung, Erziehung or schooling.

“FROM A NARROW TO A BROAD VIEW”⁴⁶ OF RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY

More than a decade after the introduction of the term inclusion in Germany – and even longer ago in the international discourse – the variety of meanings attached to the terms integration and inclusion have increased: some authors continue to use the term integration

⁴⁶ Booth, 2010, p.1

(Feuser, 2005; Lingenauber, 2008), others separated the term from inclusion (Hinz, 2002; Sander, 2004), and in some literature both terms were used synonymously (Feyerer and Prammer, 2003). In the German version of the 'UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities' (2008), inclusion is translated as integration.

It was apparent that barriers to participation can also occur through the way language is used: for example, when diversity refers to categories of people. Yet, in my opinion, it is part of a concept of inclusion to acknowledge different understandings as points of departure which open a space for dialogue to support participation for all. Furthermore, it is not the variety of meanings, but their lack of clarity that serves processes of exclusion. Ball (1981, p.6ff.) recognised a similar issue for understandings of the term "comprehensive", resulting in different "models of comprehensive education". In order to support clarity and avoid misunderstandings, some authors, such as Booth and Ainscow (2002, p.3; 2011) chose a more explicit terminology as an alternative to inclusion and integration, referring to "reducing barriers to learning and participation".

Since I started developing an understanding of responses to diversity, my view has broadened. Now, I understand inclusion in education as aiming to increase the participation of everyone in the school's communities, and every other social place concerned with education. It rejects a focus on selected categories of people, but means to value all of the individual contributions to a community equally. Thus, one's rejection of developments towards inclusion potentially means a denial of one's own participation. Inclusion is a never-ending process that involves us in taking responsibility for processes of exclusion experienced by others. This requires us to become increasingly sensitive to differences and similarities between people and to continuously reflect on the values that underlie our actions.

POLICIES FOR DIVERSITY

An international and even global perspective on inclusion was much more strongly represented in the discourse in England than in Germany, where I found mainly Reiser, Klein, Kreie and Kron (1986) and later Hinz (2003; 2007a; 2008b; 2008c) and Hinz and Boban (2009) for references to international contexts. International policies and legal frameworks, such as the Human Rights Declaration (1948), informed other international, national and local policies and in this way impact on every classroom.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS: RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY

All of the international policy documents concerned with inclusion in education, which I explored, are based on the ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ (1948). Here, the meaning of calls for inclusion in education are predominantly for access to free education for all, a human right stipulated in Article 26, as well as subsequent treaties, such as the ‘Convention against Discrimination in Education’ (UNESCO, 1960) or the ‘UN Convention on the Rights of the Child’ (1989).

In particular, two initiatives directed international attention on developments to inclusion in education: UNESCO’s ‘Education for All’ movement (1990), which established six Education for All (EFA) goals, revised in Dakar in 2000; and the ‘Millennium Development Goals’ (MDGs) set out in 2001, following the ‘UN Millennium Declaration’ (UN General Assembly, 2000).

Although most international policies are related to one of those initiatives, they reveal different approaches and foci. The majority focuses on inclusion in education in developing countries (World Bank, 2004; OECD, 2005; UNICEF, 2007b), but some documents raise attention to inequality in education in countries from the North (UN, 2000; 2007; OECD, 2001; UNICEF, 2007a). Further differences were apparent in identified barriers to participation, which depended on the geographic area: in developing countries, the main recognised constraint was “the serious shortage of resources” (UNESCO, 2003a, p.13), while in countries of the North traditions of “segregated and exclusive education” were seen as the greatest barrier. Consequently, children categorised as having “special needs” were not a primary concern of international frameworks, but other groups vulnerable to exclusions, such as ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, women and girls, people living in poverty or affected by illness.

Another apparent difference between international policy documents concerned the flexibility they offered to adapt to contextual variations. For example, the standardised EFA goals, and the even narrower focus of the MDGs, provided limited opportunities to

acknowledge individual circumstances in developments. This increasing centralisation had been promoted by the growing impact of the private and economic sector and international competition (OECD, 2001; 2007). In contrast, other policies emphasised a person's participation and the development of democratic societies (UNESCO, 1994; 2003a; UNICEF, 2005; 2007a). They indicated a wider approach to education by referring to a "range of educational arrangements in both formal and non-formal settings", (UNESCO, 2003a, p.13) and stressing the importance of partnerships between schools, families, communities and other social institutions all contributing to processes of lifelong learning (UNESCO, 1994; 2003b; UNICEF, 2000; 2007a). Some documents also reveal inconsistent approaches. For instance, UNESCO (2000, p.8) on the one hand emphasises in the 'Dakar Framework for Action' "an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be", and UNICEF (2007a, p.19) stresses its 'Overview of child-wellbeing in rich countries' the development of "each child's personality and talents to the full". But on the other hand, in both documents standardised measures of achievement were accepted as well.

An acceptance of power inequalities between donors and receiving communities, for example were noticeable in the World Bank's 'Fast-track Initiative' (2004), or in set notions of "quality in education" (UNICEF, 2000) and the identification of "needier countries" (UNESCO, 2000, p.54). These were strongly criticised for their devaluation of individual local contexts, individual resources for development, and their application of "second rate aspirations for economically poor countries" (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.24). The critics advocated increased participation of communities in their own developments. For example, the 'Paris Declaration' (OECD, 2005, p.3) stressed the importance of local ownership and other authors called for "Glocalisation" (Liasidou, 2008, p.483) or referred to the necessity of locally initiated developments, for example, local adaptations of the curriculum (Penn, 2005; Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008).

NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

Germany is a federal country in which each state has its own education system. Therefore, after the chronological outline of the policy context in England, I will distinguish between German policies and policies that apply to the state of Berlin, as one of the localities for my study.

Legislative frameworks in England

The 1944 Education Act is one of the earliest policy documents referred to in the literature on inclusion and exclusion in education in England. Some recognised "inclusive" approaches in the Act, such as the stipulation of the right to free primary education in England for all (Tomaševski, 2000), and a unified special and mainstream education system (DES, 1978).

Others, by contrast, noticed the support of processes of exclusion in education therein: for example, Gilbert and Hart (1990, p.15) referred to Section 57 in the Act, in which children were categorised as “severely sub-normal” and considered to be “unsuitable for education at school”; furthermore, it increased the number of categories of “disability” and “forms of special educational provision [perpetuating] the myth that disabilities were fixed” (ibid., p.16); correspondingly, Booth, Ainscow and Dyson (1998a, p.196) stated the Act “paved the way for the creation of a [selective] tripartite system of state secondary education” by introducing the 11+-test which assigns children to different secondary schools.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, an increased focus on diversity and individualisation was part of educational reforms (Gammage, 1987): the 1965 DES Circular 10/65 promoted comprehensive education (“non-selective”, secondary)⁴⁷; the Plowden Report (DES, 1967) ‘Children and their Primary Schools’, emphasised the importance of recognising that each individual child should lie “... at the heart of the educational process” (p.7), primary to any educational arrangement; and since the 1970 Education Act, all children had the right to education, including children categorised as “severely sub-normal”, yet not necessarily in a mainstream school (Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007).

The Warnock Report (DES, 1978, p.99) re-emphasised the “education of handicapped and non-handicapped children together” since the 1944 Education Act, by introducing the term “integration”. The role of special schooling was not denied in the Report, but “[given] considerable attention” (Croll and Moses, 2000, p.2). Moreover, it was claimed that it abolished existing “categories of handicapped children” (DES, 1978, p.99), that were criticised as discriminatory and linked “to fixed abilities or disabilities” (Gilbert and Hart, 1990, p.19). Instead, the Report introduced the concept of “special educational needs” to “give more indication of the nature of the child’s difficulties” (DES, 1978, p.43ff.). This label was not only applied to children categorised as having a “disability”, which is defined in the Disability and Discrimination Act (1995, p.1) as follows:

“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

The label was ascribed – according to the current definition of “special educational needs” – to all children, who “have a learning difficulty [...] which calls for special educational provision” (Education Act 1996, Section 312), which includes approximately 20 per cent of all children at some point in their school career. Various authors criticised the excluding

⁴⁷ There are different understandings of “comprehensive” which consequently caused different “models of comprehensive education” as Ball (1981, 6ff.) pointed out. Furthermore, Gilbert and Hart (1990, p.18) highlighted some cases which indicate a “distinction in meaning between ‘comprehensive schools’ and ‘comprehensive education’...”.

effects of the Warnock Report: it increased categorisation of children through an adopted recommendation that statistics be regularly gathered from all schools of categories of “special educational need”, with a five-fold estimate of severity in each case. Professionals received enhanced power to separate and select children in educational practice (Potts, 1983a; Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 1998a).

Since the 1981 Education Act, which was “strongly influenced by the Warnock Report” (Croll and Moses, 2000, p.2), children categorised as having “special educational needs” have remained the primary focus in policies on integration and later inclusion (Education Act, 1993; DfEE, 1994; 1997; DfES, 2001; 2004b). Other groups of children were mostly introduced in later policy contexts in relation to concepts of exclusion (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006a; Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007). The idea of exclusion for children was introduced in the 1986 Education Act, referring to children who breached a school’s disciplinary rules. In 1997, the ‘Social Exclusion Unit’, created in the Cabinet Office, focused on people facing a “range of social limitations [to their participation], from poverty to teenage pregnancy” (Booth, 2003, p.1). In the late 1990s, the category of children called “gifted and talented” was added.

The 1988 National Curriculum and resulting Education Reform Act encouraged two rather opposing agendas (Booth, 2003; Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007, p.20; Alexander and Flutter, 2009, p.3), which had developed over time (Alexander, 2009, p.3ff.): the centralised ‘standards agenda’ was supported through the introduction of national curricular attainment targets, following principles of accountability, performance, and competition, which prioritised economic interests, rather than the interests of the child. The second agenda, later referred to as the ‘inclusion agenda’ (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006b), placed an emphasis on equality and individualisation in education, and claimed all children should be “entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum” (Devecchi, 2007a, p.40).

In the 1990s, policies increased the contradictory pressures on schools to fulfil both agendas: the 1993 Education Act introduced the ‘Special Educational Needs Code of Practice’ (DfEE, 1994), an instrument for the identification of children as having “special educational needs” and a way for schools to access additional resources. And also the Labour government re-emphasised mainstream education, especially of children categorised as having “special educational needs”, with their “principle of inclusion” (DfEE, 1997).

A broader notion of inclusion applying to all children was outlined in the National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999, p.30ff.) – a value-based approach referring to socially established “barriers to learning”. It appears contradictory that at the same time, in 1998 and 1999, the non-statutory, yet “quasi-statutory” (Alexander and Flutter, 2009, p.10) national Literacy and

Numeracy strategy were introduced, which strengthened the focus on curricular standards again.

At the start of the new millennium, the English government restated its intention to reduce segregated schooling for children with labels of “special educational needs” (Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA), 2001; DfES, 2004b). Mainstream schools were required to take all reasonable steps to enable children to be included, indicating a change of emphasis (DfES, 2001). By the end of the first decade, it was seemingly moved away from centralised control and standardisation in policies and other related documents, now claiming to encourage local ownership and autonomy of schools, for example, regarding curricular developments (DCSF, 2009a; 2009b; Alexander and Flutter, 2009; Alexander, 2009). A second move apparent in policy papers was a growing emphasis on “non-school learning [and] experience” (Alexander and Flutter, 2009, p.40) and children’s emotional and social well-being. This resulted in a demand for increased involvement of families, external services and communities in schools (Alexander and Flutter, 2009; Alexander 2009; DCSF, 2009a).

However, these aspirations were implemented inconsistently according to the documents, which kept “a strong focus on standards” (DfES, 2003a, p.4) and on performance and assessment, and continued to emphasise a certain percentage of national curricular content. The compatibility clause (1981 Education Act) was still in effect, allowing segregated education if a child’s inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children. And mainstream schools were shown to be abusing this law and denying a child’s placement, if it was expected to limit the school’s performance in the national league tables (Audit Commission, 2002).

In summary, despite recognisable attempts in policy objectives in England supporting inclusion in education, even prior to the 1944 Education Act, legislation continued to promote barriers to participation.

The policy context for inclusion in Germany

The 1960s and 70s are the period of the ‘Bildungsreform’ (English transl. ‘Reform of Bildung’) in Germany that is recognised as a major source of inclusion in education (Prenzel, 2006). Following the growing criticism of social and educational inequalities promoted by increasing segregation in education systems in Germany – especially recognised in the tripartite secondary school system – the German Education Committee⁴⁸ agreed its ‘Recommendation on the implementation of pilot projects with comprehensive

⁴⁸ German original: Deutscher Bildungsrat

schools'⁴⁹ (1969). Comprehensive schools are schools which integrated all three types of secondary school. In 1970, the Committee set out the 'Structural Plan for the education system'⁵⁰, primarily to "reduce discrimination created through regional, social and individual conditions"⁵¹ (p.30). A few years later, in 1973, the Committee supported the Plan by its recommendation of 'Increased autonomy of the school and participation of teachers, pupils and parents'⁵² regarding curricula, personnel resources and finances (Fischer and Rolff, 2003). Promoted by some special pedagogues and parents of children with "disabilities" (Reiser, 2003, p.309), the special school system was eventually included in the Structural Plan through the 'Recommendations for the support of children and young people who are disabled or at risk of becoming disabled'⁵³ (German Education Committee, 1973). This was the first official attempt to unite special and mainstream school systems, though it did not reject separate special education in principle. The Structural Plan remained widely unfulfilled (Wernstedt, 2004). Until the 1980s, special schools had a growing intake of pupils, while other exclusive schools, such as faith schools or single-sex schools, were increasingly closed down. And also the tripartite secondary school system still exists in most German education systems today.

In 1986, the state of Saarland implemented the first legal document on the integration of children with "disabilities" following a growing number of pilot projects on integration across Germany. In 1993, the 'Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs'⁵⁴ stressed the provision of special education in mainstream schools by replacing the label "in need of special schooling" to "in need of special pedagogic support"⁵⁵, and later through the identification of a "specific area of special pedagogic support"⁵⁶. However, not until 1994, was the education of children, identified as having "special pedagogic support needs" in mainstream schools, directly re-emphasised in the 'Recommendations on the special pedagogic support in the schools of the Federal Republic

⁴⁹ German original: ‚Empfehlung zur Einführung von Schulversuchen mit Gesamtschulen‘

⁵⁰ German original: „Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen“

⁵¹ German original: „Benachteiligungen [müssen] aufgrund regionaler, sozialer und individueller Voraussetzungen aufgehoben werden.“

⁵² German original: Empfehlung „Verstärkte Selbständigkeit der Schule und Partizipation der Lehrer, Schüler und Eltern“

⁵³ German original: Empfehlungen ‘Zur Förderung behinderter und von Behinderung bedrohter Kinder und Jugendlicher’

⁵⁴ The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (KMK), established in 1948, is the main body for education at the federal level. It serves the purpose of ensuring a degree of national consistency, and coordination between the different education systems of the states. Its policies are recommendations supposed to be adopted by the education legislation of each state in Germany.

⁵⁵ German original: „Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf“

⁵⁶ German original: „Sonderpädagogischer Förderschwerpunkt“

of Germany⁵⁷ (KMK, 1994, p.14). But parallel to developments in England, integration was still seen as conditional, depending on its compatibility with the education of other children and the availability of the “necessary special pedagogic support as well as material and special resources”⁵⁸ (ibid.). Correspondingly, special schools continued to be seen as fulfilling their original “relief function”⁵⁹ (ibid., p.16f.).

Similar to the policy context in England, around the same time, an agenda of standardisation in education was introduced in the ‘Constance Resolution’⁶⁰ (1997), effectively opposing equal participation. The Resolution stipulated the legal basis for a national output-orientated evaluation system serving a number of purposes: quality assurance, consistency between the different education systems of the states, and international competition. Subsequently, the ‘Institute for Quality Development in the education system’⁶¹ (IQB) created national standards of core competencies in mathematics, languages and Science, implemented in all states between 2004 and 2006. Contradicting these developments of standardisation, equality in education and society has continuously been emphasised in some legal documents. While they address different dimensions of diversity, such as the ‘General Law of Equality’⁶² (2006), the majority refers to people with “disabilities”, such as the ‘Law for the Rehabilitation and Participation of Disabled People’⁶³ (2001), and the ‘Law for Equal Participation of Disabled People’⁶⁴ (2002). In this context “disability” is defined in the following way:

“people are disabled when their physical function(ing), cognitive capability or mental health will, with high probability, deviate from the condition typical for their age for more than six months, and therefore impede their participation in society”⁶⁵ (ibid., p.2).

⁵⁷ German original: ‚Empfehlungen zur Sonderpädagogischen Förderung in den Schulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland‘

⁵⁸ German original: „die notwendige sonderpädagogische und auch sächliche Unterstützung sowie die räumlichen Voraussetzungen“

⁵⁹ German original: “Entlastungsfunktion” – relieving mainstream schools from the support of children with “learning difficulties” in order to raise other children’s achievements.

⁶⁰ German original: „Konstanzer Beschluss“

⁶¹ German original: Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen

⁶² German original: „Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG)“

⁶³ German original: „Gesetz zur Rehabilitation von behinderten Menschen“ (Sozial Gesetzbuch, IX. Buch)

⁶⁴ German original: „Behinderten Gleichstellungsgesetz (BGG)“

⁶⁵ German original: Eine Person ist „behindert, wenn ihre körperliche Funktion, geistige Fähigkeit oder seelische Gesundheit mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit länger als sechs Monate von dem für das Lebensalter typischen Zustand abweichen und daher ihre Teilhabe am Leben in der Gesellschaft beeinträchtigt ist.“

Policy responses to diversity in Berlin

The Berlin 'Education Law' (2004, hereafter cited as: SenBWF, 2004) is the most influential and overarching policy document in the current education system. It stipulates the equal right for every young person to education and care in all state schools. In the Law (SenBWF, 2004, p.8) the 'Task of the School'⁶⁶ represents an understanding of learning and teaching that links to the classical paradigm of Bildung (Prange, 2004) to support the development of children's independent and responsible personalities:

“on the basis of democracy, peace, freedom, human dignity, equality of gender, and in harmony with nature and the environment, [...] guided by the recognition of the equality of all people, the respect for differences of belief and the necessity [...] of peaceful communication between different peoples”⁶⁷ (SenBWF, 2004, p.8ff.).

In the same spirit as other national and international policies, such as the United Kingdom 1988 Education Reform Act, the Law set out two opposing reforms with strong implications for responses to diversity. On the one hand, it promoted individualisation to reduce barriers to participation for all, on the other it required compliance with national requirements for standardisation and evaluation. The former reform was supported through the requirement for schools to become more “self-governed”⁶⁸ (ibid., p.12ff.) in order to further local school developments and to give teachers “more possibilities for action”. This included new responsibilities for schools, such as the development of an individual School Program and decisions about personnel and material resources. The other reform was implemented through the introduction of centralised instruments for national standards in the law (ibid.). These included, for example, regular internal evaluations and external school inspections to monitor a school's practices, and the 'VERA'⁶⁹ – the national standardised assessments of students' academic attainments.

⁶⁶ German original: „Auftrag der Schule“

⁶⁷ German original: (full version) „Auftrag der Schule ist es, alle wertvollen Anlagen der Schülerinnen und Schüler zur vollen Entfaltung zu bringen und ihnen ein Höchstmaß an Urteilskraft, gründliches Wissen und Können zu vermitteln. Ziel muss die Heranbildung von Persönlichkeiten sein, welche fähig sind, der Ideologie des Nationalsozialismus und allen anderen zur Gewaltherrschaft strebenden politischen Lehren entschieden entgegenzutreten sowie das staatliche und gesellschaftliche Leben auf der Grundlage der Demokratie, des Friedens, der Freiheit, der Menschenwürde, der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter und im Einklang mit Natur und Umwelt zu gestalten. Diese Persönlichkeiten müssen sich der Verantwortung gegenüber der Allgemeinheit bewusst sein, und ihre Haltung muss bestimmt werden von der Anerkennung der Gleichberechtigung aller Menschen, von der Achtung vor jeder ehrlichen Überzeugung und von der Anerkennung der Notwendigkeit einer fortschrittlichen Gestaltung der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse sowie einer friedlichen Verständigung der Völker. Dabei sollen die Antike, das Christentum und die für die Entwicklung zum Humanismus, zur Freiheit und zur Demokratie wesentlichen gesellschaftlichen Bewegungen ihren Platz finden.“

⁶⁸ German original: „eigenverantwortlich“

⁶⁹ German original: Vergleichsarbeiten

Furthermore, the Law declared “the comprehensive education of children with and without special pedagogic support needs”⁷⁰ (ibid., p.39ff.) in regular schools, as the primary form of their education. Yet, a child could still be refused a place on the basis of insufficient resources (ibid., p.41), if the number of children with this label in the school exceeded one third, or, according to the ‘Decree on Special Pedagogic Support’ (SoPädVO, 2005, p.3ff.) in Berlin, if there were more than five children in one class. The category of “special pedagogic support needs” in the Law (SenBWF, 2004, p.39) referred to:

“students who are impeded in their development, learning and education to such extent that they cannot be developed adequately in the lessons of regular schools without ‘special pedagogic support’.”⁷¹

While this definition considers the social environment as one barrier to participation, the related and more specific Decree on Special Pedagogic Support (SoPädVO, 2005, p.5ff.) only refers to children’s impairments, including physical, cognitive, sensory and, paradoxically, even learning impairments and impairments of social and emotional development.

Another policy document, which influenced the schools’ responses to the diversity of children, was the ‘Reform of Primary Schools 2000’⁷² (Die Senatorin für Schule, Jugend und Sport, 1998), which also informed the 2004 Education Law. It suggested the ‘Flexible School Beginning Phase’⁷³ (‘SAPH’), a vertical-year-group concept for school beginners, combining year one and two for an increased flexibility to individualise learning; the ‘reliable half-day primary school’⁷⁴ which made it compulsory for schools to provide child care until the early afternoon; and a lowered school entrance age. The ‘Integration Law’⁷⁵ (2010) and the previous two ‘Integration Concepts’⁷⁶ (2005; 2007) highlight another main focus of responses to diversity in Berlin, which is the increased participation of people with a migrant background.

⁷⁰ German original: „...die gemeinsame Erziehung von Schülerinnen und Schülern mit und ohne sonderpädagogischen Förderbedarf“

⁷¹ German original: „Schülerinnen und Schüler, die in ihren Bildungs-, Entwicklungs- und Lernmöglichkeiten derart beeinträchtigt sind, dass sie im Unterricht der allgemein bildenden und beruflichen Schulen ohne sonderpädagogische Unterstützung nicht hinreichend gefördert werden können, haben sonderpädagogischen Förderbedarf.“

⁷² German original: „Grundschulreform 2000“

⁷³ German original: „Flexible Schulanfangsphase“

⁷⁴ German original: „Verlässliche Halbtagsgrundschule“

⁷⁵ German original: „Integrationsgesetz“

⁷⁶ German original: „Integrationskonzept“; For further information please see: www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/Integrationskonzept.html

CONCEPTS FOR DIVERSITY IN INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES

International, national and local policy documents discussed diversity, and associated concepts of participation, with the same “lack of coherence” (Booth, 2005, p.155) as is apparent in the academic literature. Yet, there were some dominant trends recognisable in most policy documents and academic literature. These included, for example, tendencies to increase local ownership of developments towards inclusion, the persistence of special schools with a focus on categorisation, and increased marketisation of education through the standards agenda, whilst at the same time introducing an opposing inclusion agenda.

The noticeable inconsistencies, especially between and within policy documents, confirm the view of Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006b, p.295):

“international organizations and national governments have committed themselves to the inclusive development of education at least at the level of rhetoric”.

This raises questions regarding their actual commitment to inclusion and the claim in their original statement of purpose to give clear outlines for practice, which will be examined in the following section on literature, *practices for diversity* in education.

PRACTICES FOR DIVERSITY

There have been various studies on school developments towards inclusion. They had different designs, such as small- or large-scale studies, mostly applying a national, but sometimes also international or local perspectives. Case studies, which have grown noticeably since the 1990s (Söll, 2002; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003), are still rare in Germany, unlike their English counterparts. Germany is also rarely represented in the international discourse in contrast to England (Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Ainscow and Memmenasha, 1999; Alexander, 2000; Emanuelsson, 2001; Vislie, 2003; Stephens, Tønnessen and Kyriacou, 2004), and is correspondingly recognised as being behind in international developments in education (Deppe-Wolfinger, 2007).

In this section, I investigate work involving my two research themes concerning responses to diversity. I firstly look at roles in schools, and then at interactions between staff, children and parents.

ROLES IN SCHOOLS

In the context of my research I see roles as responses to diversity and as structures for participation. They are developed in interactions, influenced by one's own and others' expectations (Heuring and Petzold, 2005; Georgi, Ackermann and Karakas, 2011), by "individual interest, expertise and, often, social status" (Ares, 2007, p.113), personal experiences and background (Georgi, Ackermann and Karakas, 2011) and by the past (Potts, 1983a; Terhart, 2001).

Roles have been researched in educational contexts, for example, regarding professionalism (Balshaw, 2003; Cole, 2005; Twiselton, 2006; Hextall, et al., 2007) and the mutual influences of roles and identities of children and teachers (Ares, 2008; Reeves, 2009). Research findings present role *descriptions* contrasting how roles *are* carried out with the *prescription* in policies stating how roles *should* be carried out.

In the following, I focus on roles of staff, children and parents, the three main groups in my research, in developments towards inclusion in education.

Teachers' roles: participant or functionary?

The "truly boundless international literature on teachers"⁷⁷ (Terhart, 2001, p.42) and "teacher centred research"⁷⁸ (Bastian, Combe and Reh, 2002, p.429), shows that teachers are ascribed

⁷⁷ German original: „...wahrhaft uferlose internationale (englischsprachige) Literatursituation zum Lehrerberuf...“

⁷⁸ German original: „Lehrerzentriertheit der Forschung“

a predominant role in education and developments of inclusion internationally (Söll, 2002; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Santiago, 2004; Grunder, 2005a; Alexander and Flutter, 2009):

“today, in the third decade [of developments towards integration] I see integration to be more in the hands of teachers than ever”⁷⁹ (Feuser, 2005, p.2).

Hargreaves (A., 1994, p.ix) had already pointed out in the 1990s that school developments which “do not take the teacher into account are of little value”. However, developments in education systems following the implementation of the standards agenda internationally have indicated the opposite:

“the teacher’s role becomes that of a producer increasingly focused on compliance and with their professional knowledge subjugated to the market demands of the consumer [i.e. parents and children]” (Ballard, 2004, p.99).

In England, teachers, who were formerly described as paying only little attention to education law (Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 1998b), were now perceived as “compliant state functionaries“ (Stephens, Tønnessen and Kyriacou, 2004, p.121). This followed on from English policy documents that, for example, referred to the “professional *standards* for teaching” (TDA, 2002; 2007), the “conduct and discipline of staff” (School Staffing (England) Regulations, 2003, p.4), the “School teachers performance management” (DfES, 2006; Education Act, 2006), an outcome-based teacher assessment, or “initial teacher *training*” (TDA, 2002):

“... its name implies, a training model that seeks to induct trainee teachers into practical skills and willingness necessary for instructing pupils...” (Stephens, Tønnessen and Kyriacou, 2004, p.109).

Teaching in England is affected by the same standards agenda as children’s learning, following the logic that “high standards” for teachers will lead to “high standards [of] pupils’ performance” (TDA, 2002, p.1). Furthermore, the standards were seen to support teachers “in identifying their professional development needs” (TDA, 2007, p.3).

Similarly, in Germany, increasing governmental control was noticeable in the prescription of national curricular standards, and their monitoring for quality assurance, through compulsory evaluations of the educational practice (SenBWF, 2004, p.15ff.). As in England, standards were meant to benefit educational practice and professionals by “stipulating a consistent framework for professional work” (Senatsverwaltung für Bildung,

⁷⁹ German original: „Heute, in einer dritten Dekade [der Integrationsentwicklungen] sehe ich die Integration mehr denn je in die Hände der Lehrer selbst gelegt.“

Jugend und Sport, 2004, p.10, hereafter cited as SenBJS, 2004), “supporting security in lesson planning” and “offering orientation and transparency in lessons”⁸⁰.

However, the requirement for teacher compliance appeared less dominant than in England. For example, job descriptions were less specific. Apart from the Task of the School, which ascribed overall responsibilities to all people in schools, the Education Law (SenBWF, 2004, p.66ff.) allocated six specific areas of responsibilities to teachers: “teaching, rearing, judging and marking, supervising and looking after [...] in line with educational targets”⁸¹. Professional development⁸², although obligatory, was entirely the responsibility of teachers and not monitored, in contrast to England.

In academic literature, the roles of teachers had mostly been considered in the discourse on professional development, which increased following new challenges faced since the standards and inclusion agenda (Hargreaves, D., 1994; Reiser, 1995; Bastian, Combe and Reh, 2000; Grunder, 2005b; Florian, 2009).

One part of the literature on professional development focused on the development of professional competencies for teachers, such as a qualification in “special education” or preparations for collaboration with other professionals (Lütje-Klose and Willenbring, 1999a; b; Wilson, 2003; Feyerer, 2006; Gash, 2006). In this respect, Hargreaves (A., 1994) criticised the disconnection between teacher education and school developments in England. Similarly, in Germany, the discrepancy between theory and practice was viewed negatively (Dewe and Radtke, 1991; Terhart, 2000). Terhart (2001) called for more attention to be paid to teacher in-service education and suggested standards for teacher education to support quality assurance for teacher education degrees and institutions (ibid., 2002).

Since the 1990s, another focus in the literature on teacher development emphasised teachers as individuals, for example, in “teacher-personality-research”⁸³ (Von Carlsburg and Heyder, 2005), or in publications concerned with professional and personal identities

⁸⁰ German original: „Die Standards legen einen einheitlichen Bezugsrahmen für das professionelle Handeln der Lehrerinnen und Lehrer fest und tragen zur Planungssicherheit in Bezug auf die Anforderungen und Inhalte des Unterrichts bei. Sie bieten Orientierung und Transparenz für die konkrete Unterrichtsarbeit...“

⁸¹ German original: „Unterrichten, erziehen, beurteilen und bewerten, beraten und betreuen [...] im Rahmen der Bildungs- und Erziehungsziele“

⁸² The term “professional development” in this context relates to Hoyle’s definition (1991 cited in Dlugosch, 2005, p.28) as “a process in which a practitioner acquires or improves the necessary knowledge and abilities for the effective professional praxis”. This contrasts his definition of professionalisation “as a process in the course of which a job increasingly accords with the criteria of a profession” (Hoyle, 1991 cited in Reiser, 2005, p.135).

German original: „Ein Prozess, [...] durch den ein Praktiker die für effektive professionelle Praxis notwendigen Kenntnisse und Fähigkeiten erwirbt oder verbessert“ (Hoyle, 1991 cited in Dlugosch 2005, 28); Professionalisierung ist ein Prozess “in dessen Verlauf ein Beruf in zunehmendem Maße den Kriterien einer Profession entspricht“ (Hoyle, 1991 cited in Reiser, 2005, p.135).

⁸³ German original: „Lehrerpersönlichkeits-Forschung“

(Reiser, 1998; Feuser, 2002; Kansteiner-Schänzlin, 2005; Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons, 2006; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009).

There have also been a growing number of studies of perceptions of teachers. This included children's views, public perceptions of teachers and how teachers themselves perceived their profession and role (Grunder, 2005 a; b; Everton, Turner, Hargreaves and Pell, 2007; Hargreaves, et al., 2007; Avalos-Bevan, 2009). In England, I identified increased considerations of status and valuation of the teaching profession (Grunder, 2005b; Everton, Turner, Hargreaves and Pell, 2007; Hargreaves, et al., 2007; Avalos-Bevan, 2009). A 2011 study, focusing mainly on ethnicity and institutional racism, investigated teachers' diversity as an influence on their educational practices (Georgi, Ackermann and Karakas, 2011).

This literature was predominantly based on research *on* teachers instead of *with* teachers, allowing them only limited participation:

“although teachers are ascribed a key role in concepts and models in the process of school developments (Rolf, 1994), publications only consider teachers' views peripherally (Bildungskommission, 1995, S.301f., Hensel, 1995, S.69)”⁸⁴ (Söll, 2002, p.34).

Only in more recent publications in the area of inclusion did I find the participation of teachers and teacher education students acknowledged; for instance, in research for developments of an inclusive teacher education (Feuser, 2002; Booth, Ness and Strømstad, 2003), or in an increasing number of articles on perspectives of teacher education students over the last years in the 'International Journal on Inclusive Education'. The research of Howes, Grimes and Shohel (2009) stressed the importance of considering teachers' individual roles in their respective school context, while others have highlighted the necessity for increasing teachers' participation in policy-making (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008).

A growing volume of studies considered teachers' views and teacher beliefs. Some looked for teachers' views on school developments (Leyser, Kapperman and Keller, 1994; Avramdis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000; Croll and Moses, 2000; Söll, 2002; Zambelli and Bonni, 2004), others sought teachers' expertise and insights about educational practice to inform developments (Alderson, 1999; Corbett, 2001a; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Howes, Grimes and Shohel, 2009). In general, case studies and other qualitative small-scale studies were more participatory for teachers, than were quantitative large-scale studies.

⁸⁴ German original: „Obwohl den Lehrerinnen und Lehrern in den Konzepten und Modellen eine Schlüsselrolle im Schulentwicklungsprozess eingeräumt wird (Rolf, 1994), befassen sich die Veröffentlichungen nur am Rande mit den Sichtweisen der Lehrerinnen und Lehrer (Bildungskommission, 1995, S.301f.; Hensel, 1995, S.69).“

Despite those increasing foci on more participatory roles of teachers, Avalos-Bevan (2009) still noted that teachers had decreased autonomy and participation. Many authors strongly criticised the standards agenda as a “heartless reduction [that] applies to teachers as well” (Prange, 2004, p.506). They recognised various negative effects on teachers and school developments, such as the teachers’ professional and personal devaluation, reduced well-being, stress, work-overload and increased pressure, causing demotivation and teacher-resistance to change (Robertson, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998; Ball, 2003). Accordingly, authors stressed the importance of teachers’ positive attitudes towards developments (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002, p.130; Schöler, 2000 cited in Sasse, 2004), emotional well-being (Feuser, 2002; Bültner and Mayer, 2004; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Peacock, 2005), their personal aspirations as motivation to teach (Söll, 2002; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Peacock, 2005; Hargreaves, et al., 2007; Georgi, Ackermann and Karakas, 2011), and the importance of valuing their individual contributions. In part, these aspects had also been considered by governments. For example, in England, the ‘National Workforce Agreement’ (DfES, 2003c) was a response to a call for more resources; and the Berlin Ministry of Education stressed the importance of teachers’ “motivation and professional satisfaction” (SenBWF, 2007, p.12ff.) on the job.

Professionals for “special” children: from “specialist teachers” to “coordinators”

Most European education systems respond to the diversity of children, by providing a teaching role with special expertise for the education of certain children who are identified as different from others. They are categorised as having “special educational needs” or receive another similar label (Potts, 1983a; Tuunainen, 1994; Pilar and Castejón, 2001; Zambelli and Bonni, 2004). Internationally, the titles of this teaching role vary, for example, “specialist teachers”, “support teachers”, “teachers of special pedagogy”⁸⁵ or “special education teachers”. These roles have been strongly criticised for their exclusive perspective, which involves the selection and categorisation of children (Emanuelsson, 2001). Their professional separation from the general teaching profession has been recognised to have discriminating effects on children, undermining the aims of inclusive systems, and many have argued for an alignment of these professions (DES, 1978; Potts, 1983a; Eberwein, 1998; Crowther, Dyson and Millward, 2001; Haeberlin, 2007; Hinz, 2008a; Florian, 2009). In several countries, such as Germany, Hungary, Finland and Norway, this professional divide was promoted through an entirely separate specialist teacher education degree, while commonly, specialist teaching qualifications were a further education degree (UNESCO, 1995).

⁸⁵ German original: ‚Lehrkraft für Sonderpädagogik‘

However, internationally, this role has wide support (KMK, 1994; Dow, 1996 cited in Forlin, 2001a; SenBWF, 2004; Zambelli and Bonni, 2004, p.352; SoPädVO, 2005), especially amongst specialist teachers⁸⁶ (Eberwein, 1998; Haeberlin, 2007) and mainstream teachers (Reiser, 1998; Sander, 2004). Reasons have, for instance, been their professional status (Reiser, 1998; Forlin, 2001a), economic privileges, and the portrayal of professional expertise (Reiser, 1998; Lindmeier, 2000; Haeberlin, 2007) which results in less responsibility for *all* children. In summary, the separation of teaching professions, promoted by professional interests, has supported concepts of educational segregation and exclusion, confirming that “...professional interests [...] may, at times, conflict with the needs of clients” (Potts, 1983, p.172).

By contrast, in England, new roles, originating from the role of specialist teachers, were established in mainstream schools following the Warnock Report (Johnson, Wright and Hornby, 1995), such as a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)⁸⁷ or person with a similar function. The original role of specialist teachers has changed, becoming more varied. It includes, in addition to teachers specialised in categories of impairment such as speech and language difficulties⁸⁸ or sensory impairments (DfES, 2004a), teachers for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or involved in Ethnic Minority Achievement Support (EMAS). Since the 1994 ‘Special Educational Needs Code of Practice’, the coordination of the educational provision for children, who are categorised as having “special educational needs” in mainstream schools, is compulsory and commonly allocated to the SENCO (Crowther, Dyson and Millward, 2001), as this professional is mostly called. However, it can be incorporated within a broader notion of inclusion and there is no requirement to designate this co-ordinating role with the term SENCO, which can be seen to devalue both groups of staff and the children described.

Despite remaining international ambiguities around these practices, and national and individual differences between the role of specialist teachers, the literature indicates a common tendency: the development from an additional role concept of specialist teachers, only concerned with selected children, towards a more systemic approach, focusing on the coordination of responses to those experiencing educational difficulties. These developments included increasingly flexible roles, a stronger allocation to one school as opposed to working in various mainstream schools, and also new responsibilities, such as mediating

⁸⁶ I will continue to apply this term, including all other titles previously mentioned referring to the same or a similar group of professionals.

⁸⁷ The official job description of the SENCO is outlined in the National Standards for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (TTA, 1998); Detailed information about the official role of “teachers of special pedagogy” in Berlin (Germany) are provided in the Decree on Special Pedagogic Support (SoPädVO, 2005);

⁸⁸ See for example the role description of “specialist teacher” in Cambridgeshire County Council <http://www.slc.cambridgeshire.nhs.uk/default.asp?id=46>;

between parents, mainstream teachers and external institutions (Potts, 1983b; Reiser, 1998; Lindmeier, 2000; Crowther, Dyson and Millward, 2001; Emanuelsson, 2001; Forlin, 2001a; b; Hinz, 2008a; Datler, 2008). Yet, the original responsibility of specialist teachers for assessment, diagnostics and monitoring, especially of children categorised as having “special needs”, has remained broadly the same.

Some researchers questioned the extent to which such broader roles have been adopted in practice. Emanuelsson (2001, p.140) found in his four-country international comparison of current roles of specialist teachers:

“their major role is devoted to individual support, either by their own special teaching or in coordinating other external and/or remedial specialist support to students... .”

The teachers themselves reported great difficulties, such as heavy workloads, increasing paperwork, lack of clarity about their responsibilities, difficulties in collaborations, or “being forced into their role” (ibid.) through external conditions (Crowther, Dyson and Millward, 2001; Cole, 2005).

In conclusion, instead of supporting inclusion in education, international developments of the role of specialist teachers may, despite indicated changes, preserve exclusive responses to diversity, stemming from a traditional system.

Support Staff: individual, fundamental, flexible, yet devalued

Besides specialist teachers, an increased number of additional staff were introduced, as part of the responses to diversity in regular classrooms in England and Germany.

In England, the Plowden Report (DES, 1967) is described as the first document officially recommending the deployment of additional staff in classrooms (Shaw, 2004; Jackson and Bedford, 2005; Devecchi, 2007b):

“trained teachers' aides [...] should be employed in primary schools under the supervision of qualified teachers to provide them with help within the classroom” (DES, 1967, p.337).

Since then, driven by the inclusion and standards agenda (Devecchi, 2007b), the numbers and responsibilities of support staff have continuously increased, stipulated in various policy documents (DES, 1981; DfES, 1994; 1997; 2003b). In 2002, sixteen different categories of support staff were concerned with learning support, pastoral care, administration or premises (DfES, 2002a). The biggest group are teaching assistants, interchangeably called classroom assistants or learning support assistants (MacBeath, et al., 2006, p.10), though the latter term continued to carry a connotation of support for children categorised as having “special educational needs”. Learning support assistants were introduced into mainstream schools in

the 1990s, following John Patten's (Secretary of State for Education 1992-94) infamous call for a mum's army to be drafted into schools in 1993. They were also seen as a cheap alternative to specialist teachers by both their proponents and opponents (Alborz, Pearson, Farrel and Howes, 2009). Their introduction was accompanied by growing investigations of their roles and impact on educational practice (Balshaw, 1991; Alderson, 1999; Corbett, 2001a; Crowther, Dyson and Millward, 2001; Shaw, 2001; Hancock, et al., 2002; Howes, 2003; Hancock and Eyres, 2004; Smith, Whitby and Sharp, 2004; Jackson and Bedford, 2005; Blatchford, et al., 2006–2009; Alborz, Pearson, Farrel and Howes, 2009). All studies confirmed the "fundamental role" (Devecchi, 2007b, p.46) of this group of staff in educational practice, but with individually varying responsibilities, ranging from traditional one-to-one support for children categorised as having "special educational needs" to a widening focus on the whole school (Corbett, 2001a; Shaw, 2001; Howes, 2003; Devecchi, 2007b; Alborz, Pearson, Farrel and Howes, 2009). Their "unclear identity" (Devecchi 2007b, p.47) was criticised as contributing to their low professional status. Yet, it offered them flexibility to adapt to individual circumstances, which was seen as beneficial (Shaw, 2001; 2004; Howes, 2003; Hancock and Eyres, 2004; Smith, Whitby and Sharp, 2004; Jackson and Bedford, 2005; Devecchi, 2007b; Alborz, Pearson, Farrel and Howes, 2009). In response to such criticism, the 2003 National Workforce Agreement (DfES, 2003c) aimed to increase the professional status of support staff and possibilities for professional development, but also re-emphasised their role as supporters for teachers (NUT, 2002; Howes, 2003; Jackson and Bedford, 2005).

However, the Agreement was criticised for its excluding effects, not only for children categorised as having "special educational needs" (Howes, 2003; Shaw, 2004; Devecchi, 2007a), but also for support staff themselves, including the limited acknowledgement of their individual strengths and contributions within differing school contexts (Balshaw, 2003; Howes, 2003; Jackson and Bedford, 2005). In response, Howes (2003, p.153) required staff development to be "grounded in a notion of inclusive developments", and Jackson and Bedford (2005, p.13) saw the necessity for "a significant culture shift [...] in schools". Much earlier, Thomas (1987) had already emphasised the need for holistic reforms of educational practice to benefit the deployment of support staff.

In Germany, pedagogic support staff in mainstream schools were introduced later than in England. Therefore, literature and research on their roles has been limited, with less specific role descriptions, by comparison to support staff in England. Their introduction followed the establishment of mainstream educational provision for children with a label of "special pedagogic support needs", whose support was their primary responsibility. They are not allowed to teach, but have to be supervised by teachers (SenBWF, 2004, p.67). Today, in

Berlin, this role is often ascribed to so-called School Helpers⁸⁹ – a term which suggests a wide scope of responsibilities. In practice, their responsibilities varied individually, including, for example, the easing of relationships between children (Gennies, 2010). School Helpers, in contrast to other support staff, do not need a pedagogic qualification, but only some form of official qualification and are employed by an external agency⁹⁰.

Pedagogues⁹¹ are another group of support staff, who were introduced in schools in Berlin following various educational reforms, such as the establishment of the ‘reliable half-day primary school’⁹² (Die Senatorin für Schule, Jugend und Sport, 1998), the School Beginning Phase (SenBWF, 2004) and ‘School Stations’⁹³ – places established in a few schools in Berlin in collaboration with social services, which offer support outside school time to children facing high social and emotional challenges. Pedagogues continued to have predominantly caring responsibilities, inside and outside lessons, similar to their previous role, and occurring mostly in pre-school settings.

In contrast, the Integration pedagogue⁹⁴, established in response to changing working contexts, and requiring a higher education degree, involves a more specific inclusion role to increase the participation of *all* children (Kobelt-Neuhaus, 2006).

The teacher assistant⁹⁵ in Germany is not a pedagogic support role, but is concerned with supporting the bureaucratic workload of teachers – similar to one aim of the National Workforce Agreement in England. It is a particular innovation at one school in Germany, based on the individual initiative of its teachers, who have reported nothing but positive effects across all levels of educational practice (Bronder, 2004).

Parents’ roles – prescribed involvement or individual participation?

While some authors see the participation of all parents⁹⁶ in a school as impossible (Rüegg, 2001), others, such as Lanfranchi (2001, p.25), regard it as essential:

“the collaboration with all parents (including those who immigrated) [is] an integral part of the school [and] a central requirement for today’s education system in a pluralistic society.”⁹⁷

⁸⁹ German original: Schulhelfer

⁹⁰ For further information regarding the role of School Helpers in Berlin see the agency’s website: <http://www.tandemsh.de/>

⁹¹ German original: Erzieher/innen

⁹² German original: „Verlässliche Halbtagsgrundschule“; Half-day primary schools include all primary schools that offered reliable opening times from 7am till 2pm, in contrast to whole-day primary schools, that were opened from 7am till 6pm, such as Franz-Skarbina-School in Berlin.

⁹³ German original: „Schulstationen“

⁹⁴ German original: Integrationserzieher/in

⁹⁵ German original: Lehrerassistent/in

⁹⁶ The term ‘parent’ refers to any person, man or woman, who has taken on a child’s custody whether biologically related or not.

Since the end of the 1970s, government and academic literature in England and Germany increasingly emphasised parent participation in schools. This followed the growing recognition of parents' impact on their children's achievements (DES, 1967; 1978; DES Circular 1/83; Thomas, 1987; Wolfendale, 1987; Lanfranchi, 2001; OECD, 2001; Rüegg, 2001b; DfES, 2003a; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003; SenBWF, 2004; DfES, 2007a; Leitz, 2009). It was also a response to the identification of teachers' responsibilities for care and nurturing (Augé-Sollberger, 2001; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003). Home and school were seemingly moving closer together (Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003, p.11). Yet, in most education systems, parent participation is not statutory, their roles appear mainly as add-ons, only peripherally considered in school developments and decision-making (Alderson, 1999; Corbett, 2001a; Rüegg, 2001b; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004). This confirms a persisting conception of schools as monopoly providers of education in an area, rather than as contributors to the education of communities. Out of the various parental roles⁹⁸ in schools described in the literature, I distinguished two main notions, one more participatory than the other:

- a) parents as individual experts;
- b) parents as “supporters” and “supported”;

Parents as individual experts

This notion of parents values them as equal contributors to a school's practice. It is based on a general openness to adapt *to* them as much as requiring their adaptation, “matching parents' and teachers' expertise” (Wolfendale, 1988, p.217). They are equal decision-makers as well as critical friends in all areas of educational practice (Wolfendale, 1988; Carpenter and Egerton, 2007). In English literature, this notion of parents is discussed mainly as an absence, and is more noticed in schools in Germany. The possibilities and variety of such a role for parents are discussed by a number of authors:

- as voluntary teachers and contributors to the curriculum (Gloor, 2001);
- as mediators: between home and school events (Collins and Svensson, 2008), between other parents and the school (Schläppi and Boss-Zinniker, 2001), between school and borough (Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003);
- as partners or team members (Potts, 1983a; Wolfendale, 1988);

⁹⁷ German original: „...die Zusammenarbeit mit allen Eltern (auch den eingewanderten) [ist] integraler Bestandteil des Schulalltags [und] zentrale Forderung an das heutige Bildungssystem in einer pluralen Gesellschaft...“

⁹⁸ While I use the term “parent” referring to both, mothers and fathers, corresponding with the majority of literature, it has to be noted that some authors discovered gender differences in the ascribed roles, for example Carpenter and Egerton (2007).

as critics of teachers and their educational practice (Schloemann, 2007; Die Grundschulzeitschrift, 2008; Kohn and Bembom, 2008; Kerbel, 2011);
as “natural enquirers within their families” (Carpenter and Egerton, 2007, p.16) about their families’ and children’s needs and strengths.

Parents as “supported” and “supporters”

The majority of policy and academic publications prescribe ways of parental involvement, seeing parents as relatively powerless, either requiring or giving assistance under the direction of teachers. Despite claims of an equal partnership (DES Circular 1/83; DfES, 1994; 2001; 2007a) they prioritise professionals’ expertise and exclude parental knowledge, values and interests (Rüegg, 2001b; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003). The variety of subordinate roles for parents is discussed:

- as “supporters for teachers” by supporting their children’s learning at home (Collins and Svensson, 2008; Leitz, 2009) or educational practice in school (Wolfendale, 1988; Rüegg, 2001b);
- as recipients of information and advice (Carpenter and Egerton, 2007);
- as learners, taking part in courses, such as Family Learning, to acquire skills which enable them to engage in school (Eldred, 2009);
- as “clients” (Potts, 1983a).

The involvement of parents of children categorised as having “special needs”, and seen as a problem for the schools, has been sought to a greater extent than that of others (Alderson, 1999; DfES, 2001; Schläppi and Boss-Zinniker, 2001; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003). In such transactions, they are largely “assigned the subordinate, passive role of ‘subject’” (Carpenter and Egerton, 2007, p.16) by a dominating professional “expert” (Kalyanpur, Harry and Skrtic, 2000). Yet, at times, this seemed to match parents’ desire to have this “problem” sorted by an advisory and leading professional (Potts, 1983a).

Some authors recognised cultural difference as one barrier to parent participation. Those who were more excluded shared less similarities with teachers (Lanfranchi, 2001), and often had a lower socio-economic and/or migrant background. They were particularly recognised to experience “school as a powerful and alien institution”⁹⁹ (Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003, p.223). Other barriers to parent participation included:

- the teachers’ rejection of an increased level of parental involvement (Wolfendale, 1988; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003; Die Grundschulzeitschrift, 2008),

⁹⁹ German original: „...Schule als einer mächtigen gesellschaftlichen Institution, die ihnen nach wie vor weitgehend fremd ist...“

- standardised or unclear structures for parental contributions, following little official requirements to involve parents in schools (Thomas, 1987; Schläppi and Bloss-Zinniker, 2001; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003; Kohn and Bembom, 2008; Von der Gathen, 2008a), and
- a narrow understanding of education which ignores a school's wider social context (Rogers 2007).

Children's roles

Since the Plowden Report (DES, 1967) in England, and developments in the education systems in Germany in the 1970s, participatory roles of children gained attention as part of “increased demands on schools to respond to the individual pupil”¹⁰⁰ (Brenner, 2009, p.21; Grunder, 2005a; Robinson and Fielding, 2007). Their legal foundation was established with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which stipulates “the rights of children to actively participate in all matters concerning them” (Noyes, 2005, p.533).

Participatory roles of children were particularly emphasised in certain educational approaches, such as the ‘open classroom’ (Peschel, 2009) or ‘child-centred learning’, in movements towards democratic education and inclusion, and also in discourses on “pupil voice, students as researchers and consulting pupils” (Noyes, 2005, p.533). Research on children's participation in education in England included the extensive study ‘Consulting pupils about teaching and learning’¹⁰¹ (Robinson and Fielding, 2007). In Germany, it occurred as part of the discourse of teacher professionalisation and professional development: for example, Grunder's (2005a) research on ‘Students' perception of the teacher’¹⁰².

Various authors recognise participatory roles for children in schools. They refer to them as “change agents” (Noyes, 2005, p.535; Schirp, 2003; Grunder, 2005a), “experts for their own learning” (Noyes, 2005, p.537), responsible and independent (Peacock, 2005; Deppe-Wolfinger, 2007), as contributors to the curriculum (Alderson, 1999; MacBeath, et al., 2003 cited in Noyes, 2005), mediators between parents and school (Augé-Sollberger, 2001) and as supporters for other children and teachers (Feuser, 1995; Sacks, 1998; Schirp, 2003; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004). Policies in England and Germany also revealed participatory notions of children's roles regarding them as “active participants in their

¹⁰⁰ German original: „...die Ansprüche an die Schule, dem einzelnen Schüler gerecht zu werden, [...] sind gestiegen.“

¹⁰¹ For further information about this study please see: <http://www.tlrp.org/proj/phase1/phase1dsept.html> and <http://www.consultingpupils.co.uk/>.

¹⁰² German original: „Das Bild der Lehrkraft bei Schülerinnen und Schülern“

education” (DfES, 2004c, p.2; 2005a, p.24) and as contributors to education and society (DES, 1978; SenBWF, 2004).

However, other accounts in the literature highlighted that children experienced continuing barriers to their participation: they were “systematically excluded from school developments” (Palentien and Hurrelmann, 2003, p.3) having their personal interests rarely considered (Booth, 2005; Grunder, 2005a; Robinson and Fielding, 2007; Brenner, 2009). Education policies in Germany, but more so in England (DES, 1986; 1996; 2006; DfES, 2004d; SenBWF, 2004), required children “to conform to strict rules and behaviour codes” (Alderson, 1999, p.1), and Ballard (2004, p.95f.) generally recognised the identification of children as “learners” as excluding in itself:

“...we stop talking about children in our classrooms and schools. [...] ...the term ‘learner’ is meant to cause us to focus on the utilitarian aspects of what a child does in school. [...] To focus on a child would seem to involve a wider concern for each unique, embodied, whole and entire person.”

This reductionist view of children as “consumers” of prescribed knowledge, as opposed to participants in processes of learning, was also part of a frequent perception of children as “in need” of support (Alderson, 1999). In this way they were blamed for lacking skills (Ballard, 2004, p.98) that are required, instead of viewing their “need” critically as resulting from specific contexts.

Some authors presented ambiguous roles for children, including aspects of participation, but also revealing barriers to it: for instance, Ares (2007, p.108) recognised “opportunities [...] for students to shape the system”, but also “a framework [...] to align their activity with their teacher’s expectations” (ibid.); Robinson and Fielding (2007) applied standardised, thus non-participatory, surveys to seek pupils’ voices; and the UK government used the term “*pupil* participation” (DfES, 2005a, p.24) instead of “*child* participation”. The first term in indicating a hierarchical relationship already imposes a barrier to participation for children.

One main reason noticed for less participatory roles for children, was the excluding pressures arising from values underlying marketisation in education (Ballard, 2004; Merk, 2003; Noyes, 2005).

INTERACTIONS IN SCHOOLS

The importance of interactions for the development of the individual has been recognised for a long time, for example, in role theories (Mead, 1934) or in prominent statements, such as “Through the Thou a person becomes I”¹⁰³ (Buber, 1995 (1st ed., 1983), p.28), or “a person is

¹⁰³ German original: „Der Mensch wird am Du zum ich“

a person through other persons” (Desmond Tutu, 2010¹⁰⁴), a central idea of the Ubuntu philosophy.

Interactions in education have internationally received growing attention in academic and policy literature. Different terms, such as teamwork (Alborz, Pearson, Farrel and Howes, 2009), cooperation (OECD, 2005; Ares, 2007), “culture of dialogue” (Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003, p.141), collaboration (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008), “joint enterprise” (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004, p.172), or “collegiality” (Hargreaves, A., 1994, p.187), were often used inconsistently, but also to distinguish different types of interactions. Potts (1983a, p.173f.), for example, noted interactions that, in contrast to others, did not necessarily support inclusion:

“...teamwork may function to support segregation just as much as working solo. It may ratify rather than question specialization [...] which seems to support the notion of teamwork as doing one’s own thing unchallenged, but letting the others know... .”

Developments towards inclusion promoted specifically equal interactions, while “power differentials [were] explicated, critiqued and resisted” (Noyes, 2005, p.535).

The benefits of particular kinds of staff interactions for children and adults have been highlighted in England and in Germany (Hermann, 2001; Bastian, Combe and Reh, 2002; Söll, 2002; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Devecchi, 2007a; Von der Gathen, 2008b). In England, interprofessional relationships were officially required and assessed by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (DfES, 1994; 2001; 2006; DCSF, 2009d). Furthermore, they were mainly emphasised in the classroom regarding classroom practices, whereas in German policies, such as the Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004), they mostly referred to staff interactions across the school in whole-school developments. Academic and policy literature in Germany, and also in other European countries, was primarily concerned with interactions between teachers, especially between regular teachers and specialist teachers (Liermann, 2000; Rüegg, 2000; Herzmann, 2001; SenBJS, 2004; SenBWF, 2004; Kansteiner-Schänzlin, 2005; Schley, 2007; SenBWF, 2007), in contrast to a volume of literature in England on interactions between support staff and teachers (Thomas, 1987; Balshaw, 1991; Devecchi, 2007a; b). The relationship between support staff and teachers in England was commonly perceived as unequal, “one of leadership and management” (Howes, 2003, p.148; Balshaw, 1991; Corbett, 2001b; Hancock and Eyres, 2004; Devecchi, 2007a; Alborz, Pearson, Farrel and Howes, 2009). In contrast, in interactions between teachers – mainstream and specialist teachers – difficulties were mainly recognised regarding a lack of clarity about roles, concerns with professional territory and

¹⁰⁴Interview with Desmond tutu: <http://eclecticgrounds.wordpress.com/2010/03/18/ubuntu-a-person-is-a-person-through-other-persons/>

competing professional status (Lumer, 1995; Reiser, 1998; Lütje-Klose and Willenbring, 1999a; 1999b; Forlin, 2001a; Reiser, 2002 cited in Prengel, 2007; Wilson, 2003; Angehrn and Zünd, 2007).

I found interactions between internal and external professionals, institutions and communities mostly discussed in literature on inclusive responses to diversity. They were based on the recognition that “...no school exists in a cultural vacuum” (Black-Hawkins, 1999, p.1). These interactions included for example multi-disciplinary teams (DfES, 2003b; Wilson, 2003; SenBWF, 2004; Prengel, 2007), links between schools (DfES, 2005b; Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006), or between schools and other services, as emphasised in the ‘Extended Schools’ initiative (DfES, 2002b; 2005b).

Few publications referred to interactions of members of the school leadership teams (Söll, 2002; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Peacock, 2005). The Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004, p.69) mentioned head teachers only as supporters of staff collaboration, but excluding themselves from collaboration. They were mostly seen in a dominant position (SenBWF, 2004, p.68f.; DfES, 2006; DCSF, 2009d). Only Kansteiner-Schänzlin (2005, p.280) directly raised the issue of “enabling beneficial relationships [of teachers] with a leading person”¹⁰⁵.

In contrast, interactions between children and teachers – the traditional constellation in the classroom – were placed at the core of processes of learning and teaching in the literature in England and Germany (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Ares, 2007). There was little written about interactions between children and adults, other than teachers, for instance, support staff, in the classrooms. For Ballard (2004, p.101) learning is

“grounded in teacher-child relationships [...] involving relational processes requiring attention to how a child may experience teaching, which may differ from teacher intentions.”

However, child-teacher interactions were mainly described as hierarchical, determined by the teacher with further detrimental effects for children’s participation and learning (Grunder, 2005a; Noyes, 2005; Ares, 2007). They potentially lowered children’s achievements and were seen to promote inequalities between children as a result of the schools’ unequal valuation of the children’s differing “forms of [...] cultural and linguistic capital” (Noyes, 2005, p.537).

Similarly, contacts between staff and parents were primarily discussed regarding the staff’s, especially teachers’, dominance, as indicated before in the section on parents’ roles. However, particularly in Germany, teachers felt controlled by parents as well (Mack, Raab

¹⁰⁵ German original: „...fruchtbare Zusammenarbeit mit einer Vorgesetzten oder einem Vorgesetzten ermöglichen.“

and Rademacker, 2003), and in England and Germany both perceived mutual devaluation and mistrust (Potts, 1983a; Wolfendale, 1988; Augé-Sollberger, 2001; DfES, 2001; Jenzer, 2001; Lanfranchi, 2001; Rüegg, 2001a; Carpenter and Egerton, 2007; Kohn and Bembom, 2008; Leitz, 2009).

Interactions between children have been emphasised to support learning as well, primarily through partner work, peer groups support or buddy systems: for example, Feuser's (1982) concept of children's "collaborative activity"¹⁰⁶, "open classroom" approaches or personalised learning (Root, 1977; Palentien and Hurrelmann, 2003; Schirp, 2003; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; DfES, 2005a). However, in the context of behaviour management, children's interactions were viewed negatively as causing disruption in the classroom.

Generally, the development of increased interactions was accompanied by various difficulties, highlighted in the literature internationally, such as a lack of time, insufficient professional preparation for collaborations, and cultural differences, including differing values in education, different ethnic, and also professional cultures (Wolfendale, 1988; Achterberg, 1999; Alderson, 1999; Augé-Sollberger, 2001; Forlin, 2001a; Jenzer, 2001; Howes, 2003; Wilson, 2003; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Jackson and Bedford, 2005; Von der Gathen, 2008b). Yet, the most recognised barrier to interactions in schools were power inequalities, which confirmed Noyes' (2005, p.535) criticism that "power and control [are] deeply embedded in the schooling system". Nevertheless, the dominance of professionals has continuously been promoted by policies, especially in England, but also in Germany (DfES, 2000; 2002c; 2003c; 2005b; SenBWF, 2004; Education Act 2006; DCSF, 2009c).

¹⁰⁶ German original: „Kooperative Tätigkeit“

CONCLUSION: DEVELOPING A RESEARCH FOCUS

The vast amount of research on inclusion in education revealed continuing barriers to the participation of children and adults. For example, despite the long-term emphasis on participatory roles of children in education, Noyes (2005, p.534) found their roles to range on a continuum from “increased active citizenship and democratic engagement” to locating “the initiative and control [...] more clearly [...] with the teacher”. Furthermore, Wolfendale’s (1987, p.212) prediction about an increased participation of parents and that we would be “moving towards a stance whereby we will all take for granted the legitimacy of this new, open interface between school and home”, remains mostly unfulfilled. Currently, most relationships between parents and staff generally echo Potts’ (1983a, p.185) statement: “there still seems to be very little of this equal partnership about.”

Ways towards inclusion in education are still being sought, and staff clearly have a key role in inclusive developments. For example, Stamm (2007, p.41) stressed the need for a “paradigmatic change of the role of the teacher”¹⁰⁷ to create more participatory roles for children. But while a lot of research was concerned how to support staff to increase the participation of children as well as parents, I found the staff’s *own* participation in educational developments only considered in a few publications (Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008), and never specifically investigated. This was despite understandings of inclusion as “concerned with the participation of all students and their families, and all staff” (Booth, 2005, p.153), increasing demands for school initiated development and other references to staff participation, such as regarding the development of staff collaboration. For instance, Bülter and Meyer (2004, p.31) highlighted the necessity of the teachers’ “willingness to collaborate”, and Emanuelsson (2001, p.136) “a preparedness to welcome collaborative support”, as precondition for equal interactions between staff; and Thomas (1987, p.180) pointed out that unequal interactions in schools limited the capacities of teachers and classroom assistants “to work out their own unique strategies for working effectively as teams in the classroom”.

Another gap in research on inclusion in education, is a focus on interactions of a wider group of people concerned with educational practice, for example, on the whole staff or on various communities, in and around the school. This was also suggested by Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2004), as a follow-up of their study. So far, the impact of interactions on processes of inclusion and exclusion has been recognised in the literature, but mostly in regard to selected groups, such as teachers and support staff. A broader approach

¹⁰⁷ German original: „, ein Paradigmenwechsel der Lehrerrolle“

to interactions would allow an exploration of further dynamics between people and the influences on their roles. It would support an increased focus on individuals' scope for working together, instead of on pre-defined roles.

Furthermore, I found only a small number of comparative studies on responses to diversity, and these looked at diversity in relation to disability and children categorised as having "special educational needs". There have been no comparative studies, which have investigated how staff are deployed to respond to *all* aspects of children's diversity, which I therefore chose as another focus of my study.

CHAPTER 4: BEGINNING TWO JOURNEYS – INTRODUCING THE SCHOOLS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

This chapter illustrates the starting point of my fieldwork, firstly in Mt E.'s in London and then in FS in Berlin. Picking up the notion of my research as part of a journey (see above, p.45), I have chosen to introduce the two case study schools, and aspects of their wider contexts, by travelling together with the reader to each school, the journey I did everyday on fieldwork. The descriptions include general information about the schools, their boroughs, the education systems, and their cities and additionally other specific aspects that I perceived as influential to the schools' educational practice and consequently for my research.

MY JOURNEY TO MOUNT EPHRAIM'S SCHOOL

TWO IMPRESSIONS OF LONDON

The first time I visited London in 1994, I was a teenager and on holiday with my family. The city was buzzing and crowded, with seemingly endless attractions and possibilities for entertainment. It was incredibly exciting, but sometimes I was frightened about getting lost amongst all those millions of people.

The diversity of the people was such that I could not identify the stereotypical “Londoner” or “English” which I had read about in my school books. They were dressed differently, some in elegant suits, others very trendy or wearing casual clothing, and they spoke different languages. It was hard for me to say who was a tourist or a resident, and I enjoyed feeling that I did not stick out as a foreigner.

That first impression I got of London is also reflected in UK statistics: the city has 7,556,900 inhabitants (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2009), and is the most densely populated in the UK; on average 4,900 people per sq km. It is the biggest contributor to the economy of the UK: “London accounts for 20 per cent of the national employment (SOCED)” (Lupton and Sullivan, 2007, p.12). In 2007, London was the second most expensive city to live in, in the world (CNNMoney, 2007). The city is also home to people from various ethnic backgrounds, with 57.7 per cent ‘White British’. All other inhabitants officially belonged to other ethnicities. The largest ethnic group other than White British was ‘Asian or Asian British’ (13.3 per cent).

However, there was another side to London I did not appreciate during my first visit, revealing great social tensions as a distinct characteristic (London’s Poverty Profile, 2010). Londoners receive the highest salaries in the UK, but at the same time the city’s percentage of unemployed were above national average (BBC, 2008): 9.1 per cent of the population aged 16 and above, in comparison to the national average of eight per cent (ONS, 2010b). Most of them were from ethnic minorities; its population was divided into rich and poor “with a depleted middle” (Lupton and Sullivan, 2007, p.16).

These social divides were also recognisable geographically in the 27 boroughs, which showed great variations regarding ethnic and economic backgrounds amongst their population. Parts of southwest London were the richest in the country, while others in east and south London had incomes lower than the national average, but a greater ethnic diversity (National Statistics, 2007). Some boroughs were dominated by one particular ethnic group (Guardian.co.uk, 2005).

In conclusion, the wealth of opportunities London had to offer was only available to a small part of the population. The majority of people experienced barriers to their participation, indicated by the great social inequalities in this city.

CROSSING LONDON BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

For the period of my fieldwork, I stayed in southwest London. The school was in north London and it took me 90 minutes to get to it, travelling through the whole city by underground and overland trains.

I left the house usually around 7 a.m., to be at the school at 8.45 a.m., factoring in all delays that were likely to be caused by the peak-time traffic.

The overland train took me to London Bridge, a main destination for trains from the South and Southeast. Train after train arrived, and when the doors opened, people, mostly dressed in suits, seemed to fall out of the overcrowded carriages, apparently having ignored the spatial limitations of such vehicles. London Bridge, a wealthy business area, is very close to the financial district. Mt E.'s was only another twenty minutes by underground, but most children from the school would never have been to this area. Walking to the underground involved sticking to the speed of the crowds, to avoid being run over. Even the escalators seemed to run faster during peak-times. Once a woman, who was seemingly scared of the escalators in the station, hesitated before she stepped onto one, and nearly caused two people to fall over her. As a result, they gave her angry looks. Apart from moving quickly, another strategy I noticed from people using London's public transport during peak-times, was to stand your ground in order to get a space in the undergrounds or trains. People were pushing and squeezing into carriages.

I had never seen so many people wearing headphones – at least one third. Interpersonal communication was reduced to a minimum, and I sometimes felt unnoticed until I broke a “rule”, such as walking too slowly. Other customers in the underground were reading one of the free papers available in each station during peak-time, and soon to be found on floors and seats in trains and stations. I found the stations very dirty, with a lot of waste lying around, as there were no bins for security reasons.

As much as I felt uncomfortable on my journey to and from school, I found myself slowly adapting to these circumstances: occasionally leaving my litter, I speeding through the stations and getting annoyed with people who stood in my way. I even started to wear headphones. By listening to music, I felt less stressed, as I could ignore the crowds and noise around me, distance myself from other travellers and the hectic activity around me. Furthermore, by adopting such behaviour I felt more like “one of them” and less like a “foreigner”, although I was actually more isolated.

The area around my destination station was obviously poorer than many others: there was a lot of waste lying around and most houses looked run-down. People had different ethnic backgrounds and were dressed casually. The main street leading up to Mt E.'s had shops and cafés, but most of the time when I passed them, they looked empty. In the literature, the area was described “to be facing some of the most challenging social problems” (Brighouse, 2007, p.89): 9.3 per cent of the population here were unemployed, the fourth highest rate of all London boroughs (National Statistics, 2007). The borough also had one of the densest populations in London: approximately 13,000 people per sq km (ONS, 2010a). It was known for its diverse population in many ways: there was great variation of socio-economic circumstances, causing social tensions. Rich and poor were living together, sometimes even in one street. 40 per cent of the population were identified as other than White British. The biggest ethnic group were ‘Black African’ (5.2 per cent) and ‘Black Caribbean’ (4.2 per cent) (Greater London Authority (GLA), 2009). Additionally, the borough was known as a UK centre for lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual populations. The green space and shopping opportunities, restaurants and bars, raised the popularity of this borough, for inhabitants as well as tourists.

INTRODUCING MT EPHRAIM’S SCHOOL

The diversity of London’s population was reflected in the schools, as was the social divide (see Box 11, p.95). Selectivity and exclusion were dominant features of the English education system. More than 20 per cent of the country’s private schools were in London, attended by 16 per cent of all 15 year olds in Inner London – more than in other education systems internationally. Grammar schools, still remaining in some parts of England, were open to 20 per cent of the “higher performing” children in the country – mostly those from higher socio-economic backgrounds. 52 per cent of all girls in secondary education in London attended girls’ schools and the “greatest gender divide in secondary schools occurred in the borough of Mt Ephraim’s School where 71 per cent of all pupils in co-educational secondary schools were boys “ (Lupton and Sullivan, 2007, p.24).

Furthermore, schools differed strongly in their educational practice and children’s achievements, despite attempts to increase consistency through the National Curriculum, standardised attainment targets and assessment tests (SATs).

Mt E.'s was a two-form entry primary community school, run by the borough’s Local Education Authority (LEA). The LEA contracted a private organisation for a few years from 2006 to support the schools in the borough – privatisations in the educational sector have steadily increased in the UK over the last years. It was one of the bigger local authority-maintained primaries in London, with an intake of 336 pupils of mixed gender, who were

divided into fourteen classes, two classes per year group from reception till year six, except for year three and four which were combined in three classes. There was only one nursery class. The children were between 3 and 11 years-old. Corresponding to the population of the borough, the children were from various ethnic, and predominantly socio-economically deprived, backgrounds, indicated by the “very high proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals” (Ofsted, 2007, p.3). More than half of the children were refugees or

| | |
|--|---|
| Children in Mt E.’s | 336 in 14 classes (24 per class) |
| Children with English as an additional language in Mt E.’s (Jan. 2007) | 63% (211) |
| in the borough | 43% |
| in Inner London | 51% |
| in Outer London | 31% |
| in England | 12% |
| Main languages in Mt E.’s (ordered by percentage from high to low) | Somali, Turkish, English, Bengali, Albanian, Arabic, Spanish, Urdu and Lingala. (In all schools in London 360 different home languages were counted.) |
| Ethnic diversity in Mt E.’s | 87% of all pupils are identified to be “other than English or British” (largest ethnic group identified was ‘Black African’) |
| in London | Approx. 50% are other than ‘White British’ |
| in England | Approx. 17% are other than ‘White British’ |
| Children on free school meals in Mt E.’s | approx. 60% |
| in the whole borough of Mt E. | 41.9% (fourth highest percentage of all Inner London boroughs) |
| in Inner London | 36.5% |
| in Outer London | 19.1% |
| Children categorised as having “SEN” in Mt E.’s | 21.1% (71) of which: - 45 on ‘School Action’ Plans - 24 on ‘School Action Plus’ Plans - 2 with a ‘Statement of “SEN” |
| in the borough | 35.5% |
| in Inner London | 22.4% |
| in Outer London | 20.3% |
| in England | 19.5% |
| Sources: Ofsted School Inspection (2007); DCSF, 2008; ‘Mt E.’s school context’ (2007); Office for National Statistics (2007); Lupton and Sullivan, 2007, p.10) | |

Box 11 ‘Statistics on children in Mt E.’s, in Mt E.’s borough, in Greater London and England’

asylum seekers, often from the refuge across the road. In contrast to other schools, Mt E.'s took these children in, as Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, explained:

“...the head here [said] ‘[...] even if they [the children from the refuge] are only here for a day, it’s better that they come here for one day than sit in a room in a hotel doing nothing. Bring them in’” (Mt E.’s/No. 11/S/7).

As a result “[the] percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the usual ones [was] very much higher than in most schools” (Ofsted, 2007, p.3).

When I firstly arrived, the school reminded me of a fortress, mostly because of the wall around the side of the playground with a fence on top, but also because of the high security measures, which made it more complicated to get in and out. The big gate to the main playground was only opened just before and after school; from 8:55 a.m. till 9:15 a.m. and 3:25 p.m. till 3:40 p.m. At all other times one had to call in at reception, where an administrator questioned you on reasons for the visit, while behind a glass door you could already see children and staff walking along the corridor. At last one had to sign the registration form before joining the children and staff in the corridor. I experienced this procedure in other schools in England as well, but I never got used to it. Every morning in Mt E.’s, I felt a little bit like a suspect, when I had to sign in. No one else seemed to share my experience, hence I assumed it resulted from my unfamiliarity with the education system in England.

The school building did not look very welcoming from the outside: a three-storey building made of red bricks with a flat roof. The playground was split into two areas. One was made of concrete and divided into three different parts, one for each Key Stage. The other was the school garden with grass, beds of herbs and other plants and trees. A few chickens, recently bought by the staff, were in a cage, looked after by staff and children.

The inside of the school appeared different to the outside. The classroom doors were usually open, which added to the welcoming atmosphere felt by parents, staff and myself in the school. The classrooms were colourfully decorated and very light with many windows. Yet, each room looked different and one could recognise the class teacher’s individual style. Foundation Stage and year one classrooms were on the ground floor, together with the reception and administration office, the Breakfast Club kitchen and a great hall, primarily used for school dinners. All other classrooms were allocated on the first and second floor. Additionally, on the first floor were the library, two resource rooms, a staff room, an art room and another great hall, mostly used for assemblies. On the second floor was a third hall, mostly used for PE. Offices for members of the school’s Senior Management Team (SMT) were spread across all three floors.

There were 63 members of staff employed by Mt E.'s (see Box 12), and an additional ten external professionals, mostly contracted by the Borough Council, worked regularly in the school.

| |
|---|
| <p>Leadership Team</p> <p>1 Head teacher 1 Deputy Head teacher</p> |
| <p>Pedagogic Staff</p> <p>1 Pastoral Care Manager 1 Inclusion Manager 1 Extended Schols Manager</p> <p><u>Teachers</u> 15 Class teachers (two part-time) 3 Non-class based teachers: 1 Curriculum support teacher 1 EMAS teacher 1 Esol teacher 2 Teacher trainees</p> <p><u>Support Staff</u> 14 Teaching assistants and nursery nurses, including one Personal assistant 17 Meal supervisors</p> |
| <p>Non-pedagogic Staff</p> <p>2 Administrators 1 Premises Manager 1 Business Manager</p> |

Box 12 'Mt E's staff structure – internal staff'

The great majority of staff was female, but 50 per cent of all men were members of the SMT. Beside the SMT, the main responsibility on educational practice in the school was with the governing body. Yet, its actual contribution was declared as in need of improvement:

“[the] leadership is determined that it [the governing body] will become more effective as the critical friend in holding the school to account” (Ofsted, 2007, p.4).

The teaching staff was, with one exception, recognised as “English and White middle class” (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/14), in contrast to the support staff whose ethnic backgrounds matched more closely those of the children and their families. The teachers in Mt E.'s were very young, on average 25 years. The head teacher and the deputy head teacher, both in their early forties, were the oldest staff members, apart from some older support staff. On the one hand, young teaching staff was common in London schools as was their high turnover. The vacancy rate of 1.2 per cent was twice the national average (Lupton and Sullivan, 2007). London was seen as a good place to start a career, which attracted many teachers from abroad, who stayed only for a fixed period of time. Others decided to move away when they

wanted to have their own children because of London's high living costs. On the other hand, Monica, the deputy head, explained the young age of teachers in Mt E.'s through the emphasis in their adverts for teaching posts on a "good social life" (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/18) for the staff, and through their particular efforts to further young teachers' careers.

PREDOMINANT CHALLENGES PERCEIVED IN MT EPHRAIM'S SCHOOL

Robert, the head teacher in Mt E.'s, identified the children's ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds as posing a particular challenge. Middle or upper class parents would be unlikely to choose a school, "in which most of the children are neither white nor English" (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/20f.). Furthermore, Mt E.'s low results in external evaluations, such as the statutory assessment tests (SATs) and inspections by the Ofsted, which the school once failed, decreased its popularity amongst parents. The evaluation "criteria are the same for all schools" (ibid., p.9) with a particular focus on academic achievements. This was unsuitable for evaluating educational practice in Mt E.'s, where the primary educational focus was recognised to be on pastoral care in response to the children's challenging circumstances:

"...first of all feeling happy and safe, means that they [the children] are in a place where they're able to learn [...] the leading inspector said to us. Ofsted was not created for Mt Ephraim's. So, there is a definite tension between that criteria and a school like Mt Ephraim's mainly because its guiding principle is not Every Child Matters [...] its guiding principle is that schools would achieve floor-targets in the core subjects" (Monica, deputy head; Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/10ff.).

Mel, a teacher in Mt E.'s, gave me a very personal description of the school which was very different to that in the official evaluations. Moreover, it revealed the actual difficulties in describing a school's uniqueness:

"...it was a bit of a shock when I first came here, because basically [...] it was a "failing school" [...] and basically it was carnage. From walking in the door, kids were just all over the place, throwing chairs, swearing, in my class, I had a year five class,... [but] there was something about the school I really liked. The kids were hard work but I liked them, I really liked them and I really like the staff, [...] the atmosphere in the whole school, even though it was a bit frightening for me. [...] I have never done anything like it in the city. It was a bit scary, but I just wanted to stay" (Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/1).

Following such descriptions of Mt E.'s, I was curious to find out more about its actual practices and in particular the participation of children, parents and staff.

MY JOURNEY TO FRANZ-SKARBINA-SCHOOL

TRAVELLING THROUGH BERLIN

Berlin is one of the most popular cities in Germany, with a wealth of things on offer, that attracts millions of visitors every year from all over the world. As the capital of Germany, it accommodates the German parliament. Furthermore, it is particularly famous for its cultural life, its history, which is evident everywhere in the city, and various art festivals, music events and exhibitions. A great diversity of people from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds lives here. This is recognised as one of the city's greatest strengths, but it also presents challenges.

During my fieldwork, I travelled 45 minutes by bus and underground to the school, crossing three of Berlin's twelve boroughs. They were different worlds, all unique, like small towns on their own. The area where I stayed was one of the wealthiest boroughs in Berlin. With 97,623 inhabitants out of a total of 3,353,858 in the whole of Berlin it is one of the smallest boroughs (Amt für Statistik in Berlin-Brandenburg, 2007a, hereafter cited as: ASB, 2007a). Most people live in detached houses or villas. On average they are 65 years and older, and primarily identified as White middle and upper class families. Only 10.7 per cent have a "foreign nationality"¹⁰⁸ (ASB, 2007a; b). It is a quiet area with smaller streets, and larger private gardens. Its forest and lakes attract many people, especially in the summer.

In the mornings when I got on the bus to school, there were always teenagers speaking English with each other. When the four Allied Forces divided Berlin after the Second World War, this borough belonged to the US sector, and many descendants of members of the US Army still live here. Other people on the bus worked in business in the city centre and some were HE students, probably on their way to the 'Freie Universität' (English transl. 'Free University'), which is one of Berlin's three main universities and located in this area.

The closer we got to the city centre the more people, particularly tourists, got on the bus, speaking different languages. We drove along Kurfürsten Damm, one of Berlin's biggest shopping miles and tourist centres. The bottom of the street has many glamorous and expensive design and fashion shops, and most people were dressed in suits. At the upper end, there are less expensive shops, department stores, and there is also Berlin's former main train station 'Zoo', one of the biggest drug dealing areas. Just opposite is the 'Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church', a ruin from the Second World War, which complements the diverse atmosphere.

When I got off the bus, I had to squeeze through crowds of people. My underground line, a straight East-West connection, crossed many boroughs. Therefore, its passengers were

¹⁰⁸ People with other than a German passport.

a good representation of Berlin's diverse population and openness towards individual differences and life-styles. For instance, they wore distinct clothes, spoke different languages or had striking haircuts – possibly indications of their social and cultural backgrounds, their political orientation, or simply a fashion trend. There were teenagers on their way to school, hetero- and homosexual couples, families, and many other people who could be ascribed to other groups. Usually a homeless person got on the underground at some point during my journey to sell magazines; occasionally musicians, mostly with foreign national backgrounds, played for a few stops before asking for a donation.

THE BOROUGH OF FRANZ-SKARBINA-SCHOOL

When the *underground* eventually came *above* ground, the scenery had completely changed from that on the bus. Concrete dominated the picture. Old, usually four-storey apartment houses, mostly not refurbished, and newer multi-storey buildings covered in satellite dishes, were just next to the underground line. This borough has one of the densest populations in Berlin: 14,254 inhabitants per km², in comparison to the Berlin average of 3,851, live here, most of them between the ages of 45 and 60 years-old (ASB, 2007a).¹⁰⁹ It is a socially deprived area with the highest rate of unemployment in Berlin: 29.1 per cent, of whom 17.3 per cent receive social welfare. One third of all inhabitants do not have a professional qualification (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.4).

The closer I got to the school, the more I became aware of the people's cultural diversity in this borough. 23 per cent have a "foreign nationality" (ASB, 2007a; b), the third highest percentage of all boroughs in Berlin (see Box 13). Out of 184 nationalities identified in Berlin, approximately 170 are represented in this borough. But, since 1997, the number of

| Berlin | | | Borough of Franz-Skarbina-School | | |
|------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Whole population | Inhabitants with a "foreign nationality" | Inhabitants with a "Turkish" nationality | Whole population | Inhabitants with a "foreign nationality" | Inhabitants with a "Turkish" nationality |
| 3,353,858 | 470,004 (14%) (B-West:18.3%; B-East: 7.1%) | 113,779 (3.4%) (24.2% out of all inhabitants with a "foreign nationality") | 260,437 | 59,950 (23%) | 21,209 (8,1%) (35.4% out of all inhabitants with a "foreign nationality") |

Box 13 'Statistics of inhabitants with or without a foreign cultural background in Berlin' (Statistik Berlin Brandenburg (SBB), 2007a; b; 2008a; b; Amt für Statistik in Berlin-Brandenburg (ASB), 2007d)

¹⁰⁹ further source:
http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_deutscher_Gemeinden_nach_der_Bev%C3%B6lkerungsdichte_geordnet (Accessed: 25th Nov. 2010)

inhabitants with a “foreign nationality” has been receding (ASB, 2007c). A large percentage of people in this borough have a Turkish background, hence this borough is also referred to as one of the two biggest ghettos of Turkish communities in Berlin (Baumgartner and Landesberger, 1978). This was originally the result of recruitment of foreign workers in the 1960s and 70s, the so-called ‘Gastarbeiters’, mostly from Turkey. They moved into this borough because of its cheap rents. A lot of people on the underground were wearing headscarves and spoke Turkish and outside one could see advertisements in Turkish on shop windows and doors.

In the area around FS, the influence of Turkish culture was less dominant. There was a greater mix of different cultures and social status. More people spoke German, and there were a variety of international cafés, alternative shops and posters announcing “multi-culti” events along the road. Families, students and homeless people dominated the picture. A father of a student at FS, with a Turkish background, recognised the apparent acceptance and openness towards different cultures as a distinct feature of this borough:

“[here] Germans are together with Turks, with foreigners I mean, and there are many contacts. Outside of this borough it isn’t like that, [...] say in the old eastern part, there they don’t know the foreign citizens yet. [...]...the foreigners, [especially] the Turks, live for about forty years in [this borough] now and the Germans know them. [...] I have many older people, seventy or eighty-year-olds, who come to me and say: ‘we’ve lived in the same house with the Turks for forty years now and we’re *so* pleased with them. Now the children have grown up, they have grand-children...’ We all live together somehow”¹¹⁰ (FS/No. 3/P/10).

Over the last years, some areas of the borough have developed into a fashionable upmarket area, which has attracted many people, often from the German middle and upper-middle class, increasing rents and underlining the socio-economic differences amongst the population. Consequently, apart from celebrating cultural diversity, a sense of cultural separation and exclusion has persisted, exemplified in the remaining ghettos of Turkish communities, or the divide between socially deprived and upper- middle class areas. Official statistics confirmed existing social disadvantages, especially for adults and children with a “foreign nationality” (ASB, 2007 a; b): their income was on average €650 per month in comparison to the salary of people with a “German” nationality, on average €1000 per month: Only 15 per cent of children in secondary education from families with “foreign

¹¹⁰ German original: „[Hier] Deutsche sind zusammen [mit] Türken, also Ausländern [und] es gibt viele Kontakte miteinander. Außerhalb [dieses Stadtteils] ist [es] nicht so, [...] sagen wir im Ostteil, da kennen sie die ausländischen Bürger noch nicht. [...] ... die Ausländer, [insbesondere] die Türken wohnen seid ungefähr vierzig Jahren in [diesem Stadtteil] und die Deutschen kennen die Türken. [...] Ich habe viele ältere Leute, die kommen bei mir vorbei, so siebzig, achtzig jährige, und sagen: ‚Wir wohnen seid vierzig Jahren mit den Türken im gleichen Haus und wir sind *so* zufrieden mit ihnen. Jetzt sind die Kinder groß geworden, jetzt haben sie Enkelkinder...‘ Wir leben alle miteinander irgendwie.“

nationalities” did their A-levels, compared to 43 per cent of children with “German nationality” (Statistik Berlin Brandenburg, 2008c, hereafter cited as: SBB, 2008c).

For the last forty years, responses to cultural diversity have been a main focus of social developments in Berlin and in this borough, including research projects, the establishment of advisory services and government initiatives, in order to further intercultural tolerance and acceptance of difference. However, the German President Wulff made clear his acceptance of migrants from Turkey and other countries with a preponderance of Muslims in his speech about German reunification : “Islam belongs to Germany” (3rd October 2010). This received much criticism, indicating that fears of cultural infiltration and unfamiliarity with the “other” persisted.

INTRODUCING FRANZ-SKARBINA-SCHOOL

The school was a three-storey red brick building, established in 1901/1902, situated between apartment houses. Opposite the school building was the day-care centre, a former apartment house. The playground and the refectory were in between both buildings. The school grounds were accessible to anyone during the day-care opening hours of 7.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. In contrast, other schools in the borough had just started to use policemen at their school gates to prevent access to everyone, following some violent incidents between students. But just before my fieldwork, some staff in FS had suggested that the gates be locked during the afternoons to prevent strangers entering the playground area. They were referring, primarily, to teenagers who had recently begun to occupy the football pitch.

For a long time, the school had faced many challenges emanating from the social conditions in its surrounding area, as Ms Mühlhausen explained:

“[...] back then [in 1987] this was already quite a social hotspot, not as much as today, but it was a difficult environment”¹¹¹ (FS/No. 4/S/8).

But unlike most schools in this borough, FS had become very popular, according to Ulrich, a father of a former child in FS:

“this school had a really bad reputation and when Ms. Mühlhausen became head teacher it took approximately two or three years [until] it was clear: if you were to enroll your child in [this borough], then in Franz-Skarbina-School. [...] These days it’s not quite like that anymore because also some other schools have a relatively good reputation. [...] it’s nice to live here as a student. But when your children are about to go to school,

¹¹¹ German original: „...damals war es schon ein sozialer Brennpunkt, nicht so massiv wie heute, aber es war ein schwieriges Umfeld.“

you rather move [to other boroughs]. And that leads to a skimming-off effect”¹¹² (FS/No. 10/P/10 ff.).

Different factors contributed to the good reputation of FS, such as the school’s status as an awarded ‘Integration School’, a mainstream school which also accommodated children with a “disability” and/or categorised as having “special pedagogic support needs”; its locally renowned theatre after-school-club; and its comparatively high number of children with German as a first language, while other schools in the borough were conurbations for children from different cultural backgrounds.

During my fieldwork, 35 children categorised as having “special pedagogic support needs” are enrolled in the school: 54.4 per cent of the children in the school had a “non-German first language (NGL)”¹¹³ out of which “children of families who formerly came from Turkey”¹¹⁴ (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.7), formed the biggest group (see Box 14). 51.4 per cent of all children received learning materials for free because of their parents’ low income (SenBWF, 2009, p.7).

| Children in the 30 primary schools in the borough | | | | Children in Franz-Skarbina-School | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Total | Children with a “non-German first language (NGL)” | Children with a “German” background | Children categorised as having “special pedagogic support needs” | Total | Children with a “non-German first language (NGL)” | Children with a “German” background | Children categorised as having “special pedagogic support needs” |
| 12,162 | 6,732 (55.4%) | 5430 (44.6%) | 657 (5.4%) | 395 | 215 (54.4%) | 180 (45.2%) | 35 (8.86%) |

Box 14 ‘Children in primary schools in the borough and in Franz-Skarbina-School’

¹¹² German original: „Die Schule hatte ’nen ganz miesen Ruf und dann als Frau Mühlhausen Direktorin wurde hat es ungefähr zwei drei Jahre gedauert, [bis] klar war, wenn man sein Kind in [diesem Stadtteil] auf die Schule schickt, dann Franz-Skarbina-Schule. [...] Von ganz vielen weiß ich, dass sie gesagt haben: ’Entweder ich krieg’ ’nen Platz an der Franz-Skarbina-Schule für mein Kind, oder wir ziehen um.’ Das ist heute nicht mehr ganz so, denn es gibt auch ein paar andere die einen relativ guten Ruf haben. [...wenn] man als Student hier wohnt, is’ alles ganz lieb und nett. Aber wenn dann die Kinder zur Schule sollen, dann zieht man doch lieber [in andere Stadtteile]. Und das führt dann zu so ’nem Abschöpf-Effekt.“

¹¹³ German original: „nicht-deutscher Herkunftsprache“; Children with a “non-German first language” (“NGL” in the following text) is the official term applied in school contexts referring to all children who speak another first language than German in their immediate family (parents, siblings, and grandparents). Many of those children have got a German passport hence this category was established for schools to indicate which children may require additional support in their development of the German language. The term “NGL” therefore also includes children with a “foreign nationality” (ASB). Those definitions are both according to the ASB. In other contexts those terms may be defined differently, as for instance in the PISA study (OECD, 2001).

¹¹⁴ German original: „Kinder aus Familien, die ehemals aus der Türkei stammen“

All children in the school were between five and twelve years-old and were taught in sixteen classes from year one to year six. Year one to three were combined in vertical-year-group classes, another specific characteristic of educational practice in FS.

32 teachers, with an average age of 50 years, worked in the school, most of them for over fifteen years. Some were formerly employed in the German Democratic Republic where they had also done their teaching degree. 22 pedagogues, with different qualifications, including a few Integration pedagogues, worked in the day-care centre, which had opened only a few years ago. Some were also in lessons for a few hours in the school as support staff. Further support staff included a personal assistant and five School Helpers, not all full-time employed (FS/Doc.2). Non-pedagogic staff included the school secretary, the caretaker and the IT-specialist (see Box 15). In contrast to the children’s cohort, the majority of staff was identified as from “German middle-class” backgrounds.

| |
|--|
| <p>Leadership Team</p> <p>1 Head teacher 1 Deputy Head teacher</p> |
| <p>Pedagogic Staff</p> <p><u>Teachers</u> 16 Class teachers 16 Subject teachers (6 of them are qualified teachers for special pedagogy)</p> <p><u>Support Staff</u> 22 Pedagogues, primarily working in the day-care centre 5 School helpers 1 Personal assistant</p> |
| <p>Non-pedagogic Staff</p> <p>1 Administrators 1 IT-Specialist 1 Premises Manager</p> |

Box 15 ‘FS staff structure – internal staff’

FRANZ-SKARBINA-SCHOOL IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE

It is the everyday practice of schools, part of their changing individual contexts, to respond to challenges. Some challenges are long-term, such as the necessity to respond to the diversity of children and families. Others arise for a more limited period of time. One such, that was a main focus in FS during my fieldwork, was the implementation of the new Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004), which required considerable adjustments to the educational practices and organisation of all schools. While some aspects of the reforms were viewed positively by the staff in FS (FS/No. 5/S/6), overall they disagreed with the changes. For example, Kristina, a teacher, noticed an increasing workload:

“this cannot be sane what people at the [so-called] ‘Green Table’ come up with: the attainment targets that are meant to be achieved, and this, that and the other [...], the constant cuts, [...] and that [at the same time] the teaching-hours for teachers and pedagogues etc. are increased. Such reforms don’t come for free”¹¹⁵ (FS/No. 5/S/6 ff.).

Correspondingly, Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher, felt unequipped to fulfil the new requirements, such as writing a School Program:

“we did not learn how to write a School Program at all during our teacher education course. [...] I have got the feeling that my colleagues are objectively overburdened”¹¹⁶ (FS/No. 4/S/7 ff.).

Kristina’s call for more resources, was echoed by parents and children, in letters to the government, strikes and street demonstrations.

Another challenge was the school’s recent change from a so-called ‘reliable half-day primary school’¹¹⁷ into an ‘opened whole-day primary school’¹¹⁸. Formerly, free childcare had been provided by the school between 7.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. Now, it was from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., provided by the day-care centre in the school grounds. This caused a noticeable effect on the atmosphere at the school:

“[...] atmospherically, it completely changed. It got intense since many children and adults stay here until four. Essentially I see it as an advance, [...] but in many respects we are a bit herded together”¹¹⁹ (Karin, teacher; FS/No. 2/S/11).

“We have no peace and no quiet [...] since we have opened the whole-day primary school. [...] If you use a school building twice, [namely] for free-time and school, you have a constant noise-level.”¹²⁰ (Ms Mühlhausen, head teacher; FS/No. 4/S/7 f.)

Thus, apart from the focus of my research investigating responses to diversity in FS, I found myself unexpectedly in the midst of these large-scale changes, being given the opportunity to

¹¹⁵ German original: „Das kann nicht normal sein, was sich die Leute am [sogenannten] ‚Grünen Tisch‘ ausdenken: was an Lernzielen und und und alles erreicht werden soll [...], dass ständig gespart, [...] und dass [gleichzeitig] die Stundenzahl der Lehrer, Erzieherinnen usw. erhöht wird. So ’ne Reformen sind nicht für Nothing zu haben.“

¹¹⁶ German original: „Wir haben’s im Studium überhaupt nicht gelernt, wie man [ein] Schulprogramm macht. ...ich habe so das Gefühl, meine Kollegen sind objektiv überfordert.“

¹¹⁷ German original: ‘Verlässliche Halbtagsgrundschule’; All primary schools are reliable half-day schools and required to offer free child care provision between 8a.m. and 1.30p.m..

¹¹⁸ German original: ‘Offene Ganztagschule’; This is a school which offers child care provision between 6a.m. and 6p.m. as the compulsory care-times of the school are extended through a day-care opened from 6a.m. till 7.30a.m. and end of the lessons till 6p.m..

¹¹⁹ German original: „...atmosphärisch ist es anders geworden. Es ist dichter geworden, dadurch dass halt sehr sehr viele Kinder und Erwachsene bis vier Uhr hier sind. Eigentlich finde ich es ’ne Bereicherung, [...] aber in ganz vielen Punkten [sind] wir ein bisschen zu zusammengepfercht.“

¹²⁰ German original: „Wir haben keine Entspannung und Ruhe [...] seit wir die Ganztagschule [haben]. [...] Wenn Sie ein Schulhaus doppelt nutzen für Freizeit und für Schule, dann haben Sie einen ständigen Lärmpegel.“

see the impact of new governmental requirements, and their potential effect on processes of exclusion and inclusion.

My journey to FS served as an introduction to my research in the school: I was confronted with the most striking aspects of diversity in Berlin, such as its variety of space, people, cultures and lifestyles. In the borough in which the school was located, social diversity was a particularly distinctive characteristic. Unsurprisingly those features were also reflected in the school itself, and this, and the responses to them, will be explored in depth in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5: PARENT PARTICIPATION

In this chapter, I address answers to my first and second research questions by introducing and analysing the ways in which parents participated in Mt E.'s and in FS, and the barriers that they encountered. It is based on interviews and observations, including accounts from parents, members of staff and children. The first two sections of this chapter are concerned with the different ways in which parents came into contact with educational practice in the schools. The first section looks at the daily, less formalised interaction, while the second section describes formal arrangements for interacting with parents. In the third section I explore barriers to participation. The final section summarises differences and similarities identified between the opportunities for parent participation in both schools.

I distinguish two types of structures established for parents, which I have called monological and dialogical, offering different degrees of participation. Monological structures were all those delivering information in one way, in most cases from staff to parents. They perpetuated a certain understanding of parents as “recipients” of information in the schools, and who were therefore mainly passively involved in the process. By contrast, through dialogical structures, parents are also seen as “providers” of information, increasingly supporting their active engagement in dialogue.

DAILY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTACT WITH PARENTS

I arrived in the reception area of Mount Ephraim's School at 8:40 a.m., the place where every visitor had to call in first if they wanted to access the school building. A mother and her son sat on the sofa provided. Very rarely I had seen parents in this part of the school. I said "Good morning", to both of them when I entered and she responded with a smile wishing me a good morning, too. I stepped over to the counter and signed in the register that Kristin, one of the administrators in the school, had given to me. Then she pressed the buzzer to unlock the door for me which led into the school's ground floor area, leaving the mother and her son behind (Mt E.'s/Wk 2/25; Mt E.'s/Wk 5/32).

This incident left me feeling uncomfortably distanced from the mother and her son, by being allowed into the school, while they remained waiting to be let in. It left a strong impression on me, and as I later recognised, exemplified a general difference in comparison to schools I had visited in Germany such as FS: the increased regimentation and control of access to the school for every non-staff member or pupil.

The daily meeting point for parents and teachers in Mt E.'s was the playground, opened every day for a short time before and after school:

"...in the beginning of the day there is a time where teachers and parents can meet and discuss. Also at the end of the school day we have an interface where teachers and parents meet in the playground. And parents can talk to teachers at that time. That's important" (Monica, deputy head teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/12ff.).

According to the school's Attendance and Lateness Policy (2006), and in contrast to FS, it was compulsory for all children to be brought to school and picked up by an adult, except for children in year five and six with parental permission. In the mornings when the school gate opened, a few members of staff stood at the gate greeting parents and children; Robert, the head teacher, stood at the gate twice a week in order to get in touch with parents. Yet, most teachers were not available in the mornings in the playground. Lynn, a TA, said that afternoons, after school, was the best time to arrange meetings with parents:

"we [the staff] always say 'Come in at the end of the day, because it's more difficult to speak to the teacher first thing in the morning because lessons are starting. Better to come at 3:30 p.m. when they are in the playground. And please make an appointment if that's not a long enough session for the kind of thing you want to talk about. And that's always been the way, and the parents are aware of this'" (Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/3).

Most parents I saw in the playground were usually only greeting the staff and other familiar people in passing. Others did not make any contact, and the staff had to run after them to have a word. Only a few parents stopped and talked to a teacher.

An apparent reason for the playground as the main meeting point for parents and staff had been the parents' "discouragement" (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/29) from entering the school

building, as Monica, the deputy head, explained. This primarily affected parents of children in year two to year six. They could only bring their children to the school entrance, because their classrooms were located on the first and second floor. In Foundation Stage and year one, parents had more opportunities to be in contact with their children's teachers and support staff, because their ground-floor classrooms had doors leading directly into the playground. Every morning, these parents brought their children into the classrooms. In the afternoons, they stood in front of the classroom door, until the teacher allowed them in, or sent their children out. Jody, a reception teacher, felt the location of her classroom on the ground-floor was an advantage for an increased contact with parents:

“... we're lucky down here 'cause we see the parents twice a day. So it's quite easy to build up relationships with them or... it's certainly more easy than higher up in the school. And so we tend to speak quite informally daily to the parents, when they drop the kids off and when they pick them up” (Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/9).

It must have been a big change for parents when their children entered year two and they were suddenly less welcomed in their children's classroom.

I was told the reason why parents were asked not to enter the school building, without an appointment, was in response to a fear of theft or vandalism, and to prevent them from pampering their children, for example, by carrying their bags. I had never seen these reasons in print, and wondered to what extent parents were aware of them, or whether they simply felt rejected and unwelcome in the school. Sue, the EMAS teacher, confirmed my latter assumption, and was recognisably dissatisfied with the rule:

“... I think sometimes the parents aren't welcomed as much as they could be. ... here they are not allowed to come upstairs when school starts first thing in the morning. They are kept a bit at bay. Whereas in other schools I have worked in, the parents come in the morning and sit with their child and do reading before school starts...” (Mt E.'s/No. 9/S/9).

The apparent lack of a community of staff and parents was also reflected in the deputy head's description of parent-staff contacts in Mt E.'s as “interfaces” (Mt E.'s/No.6/S/12). I knew of this term from computing (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000), where it referred to electrical connections or the joining of elements primarily regarded as separate, such as a “human-machine interface” or a “human-computer interface”. Thus, its use in the context of a school, confirmed my first impression of a rather technical, distant and less individualised form of contacts between parents and staff, but I later found individual cases that disproved this impression.

I rarely noticed contacts between parents, which some parents confirmed:

“when we see them [other parents] we say 'hello' sometimes” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/P/4).

“I see them [other parents] but they are not my friends” (Mt E.’s/No. 4/P/2).

The parents, who I heard talking to each other, mostly spoke another language than English, and those, who I asked later, told me that they had already known each other before school.

In FS, my impression of parents’ daily contacts in the school was rather different. They were always allowed to come into the school during school hours, which possibly contributed to their increased contacts with each other and with staff I observed, in contrast to Mt E.’s.

Every morning a growing number of parents and children were waiting in front of Franz-Skarbina’s main entrance for it to open at 8:45 a.m. Most of the younger children were brought by their parents whilst the older ones tended to be on their own. I recognised a great diversity of people; men, women and children of different age-groups, all wearing different clothing, possibly indicating a specific ethnic background, and none of the children were wearing school uniforms, since it is uncommon in German schools. A lot of them came by bike or by foot, a few also via the underground. Zhilaa was brought to school in a minibus with her wheelchair. They were speaking various languages and many parents were engaged in conversation. Yet I noticed very little interaction between parents who spoke different first languages... .

From time to time a staff member arrived and squeezed through the crowd occasionally saying “good morning” to familiar faces, parents and children, or stopping for a little longer to join a conversation, before letting herself/himself into the building.

When the entrance door was eventually opened, children and adults streamed into the classrooms, where some parents engaged in conversations with teachers or other parents. Even when the lessons had started, occasionally parents continued chatting with each other in the corridor whilst slowly walking out of the school (FS/Wk 1/2; FS/Wk 7/11; FS/Wk 4/35).

Like in Mt E.’s, the dropping off and picking up times before and after school, were the most frequent opportunity for parents to meet each other and with staff.

However, in comparison with Mt E.’s, the most striking feature for me of the daily contacts of parents in FS was their spontaneity. This seemed to promote a very friendly atmosphere and sense of community in the school. But such contacts did mainly apply to particular parents, those from a German background, which was suggested by the fluent German they spoke with each other.

ARRANGEMENTS SPECIFICALLY MADE FOR PARENTS

Beside those daily and spontaneous opportunities for parents, there were also deliberately established structures for parents to be involved in educational practice in both schools. They followed the overall aim of enhancing the children's learning and participation. For example, Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager in Mt E.'s, explained:

“[the] ultimate goal is to help the child with whatever she's having. So to support the parents might be part of the strategy to support the child” (Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/6ff.).

And similarly in the School Program (2006) in FS, written by the staff, it stated:

“for the children's sake, teachers and parents need to establish valuing and collaborative relationships” (ibid., p.26).

“Communication and collaboration between parents and school need to be consciously initiated and looked after in order to support the learning of the child permanently and with lasting effect” (ibid., p.27).

Furthermore, the Program recognised parents as the staff's “most important partners” (ibid., p.28) and outlined one particular development project aiming “to increase the collaboration between parents and school as partners in the upbringing and education of their children,...” (ibid., p.47).

In both schools the structures established for parents could be distinguished by three different purposes (see Box 16, p.112). The *first* purpose was the exchange of information between parents and staff. The *second* was to support the staff's educational practice, showing parents how to support their children's learning at home, and the *third* purpose was to increase the parents' *own* participation.

SHARING INFORMATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND STAFF (FIRST PURPOSE)

In both schools, parents mostly used the structures established for this purpose. Yet, the exchange of information was predominantly one way, from staff to parents, as the greater number of monological structures allocated to this first purpose indicates (see Box 16, p.112).

| | Monological structures | | Dialogical structures | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| | Mt Ephraim's | Franz-Skarbina | Mt Ephraim's | Franz-Skarbina |
| 1st purpose: sharing information between parents and the school | Praise cards Stickers Focus tracker Observation sheets Children's profile books Reading Record Books Newsletter 'Parents' space' (on-line forum) <u>Arrangements for children raising greater concern:</u> Individual Education Plans Common Assessment Framework (CAF) | The newsletter 'Skarbina's Freunde' Displays and notice boards in the reception area of the school School's homepage Individual documents of the child's learning progress and School-bag mail <u>Arrangements for children raising greater concern:</u> Individual Education Plans | A child's admission meeting and child's admission form Playground meetings during drop off and pick-up times Parents' evenings Open Door policy | A child's admission meeting Individual parents' days Individual, irregular meetings between parents and teachers Pick up and drop off before and after school Class phone list Note books |
| 2nd purpose: supporting the staff's educational practice | | Themed parents' evenings <u>Arrangements for children raising greater concern:</u> Information evenings (once or twice a year) | Parent volunteers Family Learning courses Parents as partners in early learning (PPEL) <u>Arrangements for children raising greater concern:</u> Team around the child-meeting CAF meeting Individual 1:1 and group meetings Home-School-Behaviour-Book | Bilingual Parents' Café <u>Arrangements for children raising greater concern:</u> Support Conference Additional meetings of teachers and parents of children, who raise increased concern in one or more areas |
| 3rd purpose: supporting parents' participation | Language courses for parents | External school evaluations Courses furthering parents' competencies in line with the school curriculum: German classes for parents Media competencies: Computer/IT-courses for parents | Mother tongue story groups English language classes (ESOL or part of Family Learning courses) Interpreters Themed Coffee Mornings School Fairs and Open-door-day Parents' workshops in Turkish or Somali Community parents' evenings Parent governors | Elterntreff 'Skarbina Parents Online' group (Interpreters) Class' parents' evenings Parents' associations School Conference School and Class' parents' representatives Informal gatherings of parents and sometimes teachers of one class Individual parents' engagement in school activities Whole-school events Teachers-Pedagogues-Parents-ball |

Box 16 'Structures for parents in Mt Ephraim's and Franz-Skarbina-School'

Providing parents with information (monological structures)

Monological structures existed in FS and in Mt E.'s on different levels: some provided information for individual parents, others addressed all parents in one class or even in the whole school.

In Mt E.'s, most individual information received by parents about their child's individual learning progress, was from the class teachers. Every child's learning was recorded in a variety of ways, more than I noticed in FS. There were individual 'profile books', with photographs and examples of the child's work in school, shown to parents at parents' evenings, and meant to be given to them after each school year. In a 'Reading Record Book', the staff and the child documented the child's reading in school and, if applicable, also at home. In Foundation Stage and year one, the staff additionally used 'observation sheets' to briefly note down their observations of a child's learning progress during a lesson. They were displayed on the classroom wall for some time for parents and others to read. 'Weekly focus trackers' were another instrument used, in some year groups, to record a child's learning progress.

Particular importance was placed in sharing praise of children with parents, as a motivation for learning. Therefore, when children were praised, they received a sticker from staff to show their parents; recently the school had also introduced 'praise postcards' that were sent to a child's home.

In FS, parents received individual information about their child's learning progress in reports at the end of each term, and some teachers also used portfolios and learning diaries (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.53).

Information for all parents in a class were provided, in both schools, in individual class letters. In FS, this happened frequently hence all children had a folder called 'School-bag mail', especially for this purpose, in which all information to take home to their parents, was collected.

One way both schools provided all parents across the school with information was the publication of newsletters. In FS, the newsletter 'Skarbina's Freunde'¹²¹ was sold every month and informed parents about school life, such as school or class events or new members of staff. Furthermore, it featured any other issues that the writers, children in the after-school club 'school newsletter', found interesting, for example, 'how are traffic lights controlled in Berlin?' In Mt E.'s, all parents received the newsletter every Friday. It was mostly written by staff members and contained information about the whole school, as well as individual year groups, for example, the weekly school dinner menu, dates for the parents'

¹²¹ English transl.: 'Friends of Skarbina'

evening, class trips and whole-school events, after-school clubs, or advertisements for courses and workshops for parents and families, and occasionally also for voluntary work in the school. The newsletter was available in the three main languages spoken in the school: Turkish, Somali and English. Its language was kept as simple as possible in consideration of the parents' language skills, as Robert, the head teacher, explained to me.

Additionally, in FS all parents could get information on the school's homepage and from wall displays and pin boards on the ground floor, next to the school's main entrance, provided by staff, parents and children. Here, children, for example, offered homework support or babysitting; parents and staff advertised plays or parents' workshops, carried out by governmental or independent institutions in collaboration with the school. Other displayed information gave an insight into education practice in the school, referring to recent and forthcoming events, such as the school's summer fair or class trips. A list outlined the number of children categorised as having "special pedagogic support needs" in the school, and the exhibited 'European Integration Award' gave every visitor the impression of a successful school.

In Mt E.'s, a letter box was provided at the reception desk for parents to leave suggestions, comments or concerns. Moreover, Roberta's mother, a parent in Mt E.'s, referred to a form provided by the staff for parents to voice their opinion:

"there is always a form to fill in your opinion. So if the school is going to change something, there is a form, asking [about the parents' opinion] 'what do you like/not like'" (Mt E.'s/No. 7/P/2).

Exchanging information (dialogical structures)

The first dialogical structure for parents and staff to exchange information, was, in both schools, the child's admission meeting. In FS, parents usually met with their child's future class teacher, while in Mt E.'s, either the deputy head teacher, the Pastoral Care Manager or the Inclusion Manager attended the admission meeting. In both schools, the purpose of these meetings was to get to know each other, and to exchange information about the school and the child. Monica, the deputy head in Mt E.'s, highlighted the valuation of cultural diversity as a main aspect of the meeting:

"...when a child gets admitted we find out as much information about their background as possible. For example, if the child [or] their family come from a different country than England, or if they speak a different language. Welcome booklets and information is given to them in their home-language, they have the opportunity to explore similarities and differences between countries if that's relevant. So, straight away at admission, their language and their background is valued as part of the diversity in the school" (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/20).

Furthermore, the parents were required to fill in an admission form at the meeting. Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, considered the least standardised part of the admission form as most important, because it provided space for the parents' individual perspectives:

“... probably the most crucial part in our form is just like an empty box basically and we say to the parents: ‘is there anything else that you would like to tell us that you think would be good for us to know so we can help your child settling into school, anything you are worried about, any problems in relation to you child?’ ... really it’s giving parents the opportunity to say what they are concerned about and trying to get quickly some support in, so we can help the child in settling quickly into the school” (Mt E.’s/No. 11/S/8).

Subsequent to admission, both schools held regular one-to-one meetings between parents and class teachers. In FS, they were the individual parents' days, one per semester, and in Mt E.'s, so-called 'parents' evening', although they took place in the afternoon once a term. Those meetings were scheduled for approximately fifteen minutes to discuss the child's learning progress in school and its support in school, as well as at home. In FS, apart from the class teacher, the deputy class teacher, and in some cases also other staff concerned with the child, such as a pedagogue or School Helper, attended the meeting. In Mt E.'s, only class teachers were supposed to attend, as Sue, the EMAS teacher, ensured me: “I’m not a class teacher, so I don’t have ‘parents’ evenings” (Mt E.’s/Wk 12/44).

During my fieldwork I had the opportunity to experience one 'parents' evening' at Mt E.'s:

the school appears as a very busy but friendly place. Parents and children are walking along the corridors and waiting in front of their classrooms to see their class teacher, who is currently talking to another parent inside. A few support staff members are positioned on each corridor to help parents find their meeting rooms, and to look after their children when the parents are talking to the teacher. I saw Lynn, a TA and former parent governor, in the corridor, giving John's mum a hug, seemingly very happy to see her. Sue is serving coffee and tea for the teachers in their classrooms. The school finished earlier today because of the 'parents' evening'. Therefore, Monica, the deputy head teacher, and Ben, a PE teacher, are in one of the school halls looking after those children who do not have any other childcare arrangements between 2 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. In the staff room, drinks and food are provided for all staff and interpreters. Some of them are sitting on the sofas having a break and a brief chat. I saw Robert, the head teacher, a few times in the corridor and once he came into the staff room and announced he ordered pizza for all staff. On the second floor, I bumped into Macia, Waleria's mother, rushing from one classroom to the next, today working as an interpreter for Albanian-speakers. Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, was waiting in front of a classroom, to interpret for Spanish-speaking parents, which he studied as part of his degree (Mt E.’s/Wk 12/44 ff.).

For me, the most remarkable feature of this 'parents' evening' had been that the usual roles of parents and staff, and the usually recognised hierarchy, were blurred. Everyone made a

contribution according to their individual skills or current capacities, such as Macia or Allan who acted as interpreters, Sue who served coffee and tea and Robert who ordered pizza. It was very different compared to the every day practice in school, and yet, it sometimes appeared to be the practice that was most desired, when staff and parents were looking for each others' support.

In both schools, parents could also arrange one-to-one meetings with staff, in addition to parents' evening and individual parents' days. In Mt E.'s, Monica referred to the Open Door Policy, established to ensure that parents would always have someone to talk to:

“they [parents] *know* they can approach. There is an Open Door Policy here. It means that if a parent comes to me and says ‘Can I talk to you?’ the answer is ‘Yes!’, as opposed to ‘No, I’m too busy’” (Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/13).

In FS, all parents had a list with private phone numbers of everyone in the class, offering them the possibility of ringing the class teacher, as well as to make contacts with other parents and amongst their children.

The structures established in pursuit of the first purpose, in both schools, primarily supported contacts between class teachers and parents, as accounts from parents confirm:

“at first I go to Ms. Keller [Sadik’s class teacher] and if she can not help me, I go to Ms. Mühlhausen [the head teacher]”¹²² (Sadik’s father; FS/No. 3/P/3).

“...if you got any worries about your child, it’s good to go and talk to the teacher. You can talk about him [her son] with them“ (John’s mother; Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/5).

Angelica’s mother even described the class teacher as her *only* contact in the staff in Mt E.’s.

In Mt E.’s, it was common that the class teachers changed every year as children progressed in school. In FS, the children usually kept the same teacher for three years: year one till three and year four till six. Correspondingly, in FS contacts between class teachers and parents were apparently more important and often closer than in Mt E.’s.

Meetings between parents and other pedagogic staff, such as support staff or subject teachers, were not compulsory in either school. They were arranged individually and on-demand, as explained here by Paul, Nabil’s School Helper:

“they [Nabil’s parents] have got my phone number and I have got theirs. They call me or I call them. There are no fixed times... We always talk if there is a need to talk, if it is

¹²² German original: „Zuerst [wende ich mich] an Frau Keller und wenn sie mir nicht helfen kann an Frau Mühlhausen.“

important and if it is convenient. [...] At least once or twice a week”¹²³(FS/No. 13/S/3 f.).

Sue, the EMAS teacher in Mt E.’s, described that she mostly talked to parents when she carried out parents’ workshops. But those were not necessarily the parents of children she was teaching in class.

Others, such as Macia, a TA, seemingly did not regard being in contact with parents as part of their role: “I don’t think TAs are anyway” (Mt E.’s/No. 9/P/4). And pedagogues in FS held parents’ evenings and individual meetings separately, in the day-care centre, their main institution.

I was not alone in finding the structural emphasis on contacts between class teachers and parents surprising. Luke, the non-teaching staff line-manager in Mt E.’s, particularly questioned the missing structures for support staff to be in contact with parents, considering their strong involvement in the children’s education – sometimes stronger than the teachers:

“I mean a lot of them [TAs] have more to do with the kids [than the teachers], because our TAs work in class and then they have got lunch duties as well. So they are constantly there” (Mt E.’s/No. 16/S/9).

Correspondingly, the few closer contacts I noticed between parents and support staff, such as between John’s mother and Lysandra, the nursery nurse in John’s class, had been based on their individual efforts. Jenny, John’s mother, highly valued the familiarity between Lysandra and herself, and also between Lysandra and her son and other children of the class, that had developed over a number of years:

“John’s known Lysandra for a long time. They all do... When they see that laugh on her face then you know... then the child feels comfortable” (Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/18).

SUPPORTING THE STAFF’S EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE (SECOND PURPOSE)

The second purpose of structures established for parents was based on the recognition of a potential link between children’s achievements in school and their parents’ involvement.

Kristina, a teacher in FS, for example observed:

“[...] particularly in cases of children who need greater support, it is very difficult to get support from the parents for what the school is doing”¹²⁴ (FS/No. 5/S/7).

¹²³ German original: „Die [Nabil’s Eltern] haben meine Telefonnummer, ich ihre. Die rufen mich an oder ich sie. Da gibt’s keine festen Termine... Wir reden immer wenn Redebedarf da ist, wenn’s wichtig ist, und wenn’s passt.[...] Mindestens ein- bis zweimal die Woche.“

Correspondingly, she recognised parents of children who were more successful in school differently:

“...[they] get involved and are available every day, communicate and initiate parents-meetings, teacher-parent-meetings or pedagogues-parent-meetings or any other meeting with the school’s pedagogic personnel by themselves”¹²⁵ (ibid.).

Apparently, the main aim of these structures, indicated in Kristina’s first statement, was to increase the parents’ support of the teachers’ practices. Apart from increased communication between parents and staff, this meant enabling parents to support their children at home in a way that was consistent with the staff’s educational practices. There were ways in which parents supported their children’s learning at home, which interfered with teacher practices in school, thereby increasing teacher workloads:

“...often the stuff that they [the parents] are teaching the children are at odds with what we’re doing here. So for example, lots of the children come in and the parents have taught them to do their ‘abc’, but they’ve learned them as ‘abc’, not as phonics, the way that *we* do it. Because the parents don’t know... they are trying to help and everything and also they teach them all in capital letters so in the first term we have to *undo* that teaching” (Jody, a teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/10).

Another reason for these structures that Sue, the EMAS teacher in Mt E.’s, recognised was that “...the parents want to help but they don’t know *how* to help them [their children] with their homework” (Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/7).

The only monological structure I allocated to this purpose, were themed parents’ evenings in FS. They were arranged on an evening for all parents of one class, focusing on a particular topic, such as “Homework” (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.45) or media influences on children. All other arrangements in both schools were dialogical.

In FS, there was only one arrangement for *all* the parents: the bilingual (German/Turkish) Parents’ Café, organised by pedagogues and teachers in collaboration with external institutions. It was especially addressed to parents from migrant backgrounds, but other parents and staff attending, were welcomed as well. By offering themed discussions about topics such as “Integration”, “Transition from Primary to Secondary Education” or “Reading” (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.47), it was aimed at increasing the parents’ understanding about educational practice, and what was expected from their children in school. Furthermore, this was supposed to enhance the contact between staff and

¹²⁴ German original: „Aber es ist halt gerade bei den Kindern, die mitunter größerer Unterstützung bedürfen, sehr schwierig entsprechende Unterstützung auch für diese Schule durch’s Elternhaus zu bekommen.“

¹²⁵ German original: „...die kümmern sich und sind jeden Tag da und sprechen und initiieren selber Elterngespräche, Lehrer-Eltern-Gespräche oder Erzieher-Eltern-Gespräche oder überhaupt so Gespräche mit dem pädagogischen Personal der Schule.“

parents because “a lack of knowledge about the education system in Berlin” (ibid.,p.46) was thought “to impede collaboration between immigrant parents and the teachers and pedagogues” (ibid.). On average, twenty to thirty parents came to the Parents’ Café (ibid., p.51), but it had not taken place for over a year, even though it was meant to be run three times a year (ibid., p.48).

In Mt E.’s, in ‘Family learning’ courses, parents were recognised as their “children’s first and most formative educators” (London Local Authority, 2006a, p.2). They were part of the programme ‘Adult and Community Learning’, organised in collaboration with the organisation managing the borough’s schools. Each course followed a specific educational approach, as outlined in the course description for ‘Key Stage 1 Maths’:

“this course is intended for those who [...] would like to better understand how maths is taught at school under the current British Education System” (London Local Authority, 2006b, p.1).

The courses were available for all parents across the school, but particularly addressed towards the “most disadvantaged adults and families” (London Local Authority, 2006a, p.2). Some courses were taught in another language than English, in response to the different home-languages spoken: for example ‘Numeracy taught in Turkish’ or the ‘Somali homework club’. Jody, a teacher at Mt E.’s, noticed such courses raised the parents’ and children’s confidence in the respective subjects:

“... all of the Numeracy that they do, they can do in their own language or in English. They should feel confident in... perhaps in counting and all of that at home and home-language-sharing-books all of that” (Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/10 f.).

Sue, the EMAS teacher and Monica, the deputy head teacher, were the staff mostly involved in Family Learning. Together with some external teachers, they carried out some of the courses, such as ‘Supporting children in their learning in Key Stage 1’ or ‘Parent skills’, mainly concerned with child nutrition and social and emotional well-being, which included between six and 15 two-hour sessions in the mornings or afternoons.

A similar structure, which also aimed to engage parents in their children’s learning and to support “the development of positive and respectful relationships” (Mt E.’s ‘PPEL project action plan’, 2007) between parents and staff, was the project ‘Parents as Partners in Early Learning’ (PPEL). It had recently been established for all parents in the Foundation Stage, supported by an educational institution in the borough and the National Children’s Bureau. In the project, parents were, for example, involved in the making of their children’s profile books or the management of resources for educational practice.

A third structure, through which a few parents supported education practice in Mt E.'s, was through voluntary work. Some, such as Waleria's mother, were later employed as teaching assistants, lunchtime or playground staff.

Increased involvement of parents of “special” children

As mentioned above, it was recognised in both schools that the parents of the children causing greatest concern, often had less contact with the staff. Therefore, some structures for the second purpose were especially addressed at them. This was in accordance with legal documents, such as the UK 'Special Educational Needs Code of Practice' (DfES, 2001), the Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004), and the German 'Decree on Special Pedagogic Support' (SoPädVO, 2005). Furthermore, it corresponded with teachers' perspectives. Sophie, a teacher at Mt E.'s, for instance, earmarked parents of children categorised as having “special educational needs”, and thus an 'Individual Education Plan' (IEP), for attendance at parents' evenings: “they *have* to! Especially when their child got an IEP now” (Mt E.'s/Wk 12/43).

The applicable structures differed depending on the child's identified area(s) of need, which, in both schools, was distinguished by academic development, emotional and social well being, and behaviour. All structures were dialogical, apart from information evenings in FS once or twice a year about support provision regarding a particular area of concern or a child's disability (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.16).

In Mt E.'s, such structures applied when the children had previously, either received a label of “special educational needs”, focusing on an area of academic learning, or been categorised as a “child with additional needs” (Mt Ephraim's School, Child with additional needs Policy, 2007) in the area of emotional and social well being. For a child raising behavioural concerns, the school had developed another set of interventions outlined in its Behaviour Policy (2007). Yet, often, behavioural issues were seen to be interlinked with other issues (*ibid.*, p.9). Similarly in FS, the children who raised increased concern often received a label of “special pedagogic support needs”. But in contrast to Mt E.'s, this label was applied to all areas of concern. In both schools, the contacts between parents and staff, and the number of staff and external professionals involved, gradually increased according to the perceived degree of concern about the child. At the lowest level, independent of any specific problems, in both Mt E.'s and FS, intervention involved the parents and class teachers. They usually arranged a first meeting, occasionally joined by other staff. In Mt E.'s, some parents and class teachers also had increased contact through the use of a 'Home-School-Behaviour-Book'. They documented the child's behaviour every day, at home and in school, to gain a more holistic view of the child, and to support consistent interventions. In

FS, they used note books for similar reasons, not only for behavioural issues, but also in other areas, for example, to support the communication of children who could not communicate verbally.

In Mt E.'s, at later stages of an intervention, the meetings between parents and staff varied both in frequency and in the number of people involved. For a child who raised behavioural concerns, the parents met with the deputy head teacher and Pastoral Care or Inclusion Manager (Mount Ephraim's School, Behaviour Policy, 2007) to agree on further provision of support. And finally, if necessary, the head teacher arranged the child's temporary exclusion from school "to get the parents on board..." (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/5 ff.), as Robert, the head teacher explained:

"I suppose it can [...] come from the fact that the parents are not engaging with us. [...] excluding a child for the day can be the cause of getting the parents to think: 'well, I don't want to have him home, so I will join in with the process'" (ibid.).

In regards to children labelled as having "special educational needs", or "additional needs", it was compulsory to consult the parents at every stage of an intervention, its planning and revision. The ways in which parents were involved were manifold and could include one-to-one meetings and group meetings and in rare cases even home visits. The meetings involved parents and one or more professionals, such as the class teachers, the Pastoral Care, Inclusion Manager and/or external professional. Their frequency depended on what was seen to be best for the child and the parents, as Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager explained:

"if there was a child you have extreme difficulties with, it might be daily checking with them [the parents] at the end of the day 'How's it going?, Did the social worker see you?...' In a crisis phase it's gonna be a lot more frequent. If it's not a crisis we might meet the parent in the beginning and after that every six weeks. There's no other need to put more pressure on by talking all the time about it" (Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/23).

Some parents felt very insecure especially in meetings with unknown professionals, hence the Pastoral Care Manager, who was known by the parents, acted as mediator. The meetings informed the child's support provision, outlined in an IEP, which included a particular section representing the parents' views. For children diagnosed to have the highest "need of support", indicated through a "statement of special educational needs", there was a meeting called each term, a 'Team around the child'-meeting (TAC), that involved all relevant staff, external professionals and parents. The reports of these meetings included two sections answering two main questions about the parents and family of the child (Mt E.'s/Doc.1, p.4): "what are the family's strengths" and "what support does the family need?"

Correspondingly, for children identified as having "additional needs", there were meetings between the parents, and other professionals concerned with the child, revolving

around the ‘Common Assessment Framework’ (CAF), organised by the Pastoral Care Manager:

“[there are] professionals working in a team. And that includes the parents as well as equal members of the team around the child in the centre. [...] So you look at the child’s development needs, parents’ and carer’s needs, and the family and environmental needs, and then you put them all together and you agree as a team who is going to do what. The parents have to agree as well. [...] And you set a review date and you come back and you review it as a team” (Mt E.’s/No. 11/S/4).

In FS, at later stages of intervention, the head teacher arranged a more formal ‘Support Conference’¹²⁶. Alongside the parents, the head teacher and all staff from the school concerned with the child, external professionals were also part of the conference. Sometimes it was decided not to invite the parents to a meeting, if interventions had to be negotiated that could be potentially disturbing for the parents (FS/Wk 4/14). In many respects, the meetings of the ‘Support Conference’ were similar to TAC-meetings or meetings around the CAF in Mt E.’s. Yet, the ‘Support Conference’ meetings took place less frequently, and were usually a starting point for interventions, and did not continue throughout the intervention. One outcome of a ‘Support Conference’, could be the request for an assessment of “special pedagogic support needs” for the child in a specific area of concern. Following a child’s categorisation as having “special pedagogic support needs”, a teacher for special pedagogy, in addition to the class teacher, became responsible for the support of the child and was, therefore, also responsible for the contact with its parents. In much the same way as in England, a child categorised as having “special pedagogic support needs” received an IEP, outlining the child’s specific support provision, including information about and from parents, the support they provided outside school, and/or information about their collaboration with the school.

In conclusion, many of the arrangements for parental support of the staff’s educational practice, in Mt E.’s and FS, are shown to be similar. However, one apparent difference between the structures for parents of children who raised increased concerns in Mt E.’s and in FS, was their separation according to the type of concern that arose. In Mt E.’s, different structures applied to the areas of emotional and social well being, academic learning and behaviour, stipulated by the school’s different policies. In contrast, in FS, all areas of concern were firstly included in the label of “special pedagogic support needs”, making all structures potentially available for all children with this label. Correspondingly, Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager in Mt E.’s, regarded the separation of these areas to be mostly for organisational reasons and not matching reality: “...the SEN children: there is quite often a

¹²⁶German original: ‚Schulhilfekonferenz‘

family support or social emotional aspect to what's happening there as well" (Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/17).

SUPPORTING PARENT PARTICIPATION (THIRD PURPOSE)

In the arrangements for parents discussed above, the *children's* participation in education was placed at the core. But there were also structures aiming to support *parent* participation in communities, in and also around the schools. In the School Program (2006) in FS this aim was formulated as "winning parents as partners" (ibid., p.46ff.). In both schools, a few of the structures supporting this purpose were legally required, but the majority had been established as the result of staff initiatives, and, in FS, they were also based on the efforts of some parents.

Governmental requirements to increase parent participation

There were many more legal requirements on parent participation in Berlin than in England. The Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004) set out monological and dialogical structures to support parent participation in schools. Monological structures I considered, included external evaluations, the school inspection and the school's self-evaluation, in which parents were mostly consulted through surveys, apart from a few selected interviewees. Dialogical structures included parents' bodies, established on three different levels and supposed to be independent from staff. I found neither of these in Mt E.'s.

On the level of the single class, according to the Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004, p.88), a parents' body included all parents of one class and was required to meet at least three times per year. Class' parents' evenings were meant to be primarily organised by the two class' parents' representatives, formerly elected by the class' parents. They invited the other parents and the staff to the parents' evenings and decided on the topics discussed, usually in consultation with the class teacher.

The parent body on the whole-school level was the 'GEV'¹²⁷, the school's parents' board, which included all class parents' representatives (SenBWF, 2004, p.86ff.). This also met at least three times a year. The head teacher, two teachers and two pedagogues attended its meetings, but did not take the lead. The day-care centre had its own parents' association, separate from the GEV, in order to keep each association a manageable size (FS/Wk 10/51).

At the level of the borough, there was a third parent body, the 'BEA'¹²⁸, consisting of two or three parents' representatives from the GEVs of all schools in the borough.

¹²⁷ German original: GEV – Gesamtelternvertretung

¹²⁸ German original: BEA – Bezirkslternausschuss

The BEA and the FS' GEV directed their primary focus on political issues in education. Teachers were prohibited from appealing against governmental decisions, due to their status as 'civil servants', hence it was recognised as a particular strength of the parents, to fight for additional resources and demonstrate against governmental cuts. However, the parents' associations predominantly represented the *parents'* interests. Therefore, they were also perceived as strong and critical forces that could oppose the interests of staff, as Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher noticed: "those parents will be more outspoken [...] and won't hold back from criticism"¹²⁹ (FS/Wk 11/9).

Another dialogical structure in FS supporting parent participation, was the 'School Conference'. This was the most powerful body in the school, taking the final decisions on all school developments and organisational structures in the school. It included four parent representatives from the GEV, and representatives from other groups in the school (see Box 25, p.211), elected every second year. In cases where there were more than 50 children with "German as an additional language" in the school, it was compulsory that at least one child and one parent of this group attended the meetings. The Conference was only established in 2004 as part of the government's initiative 'self-governed schools'¹³⁰ (SenBWF, 2004, p.12ff.), and had to take place at least four times a year, led by the head teacher.

It becomes apparent that the dialogical structures set out by the government to increase parent participation, supported that mostly the same parents were engaged in the different bodies.

In England, following the 'School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulation' (2007), all schools were required to have parent governors who were supposed to be elected by all parents in a school. In Mt E.'s, this role appeared similar to the parents' representative in FS. According to Lynn, a former parent governor and a TA in Mt E.'s, parent governors supported parent participation, ensuring the parents' views were taken into account in the school, and by the governing board. However, Robert, the head teacher noticed a lack of parent governors in Mt E.'s: "...we should have five parent governors and I think we've got two..." (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/4).

Staff and parents increase parent participation

In addition to the statutory structures, further arrangements to increase parent participation had been made in both schools by staff, and in FS, by some parents as well. These were mostly in response to cultural differences that had been recognised as primary barriers to parent participation, as indicated in the FS School Program (2006) (see Box 17), and by

¹²⁹ German original: „Die Eltern werden weniger ein Blatt vor den Mund nehmen.“

¹³⁰ German original: „eigenverantwortliche Schule“

Robert, the head teacher in Mt E.'s: "when you've got a large body of parents who have no English it's very difficult to engage them" (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/4). First and foremost, cultural barriers were recognised in language difficulties and unfamiliarity with the education systems in Berlin and England. Other structures generally addressed *all* parents' participation, by seeking their contributions to educational practices and supporting their contacts in the schools.

- "Many parents belong to the group of people with low income and little professional qualification and thus cannot care for nor further their children adequately.
 - Many parents' life circumstances occupy them, due to relative poverty, to such an extent that their children's upbringing and education is of less importance to them.
 - Many parents had negative experiences in school themselves.
 - Many parents are migrants or from a migrant background. In most cases, these parents have a difficult relationship with the school in many respects:
 - Many live in socially deprived circumstances, e.g. being unemployed or in receipt of support from social services;
 - Many received an insufficient education themselves;
 - Many of them can hardly speak German;
 - Many have got a different attitude and expectations and, in some cases, also very different experiences with the upbringing of children in general, and in regard to school-based learning;
 - Many of them feel at the mercy of German institutions, are lacking in self-confidence and also without the language skills to actively engage and make a contribution;
- Besides the often predominantly perceived language barriers, differences in status, in home cultures and the continuous problems in communicating have to be overcome as well" (Franz-Skarbina-School, 2006, p.26).

Box 17 'Identified barriers for parent participation in FS'

Addressing cultural differences as barriers to parent participation

In Mt E.'s, themed 'coffee mornings' for parents was a structure without equivalent in FS. These gave information to parents, who were unfamiliar with social structures, facilities and services available to them in the borough, particularly for the many refugees in the school, who had only recently come to England. The themes included 'legal/benefits aid', 'community and ethnic groups', or the 'English education system'. They were chosen by Monica, the deputy head teacher, who organised the mornings irregularly, depending on her available time. Furthermore, English language classes were offered to parents in the school as part of the Family Learning or run by the teacher for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Furthermore, there were occasionally workshops, organised in Turkish or Somali, to give parents who could not speak English the opportunity to raise any issues regarding their children's education:

“we might have a Somali workshop one day for them to express any problems that they have with the children. Maybe Turkish, you know just so we can get interpreters in for those particular occasions so they tell their interpreters what they are feeling” (Lynn, TA and former parent governor; Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/4).

Similarly, in FS ‘German language classes for Turkish mothers’ (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.28) were offered four days a week, carried out by staff in collaboration with professionals from external institutions. And furthermore, parents could gain IT-skills in ‘computer courses’ (ibid., p.24) carried out by professionals from an external institution.

Seeking parental contributions

In some arrangements for parents in Mt E.’s, the prevalence of different home cultures was recognised as a resource for education practice. Sue, the EMAS teacher, ran ‘Mother tongue story groups’ once a week often with the help from a parent or, otherwise, a child from a higher year group. In those lessons, they read a story to children who spoke the same home-language, one of the four main foreign languages in the school: Spanish, Turkish, Arabic and Somali. Sue read in English, and the parent in the children’s home-language. In addition, Sue once made a recording of a few mothers who told a traditional story from their home country, to be used in educational practice.

In both schools, parents were asked for contributions to school events to encourage participation, such as providing food or drinks. In Mt E.’s, the annual ‘School Fair’, the ‘Community parents’ evening’, and the school’s ‘Open-door-day’, were meant to support the development of a community in the school, and to link the school with the communities around the school, by inviting parents, friends, and anyone else interested to attend. In FS, the annual summer party for the whole school and the day-care centre were similar events, which aimed to increase the parents’ participation in the school:

“[the summer party] was an attempt to get parents more actively involved in the school. [...] It had been envisaged that this party would be more or less organised by the parents”¹³¹ (Kristina, teacher; FS/No. 5/S/8).

Apart from bringing food and drinks, parents from each class were supposed to organise one activity or game. In Schmetterling¹³²-Class, for instance, a father who ran a wrestling centre had put up a wrestling ring for children at the party, showing them a few wrestling techniques, as a kind of conflict-resolution training for the children.

¹³¹ German original: „...dieses Schulfest war so’n Versuch Eltern aktiver in die Schule zu holen. Es war angedacht, dass dieses Fest mehr oder weniger organisiert wird von Eltern.“

¹³² English transl. “Butterfly”

In addition, some parents engaged in FS in very individual ways. For example, a mother had started to play football with children in the playground almost every day. But suddenly, after half a year, she had stopped, without any apparent reason (FS/Wk 1/43). In other cases, teachers made individual efforts to support parent participation. For example, Karin had asked a mother whether she would like to help lead the after-school ‘gardening’ club, after her former colleague had dropped out. In Heidi’s class, a parent once taught a lesson in a Science project, following Heidi’s suggestion. In the School Program (2006, p.26) these contributions by parents had been recognised:

“some parents occasionally also take on assisting roles in the day-to-day practice in school, if their time allows it.”

Franziska Schröder, a teacher, sought individual contributions from all parents in her class. On a big display in her classroom, she had collected the children’s and parents’ suggestions for education practice (FS/Wk 11/33), for instance, for resources and materials, such as a therapeutic pillow for Zhilaa or a classroom clock, and for class activities, such as a cinema visit, skating, sleep-overs in the school, a cycle tour, or a reading day. Franziska had classified all suggestions as curricular¹³³ or extra-curricular, indicating how they fit in with official requirements, and some with a possible date and names of parents to help. In this way she did not only increase the parents’ participation but, also, through the parents’ contributions, she found support for herself.

Supporting contacts of parents in the school

In FS, I recognised that parent participation was also encouraged by offering opportunities to establish new contacts and a sense of community in the school, in support of an understanding of “school not only as a place to learn and to live for children, but also a place *to meet* for parents” (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.27). Ulrich, a parent of a former child in FS, and chair of the ‘Skarbina Parents and Neighbourhood’ Association, also recognised contacts between parents as very important:

“it would be a very important task to try and increasingly support the contact amongst parents as well as between teachers and parents and with pedagogues”¹³⁴ (FS/No. 10/P/3).

The Skarbina Parents and Neighbourhood Association was originally established by parents for this particular purpose, to increase contacts in the school and between the school and the

¹³³ “Curricular” here refers to the school’s ‘Internal Curriculum’ (SenBWF, 2004).

¹³⁴ German original: „Eine sehr wichtige Aufgabe [...] wäre es, den Kontakt unter den Eltern und auch zwischen Lehrern und Eltern und jetzt zunehmend auch zu Erziehern,...[zu] versuchen zu vermitteln.“

borough. Therefore, it organised for example an informal ‘Teachers-Pedagogues-Parents-ball’ once a year:

“in the beginning we had a Teachers-Pedagogues-Parents-ball every year which children were not supposed to attend... Here, the school was more left to one side and it was a little bit more private, so we could get to know each other“¹³⁵ (FS/No. 10/P/3).

However, the focus of its activities had changed, as Ulrich explained:

“at the moment it is rather a focus on organisational issues and finances.... We are increasingly trying to fill the gaps which the government’s cost-cutting exercise is producing.... But we should come back to using the potential of parents and focus on what is going on amongst parents and in the ‘Kiez’^{136,137} (FS/No. 10/P/2).

This focus was similar to that of the GEV, the school’s legally required parent body. Yet, the groups had remained separate, which Ulrich criticised:

“much to my regret we have only very little contact [with the other associations]. But we should collaborate. It’s stupid that we create two parallel structures, ...”¹³⁸ (FS/No. 10/P/7).

Whole-school events were another way to offer parents increased opportunities to meet other parents, families, children and staff, or anyone else concerned with the school, such as friends, other local people or former pupils. In addition to such events, there were other informal and irregular meetings of parents which followed the same purpose. The ‘Elterntreff’¹³⁹ was an arrangements on whole-school level. Originally it had been established by teachers and pedagogues, but was now also run by parents:

“an open and non-prescribed communicative forum for all parents – but particularly for those children that attend the day-care centre“ (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.46).

¹³⁵ German original: „Zu Anfang haben wir jedes Jahr einen Lehrer-Erzieher/innen-Eltern-Ball gemacht, wo keine Kinder kommen sollten.... So war Schule so’n bisschen außen vor und das war so’n bisschen privater das Zusammenkommen und das Kennenlernen.“

¹³⁶ ‚Kiez‘ (pronounced ki□ts) – a German word referring to a city neighbourhood, a relatively small community within a larger town. The word is mainly used in Berlin and northern Germany. A Kiez is never defined by the municipality or government, but rather by the inhabitants, and therefore doesn’t necessarily coincide with administrative divisions. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiez>, accessed on: 31.03.2009)

¹³⁷ German original: „Im Augenblick ist es mehr so ’ne organisatorische, finanzielle Kiste des Vereins. Wir sind zunehmend dabei die Lücken zu schließen, die die Sparmaßnahmen der Regierung zunehmend reißen.... Wir sollten mehr wieder dahin zurückkommen das Potential der Elternschaft nutzen und gucken was halt im Kiez und in der Elternschaft läuft.“

¹³⁸ German original: “...zu meinem aller größten Bedauern [haben wir] nur sehr wenig Kontakt. Wir müssten doch zusammenarbeiten. Es ist doch Schwachsinn, dass wir da zwei parallele Strukturen aufbauen,....“

¹³⁹ English transl.: “Parents’ Social”

Similar informal gatherings also existed for individual classes mostly established by their parents' representatives and occasionally also joined by the class teachers:

“... they meet in a café, and eat and drink together. ...the class' parents' representatives [...] organise things like that sometimes. We had it already twice or three times. Well, I have not always been there...”¹⁴⁰ (FS/No. 3/P/7).

Another space for parents to “meet” was the online group ‘Skarbina Parents Online’, established by the GEV in 2005. Here, 84 parents (approximately 11 per cent of all parents in FS), who had registered for the group, announced and organised events, such as workshops for parents on political and educational topics. Furthermore, they kept each other up-to-date about developments in and around the school, such as building works in front of the school. In this way, the group made particular use of another particular strength of the parents, besides demonstrating against governmental decisions, namely their greater knowledge about the borough in comparison to staff, who usually lived elsewhere.

¹⁴⁰ German original: „... die treffen sich in einem Café, gehen essen, trinken zusammen. Die Elternsprecher [...] organisieren so etwas manchmal. Haben wir schon zwei-, dreimal gehabt. Also ich war nicht jedes Mal dabei...“

EXPLORING PARENT PARTICIPATION

According to the structures established for parents in the schools, their participation in educational practice was given great importance, which some staff and parents confirmed:

“it’s the parents that are so important to this school” (Lynn, a TA; Mt E.’s /No. 17/S/5).

“If we [parents and teachers] don’t collaborate then the teachers cannot carry something through either. But if the parents all say: ‘ok, we want it like this’, then a little bit can be changed of course”¹⁴¹ (Sadik’s father; FS/No. 3/P/13).

“...the parent just says that they don’t agree and they don’t want it and then you can’t do anything a lot of the times” (Jody, a teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/9).

“The most important partners of our school are the parents“ (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.28).

But there were also other views, opposed to my first impression, which saw a lack of interest in parental involvement in education practice from both parents and staff:

“some people don’t wanna bother. They don’t wanna talk and they don’t wanna help and they don’t wanna get involved” (John’s mother; Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/13).

“... the parents are not particularly interested in schooling”¹⁴² (Sadik’s father, FS/No. 3/P/13).

“There are teachers who have got a great interest in parental involvement, ... others are less interested. That’s individually different. [...] We only reach parents from classes with those class teachers who have also got an interest [...] in the work of the parents’ association and spread the information among the parents. And the other parents often do not know about us and are consequently not involved in the process either”¹⁴³ (Ulrich, chair of the Skarbina Parents Association; FS/No. 10/P/1 ff.).

Additionally, there were various other accounts of parents and staff that indicated the parents’ limited participation in the schools, despite the structures that were established for them. For example, both parent bodies in FS were struggling to involve parents. The Skarbina Parents Association even had to close down for some time and was only revitalised

¹⁴¹ German original: „... wenn wir nicht zusammenhalten, dann können die Lehrer auch nichts durchsetzen. Aber wenn die Eltern jetzt alle sagen: ‚ok, wir wollen das so‘, dann kann sich natürlich ein bisschen was ändern.“

¹⁴² German original: „... die Eltern sind nicht so besonders interessiert in Schule.“

¹⁴³ German original: „Es gibt halt Lehrer, die haben großes Interesse an der Elternarbeit,... andere haben da weniger Interesse dran. Das kann man nicht über einen Kamm scheren. [...] Wir kriegen nur die Eltern aus den Klassen, in denen auch die Lehrer Interesse [...] an der Arbeit des Vereins haben, und die das dann auch ‚reintragen in die Elternschaft. Und die anderen Eltern erfahren oft gar nicht von uns und sind dann auch nicht so in den Prozess involviert.“

in 2000. At class' parents' evenings I attended in FS, on average, only half of the parents were present and the School Program (2006, p.50) stated:

“the preparation and organisation of class' parents' evenings lies in the hands of the teachers. Only a minority of parents is actively involved through discussion etc. Many parents begin to withdraw completely. [It] is intended to try other forms of parental involvement during the parents' evening and to gradually increase the parents' involvement in preparation and organisation of the parents' evenings.”

Similarly, in Mt E.'s, teachers and the parent governor described their difficulties in establishing contacts with parents:

“so even if they [the parents] haven't signed up for the parents' evening I just give them a time. But if they do not come I will ring them and make another appointment” (Sophie; Mt E.'s/Wk 12/37).

“We will collar them in the playground” (Mel and Carrie; Mt E.'s/Wk 12/37).

“Parents would never come forward to a governor to say we are unhappy with this, we would like to see this change. They would talk to each other in the playground, but nobody would come forward and tell us what they need. It's *extremely* difficult to get parents involved in anything” (Lynn; former parent governor; Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/1 f.).

Yet, in contrast to such perspectives, Ghedi's father recognised the importance of collaborating with the school: “only the school can do nothing. Together we can do something” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/P/5). But he reported his potential contributions in educational practice were rejected: “I wrote down my name but they did not ask me. I don't know the reason” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/P/1). John's mother had a similar experience. When she made a suggestion for educational practice, no one ever responded: “it was just a little suggestion, I thought it would be a quite good idea. But it never really happened” (Mt E.'s/No.8/P/14). This experience discouraged her from mentioning further ideas to the staff in the meantime

Another indication of barriers to parent participation was their lack of information about their children's learning.

“I would like to know about when they start writing and doing things like that. [...] I haven't really seen much writing [in the class]. But I don't know if that is because they [the children] are still little. I know they do pictures like on the 'arts table'. [...] I don't know from what age they do it here [in John's class]” (John's mother; Mt E.'s/No. 8/P/10 ff.).

Her perception contrasted sharply with the staff's understanding:

“I feel like they [the parents] are probably not massively up-to-date with what we are doing but they probably got a pretty good idea. They are always in the classroom, ... they're here *every* day, in the end of the day and the beginning of the day, [...] and I

know that the children are talking about stuff and stuff that goes home in the Newsletter...” (John’s class teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/11).

John’s mother was supposed to be given his profile book, with information about his learning progress, regularly, but she only received it “...when it got filled up in reception” (Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/11), which was after more than a year.

Ghedi’s father expressed a lack of information about whom to approach to make a suggestion: “if I want to tell something [to become] better in the school. I don’t know whom I can tell” (Mt E.’s/No. 6/P/4). His apparent unawareness about the letterbox in the reception area, or the Open Door Policy in the school, was opposed to Monica’s earlier stated insistence that all parents knew about the Open Door Policy. As a result of their perceived lack of information and knowledge about educational practice, parents could become increasingly worried about their children’s education:

“I think parents are a bit worried. Like me. It took me ages to find out what was actually wrong [in regards to her son’s education in the school]” (John’s mother; Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/8).

And Ghedi’s father indicated a sense of suspicion towards his son’s actual learning progress in school:

“I want to see something [learning progress and support of Ghedi] in the school! They [the children] need to practice more” (Mt E.’s/No. 6/P/2).

Another barrier to the participation of parents, recognisable in both schools, was the parents’ “fear of entering the school, to actually enter the building, to talk to adults who work here...”¹⁴⁴ (Kristina, teacher; FS/No. 5/S/8).

These perspectives on parent participation, and barriers to it, reveal an ambivalent picture that requires further exploration. I observed evidence of parental (non-)participation in the schools expressed through their interactions and roles, two interlinked themes in this research. These form the core of the next two sections, followed by a third section on barriers to parent participation discovered in the two research themes.

INTERACTIONS OF PARENTS IN THE SCHOOLS

In both schools, most interactions of parents, particularly with staff, were within fixed structures. Usually times, places, forms of interactions, the contact person for parents, and sometimes even topics of meetings, that were considered relevant for parents, were prescribed by staff or by law (FS/Wk 4/37). The perspectives of staff on their contacts with

¹⁴⁴ German original: „...die Schwellenangst, hier überhaupt ins Gebäude zukommen, sich mit Erwachsenen, die hier arbeiten, zu unterhalten ...“

parents revealed strong tensions between them. In Mt E.'s, Jody perceived a sense of competition between her and the parents over their child's education:

“I think sometimes they [parents] feel [...] like they're competing, because I think for some of the children they're coming in here and they're speaking a language their parents don't understand and they're doing stuff that the parents can't support them with at home. I think sometimes the parents see that it's a bit of a divide and they've kind of got to battle with the school over their child for that. Not in a big way or anything. I just think that they feel a little bit like they're losing their child when their child is at school, because it's all so different from the experience they have at home” (Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/9 ff.).

Such competition was also indicated when Markus' personal assistant, Andrew, described his support of Markus in school, as conflicting with the support Markus received from his parents at home:

“I've got Markus to walk. [...] But mum still puts him in his pram. [...] I mean I can understand in a way, because it's her baby... but she still got him rapped up in cotton wool and I think she thinks I'm a bit too firm with him [...] the life he has got in school is different to what he has got at home. He can do it in school but he is not doing it at home, and I don't think it's really fair to him. [...] it's like he's sort of got two lives. I would like to say we're working together. But I don't think we *are* working together, because I think everything that I am doing is *undone* when he goes home” (Mt E.'s/No. 12/S/4 ff.).

Moreover, in this way, Markus' parents' acted against what had been agreed at their Team around the Child-meeting, namely to “encourage him to be more independent at home” (Mt E.'s/Doc.1, p.4).

Another example of inconsistent educational approaches between parents and staff was given to me by Maggie, a child in year one in Mt E.'s, when she told me: “my mum doesn't like me getting stickers. [...] She throws them in the bin” (Mt E.'s/No. 5/Ch/2). Possibly, her mother disagreed with this form of praise and encouragement of the children's learning that was used in Mt E.'s.

In FS, the seemingly differing views, between staff and parents, on the children's education, were described by teachers as putting pressures on them by parents. They faced criticism regarding their teaching skills, particularly from parents whose children received lower marks in school (FS/Wk 3/38). Because of the VERA, the national standardised assessment tests, this pressure had increased, as a comparison of the children's results across classes meant that the teachers' teaching was also compared and judged. In order to protect themselves, some teachers decided to exclude parents from certain information about the tests: “we should downplay the whole issue in front of the parents and present it to them as

not that important“¹⁴⁵ (Stefanie; FS/Wk 4/32). This comment was particularly surprising from Stefanie, because she and Heidi actually emphasised their openness towards parents. Both teachers were popular amongst parents and, in contrast to some other teachers, they did not usually fear parents’ criticism.

Furthermore, parents in FS also communicated their expectations and judgements *indirectly* to the teachers through their children, revealing the parents’ subtle yet powerful impact on educational practice. For instance, one morning Farreq stomped into the classroom shouting: “slowly my mum and I are getting fed up with this school!”¹⁴⁶(FS/Wk 6/13) Based on former experiences, Margaret, a teacher, assumed that his expression was his mother’s who was inciting Farreq to turn against the teachers.

However, in both schools, there had also been very different experiences of contacts between staff and parents. For example, Sue’s experience, as the EMAS teacher in Mt E.’s, was that parents were very grateful for her work:

“parents are always very kind to you and say thank you for helping my child or for writing with my child. They always write a good evaluation after the workshop” (Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/8).

Her recognition of parents who “want to feel welcome” (Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/14), indicated the importance of valuing their contributions to the school, and to their children’s education.

In FS, I observed more equal interactions between parents and staff at less formal occasions, such as the annual Teachers-Pedagogues-Parents-ball.

Furthermore, interactions of parents with staff, and with other parents, were apparently influenced by their cultural backgrounds, which caused a social divide. In Mt E.’s, this was noticeable, primarily, between staff and parents:

“we have got a community that’s a black refugee ethnic minority and all staff are white, apart from one or two TAs” (Allan, Pastoral Care Manager; Mt E.’s/No. 11/S/25).

“[We have] only almost all English and white middle-class staff. [...] There are hardly any children in the school who can be called ‘middle class’” (Robert, head teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 3/S/14ff.).

In FS, cultural separation was also noticed *between* parents:

“the social differentiation simply exists. When we, as Germans, come along, it is very difficult for us to make contact with them [parents who Ulrich does not consider to be

¹⁴⁵ German original: „Wir sollten das ganze Thema vor den Eltern ’runterkochen, es nicht als so wichtig präsentieren.“

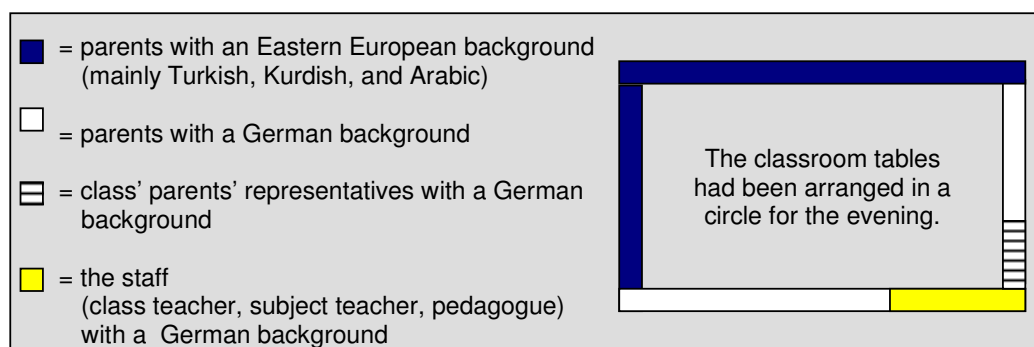
¹⁴⁶ German original: „Langsam haben meine Mutter und ich die Schule satt.“

German]. The contact is friendly but very reserved...”¹⁴⁷ (Ulrich, chair of the Skarbina Parents Association; FS/No. 10/P/5).

“Contacts and personal closeness [of families with a foreign national background] to German families are rather seldom ... the contact is narrowed down to parents’ evenings, class trips with all parents; even at school parties you can recognise the separated groupings”¹⁴⁸ (Ms Mühlhausen, head teacher; FS/Doc.2).

But also in Mt E.’s, the few parents I noticed to be in contact with each other, had shared a similar cultural background with a common language.

Such separation amongst parents, and also between parents and staff, became particularly obvious to me in FS at a class’ parents’ evening. It was apparent in the way everyone was seated (see Box 18), and who joined the conversation. Parents from a German background sat closer to the staff and engaged mostly in the discussion.



Box 18 'Parents' and staffs' seating at a parents' evening'

ROLES OF PARENTS IN THE SCHOOLS

Every role was individual, as it was not only influenced by the structures in the schools, but also by each individual in their interactions with others. For example, the roles of teachers at class' parents' evenings, were different from their roles in lessons, but they also differed from each other. Some roles of parents were distinguished officially, and for instance referred to as 'parent representatives' or 'parent volunteers'. Other parental roles I recognised as less official. They emerged from my observations, accounts from parents and staff, and from school documents.

¹⁴⁷ German original: „Die soziale Differenzierung ist einfach da. Wenn wir als Deutsche da ankommen haben wir's ganz schwer Kontakt mit denen aufzunehmen. Der Kontakt ist zwar freundlich, aber er ist sehr distanziert...”

¹⁴⁸ German original: „Kontakte und persönliche Nähe zu deutschen Familien sind eher selten. [...] Der Kontakt beschränkt sich auf Elternabende, gemeinsame Ausflüge; selbst auf Schulfesten kann man die getrennten Gruppierungen beobachten.“

Parents as supporters of staff approaches to teaching and learning

In the first type of role, parents were seen as supporters of the approaches to learning and teaching methods applied by the staff, which closely resembled the second purpose of arrangements for parents in the schools (see Box 19, p.137). In this role, parents' contribution to educational practice was expected to be consistent with the staff's approaches to learning and teaching and for example supported through Family Learning courses offered to parents at Mt E.'s. Otherwise, if the parents' teaching of their children at home was "at odds" (Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/10) with what the staff were doing, Jody, a teacher in Mt E.'s, explained she had to "undo that teaching" (ibid.). Consequently, parent's contributions in this role were not seen as equal to the staff's. They were less considered in lesson practice, but mostly referred to the periphery of educational practice in schools, as shown in other examples, too. For instance, the FS School Program (2006, p.48) referred to parents' contribution in the Parent Café as "making tea, cakes, kitchen, etc." (ibid.). In Mt E.'s, Sue, the EMAS teacher, doubted that her recording of the mothers, telling a traditional story from their home countries, had ever been used by other teachers. And in both schools it was a rare occasion for staff to visit a child at the child's home. Mostly, parent consultations took place in the schools, with limited understanding or consideration of a child's family and home environment.

Parents in this role had to fulfil certain conditions to be involved in the schools. For example they "should approach the teacher really first" (Mt E.'s/No. 8/P/7), John's mother declared. Initiating contacts with staff required parents to be self-confident, as Ulrich, the chair of the Skarbina Parents Association, confirmed as another condition for parent participation in FS:

"those [parents] who are frequently looking for contact with Ms Mühlhausen [the head teacher] and who are available for discussion and exchange are those she encounters and whose opinion is considered and taken seriously. [...] But the majority of parents do not have any contact with her and thus they do not have any impact"¹⁴⁹ (FS/No. 10/P/8).

Furthermore, Lynn and Macia, two parents who increasingly participated in Mt E.'s, described an interest in educational practice, and an understanding about the necessity to support children at home, as another basis for their participation:

¹⁴⁹ German original: „Die, die häufiger das Gespräch mit Frau Mühlhausen suchen und halt auch als Gesprächspartner da sind, dass sind die, die sie auch hört und deren Meinung sie auch ernst nimmt und auch berücksichtigt. [...] aber der Großteil der Eltern hat ja gar keinen Kontakt zu ihr, insofern haben die natürlich auch keinen Einfluss.“

“you can’t expect everything from the school really [...] it’s up to the parents as well, to help. If you don’t help your child at home, there is [only] so much they can do here [in the school], ...” (Macia; Mt E.’s/No. 9/P/1f.).

“I was basically interested in what my children were doing, what they were learning, what the curriculum was, how it changed...” (Lynn; Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/6).

Correspondingly, Sue recognised that parents, who attended the Family Learning courses “[were] generally more opened towards the school and more interested in what is happening” (Mt E’s/Wk 12/14).

In both schools, such conditions, primarily encouraged the participation of the same parents:

“...there’s only a couple of parents that used to help out in that [the School Fair]. [...] There’s always the same sort of parents, trying to raise money for the school and...” (John’s mother; Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/12).

“There has always been a group of very active and engaged parents, [...] who already engage in many other parents’ bodies. And another very big group of parents [...] cannot be woken up. It’s difficult”¹⁵⁰ (Ulrich, chair of Skarbina Parents Association; FS/No. 10/P/5).

Those parents also spoke German or English, the main languages of the schools, and often shared many other similarities with the staff, such as economic and educational background.

Parents as supporters of staff’s approaches to learning and teaching

Responsibilities

- Support of their children’s learning, social and emotional well-being at home following the staff’s approach;
- Having an interest in educational practice in the school;
- Initiate contact with the staff on an individual basis;
- Maintain contact with the class teacher;
- ...

Box 19 ‘A role of parents as supporters of approaches to learning and teaching applied by staff’

Parents as respondents to staff concerns about children

A second type of role, ascribed to parents whose children caused increased concern (see Box 20, p.138), offered some other structures for their participation than the first type. In these structures, parents were meant to be increasingly involved in the planning, implementation and revision of the support provision for their child. In contrast to the first type of parent

¹⁵⁰ German original: „Es gab immer einen Teil sehr engagierter Eltern, [...] die engagieren sich meist auch schon in vielen anderen Gremien. Und ’ne ganz große Gruppe sind nicht wach zu rütteln. Das ist schwierig.“

role, here parents were approached by staff with whom they also had an increased contact, including, for example, the Pastoral Care or Inclusion Manger in Mt E.'s, or teachers for special pedagogy in FS. Furthermore, they seemed to be considered more as equals to the staff:

“...professionals working in a team, and that includes the parents as well, as equal members of the team around the child in the centre” (Allan, Pastoral Care Manager; Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/4).

However, their contributions to their child's learning, such as outlined in IEPs, were often unspecific: for instance, “the mother is fully supportive”, “Mum is going to buy some maths books to support”, “lots of reading together” (Mt E.'s/Wk 13/26). Furthermore, staff could often regard those parents as increasingly “in need”, similar to their children: “I think that this woman as such is very needy herself”¹⁵¹ (Karin, teacher; FS/No. 2/S/13). And Sue, the EMAS teacher in Mt E.'s, identified the parents' need of support in order to learn how to help their children in their learning in school (Mt E.'s./No. 8/S/7). The recognition of parents as having a need of support could either result in enhanced efforts of staff to support those parents or cause opposite reactions from staff, namely their withdrawal from such contacts. Both responses indicate a persistently dominant staff, who prescribe parents' contributions to educational practices.

Parents of children who raised increased concern in school

Responsibilities

- Support of their children's learning, social, and emotional well-being at home, following the staff's approach;
- Being supported by staff and/or other professionals individually;
- Being approached by staff in person;
- Contribute individually to educational practice as more equal partners of staff;
- ...

Box 20 'A role of parents whose children raised increased concern in school'

Parents as their “children's first teachers”

In contrast to the first two types of role, in the third role, parents were seen as experts in educational practice, with a unique knowledge about their child and equal to the staff. Sue, the EMAS teacher, described this role as parents being “their children's first teachers” (Mt E.'s/No. 9/S/9) (see Box 21, p.139). Yet, she also indicated that this view of parents' contributions was not shared by all staff members: “I'm not sure if every teacher feels the same way as me” (ibid.). This role was primarily supported through those structures for

¹⁵¹ German original: „Ich glaube, dass die Frau an sich so bedürftig ist.“

parents I earlier mainly assigned to the thirds purpose. They were established individually, and also together, with parents, as opposed to rigidly prescribed. In this way, they offered space for parents' individual contributions, not only at the periphery of educational practice or in extra-curricular activities, but at the core of learning and teaching practices in the schools.

Parents as their “children’s first teachers”

Responsibilities

- Support of their children’s learning, social and emotional well-being at home following the staff’s approach;
- Being supported by staff and/or other professionals individually;
- Being approached by staff in person;
- Participate individually in the school’s practice and are equal partners of the staff;
- ...

Box 21 ‘A role of parents as their “children’s first teachers”’

BARRIERS TO PARENT PARTICIPATION

Staff and parents identified various barriers to parent participation that prevented them from making contributions and contacts in the schools. They referred, for example, to lack of time they had that limited their contact with each other. For instance, Roberta’s mother could not attend parent workshops in Mt E.’s:

“I can’t because I go to college and learn English. My college starts at 10 o’clock and finishes at four. In the afternoons I have to pick up my children. ... so I don’t have time” (Mt E.’s/No. 7/P/1).

For similar reasons, a mother in FS criticised the current timing of the Parent Café and suggested it should be run around the time when many parents were already in the school to pick up their children (FS/Wk 10/56).

The staff mentioned their workload to limit their time to be in touch with parents:

“I’m in the class till half past three, sometimes till quarter to four, ten to four and most parents are gone then. We were gonna discuss that the other parent governor would try and get into the playground but she has to work, so again it’s very difficult for her to come in... It would be very handy to have somebody there for our parents in the playground, but it’s hard to get this sorted out” (Lynn, former parent governor and TA; Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/5).

“...parents’ evening [...] that’s the only time that we have an interpreter and we have the time to sit down individually [with parents] and be like: ‘this is how you help, this is...’” (Jody, teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/11).

“...most of the teachers are busy. [...] If you come in, really you can’t get even five minutes” (Ghedi’s father; Mt E.’s/No. 6/P/3).

The staff's lack of time also hindered parents approaching the staff, as they did not want to increase the staff's workload:

“I would like to say something, but I also understand Ms. Grünreich [Layla's teacher], the many children, the stress...”¹⁵² (Layla's mother; FS/No. 2/P/2).

However, other parents in Karin Grünreich's class had no worries in demanding more of her time, such as Farreq's mother. She rang Karin nearly every evening at home to talk about her son, until Karin asked her to stop: “If I would do this with all parents I would sit here the whole day”¹⁵³ (FS/Wk 6/32). In her records about this incident Karin had written: “phone call with Farreq's mother (1hr): parents feel rejected”¹⁵⁴ (FS/Wk 6/33). Since then Karin felt the relationship had continuously worsened.

Another barrier in FS was a lack of publicity, as Ulrich, the chair of the Skarbina Parents Association, specifically noticed in regards to the parents' lack of engagement in the association:

“a person who is responsible for the publicity is missing. [...] Someone who ensures that we are represented in the school and that people are aware of us and consider joining us”¹⁵⁵ (FS/No.10/P/3).

But in Mt E.'s, Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, and Ron, the Inclusion Manager, were rarely approached by parents *despite* information “periodically [published] in the Newsletter about [their] roles and the team and what kind of support they [parents] can get” (Mt E.'s/No.11/S/8). Therefore, Robert, the head teacher, rather regarded the separation of areas of responsibility amongst staff as a barrier to parent participation:

“obviously not *every* parent will know that [...] Allan has that role, or Ron with special needs, 'cause they're all in a certain structure in the school...” (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/6 f.).

Such staffing structures implied an increased referral of parents between different professionals, which could prevent closeness between them and the class teachers and also bewilder parents. In contrast, in FS the main responsibility for a child's education always remained with the class teacher.

Cultural differences were continually mentioned as barriers to parent participation, although they were particularly addressed by certain structures introduced above. The first

¹⁵² German original: „Ich will etwas sagen, aber ich verstehe auch Frau Grünreich, die vielen Kinder, der Stress...“

¹⁵³ German original: „Wenn ich das mit allen Schülereltern machen würde, würde ich hier den ganzen Tag sitzen.“

¹⁵⁴ German original: „Telefonat mit Farreqs Mutter (1h): Eltern fühlen sich abgelehnt.“

¹⁵⁵ German original: „Es fehlt einfach jemand, der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit macht, jemand, der halt dafür sorgt, dass wir wieder in der Schulöffentlichkeit präsent sind, sodass Leute auf die Idee kommen würden bei uns mitzumachen.“

problem was with the parents' difficulty in speaking the schools' main language, and with their unfamiliarity with the structures in the school and the education system, in both Berlin and England. This stymied interactions, preventing them from taking on proactive roles, and contributing to discussions about educational practice and their children's learning, as the following accounts reveal:

“sometimes ..., she [Layla's class teacher] knows that I cannot speak German very well, [...] she doesn't understand me and that is a little bit sad for me”¹⁵⁶ (Layla's mother; FS/No. 2/P/1).

“I think a lot of parents don't really understand. It's a language problem. You can't talk to the parents. Technically you can't” (John's mother; Mt E.'s/No. 8/P/12).

“I have got problems about reading and writing so [...] I can't read it nicely for her [Angelica] so I know she is not happy about how I can read properly for her. [...] I like to [be more involved in the school] but my problem is, because I cannot read properly and write so that's why sometimes I don't [get] involved...” (Angelica's mother; Mt E.'s/No. 4/P/1 ff.).

“If English is the second language, they feel that they can't approach maybe, because the language isn't there and they are not able to express fully... So that could be a bit of a hindrance, I think...” (Lynn, a TA; Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/4).

Ghedi's father had expressed his unfamiliarity with the educational practice in Mt E.'s and his role as a parent, compared to the Ghanaian education system he was more familiar with:

“most things here in school are absolutely different in Ghana. Everything [in Ghana] you learn in school. [Only] sometimes [you] help at home [...] most things they [the staff] give you to do [...] to help at home” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/P/2).

And in FS, Stefanie, a teacher, noticed parents from “non-German” backgrounds often had little understanding about the more liberal educational approaches applied in the school. Correspondingly, those parents who were more familiar with the schools and their educational approach, participated more. For instance, Macia, a parent in Mt E.'s and now working as a TA in the school, described her employment as a result of her increased familiarity with the school and the staff: “as they [the staff] knew me for a long time, they asked me if I could do playground duty” (Mt E.'s/No. 9/P/1f.). She first engaged with the school through a Family Learning course, which Sue, the EMAS teacher, also confirmed reduced the parents' insecurities about coming into the school: “it [a Family Learning course] gives them the opportunity to come in the school without being scared” (Mt E.'s/Wk

¹⁵⁶ German original: „Manchmal...sie [Karin] weiß es, ich kann nicht gut deutsch sprechen [...] sie versteht mich nicht und das ist für mich ein bisschen traurig.“

12/15). Parents and staff in both schools considered parents' insecurities as secondary barriers, which resulted from their language difficulties and unfamiliarity with the school:

“... a lot of them feel insecure here because they can't communicate properly so they wouldn't come in and help in the classroom or [...] they had bad experiences of education in their own country and said they were a bit suspicious of what's going on over here” (Jody, teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/9 ff.).

“[The parents are scared] because they think the school is like in the old days, when teachers were strict... I think sometimes they hark back to their own school days and they think school is school and home is home and you shouldn't really communicate too much with your teacher. But the more modern approach is to work together, I would say” (Sue, EMAS teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 9/S/9 ff.).

“[It's] because I cannot speak German a hundred percent, [and] I'm actually a little bit shy, too. If I could speak German a hundred percent, I would have a lot of concerns, then I would be more active. But as I said, I always back off a little. But the German families simply go and say their opinion,... they will always say something and push something through. But the Turkish families, even if they go, they will certainly not say anything [but would] only listen¹⁵⁷ (Sadik's father; FS/No. 3/P/15 ff.).

“If I speak German like that [as her current ability allowed] I do not want to speak with the other parents¹⁵⁸ (Layla's mother; FS/No. 2/P/3).

Furthermore, especially in Mt E.'s, staff recognised that parents' challenging life circumstances often hindered their participation:

“because so many of our parents lead such stressful lives their children are not as high a priority as they should be. ... some parents [...] do not want to know and feel very threatened by you trying to support. [...] in their circumstances, they find it very difficult to engage with the processes that we are trying to put in place for the child” (Allan, Pastoral Care Manager; Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/20ff.).

“Parent power is very powerful. Not in this school but in others. Here it doesn't happen, because I think there is too much going on in their lives. School is not the be all and end all” (Mel, a teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/13).

Yet, in FS, the sense of a powerful and independent parents' community existed, although more than 50 per cent of the parents belonged to cultural minorities and lived in socio-economically deprived circumstances.

¹⁵⁷ German original: „[Es ist] weil ich nicht hundert Prozent deutsch reden kann [und] ich bin ein bisschen schüchtern eigentlich. [...] wenn ich jetzt 100 Prozent deutsch könnte, hätte ich also viele Sachen [...], dann würde ich mehr aktiv sein. Aber wie gesagt, ich halte mich immer ein bisschen zurück. Aber die deutschen Familien einfach die gehen hin also sagen ihre Meinung ..., also die werden immer da was sagen, durchsetzen. Aber die türkischen Familien, auch wenn die hingehen, die werden bestimmt nicht was sagen, hören nur zu.“

¹⁵⁸ German original: „Wenn ich so deutsch spreche [Laylas Mutter bezieht sich auf ihre derzeitigen Deutschfähigkeiten] will ich nicht mit den anderen Eltern sprechen.“

Most of these barriers, identified by staff and parents, made the parents responsible for their limited participation, referring to their lacking skills to engage more in the schools. They were required to adapt to the structures established in the schools, which prescribed ways and degrees of parent participation, as I also highlighted in my exploration of parents' roles and interactions above. This reflects the existence of dominant cultures in the schools, which therefore appear as an actual barrier, superordinate to such barriers recognised by staff and parents in this section.

Dominant cultures: a superordinate barrier to parent participation

Similar to my view, some people had recognised a monoculturalism in their schools that promoted the institutional exclusion of other cultures:

“you can get to situations where it's almost a bit colonial, like ‘We are the English white people and we are going to tell you ethnic minorities how to learn and how to be in England and all that.’ It shouldn't be like that. It should be that: ‘this is our school community.’ I think if we would have that, we would get a different attitude from parents towards the school” (Allan, Pastoral Care Manager; Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/25 ff.).

Correspondingly, a mother in FS noticed a dominant German culture in the school to which she strongly disagreed: “we are *not* a German school!”¹⁵⁹ (FS/Wk 10/55ff.) As indicated in former sections, the term ‘culture’ was not only applied to ethnic background, but also regarding socio-economic and, especially in FS, educational backgrounds as well. Some also referred to more than one attribute, as did Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher in FS. She talked about a German culture meaning a higher educational and socio-economic background:

“most of the German families have got a higher educational background in comparison to the high number of immigrant families with a lower social background”¹⁶⁰ (FS/Doc.2).

In FS, the dominance of particular cultures was strongly represented in terminology used in school documents and between people: it mostly applied a distinction between a German background and “non-German”, or migrant, backgrounds. However, families categorised as “non-German” were primarily from Turkey, Iraq and Iran, as well as from Arabic and African countries, while families considered as culturally “German” included backgrounds as diverse as Finnish, Polish or Japanese. This distinction did not recognise the variety of parents' individual cultural backgrounds, as indicated in Sadik's father's account, when he

¹⁵⁹ German original: „Wir sind *keine* deutsche Schule!“

¹⁶⁰ German original: „Viele der deutschen Familien haben eher einen höheren Bildungsgrad im Vergleich zu der hohen Anzahl an Migrantenfamilien unterer Sozialschicht.“

referred to families from Turkey “who live at home like Germans or in the culture of Germans”¹⁶¹ (FS/No. 3/P/9).

I found the dominant representation of a German culture, and the resulting devaluation of other cultures, expressed, with particular force, in a comparison of two official documents: an extract from the School Program (2006) and an official letter to the government written by parents.

“In our catchment area live many children with a migrant background. We are aware that this work requires the continuous engagement with the seemingly ‘other’, and our reflection on existing prejudices and judgments” (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.7).

“Our children come from many different cultures. Not all of them speak German. But they live here. In the primary schools they learn reading, writing and Numeracy. This is what they need for their future”¹⁶² (Official letter from parents to the Department for Education ‘Our children are on strike’, 19th June 2008).

In the former, a social differentiation is referred to between two apparently different cultures, in contrast to the latter which reveals a sense of belonging to a single community, whilst acknowledging differences across cultures.

Ms Mühlhausen gave another indication of a dominant culture in FS, alongside cultural diversity, in her description about changing attitudes, especially to a Turkish culture and Islamic religion in FS:

“the Franz-Skarbina-School is not liberal anymore regarding the Islamic religion and Turkish culture, because, by this time, fears of infiltration by this cultural orientation, have arisen”¹⁶³ (FS/Wk 10/56).

In Mt E.’s, a dominant English culture was mostly apparent through the expectation for parents to speak English, which resembled the dominant German language in FS. There was a constant lack of interpreters in both schools, and most documents were only supplied in the school’s main language. While in Mt E.’s, the Newsletter and a few other official documents, were available in English, Turkish and Somalian, the parents’ different cultures had rarely been considered in further areas in the school, such as curricular arrangements. For instance, Angelica’s mother mentioned that it was important for her daughter to learn cooking, as part of her Nigerian culture:

¹⁶¹ German original: „..., die auch zuhause wie Deutsche leben oder in der Kultur von Deutschen leben.“

¹⁶² German original: „Unsere Kinder kommen aus vielen verschiedenen Kulturen. Nicht alle sprechen Deutsch. Aber sie leben hier. Sie lernen hier in den Grundschulen lesen, schreiben, rechnen, das, was sie für ihre Zukunft brauchen.“

¹⁶³ German original: „Die Franz-Skarbina-Schule ist nicht mehr liberal eingestellt gegenüber dem islamischen Glauben und der türkischen Kultur, da mittlerweile die Angst vor Unterwanderung dieser kulturellen Orientierung besteht.“

“what I want her to learn is know how to cook because in [my country] every woman has to know how to cook nicely” (Mt E.’s/No. 4/P/3).

Clearly her specific interest had not been communicated to the staff, as she was unaware of the cookery club that was offered in the school.

Another indication of dominant cultures in Mt E.’s, were parents’ increased difficulties to contribute to educational practice in more formal structures, as Robert, the head teacher in Mt E.’s noticed:

“it’s very difficult to get parents contributing in any formal way, like being governors, being on the parent-teacher-association, they’re sort of formal structures” (Mt E.’s/No. 3/S/4).

Promoting dominant cultures in the schools

Formal structures prescribed ways of participation in line with dominant cultures in the schools. In this way, they could not only serve as barriers to participation but also supported the persistence of dominant cultures in the schools.

Beside formal structures there were also other factors which promoted the dominance of cultures. Robert, the head teacher, earlier recognised the staff’s predominantly white English middle-class backgrounds, which Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, criticised as part of a general tendency to further the exclusion of other cultures. Similarly, in FS, teachers and pedagogues were mostly from German backgrounds. This could enhance the staff’s unawareness of other cultures, as Luke, the Business Manager in Mt E.’s, recognised. He therefore suggested

“cultural awareness training, so that white teachers are familiar with the ways of other cultures and recognise when [...] they [children and parents] are scared because they [...] don’t understand something...” (Mt E.’s/No. 16/S/7).

Furthermore, the staff’s dominance in most interactions with parents supported dominant cultures in the schools, as well as impeding a shared understanding of the role of parents. Often arrangements originally meant to support the participation of parents of children identified as having “special needs”, such as the Pastoral Care Team in Mt E.’s, or Support Conferences in FS, were actually more supportive of teachers (Mt E.’s/Doc.2, point 14). The benefits for parents were secondary:

“...for me it is a great relief to know [from the Support Conference] a family helper is now responsible. [And] meanwhile the mother has accepted it as well”¹⁶⁴ (Karin, teacher; FS/No. 2/S/14).

Once at a meeting of a Support Conference in FS, the parents’ invitation had even been forgotten (FS/Wk 4/14).

Furthermore, Robert, the head teacher in Mt E.’s, publicly stated his expectation that parents should learn English if they lived in England and if they wanted to participate in the school. He did not attempt to increase the number of interpreters in the school, for instance, by asking all members of staff who could speak other languages, to help with interpreting.

In FS, the dominance of a German culture was also directly supported by Ms Mühlhausen. While she generally tried to be in control of parents’ influences – one reason why she attended GEV meetings, and recently registered for the parents’ online forum (FS/Wk 10/9) – she recognised a particular need to serve the interests of parents from a German background: “either we take into account what the German parents want for their children or we won’t survive”¹⁶⁵ (FS/Wk 11/9). This was because their point of view was seen as essential to ensuring the school’s popularity and thus a stable intake of children. Ulrich had preferred FS for his daughter because of the high amount of German spoken in the school:

“...to have your child in a school where he or she is the only one in the class who speaks German or has got German as her first language, that’s hard. [But] you always knew: Franz-Skarbina-School is approximately 50:50 [children with and without a migration background]. That’s a good mix”¹⁶⁶ (FS/No. 10/P/11 ff.).

Additionally, a high percentage of children from a German background in a school, was considered an indication of a “good” school and higher level of education:

“this here [is] almost the best school in this borough. In this borough it is difficult to find a good school. In many schools here there are nearly 90 per cent immigrants. And I asserted myself and then we got a place here”¹⁶⁷ (Sadik’ father; FS/No. 3/P/5).

Sadik’s father seemingly welcomed the dominance of a German culture in the school to such an extent, that he disapproved of his own culture in the school:

¹⁶⁴ German original: „...es ist für mich ’ne große Entlastung, dass ich weiß, da ist jetzt ein Familienhelfer, der kümmert sich. [Und] die Mutter hat es inzwischen auch angenommen.“

¹⁶⁵ German original: „Wir leben von der Stimmung unserer deutschen Eltern oder wir gehen ein.“

¹⁶⁶ German original: „...an ’ne Schule zu gehen, wo dein Kind das einzig deutsch sprechende, oder muttersprachlich deutsche ist in der Klasse, da schluckt man schon. [Aber] man wusste immer: Franz-Skarbina-Schule da hast immer ungefähr halbe halbe. Das ist ’ne gute Mischung.“

¹⁶⁷ German original: „Dies hier [ist] fast die beste Schule im Bezirk. Also im Bezirk es ist schwer eine gute Schule zu finden. Viele Schulen hier sind fast 90 per cent alles Ausländische [...] Da habe ich mich durchgesetzt und dann haben wir hier einen Platz bekommen.“

“actually I prefer that there is no Turkish teacher. [...] If there was a Turkish teacher, the Turkish children, [...] would react differently than if there were a German teacher... they might not accept him because both [teacher and children] are Turks”¹⁶⁸(FS/No. 3/P/8).

Responses to dominant cultures

Some responses from staff and parents to dominant cultures at the same time supported cultural dominance. Their reactions established further barriers to parent participation which have also been described before and now appear as secondary effects. For example, in response to the parents’ ascribed “need of support” in both schools, staff tried to “keep parents at bay” (Sue, EMAS teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/9) following their fear of an increased workload:

“I suppose if you opened up your classroom for the parents as well, you might end up teaching the parents instead of the children. Some of them are very needy themselves” (Sue; Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/9).

“... if I could adequately respond to the needs of the child I would already be happy... But, in addition, to respond to the problems of the mother I find very very difficult”¹⁶⁹ (Karin, teacher; FS/No. 2/S/13).

And in Mt E.’s, parents were perceived to find it difficult if they were seen as “in need of support”, as they found this was a devaluation of their own expertise.

“Some parents might not find it easy to get help” (John’s mother; Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/6).

“The parents don’t want the blame to be their parenting. If there’s a problem and you’re saying: ‘this is an issue and we need to do these things’, they feel like you’re saying: ‘you’re bad parents’” (Jody, teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/9).

Therefore, some reacted with increased opposition, or ignored the staff’s support provision in school, as for example Andrew, Markus’ TA, remarked earlier regarding Markus’ parents (Mt E.’s/No. 12/S/4ff.). Other parents withdrew more and more from the schools. This had also been noticed in FS, as two teachers indicated. They saw families with Turkish

¹⁶⁸ German original: „Also ich finde es eigentlich gut, dass hier kein türkischer Lehrer dabei ist. [...] Wenn jetzt ein türkischer Lehrer da wäre, [...] würden die türkischen Kinder irgendwie anders reagieren, als wenn ein deutscher Lehrer da wäre... sie würden ihn vielleicht nicht akzeptieren, da sie beide [Lehrer und Kinder] Türken sind.“

Sadik’s father’s statement refers to a very current discourse in the Berlin education system and nationally: the recruitment of teachers with a migrant background in schools in Germany as a response to ethnic diversity (Georgi, Ackermann and Karakas 2011).

¹⁶⁹ German original: „...wenn ich die Bedürftigkeiten des Kindes halbwegs befriedigen kann, dann wäre ich ja schon glücklich... Und dann noch auf die Problematik der Mutter eingehen, finde ich sehr sehr schwierig.“

backgrounds retreating more and more into their home cultures and rejecting the German culture (FS/Wk 3/36).

Some parents seemed to simply accept their limited participation:

“[if] they [the “German parents”] say: ‘ok, we have to do it like this and that’, and I think to myself: ‘maybe it would be better if we did it differently’, I don’t say this out loud. In most cases I join the majority [...] because if I would say something, I cannot imagine that the majority would say: ‘ok, Sadik’s father is right. Let’s do it his way.’ More than likely, nothing will be changed. Thus, as I’ve said, I rather say: ‘ok’, and stick to the majority”¹⁷⁰ (FS/No. 3/P/16).

In Mt E.’s, in response to difficulties parents had in accessing information about educational practice, they relied increasingly on their children, and considered contact with staff as necessary only if the child raised concern:

“...John tells me anyway: ‘oh, mum I did this today, we drew this today...’ As the child is not telling me anything is wrong and the child is happy, I think everything is ok” (John’s mother; Mt E.’s/No. 4/P/3 ff.).

“...I don’t really come to the school... because I’ve got no problems with him [her son]” (Angelica’s mother; Mt E.’s/No. 8/P/6).

Another strategy for accessing information was to ask other parents or friends to translate:

“... sometimes my friend explains it [the Newsletter and other school information] to me” (Mt E.’s/No. 4/P/2).

“...there are other Turkish parents, [...] my friends or someone else. [...] If I want to say something and I find it difficult to express myself I say: ‘ey, Serkan, can you say it for me in this way?’ [...] There is certainly someone present who can speak German pretty well and who can translate... I do it sometimes as well...”¹⁷¹(FS/No. 3/P/16ff.).

In FS, this way of bridging language differences was also officially recognised in the School Program (2006, p.7):

“due to our lack of teachers and pedagogues with Turkish as a native language, we rely on the support of parents, and others from the borough, to include the cultural background of this large number of children.”

¹⁷⁰ German original: „[Wenn] die sagen: ‚Ok, wir müssen das so und so machen‘ und dann denke ich mir ‚Naja, es wäre vielleicht besser, wenn wir es so und so machen sage ich das ja nicht. Also, ich schließe mich auch der Mehrheit meistens an [...] weil ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, dass wenn ich jetzt auch was sage, die Mehrheit sagen würde: ‚Ok, Sadik’s Vater hat recht. Machen wir das so.‘ Es wird bestimmt so bleiben, wie sie gesagt haben, und dann sage ich: ‚Ok‘, und halte dann mit der Mehrheit zusammen.“

¹⁷¹ German original: „... es gibt andere türkische Eltern, [...] meine Freunde oder so. [...] Wenn ich ’was sagen möchte und kann mich nicht richtig ausdrücken, dann sage ich: ‚Hier Serkan kannst du für mich das so sagen?‘ [...] Es ist bestimmt jemand da, der ganz gut deutsch kann und dann übersetzt... Ich selber mache das auch manchmal...“

Some staff interpreted the parents' limited engagement in education practice as a lack of acknowledgement of their professional expertise, and not as a result of the parents' responses to barriers they perceived to their participation:

“... parental involvement or lack of it, is frustrating. [...] when you're trying to do everything that you can for a child and the parents don't come on board and don't support what you're doing [...] ...parents that won't let you do what you know is professionally best for the child, is difficult” (Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/8 ff.).

All the responses from staff and parents, mentioned so far, did not challenge the dominance of cultures in the schools, but represented ways in which people coped with perceived insecurities and feelings of devaluation. They supported the persistence of cultural hierarchies and contexts in the schools that were alien to parents and decreased their participation even more.

However, there were a few responses, I particularly noticed from staff in Mt E.'s, with the potential to overcome these cultural hierarchies. For instance, Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, thought it necessary in order to support parent participation, to increase the staff's cultural diversity to match the parents' cohort:

“we need to be more positively recruiting and thinking about *where* we are putting our ads. [...] To me it's probably the biggest failing in this school that [...] we continue to just recruit from the same basis of staff and it's not good enough. We just advertise in the kind of publications that are read by white middle-class people. We need to advertise in publications, 'Black teacher's Professional Review' magazine or something. [...] You put the job adverts in certain professional magazines that's read by certain communities rather than just stick it in the 'Times Educational Supplement' every time“ (Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/25 f.).

Sue emphasised an approach to parents in person and individually, as opposed to applying formal structures that she recognised as excluding: “they [parents] want to feel welcome, want a specific invitation, not just in the school's Newsletter” (Mt E.'s/No. 9/S/14). When I was looking for interviewees, I experienced the success of personal approaches to parents myself. Only one parent responded to my invitation in the Newsletter, while the majority volunteered when I approached them in person – including those parents who staff had expected to be unwilling. Roberta's mother also confirmed that she became aware of the Family Learning courses when Sue approached her, and not through the advertisement in the Newsletter: “when there is a workshop, Sue comes to the gate and lets us know” (Mt E.'s/No. 7/P/1). John's mother stated her increased openness to engage in the school if she would be approached in person as well:

“... I know that I would help if I would be asked if I could come in for an hour and just sit and read. I'd say: 'yeah, ok. I'd do it'” (Mt E.'s/No. 8/P/18).

Previous accounts exemplified that, in contrast to Ulrich's view outlined earlier, the "social differentiation" (FS/No. 10/P/5) between parents and staff in FS did *not* "simply exist" (ibid.). It was promoted through roles, as structures for non-participation, developed in interactions, that were supported by dominant cultures in both schools.

SUMMARY: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

The degree of parent participation differed within, and also between, the schools. While there will always be differences between any two schools, as a result of individual influences, some seemed prompted by differences between the education systems and cultures in England and Germany. One apparent difference was the greater opportunity for parents to participate in FS, than in Mt E.'s, which corresponded to the structures established for parents at both schools. In FS, they were mainly dialogical and allocated to the third purpose, while in Mt E.'s, they followed the first purpose and were monological. However, in Mt E.'s, a few parents were employed as staff. Furthermore, in FS, contacts between parents and staff and amongst parents overall appeared to be more personal than in Mt E.'s. I found that the greater distance between staff and parents in the school in London was promoted by the greater rigidity of structures established for parent involvement and their location on whole-school level. This focus on the development of a school community in Mt E.'s meant to sacrifice closer contacts between staff and parents on class level, which were the main emphasis in FS (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006, p.26). I noticed that both these features, the greater rigidity and the notion of community, were a distinct feature of educational practice in schools in England, by comparison to schools I visited in Germany.

In both schools, I recognised the dominance of certain cultures and therefore the rejection of cultural diversity in the schools as the superordinate barrier to parent participation. In FS, the dominance of a German culture was made explicit, for example, through the distinction between a German and a "non-German" culture. While some parents and staff supported this cultural hierarchy, others emphasised the importance of reflecting the social reality of the borough in the school, and therefore argued for an equal balance between different cultures in the school (FS/Wk 3/30). For instance, as well as offering classes for 'German as an additional language', they asked for classes for 'Turkish as an additional language' for their children from other than Turkish backgrounds (FS/Wk 1/25). In contrast, in Mt E.'s, the dominance of an English culture was less apparent among the people in the school and the parents appeared to be a multicultural group. Maybe this was because of their lesser involvement and, therefore, greater anonymity in the school, but also the generally stronger sense of multiple cultures I perceived in the borough and across London, in comparison to Berlin, supported my impression.

Despite parents' limited participation in both schools, they inevitably influenced educational practices. This had been recognisable in the teachers' experienced expectations

from parents, especially in FS. Furthermore, it was shown in inconsistencies between the educational approaches applied by parents and staff, with potentially negative effects for the children, who might experience increased insecurity about which approach to follow. This was exemplified above, in Maggie's case, and correspondingly, by Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, who noticed:

“I think it [the inclusion of the children's home-cultures] does impact on children in their aspirations [...] You'd have more motivated learners” (Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/25 f.).

The dominance of educational approaches applied by staff promoted parents' mistrust towards educational practices, and disengagement. In effect, staff could feel devalued in their professional expertise and distance themselves from parents. This may well represent a vicious circle that can, however, be interrupted by a culture of mutual, equal respect. This was true in the cases of individualised contacts between parents and staff. In such equal interactions, staff experienced parents as helpful and supportive, and appreciated their individual contributions. These were lost in more hierarchical interactions, reinforcing the idea that dominant cultures limit recognition of the contributions that individuals from a variety of backgrounds can, and wish to, make to their children's education.

CHAPTER 6: VISITING TWO CLASSROOMS

Following on from the focus on parents in the former chapter, who were usually the first people I saw when I arrived at school in the mornings, my next experience of observing responses to diversity was gained in the classroom, during lesson time. This is at the centre of this chapter, especially looking at the participation of staff and children in a classroom in Mt E.'s and one in FS.

In the first two sections, two scenes, I describe '*A lesson in Apple Class*' in Mt E.'s, and '*A lesson in Eulen Class*' in FS. Occasionally, my experiences in the classes are complemented by further information I gathered in other contexts in the schools. Both lessons take place in the beginning of a school day and portray a typical lesson structure in each school. The third section, that is '*Exploring participation of children and staff in the classrooms*', will be an international analysis of the two scenes, with a focus on my two research themes, 'interactions' and 'roles', in order to answer my first and second research question. I conclude by identifying those characteristics of interactions and roles which promote excluding processes.

My illustrations will be based on accounts from staff and children and on my own observations from my fieldwork. While the scenes are intended, initially, to illustrate the perspectives of staff and children, in the subsequent analysis, I concentrate on my own interpretation of the practices outlined in the scenes.

A LESSON IN APPLE CLASS, MOUNT EPHRAIM'S SCHOOL

I arrived at 9:15 a.m. in the classroom of Apple Class, a year three class. The timetable noted the period between 9:00 and 9:30 a.m. was 'busy time'. It was immediately obvious why it was called 'busy time': the classroom was incredibly lively and buzzing. Pop music was playing and 23 children, all between seven and eight years old, had spread out across the classroom engaged in various kinds of activities. A vast amount of information and colours jumped out at me: signs hung on ropes across the room, some displaying numbers, others with "Good morning" in different languages. The 'Interactive Whiteboard' (IWB) presented a slideshow of pictures from the last class trip to the 'Tower of London', giving an idea of a current lesson topic. On the walls, two posters reminded the children about the rules they were supposed to follow, the 'Golden Rules' (see Box 22) and the 'Classroom Routines', which were stipulated in the school's Behaviour Policy (2007, p.2). A third one, the 'Lost Golden Minutes' chart, recorded who had already broken a rule and therefore lost minutes of 'Golden Time'. This was a free choice lesson time every Friday, very popular amongst the children. Another big sign asked the children: "have you reached your target", referring to the three Literacy and Numeracy targets displayed right beside the sign.

We are gentle. We don't hurt others.
We are kind and helpful. We don't hurt anybody's feelings.
We listen. We don't interrupt.
We are honest. We don't cover up the truth.
We work hard. We don't waste our own or others' time.
We look after property. We don't waste or damage things.

Box 22 'The Golden Rules'

Other wall displays outlined children's 'Classroom jobs' and who were 'Talk partners' in discussions in class.

In the back of the classroom, some children were drawing at a table. Joby, was gluing small pieces of different materials onto a sheet of paper, and Radek, another child, sat next to him cutting out shapes. As always, the materials and working equipment had been provided by the staff.

In the 'book corner', a few children were lying on pillows reading a book together. It was a cosy place, with carpet on the floor and two book shelves. Nearby, in the 'post office', Amira and Jada were writing postcards to friends in the class and to their families.

Four boys occupied the two computers. Two were working at them whilst the other two were watching.

Louise, the class teacher, was playing shopping with Serwa, Adanya and Lale: the children were estimating how much Louise would spend for her dinner and advising her on what dress to buy for her friend's wedding.

Through the classroom door I could see Carmen, the TA, standing in the corridor talking to Nadir's father. It was Nadir's eighth birthday and his father had brought a box of sweets and drinks for the class. Carmen was trying to explain to him why they could not accept the sweets in the class: "because we are a 'healthy school'" (Mt E.'s/Wk 5/29), she sounded rather doctrinaire by her reference to Mt E.'s Healthy School Policy. Only the fruit juice would be allowed, "as long as it was not fizzy" (ibid.), Carmen added. Nadir's father was looking confused and did not understand why he could not leave the rest for his son's birthday.

Once, Mel, another teacher, strongly criticised the rigid application of the Healthy School Policy in front of me as being unrealistic and opposed to her understanding of learning and teaching:

"being healthy doesn't mean that you never take a cake again for the rest of your life [...] Do we [adults] do that? ... that's not reality, that's not real life, not real life for them at home. It's ludicrous. It's like you are controlling them. We are not there to control them. We are there to educate them about what choices to make: if you eat this, this is a healthier way than eating all of this. [We are there] to inform them, to guide them and they make their own informed choices" (Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/11f.).

When Nadir's father had left, Carmen returned to the classroom. Louise had seen the two boys standing behind Erasto and Dalmar, watching their work at the computers: "do you not know what to do Sadun and Rayhan? Go and make yourselves busy", she ordered. Louise did not consider "observing someone's work" as an adequate "busy time" activity. All of the other children's activities noticeably related to one or more cross-curricular areas, prescribed by the statutory frameworks (DfES, 2007b), such as "Communication, Language and Literacy" or "Creative Development". They were acceptable to Louise.

Joby was asking Radek to pass him the blue scissors in a basket next to him on the shelf. Radek, who could hardly speak any English, looked puzzled. It was his second day in school in England, as his family had only recently emigrated from the Czech Republic. Joby repeated his request another time, using exactly the same wording, but Radek continued to look at him in confusion. Joby remained calm and waited patiently. Slowly Radek began to understand and passed a pair of yellow scissors across the table. This did not satisfy Joby, because he had asked for *blue* scissors, a piece of information Radek had not yet managed to translate. Joby formulated his request for Radek a third time, once more using exactly the

same wording but now placing a particular emphasis on the word 'blue'. Eventually, Radek worked out this specific information as well and got the exact pair of scissors. I was very impressed by Joby's perseverance, indicating his trust in Radek's capacity to understand, and his abilities as a teacher.

Meanwhile, Sadun and Rayhan had left the computers and joined Jaxson on the carpet, who was reading from his Home-School-Behaviour-Book, which was used between him, his parents and Louise. Rayhan asked him: "let me see the pictures where you have been a good boy and a bad boy" (Mt E.'s/Wk 4/10). Jaxson pointed to the happy and sad looking smileys which Louise had stuck on the book pages, indicating his behaviour during a day in relation to the Golden Rules. Jaxson had been categorised as having "special educational needs", because there was concern regarding his learning following his "challenging behaviour" towards staff and his parents, in school and at home. Every day, he had to read his parents' and Louise's feedback about him in the book, to improve his ability to control himself. Louise once explained to him: "you need to listen to me so that I can help you, ... and help you to learn" (Mt E.'s/Wk 5/11). Other children confirmed this as a major part of their learning in Mt E.'s, as for example Rayhan. When I asked him "what do you learn in school?", he answered: "listen to the teacher, sitting on the carpet and sitting nicely" (Mt E.'s/No. 5/Ch/1). Apparently, behaviour management, as stipulated in Mt E.'s Behaviour Policy (2007), was a central focus of educational practice here. In different ways, staff encouraged the children's "positive behaviour" (ibid., p.1) giving praise, tokens and punishments, like Jaxson's smileys, or the Lost Golden Minutes chart.

Suddenly, a girl at the table said to her neighbour, in a surprised tone of voice: "look at Markus" (Mt E.'s/Wk 11/6) and pointed over to him. Markus had moved with his special chair to the Daffodils-table and now sat next to Muthadi, who was helping him with a writing task. They seemingly enjoyed their interaction: Muthadi his teaching role and Markus his new "teacher".

The girl's surprise about this situation indicated that it was rare. Usually Markus was placed at Tulip-table, the table for children who worked on the lowest curriculum level in class. But during 'busy time' everyone could choose any place they liked, which in Apple Class usually resulted in single gender groups. Only Markus normally remained in his place, often surrounded by girls and Andrew, his personal assistant (PA) (Mt E.'s/Wk 12/20).

Markus had a statement of "special educational needs". Yet, no one knew more specific reasons for his difficulties, as Ron, the Inclusion Manager and Markus' lead professional once explained: "the only thing that is said about him is that he has PMLD (Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties)" (Mt E.'s/Wk 12/42). Andrew was constantly at Markus' side, having a fixed place next to him (Mt E.'s/Wk 11/5). Now that Muthadi had seemingly taken over his role, Andrew was not sure what to do. He briefly chatted to Carmen or Louise,

occasionally cleaned a shelf, but stopped regularly next to Muthadi and Markus to see whether his support was needed again.

Carmen had sat down at Crocus-table calling one child after another to check their reading homework. When she was satisfied, she put a stamp in the Reading Record Book in which the staff monitored each child's reading progress, according to official curricular reading levels (Mt E.'s/Wk 12/3). Usually the teacher chose the book for a child. Only in year six did I see children, reading at the highest attainment level, who could pick a book themselves from a selection.

Two children from year six, the 'Register Monitors' were entering Apple Class and passed Louise the register, who now required all the children to tidy up and to sit down on the carpet.

'CARPET TIME': BEGINNING THE LESSON WITH THE WHOLE CLASS

The carpet area, was a wide space in front of the IWB that was mainly used for activities with the whole class. Elsewhere, different table-groups offered opportunities for independent and small-group work. As usual, Louise sat in the front of the carpet and Carmen at the back, to support the children. "Who is ready to do some learning?" (Mt E.'s/Wk 3/24), Louise asked the children. Only Markus was not on the carpet. He had moved back to his place at Tulip-table with his back turned to the other children. He was working with Andrew on his book 'My school grounds', Markus' personal report about areas in the school, while Louise praised the other children for their tidying up: "thanks very much for tidying up! Excellent! One of the best tidying up in the school I have ever seen!" (Mt E.'s/Wk 3/15) She awarded the class with a marble. For a certain number of collected marbles the class could make a wish.

Chris was coming back from the toilet and put the sign 'I got permission from an adult' back on the door handle; all children in this class were required to carry this sign when they left the classroom. Other teachers did not apply this rule. Chris had just sat down on the carpet when Louise directed him to another spot: "why don't you sit over there closer to Carmen so she can help you?" (Mt E.'s/Wk 2/2) One could tell by the look on Chris' face that he was rather reluctant to change his place, but he got up and moved into the spot Louise suggested.

Through the open classroom doors one could hear Kirsten, the class teacher from Mango Class, the other year three class next door, beginning the children's registration, which Louise now did too. "Good morning Amira", she said waiting for the girl to respond. "Good morning Louise", Amira answered. Louise ticked her name and called the next child in the same way. Despite the repetitiveness of this procedure, during which Louise did not even

look at the children, it was noticeable that they all enjoyed being individually wished a good morning – a practice I had rarely seen in schools in Germany. But now Louise did look up: “that’s a lovely scarf you’re wearing Maggie, but it’s not part of the school uniform” (Mt E.’s/Wk 12/20). “But I’m cold” (ibid.), was Maggie’s justification for her slight individualisation of the school uniform. But Louise indicated there was no room for discussion, so Maggie took her scarf off.

After finishing the register, Louise handed it over to Muthadi and Maggie to take back to the office. This was their current Classroom job. In all classes, children were given a variety of jobs by the teachers, including responsibilities such as ensuring pens and glue sticks were working, watering plants, or tidying up different parts of the classroom (Mt E.’s/Wk 5/28). Only in Louise’s class did I see children acting as ‘Personal Assistants for the teacher and for the TA’. In year six, all children were ‘Monitors’. They had to monitor other children on selected occasions, which meant ensuring everyone followed the Golden Rules and specific ‘Routines’ that applied at each occasion.

Before Louise could start with the lesson topic, Braydon, a child from Lemon Class, a year below, suddenly walked into the classroom and up to Louise placing his head on her shoulder: “Braydon, what’s the matter” (Mt E.’s/Wk 5/14), Louise asked him in surprise. “Did you just want to say hello to Apple Class?” (Mt E.’s/Wk 5/14) Braydon nodded and the children on the carpet responded: “hello!” (ibid.) Louise was suspicious that he had left his classroom without a staff member’s permission, which would not be the first time for him, and decided to send him back. A lot of staff members had experienced difficulties with him, but Louise and Braydon had developed a close relationship over the past year when she was his class teacher.

After Braydon had left, Louise told the children what they would be doing today. The structure of the day and order of subjects was the same for all classes. First they would have Literacy until the assembly from 10:30 till 10:45 a.m.. After the morning break following the assembly, they would have Numeracy between 11:00 and 12:00 p.m.. Ikhlas, Chris, Maggie and Rayhan would then go into their daily support group with Carmen until lunch from 12:30 till 1:30 p.m.. During the afternoon, there would be Science, the ‘English as an additional language’ (EAL)-support group and another 15 minute break. The support groups were mostly led by the class teachers, while additional support arrangements in the mornings were primarily carried out by support staff or the EMAS- and ESOL teacher.

Markus was still working at his table with Andrew, and I wondered why he could not have joined the other children on the carpet. Louise introduced today’s Literacy topic, which was about how to write an instruction. It appeared disconnected from Markus’ task creating a book about the school grounds. The IWB, was displaying a written instruction for making a feather headdress, linked to the class’ current half-term topic ‘Native Americans’.

Louise asked the children: “ok. What is an instruction?” (Mt E.’s/Wk 13/2) Some of the children sighed, which Louise interpreted as an indication that they were struggling to respond: “why do you think it’s hard?” (Mt E.’s/Wk 10/4) “Because it looks hard” (ibid.), Camron answered. Louise emphasised the importance of a positive attitude: “you have to think: ‘I really wanna do this’!” (ibid.) She asked the children to read through the text and then answer the question together with their Talk partner. Like most classes in Key Stage Two, each child in Apple Class had a Talk partner, who Louise changed weekly. She tried to put children together who worked on the same curricular attainment level (Mt E.’s/Wk 10/41), because otherwise she assumed it would disadvantage those children working on a higher level:

“I try to roughly do similar levels... [...] I mean it would be great for the child that needed more support but not so great for the child who was giving the support” (Mt E.’s/No. 10/S/9).

Despite fixed Talk partners, some children were now talking in groups of three or four. Chris, Maggie and Amira had turned around to Carmen, integrating her into their discussion. Radek was sitting very close to Zora, who was the only other child from the Czech Republic in the class. Zora had been in the school for just over a year. Both were looking a little bit insecure and did not talk but watched the other children.

Camron asked Louise: “are we gonna make that head-dress?” – “No”, Louise replied. To me this put the actual purpose of reading this instruction into question. Louise added that they might make a few Native Indian dishes like ‘Molasses bread’ or ‘Wojape pudding’, if the children would work well today.

Recognising that Camron had started to tease his Talk partner, Louise told him to move over to Carmen, who would keep an eye on him, and to “sit properly”, which meant to sit cross-legged – a rule that applied to all children when they sat on the carpet. “I love the way you two work together” (Mt. E.’s/Wk 3/24), Louise praised Rayhan and Sadun.

By clapping a rhythm, which all the children repeated immediately, Louise got their attention and was now asking them for answers to her question. After having listened to some of the children’s ideas, she criticised them for not speaking in full sentences: “you should know this by now. These are basics. You are in year three now!” (Mt E.’s/Wk 8/28) While some deviations in children’s learning were acceptable, as indicated in the differentiation of curricular attainment levels, others apparently were not.

Camron had again stopped paying attention to Louise and was talking to Chris next to him. “Pull yourself together Camron, otherwise you will be sent upstairs. You really need to improve your behaviour” (Mt E.’s/Wk 10/13), Louise threatened Camron with the Key

Stage Two leader¹⁷², whose classroom was on the floor above. It was a procedure stipulated in Mt E's Behaviour Policy (2007) when a child continued to act against the school rules after the class teacher's intervention. Furthermore, Louise pointed Camron to the Lost Golden Minutes chart:

“fourteen minutes you have lost already this week. And the week has only started. Do you know what is gonna happen when you get another six minutes this week? Your mother has to come in the school. How will she react?” (Mt E.'s/Wk 10/15)

Ability based groupings

Louise began to explain to the children the tasks for their different table-groups. In all classes in Literacy and Numeracy, the teachers allocated the children to different groups following their identification of the children's curricular attainment levels. The teachers often referred to those groups as “Above Average” (AA), “Average” (A) and “Below Average” (BA). And sometimes, children who were categorised as having “special educational needs” formed another group with their own tasks. In Science, the children from different ability-based groups were usually mixed, referred to as “mixed ability groups”. In Apple Class, two out of the five table-groups worked at “Above Average” level and one at “Below Average” level. The majority of children were allocated to “Average” level. Apart from two children, all others remained in the same ability-based groups in both Numeracy and Literacy. The different group levels were meant to be hidden from children, as a year six teacher remarked: “they are not supposed to know that we group in higher and lower levels...” (Mt E.'s/Wk 9/25). For this reason, in all classes the groups had been given individual names, such as ‘Tulips’ or ‘Daffodils’ in Apple Class. For her own orientation, however, Louise labelled the different working sheets “AA” or “A” in small writing. Yet, in Apple Class some children told me that “AA” referred to the most difficult tasks (Mt E.'s/Wk 13/6). Their awareness of the different “attainment” groups Louise confirmed for children in the lower groups: “...they are aware that they are in different ability groups because they are less able” (Mt E.'s/No. 10/S/1).

Now, when Louise came to the task for children at the Tulip-table, who worked at “Below Average” level, she said to the children: “if you are at this table”, pointing to a table in the back of the classroom, “your task with Carmen is, if that's ok Carmen: just cut and stick” (Mt E.'s/Wk 3/24). Carmen nodded, seemingly used to being given rather spontaneous instructions. She usually worked with children at the Tulip-table, whilst Louise mostly supported the other table-groups, matching the distribution of responsibilities between

¹⁷² Key Stage leader = one class teacher, who presents her/his Key Stage on the Senior Management Team (SMT).

teacher and support staff in most other classes, and apparently common knowledge amongst the children as well:

“if you are in the lowest group you get help. [...] normally one of the TAs will come and help you” (Luana, a child in year six; Mt E.’s/No. 2/Ch/1).

Therefore, children who were categorised as “Average” or “Above Average”, such as Luana, generally received less support from the staff and had to work more often on their own, or rely on their peers, Luana explained (ibid.):

“in higher groups [categorised as “A” or “AA”] you are more independent and normally [if I need help] I ask the people in my group first.”

But this did not necessarily match the own appraisal of need, as Arjana, Luana’s classmate, indicated when she mentioned a need for 1:1 support in at least some subjects: “I think I only need it [1:1 support] for Numeracy” (Mt E.’s/No. 2/Ch/3). The rigid groupings also failed to respond to the individual differences between children, which Luana generally felt was beneficial for everyone’s learning, in contrast to Louise:

“I think I would prefer other people in the group. If you open up to different groups, you realise what other people know, and you can use their knowledge and sort of combine it with yours so you are learning more” (Luana; Mt E.’s/No. 2/Ch/1).

‘INDEPENDENT WORKING TIME’

“The children who feel sure about what to do, go and sit at your tables. The children who are not sure, stay on the carpet” (Mt E.’s/Wk 8/21), Louise announced. The children at Tulip-table, Carmen and three others got up. “I don’t really know what I am supposed to be doing now,” (Mt E.’s/Wk 6/15) Carmen said, and walked over to Louise to get some more information.

Suddenly, Kirsten, the class teacher from Mango Class, stuck her head through the door: “how did you get on with this” (Mt E.’s/Wk 6/22), she asked, referring to the lesson topic ‘writing an instruction’. Louise shook her head: “no, not very well” (ibid.). Kirsten indicated that she had the same experience in her class and concluded encouragingly: “well, it was a try” (ibid.). Then she disappeared, leaving Louise with a slight smile on her face. Louise turned back to the remaining children on the carpet to explain the task one more time. “I wished we did not have to do this” (Mt E.’s/Wk 3/29), she sighed quietly.

Afterwards she sent the children to their tables to write an instruction: “let’s have a great morning and get some marbles!” (ibid., p.29) Louise began to help the children at the Rose-table, before moving on to the other tables.

At Crocus-table, Jada was explaining to Zuwena how to include more time words in a written instruction, which Louise had shown her yesterday. Zuwena was very grateful to her friend and proud to challenge herself beyond the expectations of the teacher, and therefore also surpassing the achievements of many other children in the class. Sounding very excited and motivated she told me: “Ms! Ms! Jada is a teacher! She teaches me more time words!” (Mt E.’s/Wk 5/28)

Additional support arrangements outside the classroom

A woman came into the classroom and Andrew, who had been continuously working with Markus, got up and introduced her to Louise. She was Markus’ physiotherapist, who was picking him up for his weekly twenty-minutes session, which Andrew always joined, so he could continue the exercises with Markus during the week.

When they had gone, Louise continued her work with Karime. She was explaining to her how one could write an instruction, but acknowledged that there were also other ways: “I’m not saying you *have* to do it like that. It’s just how *I* would do it, how *my* brain works” (Mt E.’s/Wk 10/23).

Sue, the EMAS teacher, came into the classroom with two children from year two and year six to pick up Karime for the weekly bilingual reading group for children with English as additional language. Louise was not impressed that Karime would now be missing out on Literacy in class, and would fall even further behind, which Sue confirmed as a problem, despite the benefits of her support intervention:

“they [the children] are taken out of the class, they come out and have to go back in and perhaps don’t know where the children are in that lesson, they have to quickly catch up with the work in the class. The benefits [of the reading support] are that they pick up the reading really quickly. They have one-to-one or small group work and they can express themselves, have practice in talking and they can learn all the vocabulary” (Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/6).

To minimise the time the children missed out in class, she and Ron, the Inclusion Manager, had tried to vary the timing of the reading groups:

“Ron and I [...] juggle the reading groups around [...] so they [the children] are not missing the same lesson each day” (Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/5 ff.).

Other additional support arrangements had already been scheduled during assembly time between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m., which was considered less important than taking part in a Numeracy or Literacy lesson in class.

Sue thought that another reason why the children missed out on lesson content was the limited collaboration between her and the staff in class, the class teachers and support staff:

“I don’t get much [information about the children] actually. The teacher tells me which language they speak and [...] just say that they [the children] are beginners or whatever... And obviously [I get] the admission forms in the office. [...] The class teachers I’m meeting individually but not regularly [and] I don’t really work with the TAs.” (Mt E.’s/No. 9/S/5ff.).

Correspondingly, some teachers knew little about Sue’s support provision: “I don’t really know what’s going on in the EMAS lessons” (Kirsten; Mt E.’s/Wk 10/27). Moreover, this limited contact led some teachers to question the benefits of Sue’s reading groups, which Sue sensed as a devaluation of her work. Neither the inconsistent support provision, nor the staff’s critical views about Sue’s work, had ever been discussed openly, and both were detrimental to the children’s education (Mt E.’s/Wk 10/25).

THE END OF THE FIRST LESSON

It was nearly 10:15 a.m. and Louise was telling the children to tidy up and come back to the carpet with their work. Karime had returned from the bilingual reading group and Markus had returned from his physiotherapy and this time joined the class on the carpet.

When all the children were seated, Louise asked some of them to present their work. Ikhlas came to the front and read out his instruction. When he was finished, the children gave him a clap and Louise said that she was particularly impressed with his tidy writing today, as he usually struggled with his handwriting. Next, Louise wanted Rayhan and Sadun to present their work to the class, but they both hesitated. “Boys, you have to start speaking at some point and I don’t want to have to make you” (Mt E.’s/Wk 8/9), Louise responded. Other children had expressed their insecurities about speaking in front of the class as well. For example, Arjana explained her fear of being mocked:

“[in] carpet sessions I feel scared to say something because I’m scared that if I go wrong they will all like ‘Oh god you got that wrong, that was the easiest question’” (Mt E.’s/No. 2/Ch/2).

All three boys received stickers from Louise who was now, rather sarcastically, asking Carmen: “who do you think did *not* make an effort? Let’s do some naming and shaming” (Mt E.’s/Wk 13/8). Although she had only worked with the children at Tulip-table, Carmen picked Camron, who had been working at Daffodils-table. He wanted to say something in his defence, but Louise silenced him promptly: “we don’t answer back if you don’t want to lose more Minutes” (ibid.). In the end most children got a sticker, and to all the rest Louise explained that if they did better next time they would get a sticker, too (Mt E.’s/Wk 6/17).

During assembly, and in the following Numeracy lesson, the children would be alone with Carmen, Louise told them, because she had a meeting with Kirsten, her year group partner, about the children’s learning progress (ibid.). Then she required Apple Class to line

up, alternating boy and girl, to go to assembly; with Carmen in the front, the children left the classroom.

A LESSON IN EULEN CLASS, FRANZ-SKARBINA-SCHOOL

It was 8:50 a.m. and most children from Eulen Class had arrived in the classroom. As with most classes in year one to year three, Eulen Class was a vertical-year-group, meaning that it included children from year one to three and covered an age range between five and eight. For most children, school usually started in the second lesson. Only some had additional support arrangements, such as ‘German as an additional language’, once or twice a week in the first lesson at 8:00 a.m..

In the classroom, children were sitting at their tables chatting about their weekends or their homework. Imran, Gökan, Hamid, Cahil and Rashid exchanged football stickers and were deeply engaged in discussion while Ben stood next to them watching.

A few children were still outside the classroom, putting their slippers on and their jackets on the coat hanger with their name. Margaret, the teacher for special pedagogy, began to make a circle in front of the blackboard. This was not easy because of the limited space, due to the many shelves in the room filled with learning materials, some sorted by year group. On one of the shelves sat a little owl, the class mascot, enthroned above everyone.

The walls and windows gave an impression of the children’s activities: on one wall pictures the children drew in their last art lesson were hung up, and coloured paper flowers, they had also made, were stuck on the windows. Above the pictures, the teachers had put a line with the twelve months and every child’s birthday. Next to the classroom door on the wall, was a list with the children’s ‘Classroom jobs’. As in the other classes, there were a ‘milk-job’, which meant that every morning someone had to get the milk from the kitchen that some children had ordered for breakfast, a ‘hand out’-job and a few tidying up jobs, such as the ‘books’-job and ‘games’-job¹⁷³ (FS/Wk 4/3). Unique to Eulen Class was the ‘Nabil’-job, which was about “looking after him [Nabil] a little bit or joining him in the playground during break times,”¹⁷⁴ (FS/Wk 5/1), as Karin occasionally reminded the children. Nabil was a child in class. More and more children were squeezing into the circle. Karin, the class teacher, who until now had been talking to a mother in the corridor, came into the room as well, and closed the classroom door behind her. At 9:00 a.m., the official lesson starting time, 21 children, Margaret and Karin were sitting in the circle.

Just as Karin wanted to begin, the classroom door opened again and Paul came in, Nabil’s School Helper, pushing Nabil in his wheelchair. Nabil was often a little late, particularly since he and his parents had moved approximately three kilometres away from the school. The taxi, that brought him to school every morning, often struggled to be on time.

¹⁷³ German original: „Kakao-Amt“, „Bücher“, „Spiele“, „Austeilamt“

¹⁷⁴ German original: „...ein bisschen auf ihn aufpassen, ihn in die Pause begleiten.“

It took a while for Paul to find a space in the circle where he could sit next to Nabil, preferably not near Kevin, who often teased Nabil.

IN THE DAILY MORNING CIRCLE

Like every other morning, Karin announced the day and the date and wrote it in one corner of the blackboard. The names of two boys from the class, Farreq and Kevin, were on the blackboard with two sad faces drawn next to them. Karin removed a photograph of Amina, a girl in the class. She had not been in class yesterday, hence her picture on the blackboard, but today only Farreq and Malte seemed to be absent.

On the bottom of the blackboard Karin had written today's timetable, drawn in words and pictures, especially for those children who were struggling to read German. The timetable gave information about the lesson subjects and break times. It also distinguished whole class sessions, possibly with differentiated tasks for the children, from sessions in which the class was divided into different groups, mostly by year group, and taught by different teachers.

When Karin, who read out the timetable, got to the fourth lesson that was Arts, Ron immediately raised his hand: "no, we have got Science in the fourth lesson!" (FS/Wk 4/2) Karin explained that Judith, the deputy class teacher and Science teacher, had to do supply teaching in another class today, hence Karin would do Arts with them.

Ron's questioning of the teachers' lesson plan was directly opposed to how Ben, a year three child, felt the role of a pupil in Eulen Class should be: "...they [the pupils] are actually supposed to pay attention and to follow the rules"¹⁷⁵ (FS/No. 4/Ch/4). It was surprising to hear this view expressed by a year three child, as, by law, children from this year group and above were meant to be given an increased say in school processes through class representatives, who represented their views on the school's pupil committee (SenBWF 2004, p.80ff.). Ben was seemingly unaware of the more participatory role his year group should have. In year four, there were class representatives. But there was some confusion about their actual role highlighted in the differences between the official position in the education law and the description of Inga, a child in year four in FS. The law allocated the task to class representatives to represent the interests of children in their class within the school and in front of the governing body (SenBWF, 2004, p.80). Inga described their role slightly different:

¹⁷⁵ German original: „Also, die [Schüler/innen] sollen eigentlich ganz gut aufpassen und sich ganz gut an die Regeln halten.“

“once a year, in year four till six, two children are elected, who are supposed to solve the problems between teachers and children. Those children are called class representatives” (FS/Doc.1).

Now the classroom door opened and Farreq walked in. After he had left his school bag at his table, he tried to find a place in the circle, preferably amongst a particular group of boys sitting at one end. They all had Turkish backgrounds and spoke Turkish as their home-language. Most children in the circle sat next to others with whom they shared some obvious characteristics. For example, nearly all girls were sitting next to one another; Ron, Jan and Linus formed another group, three of the five boys in the class without a migrant background and in the same year-group; Layla and Jan were also in the same year-group and since Karin had placed them at the same table in class next to each other, they had developed a friendship. Only Kevin did not indicate any preference where he sat down, nor did he seem to be in any group. He sat between the girls’ group and Paul, Nabil’s School Helper.

Farreq had still not found a space, so Margaret pointed out a gap between Emma and Siham. All three children looked at each other with slightly worried expressions, which Margaret seemed to notice, and commented: “you have to be able to get on with someone you do not like as much as others. We are one team here!”¹⁷⁶ (Margaret; FS/Wk 10/43)

Class-organisation: class-trips and Classroom jobs

“Now..., I won’t take with me to the theatre tomorrow...”(FS/Wk 4/42), before Karin could continue, Kevin finished the sentence for her, answering expectantly: “Kevin!”¹⁷⁷ (ibid.) Karin ignored him and began to name those children who had not paid for the class trip to the theatre tomorrow.

Every Monday, the children’s Classroom jobs were re-allocated. Two children shared one job, which they could pick from the list on the wall. The only child who never got to choose a Classroom job was Nabil. He *was* the job. Karin read out one job after the other. When she asked who would like to do the ‘Nabil’-job none of the children raised their hands. This challenged Paul’s perception of the popularity of the ‘Nabil’-job:

“when they distribute the ‘Nabil’-job on Mondays [...] that always works very well and they [the children] are all very sympathetic towards him”¹⁷⁸ (FS/No. 13/S/5).

Eventually, after Karin had explained again what responsibilities the job entailed, Faaria and Leo said they would do it.

¹⁷⁶ German original: „Man muss auch mit jemandem auskommen, den man nicht so gut leiden kann. Wir sind hier eine Mannschaft!“

¹⁷⁷ German original: „Ich nehme morgen nicht mit ins Theater...“ – „Kevin!“

¹⁷⁸ German original: „...wenn der Nabil-Dienst Montags gewählt wird [...] das klappt immer sehr prima und die sind ihm immer schon alle sehr wohl gesonnen muss man so sagen.“

Listening to children

After all the jobs had been distributed, the children got the opportunity to tell the class about their experiences at the weekend and say anything else they thought relevant – a routine which always took place at first Morning Circle after the weekend.

Many children raised their hands, and one after the other described their weekend. Kevin continuously interrupted, and after giving him a few warnings, Karin said:

“would you like to go back and sit at your table? Can you be quieter there? You are disturbing a lot of children in the circle at the moment”¹⁷⁹ (FS/Wk 4/3).

Kevin answered that other children were disturbing, too. “No! You are the *only* one, who is disturbing”¹⁸⁰ (FS/Wk 5/42), Paul said, abruptly joining the conversation and sounding as annoyed with Kevin as Karin. But in contrast to her, by emphasising that Kevin was the “*only* one” he separated him from all the other children and it was unclear whether Karin welcomed this emphasis. Kevin was now facing the combined anger of all three adults: Karin, Paul and Margaret.

For the next activity Karin got out a box which contained the names of all the children in the class and picked one with eyes closed: Kevin’s. Now, all children were asked to think about something nice to say about him. Two children raised their hands and Karin pointed out that this was not a lot in comparison to other children: “Kevin, I would love it if next time there could, perhaps, be more children who can say something nice about you”¹⁸¹(FS/Wk 4/3). By highlighting Kevin’s apparent unpopularity in the class, she reversed a main aim of the exercise, which was to raise a child’s self-confidence, by seeking *positive* feedback from others.

Next, Karin wanted to talk with the children about Malte, a boy in the class, who she had sent to the school’s kitchen with Maggie, the pedagogue, for this lesson. She wanted to prevent him from feeling uncomfortable and possibly “causing trouble again”¹⁸² (FS/Wk 4/42). Usually, during music lessons, Maggie or another member of staff took Malte elsewhere, because “he does not like music”¹⁸³(FS/Wk 4/11), Karin explained,

¹⁷⁹ German original: „Willst du dich an deinen Platz setzen? Kannst du dort ruhiger sein? Du störst gerade viele Kinder im Kreis.”

¹⁸⁰ German original: „Nein! Du bist der Einzige, der stört!“

¹⁸¹ German original: „Kevin, ich würde mir wünschen, dass nächstes Mal vielleicht mehr Kinder ’was nettes zu dir sagen können.“

¹⁸² German original: „...wieder Ärger gemacht.“

¹⁸³ German original: „Er mag Musikunterricht nicht.“

“he freaks out [in those lessons]. [...] When I sent him into the kitchen he is like sugar. That’s what I would like to do with him most. That’s like therapy”¹⁸⁴ (FS/Wk 4/11; FS/Wk 6/18).

But the increasing pressures from curricular requirements did not allow her to individualise her educational practice and provide an environment which she regarded as more adequate for Malte. Only when it seemed inevitable that keeping him in the classroom would create disturbance for the other children, Karin ignored the curricular attainment targets for Malte and sent him out of class, usually into the school’s kitchen or the school garden (FS/Wk 4/16). In the day-care centre, where pressures from statutory attainment targets did not exist, the pedagogues reported fewer difficulties with him than in Karin’s class, and also Malte apparently enjoyed it there. Karin noticed this, sounding a little jealous: “*they* [the pedagogues] *can* leave him to it”¹⁸⁵ (FS/Wk 4/16), while for her the two main questions had to be “how do I get him to work” and “how do I prevent him from disturbing other children’s learning?”¹⁸⁶ (FS/Wk 4/16)

Karin began the conversation about Malte by asking the children whether they knew why his name had not been written on the blackboard next to Farreq’s and Kevin’s. Last week all three children had left the school grounds without permission from a member of staff. Without giving the children any time to respond, she immediately answered the question herself: “because Malte is not how (other) children of his age should be, other rules apply to him”¹⁸⁷ (FS/Wk 4/42). She seemed to recognise “other children of his age” as a less diverse but rather “homogeneous” group. This was supposed to justify that rules applying to them, did not apply to Malte. Over time Karin had received many comments from children which indicated that they felt unfairly treated: “Why am I not allowed? Malte is allowed to do it, too!”¹⁸⁸ (FS/Wk 4/15) Ben, Farreq and Emma confirmed Karin’s perception of unfair treatment, but not only in regards to Malte:

“some, [...] the favourite children, are always treated incredibly nice [by the teachers] and others are always shouted at: Kevin, Farreq...”¹⁸⁹ (FS/No. 4/Ch/3).

¹⁸⁴ German original: „Er geht dann über Tische und Bänke. [...] Wenn ich den in die Schulküche schicke, dann ist er Zucker. Das würde ich am liebsten immer mit ihm machen. Das ist wie Therapie.“

¹⁸⁵ German original: „Die [die Mitarbeiter/innen im Hort] können ihn ja auch lassen.“

¹⁸⁶ German original: „Wie kriege ich ihn zum Arbeiten?“ „Wie verhindere ich, dass er die anderen Kinder vom Lernen abhält?“

¹⁸⁷ German original: „Weil Malte nicht so ist, wie (andere) Kinder in dem Alter schon sein sollten, gelten für ihn andere Regeln.“

¹⁸⁸ German original: „Wieso darf ich das nicht? Malte macht das aber auch!“

¹⁸⁹ German original: „Manche, [...] so ein paar Lieblingskinder, werden immer total nett behandelt und andere werden immer total angeschrien: Kevin, Farreq.“

Now, Karin was asking the children for suggestions on how to support Malte and make him feel more accepted. Layla immediately had an idea: “the teachers should say ‘please’ to him more often”¹⁹⁰ (FS/Wk 4/43). Karin quickly turned this suggestion down: “the teachers are already doing this and are always very careful and sensitive with him”¹⁹¹ (FS/Wk 4/42). Again she came up with the solution herself, demanding of the children that they should try to be more patient and understanding with him, and accept the staff’s different responses to Malte and themselves.

INDEPENDENT WORK AND VERTICAL-YEAR-GROUP LEARNING

Karin ended the conversation about Malte and asked the children to go back to their tables. The children sat in their fixed table-groups in the classroom assigned by the teachers. They were different from the groups the children formed in the circle and based on similar year groups. Only individual children were seated at a table with children from another year group.

Every Monday, the children received the new ‘Week’s Working Plan’ from Margaret and Karin. The Plan outlined five different tasks, covering different curricular areas, such as Numeracy, Literacy, PE, and Arts, and prescribed whether the children should work alone, in pairs or in a group. The children were free to choose the order of the tasks and usually worked on the Plan one lesson per day. Since Karin was teaching in a vertical-year-group class she felt it was difficult to sufficiently differentiate tasks for the children. This contradicted the original intention underlying vertical-year-group classes, which was to increase possibilities for individualised and thus differentiated learning and teaching. As a result, Karin mostly stuck with the traditional concept of single-year-group teaching:

“basically [...] the way I differentiate is year 1, year 2, year 3. Those who are good in Numeracy in year 1, I can occasionally include in year 2, and those who are bad in year 3 I can include in year 2 as well. [...] I’ve got the feeling that such differentiation, which I could do in the past [in single-year-group classes], I cannot do anymore. [...] When I have a homogeneous class, I have, say, one big string of tasks, which I can then differentiate for two or three children who need it: for children who are less capable for one reason or another and for children who are good”¹⁹² (FS/No. 2/S/5).

¹⁹⁰ German original: „Die Lehrer könnten zu ihm mehr bitte sagen.“

¹⁹¹ German original: „Die Lehrer machen das schon manchmal und sind immer sehr vorsichtig mit ihm.“

¹⁹² German original: “Ich habe [...] das Gefühl meine Differenzierung ist erste Klasse, zweite Klasse, dritte Klasse. Wer gut ist und ist in Mathe in Jahrgang 1, den kann ich mal ansatzweise in Jahrgang 2 mit dazu nehmen und wer schlecht ist in Jahrgang 3, den kann ich auch in Jahrgang 2 mit dazu nehmen. [...] ich habe das Gefühl diese Differenzierung, die ich früher machen konnte [in homogenen Lerngruppen] gelingt mir nicht mehr. [...] wenn ich eine homogene Klasse habe, hab’ ich, ich sag’ mal, im Großen so ’nen Aufgabenstrang, -komplex, und kann dann noch zwei, drei

Karin began to explain the Literacy task in the plan to the children, as she was responsible for Literacy. Margaret and Karin shared responsibility for Numeracy and Judith did Science. The teachers planned and prepared all other subjects together in weekly meetings. Paul did not attend those meetings, nor was he involved in any lesson planning, although he was in the classroom as much as the teachers. His only focus was on Nabil: "I am really only responsible for Nabil"¹⁹³ (FS/No. 13/S/12). The teachers usually gave him the year one tasks for Nabil, which Paul adapted if necessary.

Karin had to select two children to work at the two computers. She stated as a condition: "I only choose children who are good at following rules"¹⁹⁴ (FS/Wk 4/11). I never saw any rules displayed anywhere in the school, or in the classrooms. But apparently there were rules applying to everyone across the whole school, formulated by the staff and children of the after-school-club 'School assembly' and passed by all children and staff in a school assembly. Additionally, there were class rules that differed between classes: for example, the use of specific hand signs in class conversations, or short term rules such as not to exchange football stickers in the classroom.

A child was asked to play the gong, indicating the start of the 'Quiet-time', an independent working time. Some children were putting their drinks on their tables, which was forbidden in other classrooms, and then took their working equipment, such as pencil cases and scissors, out of their bags. Others had got up and walked over to the shelves to get books, work sheets or their personal folders. At a table in the middle of the room, were the new materials for this Week's Working Plan provided. They were sorted by year groups, as were the materials on the shelves, to help the children to complete their tasks. Some children were engaging in Numeracy tasks, while others had chosen to read. The majority was obviously capable of organising their work independently. Only a few children seemed slightly unsure about what they were supposed to do and waited for Karin to help them.

Margaret took the five year three children outside in the corridor to do some Numeracy work with them, in preparation for the VERA, the national comparative assessment tests for year three students. Here they would not disturb the other children in the class. The corridor was frequently used as a place to work by all classes on this floor. Often children chose to come here because they found it too noisy in the classroom, or because they had been taken out by a member of staff for one-to-one support or small group work.

Differenzierungen 'reingeben für die Kinder, die das brauchen: Kinder, die schwach sind aus dem einen oder aus dem anderen Grund und für die Kinder, die gut sind...."

¹⁹³ German original: „Ich bin ja wirklich nur für Nabil zuständig.“

¹⁹⁴ German original: „Ich nehme nur Kinder dran, die sich gut an Regeln halten können.“

When Margaret and the year three children had left, Karin commented sarcastically: “this is *vertical-year-group* learning”¹⁹⁵ (FS/Wk 5/7 ff.), recognising that not only her, but also the government applied vertical-year-group learning inconsistently and hold on to single-year-groupings for the national assessments.

Supporting each other’s learning

“If you have got questions come to an adult and we will be happy to help you”¹⁹⁶ (FS/Wk 4/8), Karin announced. In other vertical-year-group classes, children were expected to first ask another child before they could seek help from an adult, because according to another teacher, Kristina, “lessons work best when children learn from children”¹⁹⁷ (FS/No. 5/S/1). She regarded this opportunity for *all* children to help each other as a particular advantage of vertically grouped classes:

“...helping each other, not always being the one [child] who is helped but at some being the one who is *giving* help as well, [...] that’s a fundamental point [in vertical-year-group classes]. And in an age-homogeneous group, in 95 per cent of the cases it is the same children who are always asked for help”¹⁹⁸ (FS/No. 5/S/9).

Karin recognised the strengths of children’s interactions for their learning as well, and especially acknowledged their diversity:

“[...] the children with their different capabilities motivate others to an extent, in regard to specific interests they have, or as a model for social behaviour or so”¹⁹⁹ (FS/No. 2/S/16 f.).

Yet, her practice did little to support this approach “because I simply feel overburdened with it [the vertical-year-group approach]”²⁰⁰ (FS/No. 2/S/2). Only recently she, Judith and Margaret changed the children’s vertical-year-group tables back into single-year-group tables, and most support between children in the class was one-sided, with children in year three helping younger ones. While Emma, a child in year two, greatly appreciated the help from older children, Ben, who was in year three, was critical about his role as “helper”:

¹⁹⁵ German original: „Das ist jahrgangsübergreifendes Lernen.“

¹⁹⁶ German original: „Wenn ihr Fragen habt, kommt auf ‘nen Erwachsenen zu, wir helfen euch gern.“

¹⁹⁷ German original: „...am besten finde ich dann den Unterricht, wenn Kinder von Kindern lernen.“

¹⁹⁸ German original: „Und dieses sich gegenseitige Helfen und nicht immer nur derjenige sein, dem geholfen wird, sondern auch irgendwann derjenige, der helfen kann, [...] das ist ein ganz wesentlicher Aspekt. Und in ‘ner altershomogenen Gruppe werden immer die gleichen Kinder gefragt zu 95 Prozent.“

¹⁹⁹ German original: „[...] die Kinder mit ihren unterschiedlichen Fähigkeiten ziehen ja andere auch so ein Stück mit bei bestimmten Interessen, die sie haben, oder als Vorbild für soziales Verhalten oder so.“

²⁰⁰ German original: „... weil ich mich damit einfach überfordert fühle.“

“I like [about vertical-year-group learning] that the children in year three are helping me”²⁰¹ (Emma; FS/No. 4/Ch/9).

“I don’t like it that you cannot really work on your own because there are always the year-one-children hanging on your neck, asking what they are supposed to do, etc., before you can start doing your own thing. [...] I do like that you are sometimes together with them, but we could be separate a bit more often”²⁰² (Ben; FS/No. 4/Ch/8 ff.).

Halimah had to move to a year two table because the teachers found her chatting too much with her neighbour. Now, she was the only year one child at this table. Currently she was getting help from her new neighbour Hamid, which did not seem to please Karin. “Is Halimah not able to do it on her own”²⁰³ (FS/Wk 4/5), she asked when she passed their table. Halimah shook her head. Karin looked a bit suspicious whether or not she should believe Halimah, or think the children used the opportunity to “cheat”. But she decided not to interfere (FS/Wk 5/54 ff.).

Kristina, the deputy class teacher in Elephant Class, had a different perspective to Karin’s: “I’ve never seen children cheating. [Sometimes] they simply use the materials in a different way”²⁰⁴ (FS/No. 5/S/17). What Karin considered as “cheating”, Kristina regarded as part of the children’s individual ways of learning that might differ from teachers’ expectations.

Nabil

Nabil was sitting at a year one table together with Layla and Jan. Next to him sat Paul, his School Helper. Nabil was categorised as being in need of “special pedagogic support” in the area of “cognitive development” (SoPädVO, 2005, p.7), and therefore to be taught as “target differentiated”²⁰⁵. This meant that his education in school followed a different curricular framework to the standard curriculum for primary schools, which also exempted him from statutory requirements like the national assessment tests (SenBWF, 2004, p.15). He was working on a year one Week’s Working Plan, although he had already been in school for three years.

Nabil had a special position in class, which Paul saw as mainly caused by his disability:

²⁰¹ German original: „Ich mag [am jahrgangsübergreifenden Lernen], dass die Kinder im dritten Jahrgang mir helfen.“

²⁰² German original: „Ich finde ein bisschen blöd, dass man da nicht richtig alleine arbeiten kann, weil einem dauernd Erstklässler am Hals hängen, die einen fragen, was man da machen soll und so,... bevor man erst seinen Kram machen kann. Ich finde es auch gut, dass man manchmal mit denen zusammen ist. [...] Aber es könnte noch ein bisschen öfter getrennt sein.“

²⁰³ German original: „Kann Halimah das nicht alleine?“

²⁰⁴ German original: „Also ich habe es [das Schummeln] noch nie gesehen bei Kindern. [Manchmal] haben sie diese Materialien halt anders verwendet.“

²⁰⁵ German original: „ziendifferent“

“you need to support Nabil 1:1 because he is severely physically and mentally disabled. You cannot leave him alone, except maybe in the playground, when he is with the ‘Nabil’-job children who look after him. And thus he has got a special position, and you can do a lot of things which the others are not allowed to do. For example, the other children are allowed to have breakfast for ten minutes. Nabil can have his breakfast for as long as he likes. I can take him outside the class if I think: ‘this is too much for him’, or ‘this is not doing him any good’”²⁰⁶ (FS/No. 13/S/2 ff.).

But other times he recognised Nabil’s different position as a result of external circumstances. For instance, he could not attend his class’ weekly swimming lesson because his wheelchair did not fit in the bus that brought the children to the swimming pool: “now he misses swimming, because he cannot enter the bus”²⁰⁷ (Paul; FS/No. 13/S/9).

At the moment, all children at Nabil’s table were working on their own and occasionally asking a teacher, Paul, or each other, for help. They never asked Nabil, nor did he ask them. He first asked Paul. This situation did not correspond with Paul’s description of Nabil:

“he is a very social person. He likes to share. [...] There are, for example, other children who approach him and ask whether they could borrow his rubber or a pen or something like that and Nabil usually says: ‘yes’”²⁰⁸ (FS/No. 13/6).

According to Paul, the reason why Nabil rarely worked together with other children during lessons was “less that he doesn’t want it than that he can’t do it”²⁰⁹ (FS/No. 13/5 ff.). And he specified:

“Nabil cannot work that much and he is also not as quick as the other children. To a limited extent it [working with other children] is possible, but even they [the children from year one] have sometimes got ahead of him”²¹⁰ (ibid.).

THE END OF THE LESSON: TABLE-GROUP AWARDS

It was 9:35 a.m. and the end of the lesson. Margaret was coming back from the corridor with the year three children and the teachers asked everyone to tidy up. When the children had

²⁰⁶ German original: „Man muss Nabil wirklich 1:1 zur Seite stehen, dadurch das er so schwer körperlich und geistig behindert ist. Man kann ihn nicht alleine lassen, vielleicht auf’m Schulhof, wenn da so’n Dienst ist, der ihn dann betreut noch. Von daher hat er eh ’ne Sonderposition und man kann viele Sachen machen, die die anderen nicht machen dürfen. Das fängt z.B. an, die anderen Kinder dürfen zehn Minuten frühstücken, Nabil kann so lange frühstücken wie er will. Ich kann ihn aus dem Unterricht rausnehmen, wenn ich denke: ‚So, das überfordert ihn jetzt‘, oder ‚das tut ihm nicht gut‘.“

²⁰⁷ German original: “Jetzt fällt das Schwimmen weg, weil er kommt nicht in den Bus rein.“

²⁰⁸ German original: „Er ist ein sehr sozialer Mensch. Er teilt gerne. [...] Da kommen z.B. andere Kinder und fragen ihn, ob sie mal das Radiergummi ausleihen dürfen oder einen Stift oder so und Nabil sagt fast immer: ‚Ja gerne‘.“

²⁰⁹ German original: „...weniger, dass er das nicht will, als dass er das nicht kann.“

²¹⁰ German original: „Nabil kann nicht so viel arbeiten und er ist auch nicht so schnell wie die anderen Kinder. [...] Bedingt geht das [Arbeiten mit anderen Kindern], aber selbst die [Kinder aus dem ersten Jahrgang] haben ihn manchmal schon überholt.“

returned to their tables, Karin praised them: “I have to say, today it worked very well again, with your discipline”²¹¹ (FS/Wk 7/22). Next, she wanted to award table-group points to the table where the children had worked most quietly today. “This table over here was actually pretty quiet. Only Kevin caused a disturbance”²¹² (FS/Wk 4/6), she said, giving Kevin a critical glance. Eventually she decided to give the points to Layla, Jan and Nabil.

Now it was breakfast time, a 10-minutes break between the second and third lesson, during which the children could eat what they had brought from home. Karin allowed the children to get their breakfast out of their bags. Most children would finish school today at 12:20 p.m., at the end of the fifth lesson, and the earliest finishing time for the school day. A few children would have additional support groups until 1:35 p.m., and others would stay until late afternoon in the day-care centre, or because they attended after-school clubs.

²¹¹ German original: „Ich muss sagen, es hat heute ’mal wieder wunderbar geklappt mit der Disziplin.“

²¹² German original: „Der Tisch hier war ziemlich leise. Nur Kevin hat gestört.“

EXPLORING PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND STAFF IN THE CLASSROOMS

The two classroom scenes illustrated different perspectives on practice in Mt E.'s and FS. Lessons were a main place to reveal responses to diversity forming the biggest part of children's and staff's school days. In this section I analyse and compare responses to the perceived diversity of children and staff in the classrooms another time looking at my two research themes 'roles', as structures for their participation, and 'interactions', as influences on those structures. However, according to the main focus of this thesis on staff, the interactions amongst children will only receive attention to the extent to which they were influenced by staff.

Firstly, I explore the two research themes separately. This includes a description of roles and interactions in the classrooms, and influences on the participation of adults and children. Thereby, my international perspective reveals several differences within structures as well as practices across the schools. In the conclusion of this section the two research themes will be merged, focussing on predominant responses to diversity in the classrooms.

“TEAMS” IN THE CLASSROOMS

“Because of the good teamwork [...] I feel very welcome and valued here [in the school], because I know that I can ask anyone, if I need help, and the one who has got time or could help me wouldn't say: 'no'”²¹³ (Kristina, teacher; FS/No. 5/S/10).

“It's the atmosphere of the teachers and all staff. And it's the relationship they have with the children. I think that's what makes the school. [...] It's such a welcoming place” (Lynn, TA; Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/7).

These two statements exemplify that in both schools interactions were considered as foundations for the participation of staff and children as well as for educational practice. They appeared to vary with individuals, irrespective of standardised arrangements, such as fixed staff teams, prescribed meetings or children's table-groups. In the following sections I will compare interactions of staff and children, their causes and their effects on individual participation.

²¹³ German original: „Durch die gute Teamarbeit [...] fühl' ich mich hier immer sehr wohl, weil ich weiß, ich kann hier jeden fragen, wenn ich Hilfe brauche, und derjenige der Zeit hat oder mir helfen kann würde nicht sagen: ‚Ne‘.“

Staff interactions for classroom practice

An obvious difference between Apple Class (Mt E.'s) and Eulen Class (FS) was their staffing: in Apple Class there was Louise, the class teacher, Carmen, the TA and Andrew, Markus' PA. All three attended most lessons every day. In Eulen Class, the staff consisted of five members, but they were never all together in class: Karin, the class teacher and Paul, Nabil's PA, were in most of time. Judith, the deputy class teacher, and Margaret, a teacher for special pedagogy, had fewer class-contact hours. Maggie, the pedagogue, was in Eulen Class least, for only a few hours per week.

In both schools, teachers also spent time together, outside the class, for lesson planning. In FS, Karin, Margaret and Judith met every Thursday after school for a couple of hours in their free-time. Other teachers in the school met only irregularly and, for the most part, did their planning separately. In FS, there was no time officially provided for shared lesson planning.

In Mt E.'s, the SMT had officially required shared lesson planning – not between staff in one class, but between class teachers from the same year-group, such as Kirsten and Louise. Their weekly planning meetings took place during 'Planning Preparation and Assessment'-time (PPA-time), three extra paid hours legally provided for teachers' responsibilities outside lessons (DfES, 2003c). Furthermore, the school had a particular PPA-room equipped with materials and tools for lesson planning, and also a wall display where all teachers shared their present half-term topics, as a basis for a further exchange of ideas. Some year group partners, such as Louise and Kirsten, got on very well with each other and their collaboration was not confined to PPA-time. They also gave each other feedback on their planning during lessons, did joined teaching, and sometimes combined their classes, so that one could work with a small group, while their colleague taught the other children (Mt E.'s/Wk 5/9).

In FS, there was much less cross-class contact, and teachers predominantly described their educational practice in isolation from other classes:

“in your concrete practice you are more or less on your own. You develop the things together with the colleagues in your team [the class team]”²¹⁴ (FS/No. 2/S/3).

“A lot of teachers are still very much on their own, isolated, doing their own thing during the lessons”²¹⁵ (FS/Wk 7/15 ff.).

²¹⁴ German original: „Aber in der konkreten Arbeit biste mit deinen Kollegen dann mehr oder weniger auf dich selbst gestellt. Mit den Kollegen aus dem Team entwickelt man die Sachen dann gemeinsam.“

²¹⁵ German original: „Viele Lehrer sind immer noch ganz für sich, abgekapselt, machen ihr Ding im Unterricht.“

Their isolation was to such an extent that they even hesitated to ask colleagues from other classes for advice, preferring to seek advice from teachers from other schools (FS/Wk 3/39 ff.).

Contacts between class teachers and support staff were much less supported in both schools – mainly through official arrangements. Some support staff in Mt E.’s got their own “planning time because they have to plan the interventions to help the kids that aren’t achieving as well” (Mt E.’s/No. 16/S/4), as Luke, the non-teaching staff line-manager, explained. Yet, most of them were not involved in any lesson planning, but would find it beneficial:

“...it would be nicer to have a bit of planning explained. It would be a good thing”
(Lynn, TA; Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/11).

And Andrew, Markus’ PA, expressed the desire for feedback and confirmation about his work from the teachers:

“I’m doing the best I can but I’m crying out for help: ‘let me know if I’m doing right!’”
(Mt E.’s/No. 12/S/2)

In the current situation, support staff followed the teachers’ instructions, more or less spontaneously, or got on alone, only orientating to the teachers’ weekly lesson plans, as Lysandra and Lynn described:

“I just carry out the activities on the plan. [...] I just use my initiative and get on with it”
(Lysandra, nursery nurse; Mt E.’s/No. 8/S/3 f.).

“I will come in in the morning and I look at the plan. I will set up without saying anything” (Lynn, TA; Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/7).

Similarly in FS, due to a lack of time, Karin mostly relied on the capabilities of Nabil’s School Helper, Paul, to plan Nabil’s support himself:

“I can’t sit down with Paul and talk in more detail – which would actually make sense – e.g. how best to support Nabil in Numeracy. I am only able to do this more or less in passing”²¹⁶ (FS/No. 2/S/4).

For Paul this contact with Karin was sufficient, but Karin found it dissatisfying and recognised a need for guidance for Paul and the other School Helper’s:

²¹⁶ German original: „Ich kann mich nicht hinsetzen und mich mit Paul ein bisschen enger absprechen – was eigentlich einen Sinn machen würde – z.B. wie man Nabil am besten in Mathe unterrichten könnte. Das schaff’ ich mehr oder weniger nur zwischen Tür und Angel,....“

“we [Karin and I] don’t have fixed times. We talk if there is a need to talk, if it is important and if it is convenient, [...] at least once or twice a week”²¹⁷ (Paul; FS/No. 13/S/3 ff.).

“I don’t find it very easy with the School Helpers because they would need much more guidance from the teachers who have the experience, so that they can work in a more target-oriented way with the children”²¹⁸ (Karin; FS/No. 2/S/4).

Staff collaboration was not only seen as supportive for their educational practice. What many staff emphasised most when they talked about their collaboration with colleagues was the support they received *personally*:

“she [Kirsten] supports me in lots of ways: if I’m feeling low or doubt myself in this job she will pick up on it and talk to me about it” (Louise, teacher; Mt E’s; No. 10/S/3).

“I’m supported by Carrie. All my year partners actually. [...] If you have got any personal problems, [they are] really good...” (Mel, teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 7/S/10).

The recognition of individuals was not only described as the result of successful collaboration, but also as the basis for it:

“I think we [Carrie and Mel] are quite similar. We both have children and personality I think. [...] she is easy going and I am easy going” (Mt E.’s/No. 7/S/10).

“I think where people [pedagogues and teachers] somehow relate personally and work together, it begins to mix”²¹⁹ (Karin; FS/No. 2/S/12).

For Kristina, a teacher in FS, such relationships did not require colleagues to be similar, but to value the other’s difference:

“firstly you need to get used to each other, because everyone is different. Different characters are coming together. But what I always think is valuable, is that you actually complement each other very well in many respects. What one can’t do as well, the other can do very well, and vice-versa”²²⁰ (FS/No. 5/S/2).

Karin underlined such valuing of a colleague’s individuality when she expressed respect for Maggie’s personal skills rather than those which expressed her formal qualifications:

²¹⁷ German original: „Da gibt’s keine festen Termine... Wir reden immer wenn Redebedarf da ist, wenn’s wichtig ist, und wenn’s passt, [...] mindestens ein- oder zweimal die Woche.“

²¹⁸ German original: „Ich finde das nicht so einfach mit den Schulhelfern, weil im Grunde genommen bräuchten die viel mehr Anleitung von den Lehrern, die die Erfahrung haben, so dass sie mit den Kindern auch viel zielgerichteter arbeiten können.“

²¹⁹ German original: „Ich glaube auch da, wo so die persönlichen Beziehungen irgendwie stimmen und die Leute [Erzieherinnen und Lehrkräfte] an einem Strang ziehen, dass es an manchen Stellen anfängt sich zu mischen.“

²²⁰ German original: „[Man] muss sich erst mal aneinander gewöhnen weil man ja unterschiedlich ist. Unterschiedliche Typen treffen aufeinander. Aber das Angenehme ist, denke ich immer, dass man sich eigentlich in ziemlich vielen Bereichen gut ergänzt. Was der eine nicht so gut kann, kann der andere super-gut und andersrum.“

“particularly with Maggie I have got a friendly contact. I find her very qualified. I have the feeling that I can pass some children with a task over to her, without much previous preparation and she will manage. [...] I value her as a competent colleague”²²¹ (FS/No. 2/S/4).

In order to establish such collaboration and to get used to each other, Kristina regarded continuous communication and commitment to what had been agreed as primary conditions. Correspondingly, other staff valued communication as well as equal participation, flexibility and honesty as crucial aspects for their collaboration.

“Carrie and I are very much give and take, we compromise with each other, [...] I’ve been in partnerships where someone has been really dominant and dominated you and said we are doing this, we are doing that” (Mel, teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 7/S/10).

“I think me and Kirsten [...] are quite flexible [in] how we wanna do things...” (Louise, teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 10/S/3).

“I think we are just really natural people and I’ve always said to her [Brenda, the class teacher] if there is anything wrong with my work, tell me. If there is anything you don’t like me to do, tell me. And she always said the same to me” (Lynn, TA; Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/10).

Communication, however, took time, and this was one of the major barriers staff in both schools identified for their collaboration:

“...we used to have phase [Key Stage] meetings every week, where [the teachers’] planning will be discussed with the TAs of Foundation Stage. [...] You know people haven’t got the time in the afternoons or the end of school to sit down to meetings” (Lynn, TA; Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/10 ff.).

“Due to a lack of time we don’t meet regularly”²²² (Kristina, teacher; FS/No. 5/S/2).

Karin, the class teacher in Eulen Class in FS, saw as a contradiction not being given time from the government for shared planning but still being required to collaborate during the lessons:

“how can you develop something together [teaching in the lesson], if you havn’t been allowed time for team-meetings as part of your working day?”²²³ (FS/No. 2/S/12)

Furthermore, personal relations between staff could be thwarted, in both schools, by the head teachers’ final say on staff team constellations.

²²¹ German original: „Gerade zu Maggie habe ich so’n freundschaftlichen Kontakt. Ich finde die sehr qualifiziert. Ich hab’ da das Gefühl, dass ich ihr relativ unvorbereitet Kinder mit ’ner Aufgabe in die Hand drücken kann und dann macht die das so. [...] Ich schätze sie als qualifizierte Kollegin.“

²²² German original: „Wir treffen uns aus zeitlichen Gründen nicht wirklich regelmäßig.“

²²³ German original: „Wie will man etwas gemeinsam entwickeln, wenn das in der Arbeitszeit nicht berücksichtigt ist, dass man ’ne gemeinsame Teamzeit hat?“

Limited contacts between staff working in one class had different negative effects for the participation of children and adults. They created inconsistencies between staff's educational practices, which could increase a child's dependence on one member of staff, as in the case of Nabil and Markus, and their PAs.

Moreover, a lack of communication promoted misunderstandings and unawareness of others' views. For example, Louise found that Andrew dominated Markus' support provision, which prevented her from getting as involved with his learning as she would have liked (Mt E.'s/Wk 9/31). Andrew presented an opposite view in which he clearly saw Louise to have the main say:

“it has to be up to the teacher to say whether he [Markus] can do this with another child or whether he can do that. As long as I know what's going on, I just follow the routine” (Mt E.'s/No. 12/S/1 f.).

In FS, Julia, a teacher, saw barriers to her participation in the “team” as due to Heidi's dominance. Heidi was unaware of Julia's view and thought they participated on equal terms.

Furthermore, teachers questioned the benefits of additional support arrangements, due to their limited insight and information. In Mt E.'s, Sue, the EMAS teacher, as well as support staff, felt their work was devalued by other teachers:

“I feel that we [the support staff] do so much for the teachers and most of them don't appreciate what we do and acknowledge that *we* do most of the work. And we never get praised for it. We never get included in things, so we're always left out” (Mt E.'s/No. 8/S/6).

In summary, in both schools, teachers and support staff were generally dissatisfied with their limited contacts, primarily caused by a lack of dedicated time. The barriers to their own, as well as children's participation could have been reduced through more planned opportunities for communication between staff. This would have also supported the harmonisation of their educational practices.

Interactions between children and staff

Most children regarded their class teacher as their first point of contact, but, for some, it could be another adult in class, as Serwa and Adanya, two girls in Apple Class explained:

“...for lessons it's gonna be Louise [we are mainly in touch with]. Andrew is with Markus and Carmen normally helps the lower groups” (Mt E.'s/No. 2/Ch/3).

And in the earlier described scene with Braydon, in Mt E.'s, he showed that he felt closer to Louise, his former class teacher, rather than his current one, who he had known for a shorter time. Although he would probably establish a closer relationship with his current class

teacher, in due course, he appeared to be having more difficulties than other children, by leaving his lesson to visit Louise. But long-term relationships between teachers and children did not necessarily guarantee a positive interaction, as shown by Karin and Kevin's interaction in FS, which had been for more than two years.

The dominance of staff in interactions with children, and their application of power, I recognised in both schools in many respects, but more so in Mt E.'s. On more than one occasion, children demonstrated their compliance with staff instructions. This was noticeable in responses to both praise and sanctioning practices, staff's directly expressed demands of compliance and conformity from the children, and underlined in Mt E.'s Behaviour Policy (2007). Furthermore, it was shown in the many arrangements in educational practice that counterposed the children's own preferences, such as seating arrangements, groupings or helper's systems, and in the staff's unfair treatment of children, especially noticed by children in FS.

Children were only able to influence the content of educational practice to the extent to which the staff allowed it. For example, the signs with the children's different home-languages, that were put up in Apple Class in Mt E.'s, were in response to their diverse backgrounds. In addition, the staff occasionally gave the impression to the children that they were making choices about educational practice, using this as a motivational tool:

“I knew we [the staff] were gonna do it but we [...] let them [the children] think that they came up with the idea or *made* them think they came up. [...] So, they took ownership and wanted to do it straight away” (Louise, teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 10/S/8).

It seemed that the staff was aware of the children's limited participation and the negative effects it caused for their learning. However, structures that had been established specifically to increase the children's participation, such as the children's class' and school councils, were organised in both schools erratically, sometimes even in breach of legal requirements: in FS children's class' councils and class representatives were not established in year three but only from year four onwards.

In response to their limited participation, some children, like Kevin in FS, withdrew or reacted defensively. In Mt E.'s, reactions from the children were less strong, which I interpreted as an indication of their increased degree of compliance. When they were asked directly, they usually had ideas for improvement, but they never mentioned them on their own.

In addition to such hierarchies between *all* children and staff, Markus' and Nabil's interactions with their PAs had knock-on effects on their contacts with other children and staff, which limited the boys' participation in class even more. This contradicted Paul's intention to support Nabil's inclusion:

“I influence [Nabil’s] social integration a little bit. I direct it, you could say. I guide him through the school day and support him..., e.g. when he is discriminated against in the playground or something like that, I am by his side. [...] Then I am his advocate or his advisor...”²²⁴ (FS/No. 13/S/5).

But Paul and Andrew were so often by “the children’s side” that they obstructed contacts between Nabil, Markus and other children, and indeed with other adults. This was not only because of the physical space they usually occupied next to the children, but also because the arrangement supported the view of Nabil and Markus as being “different” and in “high need of support”. Consequently, other children were discouraged to ask them for help; and Nabil and Markus were not encouraged to ask other children for help, because of the continuous support they received from their PAs. This excluded them from one main basis of children’s interactions during the lesson. However, Nabil’s participation in his interaction with Paul appeared to be equal:

“I am lucky because [...] Nabil collaborates very well and also helped me in the beginning. He told me, what I was supposed to do. [...] We have learnt from each other, so to speak. I learnt things from Nabil which I didn’t know before and this is how I found my way into the role”²²⁵ (FS/No. 13/S/1).

While no other child-staff interaction was described to me as equal to such an extent, there were occasionally indicators of more equal interactions as opposed to increased power applied by staff. For example, Louise, the class teacher of Apple Class in Mt E.’s, responded to a child who had difficulties with a numeracy task: “everyone [in class] got confused, including me” (Mt E.’s/Wk 10/28). By admitting that she struggled with the task as well, she created more equality in the relationship with the child. In FS, Karin, the class teacher of Eulen Class, described that most children trusted her in their relationships:

“I think that I have actually got a good relationship with them [the children], that they like me somehow and that they trust me [...] – well, the majority of pupils – Kevin certainly not quite or a Farreq probably neither, but the majority of the children”²²⁶ (FS/No. 2/S/20).

²²⁴ German original: „...[Nabil’s] Sozialintegration, da bin ich ja auch so’n bisschen mit dran beteiligt. Ich lenk’ ihn sozusagen durch den Schulalltag und bin ihm behilflich, wenn er z.B. auf dem Schulhof diskriminiert wird oder so, da bin ich auch an seiner Seite. [...] Na, ich bin dann auch sein Anwalt oder sein Berater...”

²²⁵ German original: „Ich hab das Glück, dass ich den Nabil betreu’ und dass der sehr gut mitgearbeitet hat, also auch mir geholfen hat zu Anfang. Der hat mir gesagt, was ich tun soll. Wir haben sozusagen voneinander gelernt. Also ich hab’ von Nabil Dinge gelernt, die ich nicht kannte, und so hab’ ich mich da ’rein gefunden.”

²²⁶ German original: „Ich glaub, dass ich eigentlich ’ne gute Beziehung zu ihnen hab’, dass sie mich irgendwie mögen und dass sie auch Vertrauen zu mir haben [...] – also die Masse der Schüler – Kevin sicherlich nicht unbedingt oder so’n Farreq wahrscheinlich auch nicht, aber die Masse der Kinder ja.“

I gained the impression in the classroom, that the children's trust supported more equal interactions with Karin, because these children enjoyed greater participation than others.

Correspondingly, other teachers in FS and Mt E.'s expressed a trust in the children and their ability to take on responsibility for their learning:

"I believe that children know, at my kid's age, what they are doing. [...] I don't think you need to point it out 'that's the rule that you have broken.' They know when they've done something wrong" (Mel; Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/11).

"I know that it [the children's independent work] will work and I do not need to take care of it anymore"²²⁷ (Heidi; FS/Wk 1/9).

Because of their trust in the children, Mel and Heidi saw less need to apply power and control on them, in comparison to Karin and Margaret in FS, who admitted distrusting the capacity of children to take responsibility for their learning (FS/Wk 5/54 ff.). Consequently, they allowed children less independence in class, also exemplified by the scene in which Karin hesitated in allowing Hamid to support Halimah. Similarly in Mt E.'s, Andrew, Markus' PA, mistrusted Muthadi's capability in supporting Markus and kept observing the two boys.

Often staff's increased application of power over the children contradicted their actual understanding of learning and teaching practices which were about supporting children's individuality. Louise, the class teacher in Apple Class, explained that they mostly engaged in more authoritative approaches, exercising control and requiring conformity, in response to governmental pressures:

"... this whole child-initiated learning thing [...] if they weren't working with either me or Carmen [...] how could we make sure that they were working towards that learning objective [i.e. a statutory attainment target]?" (Mt E.'s/No. 10/S/9)

Similarly, in FS, interactions between staff and children, in which these statutory requirements did not apply, appeared to be more equal, such as Nabil's and Paul's interaction; or the interaction between Malte and pedagogues in the day-care centre, which Karin described as unproblematic, in direct contrast to her interactions with Malte in school. But there were also teachers, like Kristina, who were less acquiescent towards official requirements but allowed children more freedom and independence: "generally I try to feel as least pressurised as possible by some things, such as curricular requirements"²²⁸ (FS/No. 5/S/6).

²²⁷ German original: „Und ich weiß, dass das dann auch klappt und ich mich nicht mehr darum kümmern muss.“

²²⁸ Ger.original: „Ich versuch' mich [...] immer so wenig wie möglich von bestimmten Dingen, wie irgendwelche Lehrpläne oder Ausführungsvorschriften, unter Druck setzen zu lassen.“

The examples of interactions between staff and children in both FS and Mt E.'s indicated that interactions amongst staff, and between children and staff were individual and the degree of children's participation differed. Yet, in both schools the staff was mostly dominant. They applied an increased power over children, particularly in response to governmental requirements, while staff-child interactions that were not affected by such requirements appeared to be more equal.

“LEARNERS” AND “TEACHERS”: ROLES OF STAFF AND CHILDREN

In both classes, the roles of children and adults differed from officially ascribed and widely assumed concepts like ‘pupil’, ‘teacher’ or ‘TA’. For example, apart from the role of teachers and support staff as supporters of children, children were also recognised as supporting the staff. Paul described Nabil as his supporter, and similarly Lynn, a TA in Mt E.'s, felt motivated by the children in her work and regarded herself as a learner alongside them:

“... the thing that keeps me going with each child is realising each one is different, each will learn in their own way and as soon as that child makes one achievement I get such a buzz out of that. And it's me learning as well that does it. Because adults don't stop learning on the job. It's that kind of passion to carry on learning with them [the children], alongside them” (Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/9).

And also some children regarded themselves as supporters for the teachers:

“first of all, Louise [teacher] doesn't know much about children. *We* are children ourselves so she can see what we do often and what we like. So, that's what she learns from us” (Adanya; Mt E.'s/No. 5/Ch/1).

Furthermore, children were supporters of other children: “...they encourage each other and help each other and learn from each other” (Louise, teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 10/S/2). In Apple Class, Zuwena considered her friend Jada as a teacher, because she had helped her, and in Eulen Class, Halimah gained support from Hamid. Sometimes the support children gave each other was something that staff could not provide, as seen between Radek and Zora in Mt E.'s, who could comfort each other because they spoke the same home language, different from the staff.

And adults were also important supporters for each other inside and outside the classrooms, as shown in previous accounts.

Moreover, all roles were individual, which was most obvious in staff roles in FS: for instance, roles of teachers indicated a continuum from being a “lecturer of learning content” to a “facilitator of individual learning processes”, as Karin's and Kristina's accounts point out:

“I think partially I am the lecturer when I stand in front of them and introduce a topic to them. And sometimes I am only the helper, maybe call it the learning advisor. And at other times I am the person a child is approaching to tell me about the argument in her/his family or something like that. I think I have to take on all these roles to different degrees for each child”²²⁹ (Karin; FS/No. 2/S/20).

“[In the lesson I am] merely a grown-up person who is leading the lesson giving small inputs: ‘why don’t you think in this direction’ or ‘have a look in this book’, so that they [the children] learn to gather information themselves from whichever source and not only from the adult person, the team or whoever else is present”²³⁰ (Kristina; FS/No. 5/S/1).

Another example of a role that has very obviously become more individualised was Margaret’s as a teacher for special pedagogy in Eulen Class in FS. According to her official role description she was responsible for children categorised as having an increased need of “special pedagogic support” and traditionally her role was only allocated to special schools. But here in FS her role had changed over time. While she was sometimes an advisor for other teachers in the school regarding children with this specific label, in Eulen Class she was mostly concerned with all children equally. Kristina confirmed the apparent mismatch, between staff roles in practice and external definitions of their roles, in her view of the ‘performance-lessons’, lessons assessed by a supervisor which all new teachers have to do in their second year of teaching practice to gain their final teaching qualification. She experienced them as unrelated to classroom reality:

“...the so-called ‘performance-lessons’, they are really like performances, like theatre. I always thought: ‘that’s unrealistic, school can’t be like that. I had good supervisors and I learnt a lot during my teaching course, but those ‘performance-lessons’...”²³¹(FS/No. 5/S/1).

In Mt E.’s, though not in her official role, Lynn, a TA, said she occasionally had a teaching role in class:

²²⁹ German original: „Ich denk zum Teil bin ich schon die Dozentin, wenn ich da stehe und in irgendeinen Bereich einführe. Und manchmal bin ich nur die Helferin, die Lernberaterin vielleicht. Und manchmal bin ich diejenige, wo ein Kind hinkommt und mir die Details des Streits in der Familie berichtet oder so. Ich glaub, dass ich so für alle Rollen mehr oder weniger unterschiedlich bei den Kindern herhalten muss.“

²³⁰ German original: „[Im Unterricht bin] ich praktisch nur noch als erwachsene Person, die da den Unterricht leitet und so kleine Anstöße geben kann: Denk doch mal in die Richtung oder schau doch ’mal in dem Buch nach, so dass sie [die Kinder] also selber lernen sich Informationen zu besorgen von welcher Seite auch immer, abgesehen von demjenigen, der da als erwachsene Person, Team oder wer auch immer gerade anwesend ist.“

²³¹ German original: “...diese sog. Vorführstunden, die auch wirklich wie Vorführungen sind, wie Theater. Ich habe halt immer gedacht: ‚Das ist unrealistisch, so kann Schule nicht sein.... Ich hatte gute Fachseminarleiter, ich hab eine Menge gelernt in meiner Ausbildungszeit, aber diese Vorführstunden...“

“I’ve often taught when she [Brenda] hasn’t been in. Don’t know if that’s meant to be mentioned but I have done that. I’m at a level where I’m trusted to teach if she is not in” (Mt E.’s/No. 17/S/7).

Mostly, support staff in both schools were concerned with children categorised as having “special educational needs” or “special pedagogic support needs”, and did one-to-one or small group support, as Luke, the non-teaching staff line-manager in Mt E.’s, confirmed: “...they [the support staff] do more one-to-one inclusion work..., or take small groups out” (Mt E.’s/No. 16/S/4). Therefore, the class teachers’ primary focus was to support the rest of the class. At FS, for some teachers to accept a child with the “special pedagogic support needs”, often a pre-condition was to get additional support staff in class. In most cases, support staff were not officially employed to work with children categorised as having “special needs”. Their focus on this group of children was, again, a result of individual arrangements in each classroom. In FS, only the roles of School Helpers and Integration pedagogues, were officially established to support children with this particular label. In Mt E.’s, this was only the case for the role of Markus’ personal assistant.

Generally, in Mt E.’s, roles appeared more constrained by standardised government requirements than in FS, and therefore less individual:

“...what it is that we are basically working towards is sitting exams [SATs]. Which is something we [Louise and Kirsten] don’t want to be doing here but I know that a lot of teachers do” (Louise, teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 10/S/6).

Individual and local interpretations of staff roles were highly valued, as Karin expressed earlier in regards to Maggie, the pedagogue in her class. And Luke, the Business Manager in Mt E.’s, welcomed the flexibility in individual role adaptations due to the vagueness of official job descriptions:

“...the beauty of the government’s writings on teaching- and teaching assistants’-job descriptions is that they are really vague, in the sense that one sentence could be interpreted as whatever the staff say they do well, that fits that one or that one or that one” (Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/1).

However, in both schools, the potential for individual contributions of staff to educational practice was disregarded following governmental requirements. Similarly, also the children’s individual strengths often remained unrecognised in the schools. For example, Louise, the class teacher in Apple Class acknowledged that some children acted as supporters for their peers, but – in contrast to Adanya’s perception mentioned earlier – she was unsure whether they could also support her: “I suppose they do” (Mt E.’s/No. 10/S/8). Luana and Arjana, two girls in Mt E.’s, criticised the rigid table-groupings according to statutory attainment levels which prevented them from gaining support from other children. And Ben, a boy in

Eulen Class in FS, disagreed with the role he was ascribed as main supporter of the younger children, because he was in year three. He found this limited his own work. The children's accounts reveal that educational approaches, such as single and vertical-year-group learning, influenced the roles they were ascribed and often limited their participation. Furthermore, the staff saw the children's individual participation was obstructed by limited resources of space, time, personnel and material provided according to governmental diktat. However, the main constraint for staff, in considering the children's individual contributions, were again governmental requirements, specifically the narrow focus of statutory attainment targets:

“because attainment is only measured across English, Mathematics and Science in this country, that kind of pressure *could* mean those are the only curriculum areas taught. [...] And what that of course means is this opportunity for our young children to experience a rich and broad curriculum of learning will be focused into very narrow subject areas, in order to achieve certain targets”(Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/22).

Similarly, Julia, a teacher in FS, noticed:

“very rarely do we manage to give all children an opportunity to show their individual strengths. Maybe by playing football, but otherwise ...”²³² (Julia; FS/Wk 1/15).

Consequently, children were mostly perceived as either “supported” or in “need of support”, based on a judgement of their ability in relation to the standardised attainment levels. As a result, they were placed into preordained categories, referred to by labels, such as “Above Average”, “Below Average”, “special pedagogic support needs” or “year groups”. This was a practice that staff in both schools considered “heavily contradicted” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/21; FS/No. 5/S/7) governmental requirements to respond to each child's individuality as outlined in the inclusion agenda. It was impossible to capture a child's individual strengths in standardised attainment levels. As a consequence, the staff's ascription of such levels were meant to mediate between the contradictory aims of individualisation and standardisation.

As children's predominant role was to be “supported”, they mainly ascribed to adults the role of “supporters”. For instance, Ikhlas, a child in Louise's class at Mt E.'s said: “adults help mostly” (Mt E.'s/No. 1/Ch/1). He recognised his teacher generally as more competent than himself: “she is cleverer than me because she is the teacher” (ibid.). Adanya, another child in Louise's class, had a different interpretation of Louise's role. As previously described, she recognised Louise as having a “need of support” as well and, in contrast to Ikhlas, she also felt competent to support her teacher. Interestingly, Adanya was categorised as “Above Average”, while Ikhlas had been given a label of “special educational needs”. It seemed that labels could operate as self-fulfilling prophecies, influencing one's perception of

²³² German original: „Wir schaffen's ganz selten im Unterricht, dass alle Kinder eine Stärke zeigen können. Vielleicht mal im Fußballspielen aber sonst...?“

one's own and, consequently, others' roles. Especially in Mt E.'s, children adopted the adults' focus on attainment levels and thus questioned their individual strengths:

“these children [...] all know [...] what national level of attainment they are in English, Maths and Science. [...] The problem is, they are all worried about being tested at the end of the year. [...] That's wrong” (Monica, deputy head teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/24).

In FS, fewer children worried about their achievements in the national assessment tests and teachers seemed to be more critical about the standards agenda than in Mt E.'s, for example, considering the national assessment tests as “child torture”²³³ (Heidi and Kristina, teachers; FS/Wk 6/40). This was possibly because the standards agenda had been implemented much more recently than in England.

The rigid ascription of standardised roles to children and adults moreover promoted an increased separation between people with different roles, such as teachers, support staff and children, who in this way were allocated to allegedly “homogeneous” groups. For instance, Macia, a TA in Mt E.'s, clearly separated her role from that of the teachers:

“he is the teacher. So I have to support his work. He has to support the children and I have to support his work. He tells me which work I have to do with them. He has planned the activities and I will do it” (Mt E.'s/No. 9/P/3 f.).

I discussed in former sections the excluding effects of such separation. Additionally, Kristina, a teacher in FS, pointed out regarding single year groups, that “homogeneous” groupings did not reflect reality: “... in normal life children don't grow up in age-homogeneous groups”²³⁴ (FS/No. 5/S/10). Interestingly, Kristina had not considered any other category as artificial, like “special pedagogic support needs”. Some teachers, such as Karin in FS, chose to hold on to single- as opposed to vertical-year-groupings, because they felt overburdened by the insistence on recognising children as more diverse (FS/No. 2/S/2).

Children's "special" roles

Labels did not only have powerful effects on the way in which individuals perceived themselves and others, but also on how others perceived them. This was particularly noticeable regarding children categorised as having “special needs”. They were labelled as being in even greater “need of support”:

“they [children categorised as having “special educational needs”] can't even reach any basic level at all” (Mel, teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/8).

²³³ German original: „Kinderquälen“

²³⁴ German original: „...im normalen Leben wachsen Kinder eigentlich nicht altershomogen auf.“

“Other children learn something and internalise it... But if Nabil does not practice all the time he forgets it. [...] He cannot work that much, nor is he as fast as the other children...”²³⁵ (Paul, Nabil’s School Helper; FS/No. 13/S/2 ff.).

“What to do with the SENs because they are the ones who cannot do anything.” (Caroline, teacher; Mt E.’s/Wk 10/35 ff.)

They were separated from others, through individualised arrangements, such as special rules or activities in the lesson, disconnected from those of most other children, and also through the views of staff viewing them as “more different”:

“Malte is not how (other) children of his age should be”²³⁶ (Karin, teacher; FS/Wk 4/42).

“Markus can’t do that. He does not learn that way [like other children].” (Andrew, PA; Mt E.’s/Wk 9/31)

In FS, such views were also represented in a poster displayed in the corridor. It counterposed a “we” with “disabled children”, again falsely demarcating both groups as “homogeneous” (see Box 23).

“Our Children, with whom we learn together

Altogether 35 children with different disabilities are learning with us in our school. This means that approx. every 11th child receives some kind of special educational provision. For this reason there are often two teachers together in one class....

1 child with special support in the area of “hearing”

11 children with special support in the area of “cognitive development”

6 children with special support in the area of “social and emotional development”

6 children with special support in the area of “learning”

6 children with special support in the area of “physical ability”

5 children with special support in the area of “language development”

Furthermore we teach and support children with multiple severe disabilities. Those three students you recognise by a wheelchair with which they are speeding through the school.” (FS/Doc. 3)

Box 23 ‘Children categorised as having “special pedagogic support needs” in FS’

²³⁵ German original: „Andere Kinder lernen etwas und verinnerlichen das... Wenn Nabil nicht permanent übt vergisst er das. [...] Er kann [...] nicht so viel arbeiten und er ist auch nicht so schnell wie die anderen Kinder...“

²³⁶ German original: „Malte ist nicht so, wie (andere) Kinder in dem Alter schon sein sollten...“

Children with an increased “need of support” were seen as deficient, as “children, who do not function in this school system in the way we think children [...] should do”²³⁷ (Karin, teacher; FS/No. 2/S/2). Consequently, their role as contributors to educational practice was less recognised than that of other children. Karin only noticed one contribution from Nabil to the class, and this was not based on an appreciation of his actual strengths:

“...this aspect of having a very needy child [Nabil] in the class, I regard as a big advantage, because I think that it is beneficial for everybody”²³⁸ (FS/No. 2/S/17).

In contrast, Paul, who was not under pressure to satisfy statutory requirements, had seen some of Nabil’s strengths when he previously described him as a supporter of himself. It might have been possible to extend this lesson to foster Nabil’s participation in class.

²³⁷ German original: „...Kinder, die in diesem Schulsystem nicht so funktionieren, wie wir denken, wie Kinder [...] funktionieren müssten...“

²³⁸ German original: „...dieser Punkt, ein sehr hilfsbedürftiges Kind in der Klasse zu haben, das finde ich einen sehr großen Vorteil, weil ich glaube, dass alle da einen sehr großen Nutzen von haben können.“

CONCLUSION: PREDOMINANT RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOMS

In conclusion, in both schools the predominant responses to the diversity of children and adults were rigidly ascribed roles and hierarchical interactions. These acted as barriers to participation, not only for children but also for staff, even though they held the most power in the classroom. They limited individual contributions to educational practice that were otherwise seen as beneficial.

First and foremost, these were caused by standardised requirements and structures set out by the governments. They prescribed interactions and limited possibilities for frequent communication, despite this being recognised as a condition for the establishment of equal relationships. They placed pressures on adults and children to reach standardised attainment targets, which resulted in the labeling of children. Labels such as “Above Average” or “special needs” placed a primary focus on children’s differences in relation to a prescribed norm and stressed the “otherness” of those who deviated from it, rather than looking for similarities. They designated children roles, providing rigid structures for their participation. Similarly, staff roles, like ‘teacher’ or ‘TA’ were prescribed in official job descriptions. These labels for children and adults limited opportunities to individualise structures to aid participation, and were therefore deemed inadequate. They responded to diversity with categories, which created an illusion of “homogeneity”. Generally, there seemed to be less participation of staff and children in Mt E.’s, than in FS. This was shown in the staff and children’s greater compliance with governmental requirements, stronger hierarchies between staff and children, and an increased number of additional standardised support programs and ability-based labels.

However, some interactions were shown to be equal, and there were roles that had been more individualised, irrespective of external standardisation. These resulted from individual efforts by children and adults, and were based on interpersonal and personal factors, such as mutual trust, respect for individual competences and valuation of diversity. This provided increased flexibility and freedom for individual participation, and for the recognition of their individual contributions to educational practice.

CHAPTER 7: STAFF MEETINGS OUTSIDE LESSON PRACTICE

In the two former chapters, it was apparent that in both schools, educational practice was not limited to lessons in the classroom. Another big part of educational practice happened outside lesson time, but was influential to it.

In this chapter, I illustrate the responses to the diversity of staff I observed outside the classroom, their rationales and effects on staff participation. This includes an exploration of the individual interests of staff and those underlying governmental requirements, which acted upon staff and evinced criticism, rejection, negotiation and compromise. Particular attention is paid to staff roles that applied across each school and were not based in one classroom: for instance, additional roles of teachers as coordinators, manager roles, or the roles of head or deputy head teachers.

At the core of this chapter, in the first two sections, are three examples of formal staff meetings in Mt E.'s and FS. This is complemented by accounts of informal staff gatherings, such as during break times. The third section analyses staff interactions and roles I observed in the scenes as responses to their diversity outside lesson practice, highlighting differences and similarities between the two schools. Finally, in the conclusion of this chapter I point out the main barriers and facilitators of staff participation outside the classrooms.

In both schools, formal staff meetings took up a considerable amount of the staff's time in school – usually each member of staff attended a few meetings per week. Between the schools, the meetings differed in length, time, frequency and attendees. In both schools it was common that apart from whole staff meetings, support staff and teachers usually held separate meetings. The staff meetings presented in this chapter were chiefly attended by teachers. They were selected because they were the most frequent, in comparison to other meetings, and were, therefore, a good opportunity for me to observe. In Mt E.'s, I chose to describe two staff meetings in order to match the extent of the staff meeting in FS.

A STAFF BRIEFING AND AN IEP-SESSION IN MOUNT EPHRAIM'S SCHOOL

It was Monday, 8:20 a.m. and a few members of staff, mainly teachers, but also a few TAs, were in the staff room, where the staff briefing was scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Support staff usually did not start work until 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. Monica, the deputy head, was having a chat with Christina and Nicole, two teachers who were also Key Stage Two Manager and the Assessment Coordinator, about personal and work-related topics. Others were sitting on sofas or at tables, reading the newspaper or having breakfast.

The staff room was a wide room that included a little kitchenette with a coffee and tea maker, a microwave and a fridge. Here, the staff prepared and kept their breakfasts, a great selection of cereal boxes that sat on top of one shelf, and their lunches, if they chose not to have school dinners.

Various books, including children's books, and leaflets and magazines, from the Local Authority and other education institutions, lay on the window sills and tables. A cutting machine and a laminator was provided for lesson preparation in addition to the PPA- and three other material- and equipment rooms.

A big white board was on one wall, mostly with information from the SMT about the organisation of the current school day as well as long-term announcements, such as the staff playground duties, absent staff and covers, class trips, staff meetings or school visitors. A little space was provided for staff to suggest social activities, with date, time and place. Teachers usually went out together on Friday nights and Wednesdays, after their regular in-service training (inset). They were rarely joined by support staff.

The staff room was never locked during school time, nor was any other room in the school, except the offices of members of the SMT. Children wanting to talk to staff in the staff room just walked in. Everyone was advised not to leave anything valuable in the room, as there had been recent cases of theft.

Slowly the staff room filled up as more teachers arrived. Whenever someone passed Monica, she called out: "good morning", and with a welcoming tone of voice asked: "how are you?" She regarded this as part of her role and explained:

"...my presence is big. I make sure that everybody knows I'm here. Everybody knows I have got an open door and can come and discuss issues. And [...] I think it is impossible for someone to walk down a corridor or walk into the school, be here for longer than a minute, without being greeted by somebody and made to feel that this is their place and they are welcome. So, I think that's very important because it makes everybody in the school feel safe, secure and able to contribute" (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/10).

When Robert, the head teacher, entered the room Valerie, a teacher education student approached him straight away telling him that yesterday on a class trip she was approached by a man at the train station who praised the children's good behaviour and asked her to tell her head teacher. Robert looked very pleased.

THE STAFF BRIEFING

When Valerie had finished Robert sat down, clapped his hands and wished everybody a "good morning". It was the indication that he would like to start the staff briefing. It took place every Monday and Wednesday morning between 8:30 and 8:45 a.m. in the staff room. Although its name suggested all staff attendance, the briefing was only compulsory for teachers and the SMT. Occasionally, teacher education students, a Learning Mentor or new staff to be introduced, would join the meetings. Support staff were invited to most teacher meetings and the inset on Wednesdays, but rarely attended. Mostly Robert or Monica led the briefings and, only if they were unavailable, another member of the SMT took over. Robert attended at least one staff briefing per week; Monica was present at most of them.

At first Robert reminded the teachers about the changed inset time this week:

"staff training about the new primary strategy this Wednesday afternoon will be from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m." (Mt E.'s/Wk 3/1).

Then he mentioned the up-coming assessment reviews and referred to Nicole, the Assessment Coordinator, who would talk about them later. Encouragingly, he added, the children's Literacy work had improved, especially in comparison to the boys' low results in the Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) from last year (Mt E.'s/Wk 10/33; Mt E.'s/Wk 6/1). Kirsten, the Literacy Coordinator, added:

"[the writing] has improved already but you still need to focus on it. I'm going to collect some writing books from your classes to have a look at them during next week. If you have got any problems with a child's writing development, come and talk to me" (Mt E.'s/Wk 4/1).

Nicole was next to explain what the teachers had to do with regards to the up-coming Numeracy and Literacy assessment reviews:

"I emailed information about the next Literacy and Numeracy assessments to all of you, as well as the Whole-School Writing Sample²³⁹ which you have to do with the children. Every child's work needs to be levelled and handed in by mid-term. If you have got any problems let me know as soon as possible, please. Moreover, could you swap the reading books from your book corner with other teachers?" (Mt E.'s/Wk 4/1ff.)

²³⁹ The Writing Sample is a writing task, a kind of essay for all children in KS 1 and KS 2. The teachers are required to follow specific instructions regarding how the sample has to be carried out.

When she had finished Robert looked around to see whether anyone else wanted to make an announcement. Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, had some information for the staff:

“I talked to Jacob yesterday and he is still quite unsettled because of his father’s death. I arranged with him that he can come to me or go to his teacher if he does not feel well or when he gets angry. Beside that, we should not loosen the school rules for him, as he needs the structure and consistency. So please consider the reasons for his behaviour and act upon them, but still require him to follow our rules as we require from everyone. If you have got any further questions please come and see me. It would be awful if we needed to exclude him.

Furthermore, I will put up a list with dates for the next ‘Pastoral Care Team’-meetings. If you would like to attend and maybe discuss a child from your class, please sign up.

I would like to lead the assembly this morning, in order to talk about the racist incident in the playground yesterday if no one else is keen to lead it. It would be very good if all classes could be there“ (Mt E.’s/Wk 12/34).

Daniela, the Key Stage One Manager, responded to Allan:

“but reception, year one and two have got singing assembly during this time, and it would be a shame for the children to miss it” (ibid.).

Monica had a solution:

“I can come round in reception, year one and two and tell you about the assembly later, so you can go to the singing assembly with your classes” (ibid.).

Finally, Allan presented a new idea for a lunch break activity for certain children:

“Tony [voluntary worker], Ben [PE teacher] and I had the idea that Ben could play team games during the lunch break with children who show difficulties in collaborating with others, in order to support their social skills. What do you think?“ (Mt E.’s/Wk 7/16)

Caroline, a teacher, questioned the idea of picking out particular children:

“how will you explain to the children who are selected that they are taken from the playground to join another activity with you?“ (ibid.)

Monica did not share her worry:

“I don’t think it has to be explained to them, because most children know, that they can go to Ben if they have got a problem” (ibid.).

Allan answered:

“I would tell the children the truth: they are going to do an activity with Ben to help them control their behaviour because they showed inappropriate behaviour in class” (ibid.).

Caroline was still dissatisfied and referred to another practice which she found less selective:

“there is another teamwork practice in the afternoon, where children are sent together with a friend as support. Thus, not only the most disruptive children attend the activities, it’s a mix” (ibid.).

It remained unclear whether her concerns were taken into account. The staff agreed that Allan would talk to Ben and Tony and inform the others about further steps.

Monica was raising her hand to share some other information:

“two things I would like to mention:

firstly, I attended a deputy meeting yesterday titled ‘What does school mean to the staff?’ It was very good and Kirsten and a few others will now go around our school, taking pictures, etc. in order to document what school means to them.

And secondly, there is only one secretary in the office today, as the other two are off sick. If someone has got time to help her a little bit during the day it would be great. I will go in for an hour this morning” (Mt E.’s/Wk 3/1).

Sue, the EMAS teacher, had a question about the children for her additional language support:

“can I just read out a list of children who attend the language support groups? Please tell me whether there are any further children in your class you would like to put on the list” (ibid.).

Following Sue’s request Ron, the Inclusion Manager, asked the teachers to review the IEPs in their classes and to tell him whether they needed any additional support for a child. The school had some new software called ‘IEP Pro’ for the teachers to use for their review and writing of the IEPs. Ron suggested he would introduce the software to all teachers in their PPA-time over the next weeks (Mt E.’s/Wk 11/22 ff.).

He also mentioned that the support staff were going to use a specific support program with children categorised as having “special educational needs”:

“I have emailed every teacher information about the program ‘Catch-Up’. You have to sit down with your TA at some point this week to select the Catch-up kids. If you have got any questions about the Catch-Up, please come and ask me” (Mt E.’s/Wk 8/26; Mt E.’s/Wk 4/21).

And finally he announced that he was going to monitor the support staffs’ work.

This reminded Robert, the head teacher, that he was supposed to carry out the teachers’ statutory annual appraisals to review their performance management targets in autumn. He asked whether they could defer the appraisals until the new year. The teachers agreed (Mt E.’s/Wk 8/1).

Before Christina, the Science Coordinator, could talk about the Science assessments she planned for next week, Monica stepped in to praise the Foundation Stage staff team for their

successful teaching, shown in the results in the last Science, Literacy and Numeracy assessments. All children had “put on value” (Mt E.’s/Wk 6/19) very quickly. The others gave the Foundation Stage teachers a clap.

Christina only wanted to reassure the teachers that the assessment “is not about levelling but only to decide who is “Below Average”, “Average” or “Above Average” (ibid.). And in her other role as Key Stage Two Manager she announced: “the Key Stage Two phase meeting is today between 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.” (Mt E.’s/Wk 4/1 ff.).

With a gesture to the window pointing at the heavy rain outside she asked:

“is there any chance that someone’s got a spare dry pair of trousers I could borrow for today? Mine are soaking wet” (ibid.).

The teachers laughed but no one could help her. Seemingly this was the moment for Brenda to make a personal announcement: “I am pregnant,” (Mt E.’s/Wk 4/2) she said with a big smile on her face. Some staff stood up and gave her a hug.

Robert had to leave, so Monica closed the meeting:

“right, does anyone else need to say anything? No? Well, then good luck to Valerie who is teaching today for the first time, and enjoy your day everyone!” (Mt E.’s/Wk 3/23)

Most teachers got up and walked back to their classrooms to welcome the children who were about to arrive. A few remained a little longer in the staff room to finish earlier conversations.

WRITING AN “INDIVIDUAL” EDUCATION PLAN: “MANAGING” RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY

I walked with Carrie, a part-time class teacher of a year five class, and also a newly qualified teacher (NQT), and Ron, the Inclusion Manager, to the PPA-room. As Ron had announced at the staff briefing, he was going to show Carrie how to use the IEP-Pro software, that was supposed to facilitate the review and writing of IEPs for children who were categorised as having “special educational needs”. It was officially PPA-time for all class teachers in year five. But today Mel, who shared the class teacher role with Carrie, and Caroline, the class teacher of the other year five class, had to teach until 11 a.m.. The TAs, who usually looked after the class during this time, had a course on the new Catch-Up program they were going to use with some children. Carrie would explain the IEP-Pro to the other teachers later.

In the PPA-room Ron and Carrie sat down at one of the four computers provided. They decided to pick Chelsea’s IEP, a child in Carrie’s and Mel’s class, as an example of how to use the software. “This is all about management and you can update it whenever you like” (Mt E.’s/Wk 11/25), Ron began to explain. Carrie asked whether the program was sufficiently flexible to respond to children’s individual characteristics. Ron confirmed this to

be an important aspect and that they had to adapt the suggestions given out by the program to the individual child. “Let’s start with the levels” (ibid.), Ron recommended, after he and Carrie had agreed on the subject Literacy. They tried to set up a file for Chelsea but when they wanted to type in her Literacy levels, distinguishing between her writing and reading competences, the program did not accept two different levels. They decided on one level which they considered to be the “best-fit”. As a result, the program outlined a selection of different concerns a child could raise. The teachers had to choose one as the “main area of concern”. They were neither allowed to formulate a concern themselves, nor to choose more than one “main concern”, but could pick further sub-concerns. Next, Ron and Carrie had to select an attainment target for the child out of a list the program had created. Carrie was undecided about which target to choose as in her view none was suitable for the child. Ron asked: “what are Chelsea’s strengths, bless her?” (Mt E.’s/Wk 12/37 ff.) “She is friendly, nice...” (ibid.), Carrie started to offer, but it was only permissible in the program to specify academic skills. Ron wanted to know whether Chelsea was good in story telling. “You know what, now that you mention it, she is actually pretty good in that” (ibid.), Carrie realised. She recalled a lesson where Chelsea told the class a dream she had and, unexpectedly, she “got so engaged!” (Mt E.’s/Wk 11/28) Ron refocused on the Literacy targets on the list: “it’s just about finding one that fits” (ibid., p.27). “Let’s just take this one” (ibid.), he said and reformulated the target attempting to make the language more “child friendly”. The children were supposed to understand their IEPs and, for this purpose Ron considered the “National Curriculum Language” (ibid., p.24) used by the program to be inappropriate.

The next problem, lay in the program’s suggestion for “Strategies/Resources” to meet the set target. Not every target was available in all year groups in the program but only attached to a particular year group. Thus, the topics in the proposed “Strategies/Resources” aimed at a certain age of child. Chelsea was in year five but was supposed to approach attainment targets, which were allocated in the program to year two. Consequently, Carrie noticed the suggested “strategies” did not match Chelsea’s interests, hence she had to develop some herself. This indicated once more her particular expertise and knowledge in developing individual support for the child, in contrast to the program which had claimed to support the writing of “individual” education plans.

Moreover, Ron disagreed with the way the program set out to evaluate a child’s progress: it outlined certain “Success criteria” and a box saying “observed on” which had to be ticked by the staff. Ron preferred a continuous monitoring of the child’s progress rather than noting a one-off success. And Carrie added further success criteria to observe which were not outlined in the form used by the program.

The support Carrie and Ron had stipulated for Chelsea in the “Support” column of the form, only included support provided by staff, teachers or support staff inside the school.

Peers were not considered at all and the involvement of Chelsea and her parents was only indicated by an extra sheet asking for the child's and parents' views. Ron had added it because it was not part of the program.

Now Caroline, the other year five class teacher appeared in the door. Ron and Carrie were finished. It was nearly 11:00 a.m. and all three decided to go down to the staff room to get some coffee before Carrie and Caroline continued their PPA-time and together prepared the lessons for the next week.

A MEETING OF THE COORDINATORS' CONFERENCE IN FRANZ-SKARBINA-SCHOOL

At 1:35 p.m. the last lesson finished. Afterwards some teachers met in the 'Teachers' Room',²⁴⁰ for a break before they had to attend the meeting of the Coordinators' Conference or run an after-school club. This room was predominantly used by teachers. Other staff mostly came to the room when they had to use the photocopier or other equipment for educational practice provided here. The pedagogues had their own staff room in the day-care building.

The room was usually locked, and every member of staff had a key. Yet, last month a teacher's bag was stolen. Most teachers had their fixed place at one of the tables at which they kept their personal belongings and lesson materials during the school day. In contrast to other schools, where teachers from the same year group shared a table, in FS they were mixed, but often teachers who had closer relationships sat together. But Heidi said she would like to swap places some times to "see other faces and not always the same" (FS/Wk 6/40). A few kitchen facilities, such as a kettle and a coffee machine, a small stove, a fridge, a dishwasher and shelves with a few dishes, offered the opportunity to store and prepare food. But, mostly, teachers only made coffee or tea, as they usually brought sandwiches from home. The windowsills and big shelves were storage for school documents, such as legal frameworks, and for subject-related texts.

Some teachers had quickly left the room to go to a café or restaurant around the corner or to have a cigarette on the balcony. Those who were still in the room talked about personal and work-related issues. I often saw teachers "letting off steam" and then gaining comfort from colleagues, for example, about a controversy with parents. I observed tears, laughter, sarcasm and other emotional outbursts in the Teachers' Room. These seemed to be important, as they created an atmosphere in which the teachers felt welcomed, personally and professionally.

THE ARRIVALS AT THE MEETING

The Coordinators' meeting was scheduled at 2:30 p.m. in the Mediothek, the school's media library, which was mostly used for RE-lessons and staff meetings. It was a medium-sized room, and its round-shaped tables, arranged in an oval, its wooden floor and big windows, produced a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Coordinators, were teachers who, apart from their teaching role, were elected as heads of a department or held the main responsibility in another area of educational practice in the

²⁴⁰ German original: ‚Lehrerzimmer‘

school, such as ‘working with parents’. Altogether, the school had sixteen Coordinators who formed the Coordinators’ Conference. Its primary concerns were to revise and adapt the School Program (2006), that is, the school’s individual “pedagogical strategic plan”²⁴¹ (SenBWF, 2004, p.14) established in 2006; to analyse the school’s self-evaluation and to ensure the flow of information in the staff, for example, by arranging further staff meetings for the whole staff or other smaller staff bodies.

When I arrived, two Coordinators were already in the room and sat next to each other at a table. Shortly after, the other Coordinators and Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher, arrived. Ms Mühlhausen sat down at one top end of the tables. As for most other meetings she attended, she chaired this one. Apart from Ms Mühlhausen, nine Coordinators, two visiting teachers and myself attended the meeting. As the school’s ‘Organisation handbook 2007/2008’ stated: “any interested people can take part as guests” (p.1), “as long as they ask”, Kristina, a teacher, had added. I found this openness was confirmed by Ms Mühlhausen, with regard to my attendance at the staff meeting: “someone who works here for three months is of course allowed to attend *all* conferences”²⁴² (FS/Wk 2/35).

Yet, the majority of teachers stayed away from most meetings if they could. They had criticised the growing number of compulsory meetings on top of their normal workload: Wednesday was called ‘Meetings Day’, because most meetings were on that day, usually lasting about an hour and a half. Thursdays were generally kept free between 8:00 and 8:45 a.m. in all teachers’ timetables for spontaneous staff meetings. The amount of meetings had increased following the governmental requirement for ‘self-governed schools’ (SenBWF, 2004, p.12 ff.), which was meant to increase the participation of teachers (SenBWF, 2004, p.15). In contrast to this aim, some teachers did not attend staff meetings because they thought their views were not taken into account, and felt powerless:

“that’s such a joke, ‘self-governed school’!”²⁴³ (FS/No. 5/S/18)

“You talk and talk at those conferences and in the end something completely different will be decided”²⁴⁴ (FS/Wk 13/34).

“I get stomach-ache when I’m asked to write down what I would like, because I’ve done this already so many times but nothing has ever changed”²⁴⁵ (FS/Wk 3/85).

²⁴¹ German original: „pädagogisches Handlungskonzept“

²⁴² German original: „Wer drei Monate hier arbeitet kann natürlich bei allen Konferenzen dabei sein.“

²⁴³ German original: „Ist auch so’n Witz ‚selbstverwaltete Schule’!“

²⁴⁴ German original: „Man redet und redet auf Konferenzen und hinterher wird doch was ganz anderes entschieden“

²⁴⁵ German original: „Ich krieg’ Magengrummeln, wenn ich aufschreiben soll, was ich mir wünsche, denn das hab’ ich schon so oft gemacht und nie ist was passiert.“

Others, such as Karin, thought some meetings weren't beneficial because of the difficult atmosphere created:

“I find this [...] department-conference very unedifying. I find the atmosphere very difficult. I don't think it is very beneficial”²⁴⁶ (FS/No. 2/S/6).

And Gertrude, described feeling overburdened by the school's extensive engagement in new projects and pilot schemes, and to losing more and more the overview (FS/Wk 6/12 f.).

ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

The topic of today's meeting was the development of the school's 'Internal Curriculum'²⁴⁷, stipulating transferable competences instead of formerly required subject-orientated competences for the children. It was required in the new Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004) and part of the School Program (2006), which outlined how the school was responding to the national statutory curricular frameworks²⁴⁸ and legal requirements. Prior to the meeting, Ms Mühlhausen had prepared a first draft of a preamble for the Internal Curriculum and had given it to each Coordinator. Today, a discussion of the draft was planned and to come to a final agreement, before it would be taken to the Whole Staff meeting to seek everyone's approval.

Christel, a Coordinator, apologised that she had neither read the preamble nor taken a copy with her today. She only heard about the meeting the day before. Ms Mühlhausen assumed Christel was not the only one who did not do “her homework” and looked enquiringly at the other Coordinators. Some of them nodded. She showed her disappointment about their lack of engagement. Under those circumstances they would not be able to make a decision about the preamble today but would have to arrange another date, she declared. She repeated her request that the Coordinators read the preamble and check, in particular, the presentation of their subjects. As an orientation for the content of the curriculum, they should additionally have a look at the content of the VERA, the national assessment test, to be carried out in a few weeks – the curriculum could apparently not be entirely 'internal' but had to respond to external requirements.

Not being able to go through the preamble, the meeting moved on to the individual subject curricula that would be part of the school's Internal Curriculum, and which the Coordinators had to write for their respective subject or year group. Evelin began to introduce the draft for teaching IT, which she had written together with other IT-teachers. It

²⁴⁶ German original: „Diese [...]Fachkonferenz find ich ganz ganz unerquicklich. Ich find' die atmosphärisch ganz schwierig. Ich find die nicht grad gelungen.“

²⁴⁷ German original: ‚schulinternes Curriculum‘

²⁴⁸ German original: Rahmenlehrpläne

supported a cross-curricular approach to IT. The children would use computers and develop their IT-skills in different subjects and in a variety of ways, for example, for the presentation of their work.

As soon as Evelin had finished, some Coordinators started to criticise the high attainment standards in her proposal, to which they refused to commit, especially “given how tight curriculum is already!”²⁴⁹ (Karin, teacher; FS/No. 2/S/19) Evelin responded that lower standards of attainment would make the curriculum less visionary, which for her was a central aspect of this curriculum. Picking up on Karin’s comment, Ms Mühlhausen asked whether some teachers felt overburdened by the expectations placed on their media competency. Some Coordinators admitted they were afraid of their own inability to teach the children IT-skills as part of their subjects. And they did not want to do a preparatory IT-course, as most in-service education had to be arranged outside the staff’s working time.

Evelin had wanted to increase flexibility into IT teaching, by adapting IT to individual classroom contexts and subject matter, and to benefit other areas of learning and teaching. But most staff felt rather inhibited by her proposal.

Next, the Coordinators began to consider possibilities for reducing the pressures on their teaching practice, such as a voluntary “freestyle section”²⁵⁰ (FS/Wk 2/48) in the Internal Curriculum with higher standards and a space for visions and aspirations (ibid., p.45 ff.). Bettina, a Coordinator, generally questioned the degree of teachers’ commitment to the curriculum, by highlighting: “we are formulating *learning* targets for the pupils”²⁵¹ (FS/Wk 2/45 ff.), as opposed to *teaching* targets for teachers. Consequently, the responsibility for meeting curricular requirements seemed to be loaded more on the children than on the staff, she concluded. But Ms Mühlhausen disagreed: “no! We *also* set out targets on what we have to *teach* the children”²⁵² (FS/Wk 2/45 ff.).

Ms Mühlhausen considered another aspect relevant to deciding on the level of curricular attainment targets, which was the school’s public image compared to other schools:

“we have to decide whether we want to apply the highest learning standards or learning standards at a medium level, which is often the case in Germany”²⁵³ (FS/Wk 2/45 ff.).

And she suggested that the attainment targets were lowered, which would support the teachers’ participation.

²⁴⁹ German original: „...bei der Gedrängtheit des Lehrplans!“

²⁵⁰ German original: “Kür-Spalte”

²⁵¹ German original: „Wir formulieren *Lern*-Ziele für die Schüler.“

²⁵² German original: „Nein, wir formulieren auch Ziele, die wir den Kindern *vermitteln*.“

²⁵³ German original: „Wir müssen uns einigen, ob wir Spitzenstandards ansetzen oder mittlere Standards, wie es in Deutschland häufig der Fall ist“

The teachers agreed that if Evelin revised her proposal with lower attainment standards, they would give their consent.

Next, Julia introduced the curriculum proposal for vertical-year-group classes (year one till three), which she had written in consultation with the other vertical-year-group teachers. In her proposal, Julia retained single year groups for facilitating the allocation of curricular content (FS/Wk 2/45 ff.). In practice, she explained, the learning content and children's transitions between the year groups would be fluid. This confirmed another teacher's experience, that a year group was no indicator of a child's level of learning:

“... there's a boy in year one who would be bored to death if he had to continue calculating with numbers up to twenty. And consequently he gets the tasks from year two or completely different tasks”²⁵⁴ (FS/No. 5/S/4 ff.).

At least in their terminology, all staff still applied the concept of single-year-groups.

Rüdiger, found this breakdown very helpful, because he could directly link it to the curriculum for year four which he had to write (FS/Wk 2/45 ff.).

After Julia had finished with the introduction, the Coordinators discussed whether some of the skills included in the curriculum should be taken out: for example, the transferable competence ‘to follow work instructions independently’. Margaret mentioned that it would limit the time for children to achieve proficiency in other areas, and she was particularly concerned about those assessed in the VERA. This concern was brushed aside by other Coordinators, who argued that this competence was a prerequisite for children acquiring all others. After the meeting Ms Mühlhausen commented that she was shocked by some teachers' lack of consideration for the time children needed to gain transferable competences (FS/Wk 5/30).

Julia now mentioned that Heidi had once written a training for the competence ‘to follow work instructions independently’ which she used in her class. Looking inquisitively at Heidi, she asked whether she would be prepared to pass this on to other teachers, which all the Coordinators said they would appreciate. Eventually Heidi agreed. It was a rare occasion for teachers to share their practices with other teachers outside their class teams. In addition, particular tensions had developed some time ago, between Heidi's so-called ‘Crossy-team’, formed with the teachers of the two other vertical-year-group classes on her floor, and the teachers from the vertical-year-group classes on the floor above, simply called ‘Vertical-year-group-team’. Three years previously, Heidi and her team colleagues in the Crossy-team had chosen to start the first year of vertical-year-group classes in the school, while the

²⁵⁴ German original: „...da ist auch ein Junge aus dem ersten Jahrgang, der sich tödlich langweilen würde, wenn er weiterhin im Zwanzigerraum rechnen müsste. Also der kriegt dann halt die Aufgaben des zweiten Jahrgangs oder kriegt ganz andere Aufgaben.“

teachers in the Vertical-year-group-team had worked for only two years with this approach, and had never actually wanted to teach vertical-year-group classes. In comparison to Heidi's team, they experienced greater difficulties with the vertical-year-group approach. In theory, Heidi and her team colleagues could have supported the other teachers, possibly sharing some practice with them, but they had not yet found a way to overcome their disparities. This was shown in an incident between Heidi and Gudrun, a teacher from the Vertical-year-group team, which I recorded in my field notes journal:

Gudrun came into Heidi's classroom the other day saying: 'ok, everyone says that *you* lot here are doing *such* a good job with the vertical-year-group learning and now I would like to see that.' In response, Heidi did not allow Gudrun to observe her lessons. She described to me that in principle she would not mind Gudrun attending her lessons, but she did not like the way in which Gudrun had asked. It seemed to her that Gudrun had only wanted to see Heidi struggling in her lessons, too²⁵⁵ (FS/Wk 6/59 ff.).

Karin, Gudrun's team colleague in the Vertical-year-group-team, strongly desired increased contact with the teachers from the Crossy-team:

"I've always said I would really appreciate if we [Vertical-year-group- and Crossy-team] would collaborate with each other. I have said it in department-conferences as well as to people individually that I would very much like to collaborate more. But there wasn't much response. And here on our floor it is particularly difficult because one colleague [Gudrun] says she needs to sort herself out first, she doesn't want it and doesn't understand why she should do it"²⁵⁶ (FS/No. 2/S/3).

The focus of the Coordinators' meeting was becoming more and more about the Coordinators' individual teaching difficulties, using the meeting to openly share issues surrounding their teaching practices.

Lisa overcame her apparent insecurity by asking apologetically whether someone could clarify the meaning of 'transferable competence' for her once more. She had picked up on various definitions from colleagues, all differing from the official understanding outlined in the national curricular framework. In her opinion, a consistent understanding was a prerequisite to developing shared aims in educational practice (FS/Wk 5/27). Her question

²⁵⁵ German original: „Gudrun kam neulich in Heidis Klassenraum und sagte: ‚So, alle sagen, dass ihr so guten Unterricht hier macht, dass alles so gut funktioniert mit dem JüL, jetzt will ich das mal sehen.‘ Daraufhin hat Heidi gesagt, dass sie das nicht will, wobei es ihr nicht prinzipiell darum ging, dass Gudrun nicht zusehen dürfe, sondern um die Art, wie Gudrun sie fragte. Außerdem hatte Heidi den Eindruck, dass Gudrun eigentlich nur sehen wollte, dass bei ihr auch nicht alles gut funktioniert.“

²⁵⁶ German original: „Ich habe eigentlich immer wieder gesagt ich würd's toll finden, wenn wir uns mehr miteinander absprechen. Hab' ich denen auch gesagt, sowohl auf Fachkonferenzen, als auch die einzeln angesprochen und gesagt, dass ich mir das so wünschen würde, dass wir uns mehr miteinander absprechen. Da ist aber ganz wenig Resonanz gekommen. Und hier auf unserem Flur ist es auch ganz schwierig, weil hier die Kollegin, die hier drin ist, sagt, sie muss erst mal mit sich selber klar kommen, sie will das nicht, sie sieht das gar nicht ein...“

must have hit a crucial note, as most of the Coordinators and guests present, now also expressed confusion about this and other governmental terms, and uncertainty about what they were actually required to do.

When Franziska explained her understanding of the term ‘transferable competence’, she saw it as a particular strength of the new curriculum, offering more freedom for teachers’ individual practice than the former subject-orientated curriculum, but also guidance to support consistency between year-groups (FS/Wk 5/30). Ms Mühlhausen had always appreciated Franziska’s perspective and personality and the way she generally responded well to instructions. In this she differed strongly from other teachers. Julia expressed the objection of other teachers towards the curriculum: it perceived it as a limitation on their freedom to plan lessons. Stefanie, a teacher from the Crossy-team, stated: “I don’t want to be given instructions on my lessons”²⁵⁷ (FS/Wk 6/63). She and the other Crossy-team teachers were regarded as exceptionally good teachers by parents, and colleagues, as well as Ms Mühlhausen. Thus, their rejection of the idea of giving up their individual teaching practices for another structure was understandable. As a result of this criticism, Julia’s draft on the vertical-year-group curriculum turned out to be only one page long. Ms Mühlhausen actually shared the valuing of freedom and ownership of their practice by the teachers, and recognised the disadvantages of “slotting” individual practices into standardised frameworks. She had illustrated this through an example:

“the enjoyment and the inner feeling of satisfaction is more likely to arise if you can take ownership and do things the way you would like to do them. We had this feeling when we got the new ceiling in the refectory. To be suddenly able to say: ‘yes, because of all our joint efforts together with the children, we have now got this ceiling, now it is not as noisy as it had been before. We did it. In our way we raised the money, we got the parents on board, we included the children and we have got a nicer room.’ If we are only here to slot teachers into timetables to cover the first till the sixth lesson PE, it would be terrible”²⁵⁸ (FS/No. 4/S/20).

However, she also felt it was necessary for the teachers to recognise the need for accountability for their teaching, exclaiming: “accountability is a taboo-word in this staff body!”²⁵⁹ (FS/Wk5/31) Noticing a build up of tension, Ms Mühlhausen asked the teachers

²⁵⁷ German original: „Ich möchte mir keine Vorschriften in meinem Unterricht machen lassen.“

²⁵⁸ German original: „Die Freude und das innere Gefühl von Zufriedenheit kommt [...] denke ich ’mal eher auf, wenn man selbst was machen kann. Das Gefühl kam auch auf, als wir die Decke da in der Mensa hatten. Plötzlich zu sagen: ‚Ja, durch die ganze Arbeit, die wir uns gemacht haben mit den Kindern, jetzt ist diese Decke da, jetzt ist es leiser. Wir haben ’was geschafft. Wir haben auf unsere Art irgendwie Geld geschafft, wir haben die Eltern aktiviert, wir haben die Kinder einbezogen und wir haben ’nen schöneren Raum.‘ Wenn wir nur noch dafür da sind, die Lehrer hier in den Stundenplan zusetzen, dass da einer da ist, der von der ersten bis zur sechsten Stunde Sportunterricht macht, das ist ganz furchtbar.“

²⁵⁹ German original: „Verbindlichkeit ist ein Tabu-Wort in diesem Kollegium.“

for the reason for their resentment: “is it the unwillingness to deal with the Internal Curriculum?”²⁶⁰ (FS/Wk 2/51) Julia and Alex tried to explain their argument against stipulating their individual practices into one standardised framework:

“it is the anxiety of having to give up your own practice because of obligatory requirements. I have seen the curriculum of year five and six and thought: ‘thank god I don’t have to work in those year groups!’ Does all this really need to be stipulated in the curriculum?”²⁶¹ (Julia; FS/Wk 2/51)

“Once you have found your structure for the vertical-year-group learning, then it works. And all depends on it. This is where the fear of accountability is coming from”²⁶² (Alex; FS/Wk 2/51).

In addition, Lisa saw a correlation between the teachers’ age, the length of time they had worked together, and their lack of initiative and reluctance to change: “[we] are all getting older together and we lack younger ones who can bring a breath of fresh air”²⁶³ (FS/Wk 2/35 ff.).

Ms Mühlhausen concluded from the teachers’ explanations that the Internal Curriculum had to provide a structure to show accountability as required by the government, but also had to offer flexibility for the teachers’ individual practices. She gave the teachers strategic advice how to integrate these seemingly opposing aspects into their subject- or year-group-curricula:

“explain some practice in more detail, e.g. ‘group work’. That does not mean to commit to the Internal Curriculum to the last detail”²⁶⁴ (FS/Wk 2/45 ff.).

THE END OF THE MEETING

It was already 3:45 p.m. and some of the Coordinators needed to go home. But Rüdiger, a class teacher in year four, said that he felt unsure about how he was supposed to develop the year four curriculum: “we haven’t spoken about the transition between year three and year

²⁶⁰ German original: „Ist es die Unwilligkeit sich mit dem schulinternen Curriculum zu befassen?“

²⁶¹ German original: „Es ist die Angst, eigene Praktiken aufgeben zu müssen aufgrund verbindlicher Vorgaben. Ich habe das Curriculum der 5. und 6. Jahrgangsstufe gelesen und dachte: ‚Gott sei Dank arbeite ich nicht in der 5. und 6. Klasse‘. Muss das wirklich alles im Curriculum festgeschrieben werden?“ (The higher the year group in primary education the more curricular requirements applied to the educational practice in order to smoothen the children’s transition between to secondary education.)

²⁶² German original: „Wenn man eine Struktur gefunden hat, dann funktioniert JüL. Und damit steht und fällt es. Daher die Angst vor Verbindlichkeit.“

²⁶³ German original: „[Wir] sind alle gemeinsam alt geworden und es fehlt ein bisschen der frische Wind von den Jüngeren.“

²⁶⁴ German original: „Schlüsselt beispielsweise die Gruppenarbeit auf. Das heißt nicht, das Methodencurriculum bis in Detail festzulegen.“

four”²⁶⁵ (FS/Wk 2/51). In response, the Coordinators clarified the next steps: Julia, Alex and Lisa would rewrite the proposal for the vertical-year-group curriculum, and when this was approved by the other vertical-year-group teachers they would pass it on to Rüdiger as an orientation for the year four curriculum draft. Rüdiger pleaded: “but please do not move too much learning content into year four!”²⁶⁶ (FS/Wk 5/30) This had happened a few times before when teachers had felt there was too much curricular content to teach in the lower year groups (FS/Wk 5/27 ff.).

Without enthusiasm, the Coordinators and Ms Mühlhausen considered the upcoming meeting of the whole staff and the School Conference: “[we will] have to go round all these circles once more. Everything will be discussed again”²⁶⁷ (FS/Wk 2/47).

²⁶⁵ German original: „Der Übergang von Jahrgang 3 zu Jahrgang 4 wurde noch gar nicht angesprochen.“

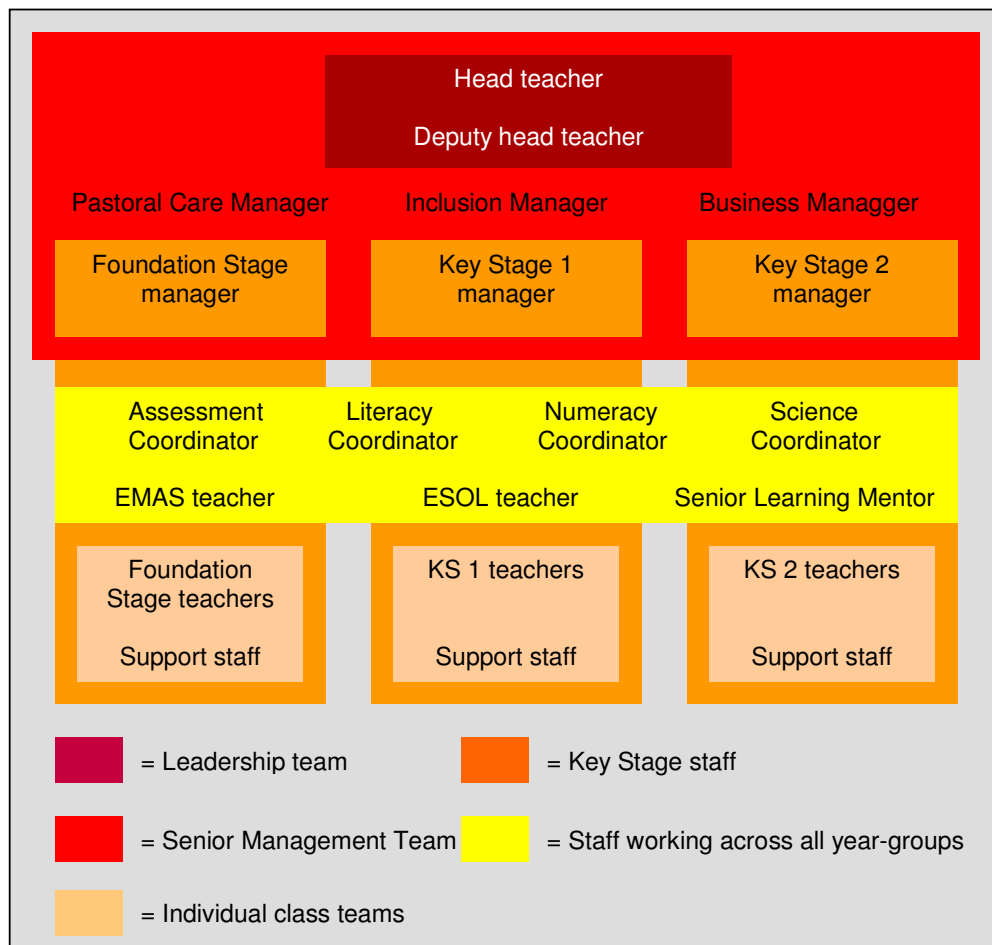
²⁶⁶ German original: „Aber bitte nicht zuviel in die vierte Klassenstufe abschieben.“

²⁶⁷ German original: „Wir müssen die Schleifen dann nochmal ziehen. Alles wird wieder neu diskutiert werden.“

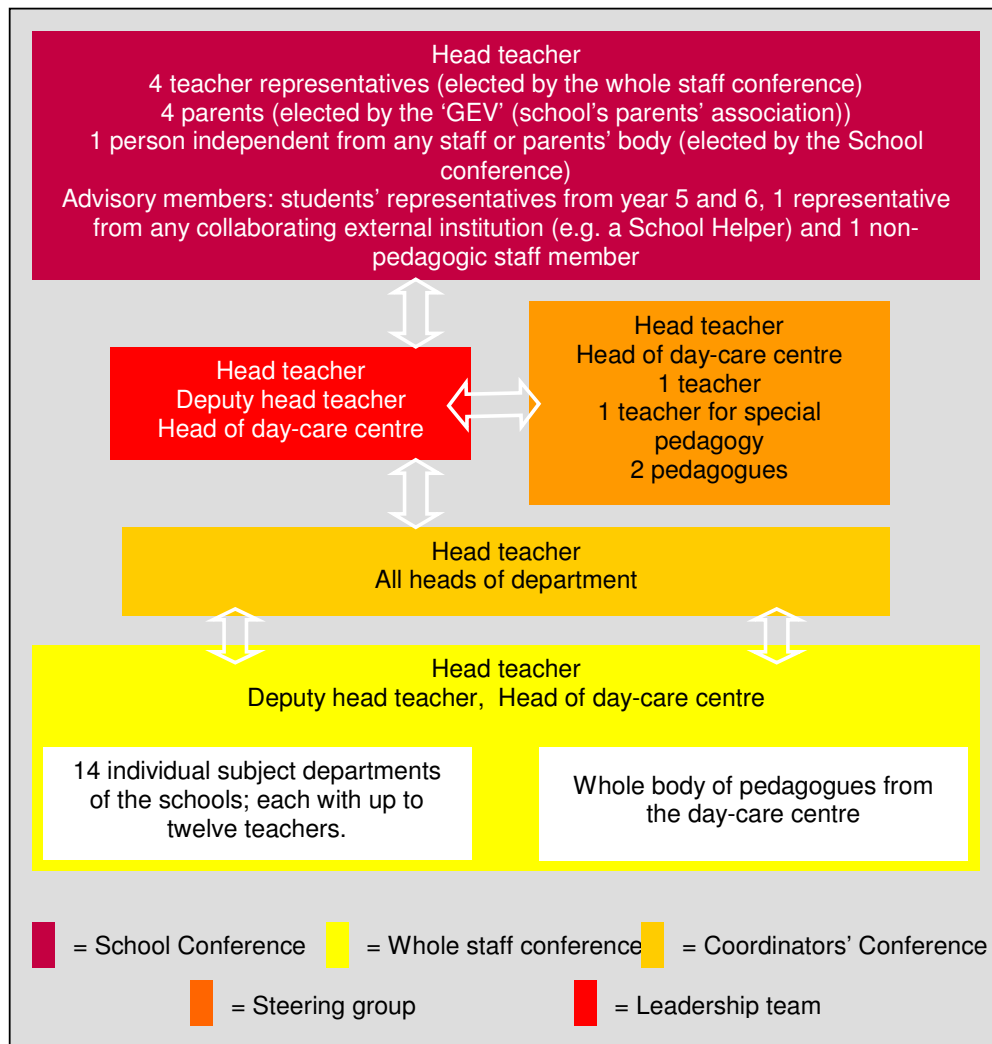
EXPLORING STAFF PARTICIPATION OUTSIDE LESSONS

The previous two scenes showed formal staff meetings in Mt E.'s and FS in order to illustrate responses to the diversity of staff outside lesson practice. In this part of the chapter, I investigate their participation and barriers to it, their rationales and effects, once more focusing on their roles and interactions as structures for, and influences on, their participation.

In the first section I compare staff interactions in Mt E.'s and FS, followed by an exploration of the apparent barriers to participation promoted through hierarchies in the staff, and between schools and governments. In the second section I discuss three distinguishing features of staff roles in Mt E.'s and FS and their effects on the participation of staff. I conclude this chapter with my identification of main barriers as well as facilitators for staff participation.



Box 24 'Staffing structure in Mt E.'s: a hierarchical network'



Box 25 'Staffing structure in FS: hierarchical staff bodies'

COMPARING STRUCTURES FOR STAFF INTERACTIONS

What I first recognised, when I compared the two scenes, were the different degrees of staff community in the schools. It appeared to be stronger in Mt E.'s. At the meetings in Mt E.'s, the staff shared individual practices, personal information, offered support and acknowledged individual achievements, which produced this sense of community. There was no immediate indication of anyone's exclusion or of much disagreement.

In contrast, in FS at the Coordinators' meeting, people revealed differing perspectives, criticism of individually perceived barriers to participation, defensiveness towards sharing their own or adapting to others' practices, and initially showed reluctance to express individual concerns and difficulties in such a forum.

I found that the seemingly stronger staff community in Mt E.'s was supported by various structures, such as the appearance of the staff rooms. In Mt E.'s, the staff room was much

more homely than in FS the Teachers' Room – a title which already implies the exclusion of other groups of staff, namely support staff as well as non-pedagogic staff. The staff room in Mt E.'s was used by staff for non-work related activities, such as having breakfast or lunch, relaxing on the sofa or reading the newspaper. In FS, the Teachers' Room was mostly used for working purposes while, for more personal gatherings, teachers rather went to a café or met in their classrooms.

Another feature promoting a sense of staff community, was a sense of collective responsibility. In Mt E.'s, staff shared concerns over their daily practice, which was supported through the staffing structure: a network of roles of staff with different responsibilities following a model of “distributed leadership” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/3), as Monica explained (see Box 24, p.210). For example, the EMAS teacher held the main expertise and responsibility for additional language and family support; the Inclusion Manager was approached by teachers when they had concerns over a child's academic learning; the Literacy, Numeracy, and Science Coordinators exercised overviews of the children's learning attainments in particular subjects. As they were all concerned with different aspects of daily educational practice, communication between them was inevitable. Monica, the deputy head, regarded this “ethos of collective responsibility” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/14) as a prerequisite for staff to carry out their job:

“...if you don't sign up for that collective responsibility, it's likely that you are incapable of doing your job, [that is] to improve the lives of the children who are in front of us“ (ibid.).

In this way, staff were available for each other to help, which Luke, the Business Manager, felt as a necessity:

“they [the staff] need to [...] feel supported [and] also know where they can go if they are having problems. And feel that if they do go to somebody their problem is gonna be solved. And I think that's the beauty here. That they think they can go to people and things will get done” (Mt E.'s/No. 16/S/12).

Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, recognised and described as important for staff interactions that “people [staff] feel comfortable being honest and say: ‘I don't think I get enough support’” (Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/19).

However, such distribution of responsibilities in daily practice could also cause inconsistent practice, as Jody, a teacher in Mt E.'s, experienced:

“a child [has] been very poorly behaved. [...] the situation has escalated and Monica is now supposed to be overseeing it. [...] for the last three days Monica hasn't been able to come down, so it's actually becoming detrimental... [...] I just don't think that the system in itself, relying on her to remember and to be available... [...] it's not

consistent. [It] is a lot more consistent, is a lot more reliable [when] *I* am just managing” (Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/4 ff.).

In comparison to the close staff network in Mt E.’s, in FS the staffing structures offered more opportunities for isolation, and collective responsibility for whole-school developments was mainly supported at the strategic level. Individual daily practice was rarely discussed at official meetings of staff from different classes, which followed an agenda formulated by the head teacher or heads of department. The only official structures allowing space for discussion of teachers’ individual educational practice, although narrowly focusing on a particular child, were meetings of Support Conferences or individual meetings of class teachers and a teacher for special pedagogy, for the purpose of arranging a child’s assessment for “special pedagogic support needs”. Yet, even at these meetings, it is questionable to what extent staff felt able to talk openly about their individual educational practice.

Another difference between FS and Mt E.’s, and apparently a contributing factor to the development of a staff community, was the emphasis on whole staff meetings. In FS, whole staff meetings were arranged three or four times a year, lasting on average for two or three hours. The most frequent meetings were those of smaller staff bodies, such as different subject departments, consisting of a few teachers and sometimes pedagogues, meeting, at best, once a fortnight. Whole staff meetings and at least one department conference were compulsory for all staff (see Box 25, p.211). In Mt E.’s, whole staff meetings, open to all staff, but only compulsory for teachers, took place three times a week: two staff briefings, each fifteen minutes, and one one-hour inset. In addition, smaller groups of staff, such as the Key Stage teams, or the SMT, were arranged at least every fortnight, and support staff met irregularly. Apart from those official structures, individual arrangements in Mt E.’s aimed to increase the staff community and collective responsibility: for instance, Monica’s request to staff in the briefing, to think about what the school means to them. And a particular emphasis in Mt E.’s was placed on the socialising of staff inside and outside school, which was recognised as beneficial for educational practice:

“...we share interests and we share a social life, which makes the challenging part of my job easier. [And] it’s working for the children” (Monica; Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/18).

It was supported through weekly events announced on the white board in the staff room.

Robert, the head teacher, ensured he met with staff in school every day:

“I speak to every teacher every day, which can just be, obviously casual conversation or it can be about something they’re doing...” (Mt E.’s/No. 3/S/8).

By comparison, Ms Mühlhausen at FS was hardly ever in the Teachers' Room and although her office door was usually open, apart from some staff who she saw daily, her main point of contact were arranged meetings.

Informal gatherings were rarely organised for the whole staff, but on an individual basis for smaller groups. Those staff groups were often year-group- or class-teams, and therefore their members had already been closely working together, supported by the organisational structures in the school. Consequently, they did not support the development of a whole staff community, but furthered separations between staff.

Hierarchical interactions as barriers to participation

In both schools, all staff, support staff, teachers and school leadership experienced barriers to participation. This was despite structures and intentions with directly opposite aims, apparently supporting an increased staff ownership in the schools: for example, the concept of a 'self-governed school' (SenBWF, 2004, p.12ff.), implemented by the Berlin government, or Robert (head teacher in Mt E.'s) emphasising the idea of

“let[ting] people have responsibilities, ... it's like treating them like adults really. ... that's what we should do with the staff really, I think. [...] And that's why they feel, very positively about their well-being” (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/9).

These barriers were predominantly recognisable in hierarchies of staff, as well as between governments and the schools.

Staff hierarchies

In Mt E.'s, hierarchies were part of the staffing structure and, therefore, seemingly unquestioned:

“obviously it [the hierarchy in the staff] starts with the head, deputy head, SMT and then they bring it [the subject of discussion] to the staff. If it's a little bit of change here and there, yes, they take all staff on board: teachers, and maybe TAs, to a lesser extents. But if they want to change something major [...], if people wouldn't like it, they would go: 'this is how we are doing it'!” (Mel, teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 7/13)

Potentially all teachers could become members of the SMT. Yet, for many of those who were not, they considered their participation to be limited, especially regarding developments that concerned the whole school, or required “major changes” (ibid.). For instance, Jody, a teacher, desired more say in regard to the assignment of year groups (Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/18), and Mel criticised the Healthy School Policy that had been agreed by the SMT. Mel never suggested alternatives because she felt her participation was too limited to initiate change:

“I’m not that sort of a person that would go to Monica [deputy head] and say: ‘I don’t really agree I think we should do it differently.’ [...] It’s just the way it’s gonna be. Something that can’t be changed and you’ve got to do” (Mt E.’s/No. 7/S/12 f.).

Lysandra, a nursery nurse, had become frustrated about her limited participation and resigned:

“...you can raise it [an idea], but nothing will get done about it. It’s just being ignored. And if you do say something you will be looked at in a funny way” (Mt E.’s/No. 8/S/6).

Other staff found the management to be relatively accommodating:

“I think they [the SMT] are up for the staff having their say and what they [the staff] think is important. [...] They do look after the staff in lots of ways, ... how staff are feeling and that they are happy” (Mt E.’s/No. 10/S/4).

Monica, the deputy head teacher in Mt E.’s, regarded the limited participation of staff in decision-making as an inevitability, due to the complexity of the school and the distribution of responsibilities:

“urban schools are complex organisations. [...] I don’t think there is one person who knows everything that’s happening, I think there are lots of people who are leading different areas with the same vision. I’ve never heard of a completely transparent organisation where decisions are completely shared, and everybody has the opportunity to take part in those decisions. ...people get paid to do certain jobs. [...] Perhaps staff might say or might even want to know everything that’s coming in to Robert and I. [...] But actually no! It’s not appropriate. ... *we* take the decision as leaders... [it’s] our job. If we are wrong, then we’ll be held accountable for the wrong decisions. I would imagine there *is* some frustration [amongst the staff]. I certainly heard some myself” (Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/4 ff.).

In contrast to Monica’s justification of the rather rigid hierarchy in Mt E.’s, with a powerful management, Ms Mühlhausen expressed a more ambivalent support for hierarchical staff structures in FS. She tried to ensure staff, but also her own, participation in school developments, recognising the actual benefits of increased feelings of ownership for educational practice, as she previously stated at the Coordinators’ Conference meeting:

“as the head teacher, you are in a very awkward position. You are responsible for the development of the School Program [etc.] but you are not supposed to interfere, to let the teachers do the developments by themselves.... [But] I’ve got my own interests and sometimes [...] I am unsatisfied with what happens content-wise [...], and I recognise that I start intervening again – introducing my own interests”²⁶⁸ (FS/No. 4/S/13 ff.).

²⁶⁸ German original: „...als Schulleiterin kommt man in ein ganz merkwürdiges Konstrukt. Man ist verantwortlich für die Erstellung des Schulprogramms [etc.], aber man soll seinen Mund immer halten, soll die [Lehrer/innen] Entwicklungen selber machen lassen.... [Aber] ich hab’ eigene

Her dominance was strongly criticised by some teachers who felt it acted as a limitation to their participation:

“I think in regards to some issues, when she [Ms Mühlhausen] has got the feeling a decision may be made which is not the right one in *her* opinion, she simply takes over and makes the decision”²⁶⁹ (Kristina; FS/No. 5/S/15).

“Your suggestions are simply disregarded [by the head teacher], just like that”²⁷⁰ (Heidi; FS/Wk3/63).

Other teachers did not mind Ms Mühlhausen’s dominance, nor taking instructions, as was also noticeable at the Coordinators’ meeting. Ms Mühlhausen recognised the differing expectations from staff on her role, as well, which caused additional pressures for her:

”some ascribe a role of leadership to me and others can be quite informal with me. [...] And then there are also colleagues who do not want to be led at all, who think it would work without any leadership. And at the opposite end of the spectrum, there are probably those who say: ‘she needs to put her foot down.’ If she doesn’t put her foot down but looks for a compromise because of the severity of the situation, this, in turn, initiates arguments between the colleagues. That’s always a little minefield”²⁷¹ (FS/No. 4/S/10 ff.).

It becomes apparent that staff hierarchies in FS were seen less as an inevitable part of the staffing structures, but more due to interactions between staff and Ms Mühlhausen. Consequently, and in contrast to Mt E.’s, a lot of staff criticism about their limited participation was directly addressed to the leadership. Ms Mühlhausen had tried to reduce the conflicts, by increasing communication between herself and the staff, hence she had established the Coordinators’ Conference:

Interessen und manchmal [...] bin ich unzufrieden mit dem, was inhaltlich läuft [...], und dann merke ich, dass ich schon wieder anfangen zu intervenieren, dass ich meine eigenen Themen da ’rein bringe.“

²⁶⁹ German original: „Ich denke bei den Dingen, wo sie das Gefühl für sich hat, das kommt sonst nicht zu einer für sie richtigen Entscheidung, [die] nimmt sie dann einfach in die Hand und bestimmt dann halt auch.“

²⁷⁰ German original: „Einfach so [werden] Vorschläge, die man hat, vom Tisch gewischt.“

²⁷¹ German original: „Manche [...] schieben mir ’ne Rolle von Schulleitung zu und andere können ganz gut und locker mit mir umgehen. [...] Und es gibt auch Kollegen, die gar nicht geleitet werden wollen, die meinen es ginge alles ohne Leitung. Und wiederum am entgegengesetzten Teil der Skala gibt’s vermutlich die, die sagen, da müsste sie ein Machtwort reden. Wenn sie kein Machtwort spricht und der Schwere wegen ein Kompromiss zu suchen ist dann kommen auch die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen den Kollegen. Das ist immer so ein kleines Minenfeld, auf dem man sich bewegt.“

“if you talk to colleagues and make it transparent and always reveal the reasons for taking a certain decision and let them participate in the decision-making process – which sometimes costs a lot of time – there are fewer conflicts”²⁷² (FS/No. 4/S/3 ff.).

Yet, certain “areas of conflict with the teachers”²⁷³ (ibid., p.2 ff.) seemed to be persisting, like the differing foci on educational practice in the school:

“...as a head teacher I think you stop thinking ‘me and my class’. ...you are automatically in the role of ‘my school’. This is somehow simply a different entity: you have got sixteen classes and 34 teachers. And you try somehow to put your ideals or your vision about the school into practice, and sometimes it does not work”²⁷⁴ (ibid., p.3 ff.).

Her perspective was criticised by teachers as lacking understanding of their concerns with classroom practice:

“sometimes I have the feeling that the school leadership is not sufficiently informed anymore about the problems in classes and lessons.... [I wish that] she did not only view our problems from the outside, but for a moment adopts our perspective, in order to understand us better, and forgets her concern with the image of the school to the public, that you want to keep certain parents, that you satisfy such and such committees and regulations”²⁷⁵ (Heidi, teacher; FS/No. 1/S/4).

However, on the other side at the Coordinators’ meeting, it was obvious that teachers also benefited from Ms Mühlhausen’s particular expertise in responding to governmental requirements. And correspondingly, Ms Mühlhausen thought her broader perspective of educational practices complemented the teachers’ narrower classroom perspectives:

“sometimes I think that I see more possibilities because I still have an outside perspective. My colleagues are buried in their class-work too much at times. And when

²⁷² German original: „...wenn man mit Kollegen redet und es transparent macht und immer wieder begründet warum man was entscheidet und immer wieder ihre Teilnahme auf dem Weg zur Entscheidung irgendwie mitnimmt – was auch manchmal viel Zeit kostet – dann sind die Konflikte nicht so.“

²⁷³ German original: „Konflikte mit den Lehrern“

²⁷⁴ German original: „...als Schulleiterin hört man glaube ich auf so stark ‚ich und meine Klasse‘ zu denken. ...man kommt irgendwie automatisch in die Rolle ‚meine Schule‘. Das ist irgendwie einfach eine andere Einheit: man hat 16 Klassen und man hat 34 Lehrer. Und man versucht irgendwie sein Ideale oder seine Vorstellungen von Schule zu realisieren und manchmal funktioniert das nicht.“

²⁷⁵ German original: „Ich [habe] manchmal das Gefühl, dass die Schulleitung an manchen Stellen nicht mehr so gut Bescheid weiß über die inneren Probleme in Klassen und im Schulunterricht.... [Ich wünsche mir, dass] sie unsere Probleme ’mal nicht immer nur von außen betrachtet, sondern sich, nur für diesen Moment, ’mal auf unsere Ebene begibt, und die Denkweise, dass da eine Außenwirkung für Schule sein muss, dass man bestimmte Eltern halten will, dass man diesen und jenen Gremien [...] und jenen Bestimmungen gerecht wird, ’mal außen vor lässt, um uns besser zu verstehen.“

you then can introduce something new from the outside I always like that”²⁷⁶ (FS/No. 4/S/3).

Ms Mühlhausen gained some insight into classroom practice through her small teaching responsibility, Support Conferences, or irregular chats with teachers. She did not know about the desire by some teachers that she have an increased insight into their practices, but assumed that “many teachers would perceive it as controlling”²⁷⁷ (FS/No. 4/S/11). But, similarly, she wanted teachers to take on her perspective and “look beyond their own lessons”²⁷⁸ (FS/No. 5/S/19). Underlying this criticism of each other’s perspectives on educational practice appeared to be the desire for an increased valuation of one’s work. For instance, Ms Mühlhausen had indicated her disappointment at the Coordinators’ meeting and afterwards about teachers who were “not even” (Ms Mühlhausen; FS/Wk 5/31) engaging with the new Internal Curriculum, which increased the pressures on her. The slow turn of the meeting’s topic away from the development of an Internal Curriculum to the Coordinators’ individual concerns, also showed their desire for a recognition of their individual daily practices. And Heidi directly expressed what she saw as a lack of valuation of her work:

“the school leadership should pay attention to what we are already doing and not always [say]: ‘we’ve got to....’ Nobody, apart from your team colleagues, comes to you, pats you on your shoulder and says: ‘you do that really well’, or supports you otherwise. The things that are already happening are ‘simply common-place’”²⁷⁹ (FS/No. 1/S/2 ff.).

Apparently neither she nor the teachers had communicated their desires sufficiently to each other, and thus did neither know about actually existing valuation. For example, Kristina described her empathy with Ms Mühlhausen’s difficult situation to me:

“the school leadership gets immense pressure from the governing body, the school inspector and the chief school inspector,.... It is pretty tough what our poor school leadership has to cope with”²⁸⁰ (FS/No. 5/S/8).

²⁷⁶ German original: „Ich find manchmal, ich hab mehr Möglichkeiten Ideen von außen mitzukriegen, da ich noch den Fuß draußen hab’. Also meine Kollegen versinken manchmal mit ihrer Klassenarbeit sehr stark. Und wenn man dann von außen mal wieder so was neues einbringt, finde ich das immer ganz gut.“

²⁷⁷ German original: „...es würden viele Kollegen als Kontrolle erleben.“

²⁷⁸ German original: „... über den eigenen Unterricht gucken.“

²⁷⁹ German original: „...die [Schulleitung] sollte an manchen Stellen auch mal so’n bisschen gucken, was wir schon alles machen und nicht immer [sagen]: ‚Wir müssen ‚mal...‘. [...] Es kommt keiner, [außer] innerhalb des Arbeitsteams, zu dir und klopft dir auf die Schulter und sagt: ‚Das machen Sie aber gut‘ [...], oder dass du noch mehr unterstützt wirst. [...] Die Sachen, die laufen sind eben selbstverständlich.“

²⁸⁰ German original: „Die Schulleitung kriegt ja auch immensen Druck vom Schulrat, Schulrätin, übergeordneter Schulrat,.... Also, das ist schon ziemlich heftig, was sich da unsere arme Schulleitung manchmal so reinziehen muss.“

As exemplified at the staff meeting in Mt E.'s, the valuation of the staff's work was an established part of their interaction, which they greatly appreciated:

“it is nice when somebody praises you, like after the parents' evening Robert [the head teacher] said: ‘thanks for organising all the interpreters.’ He said: ‘thank you’, and that means a lot to me” (Sue, EMAS teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 9/S/8).

Furthermore, in FS, staff more often expressed mistrust and suspicion towards colleagues and an increased sensitivity towards criticism, while in Mt E.'s, I could see a greater sense of trust across the staff:

“... they [the teachers who are more critical towards Ms Mühlhausen's dominance] easily think, [...] there is some gossip and diddling...”²⁸¹ (Karin, teacher; FS/No. 2/S/9).

“But maybe we need to become a little bit more open and learn how to deal with criticism”²⁸² (Stefanie, teacher; FS/Wk 6/63).

“Trust I think is the main one. [...] obviously they [the staff] have seen me working in the school, and they trust what I am capable of” (Lynn, TA; Mt E.'s/No 17/S/6).

That both, trust and valuation, were more established across the whole staff body in Mt E.'s than in FS, where they were mostly recognisable in individual staff contacts, suggested an interdependence of both features.

As exemplified at the Coordinators' meeting in FS, in response to feelings of devaluation, mistrust, and pressures, Ms Mühlhausen and the teachers in FS applied an increased power to defend their individual interests, or simply withdrew from interactions. Those responses supported their individual security, yet they revealed a vicious cycle, promoting further hierarchies and rejection of other perspectives than one's own.

The exclusion of support staff. One group of staff were absent from most staff meetings, despite their otherwise strong contributions to educational practices: the support staff. They were less involved in school development than teachers, particularly noticeable in FS, and their separation from the teachers' community was especially recognised in Mt E.'s: “there is a massive divide between teaching and non-teaching staff” (Luke, Business Manager; Mt E.'s/No. 16/S/4). Monica claimed that “they [the support staff] are welcome” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/18) but then added “they don't *feel* welcome, I don't think, as a group” (ibid.). Although all staff experienced limited participation, there were various factors, which seemingly increased these barriers to participation for support staff.

²⁸¹ German original: „... die [die Lehrer/innen] denken dann eben schnell, [...] da wird gemauschelt oder getratscht...”

²⁸² German original: „Aber vielleicht müssen wir da auch etwas offener werden und lernen mit Kritik umzugehen...”

In FS, the separation between teachers and support staff was promoted by their belonging to different institutions: the pedagogues were members of the day-care centre and the School Helpers were employed by another institution in Berlin. They had their own meetings and their own management, as, for example, Nabil's School Helper Paul described:

"I've got my own lobby because there are other School Helpers here who have got the same employer as I have. We communicate and we also have our proper [team meetings]..."²⁸³ (FS/No. 13/S/11).

Correspondingly, he had never been invited by teachers to a staff meeting, not even to the whole staff meetings, which the pedagogues had to attend. The Teachers' Room in the school was officially provided for teachers, while pedagogues had their staff room in the day-care centre.

In Mt E.'s, both support staff and teachers were employed by the school. Yet, their meetings were mostly held separately, which Monica, the deputy head teacher, saw was caused by their conflicting working times, which apparently also prevented informal gatherings:

"teachers cannot meet during the day, [...] and TAs finish at 3:30 p.m., and we can't do it at lunch time, because most of them choose to be employed as lunch time assistants as well [...] so they have a different lunch time and [they] don't share the staff room at the same time" (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/18 ff.).

However, it had not affected Lynn, a TA, who had equal contacts with teachers and other support staff:

"probably I am [most in touch with] support staff because of the lunch time shifts as well. So I'm always with support staff, but teachers as well, I suppose. Maybe about the same mix" (Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/11).

Different working times did not necessarily promote exclusion for support staff. Another factor that acted as a potential barrier to their participation was the different ways in which the school gave consideration to support versus other staff. For instance, the staff well-being program "was mainly for teachers, because all main well-being facilitators are for teachers." (Luke, Business Manager; Mt E.'s/No. 16/S/9). Furthermore, support staff had much less in-service training (insets), "five or six days per year" (Lynn, TA; Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/11), in comparison to teachers, who had at least one per week.

In addition, especially in Mt E.'s, some personal attributes distinguished support and teaching staff as well, such as their cultural backgrounds:

²⁸³ German original: „Ich hab' ja hier meine Lobby. Es gibt hier ja noch mehrere Schulhelfer, die sind ja beim selben Arbeitgeber wie ich. Wir tauschen uns ja auch aus und wir haben ja auch richtig unsere [Teammeetings]....“

“all our teachers are white. And we have got ten per cent white kids. The support staff interestingly nearly matches the pupils’ cohort. But that is because a lot of them were, or are, parents of kids in the school, so you automatically get the same reflection” (Luke, Business Manager; Mt E.’s/No. 16/S/7).

Apparently, ethnic differences, that were formerly described as barrier for parent participation, had similar effects on support staff, indicating again the dominance of particular cultures in the school. Possibly their own exclusion was an explanation why they had not been used as mediators between staff and parents with different cultural backgrounds. It had continuously been called for more interpreters, instead of taking advantage of the skills of support staff at Mt E.’s for interpreting

Monica assumed that another personal factor causing separation between teachers and support staff was their age differences: support staff were on average 15 years older than teachers. But Luke ascribed the separation to be due to people’s inflexibility to adapt to change, which often corresponded with a higher age, and did not only promote a divide between teachers and support staff, but also *amongst* the support staff in Mt E.’s:

“...we have got a divide amongst teaching assistants as well, because you have got your old generation and the new generation. [But] we are quite lucky because the older generation does take new things on board and you don’t get the usual ‘that’s not how we used to do it’... And then the younger staff have got more of their own mind now” (Mt E.’s/No. 16/S/4).

Lisa, a teacher at FS, recognised this correlation between age and flexibility to respond to change, as equally true amongst teachers, hence she called for more age-diversity in the teaching body.

In summary of this section on staff hierarchies, especially in comparison to the strong criticism staff voiced in FS, it was surprising to me how little staff hierarchies in Mt E.’s were questioned, and simply accepted as part of staffing structures. In FS, hierarchical interactions were seen predominantly as between some teachers and the head teacher, whereas the staffing structures were supposed to increase staff participation. Another main difference between Mt E.’s and FS, were the ways in which staff were aware of barriers to their participation: in Mt E.’s, it was mainly referred to developments at the strategic level of the school, and, in FS, staff first and foremost expressed their desire for increased valuation and sharing of their individual practice.

Hierarchies between governments and the schools: speaking different languages

School staff, but especially the leadership, were under constant pressure to fulfil governmental requirements, such as standardised attainment targets, curricular topics and standardised national pupil assessment (SATs and VERA), as well as school evaluations or individual, yet standardised, education plans (IEPs). Those pressures were particularly strong in Mt E.'s, due to the publication of children's results in the SATs, which was not yet the case in Berlin, although it was currently under debate²⁸⁴. These governmental requirements ran counter to the actual realities staff confronted in their schools and interfered with their understandings of learning and teaching and their visions of educational practice like those expressed by Ms Mühlhausen's:

"I would like to imagine a learning environment as a space, which we inhabit the whole day in some way, in which we are eager to work, in which we have lots of time to communicate with each other and to discuss our ideas without haste, and eventually go home with your plans to put them enthusiastically into practice"²⁸⁵ (FS/No. 4/S/21).

And Stefanie, an FS teacher, confirmed the apparent mismatch of understandings of educational practice, such as Ms Mühlhausen's, and the standardisation in governmental requirements by pointing out: "this focus on attainment and performance means death [for all educational practice]"²⁸⁶ (FS/Wk 6/40).

The Coordinators' difficulties in understanding the government's instructions was another example of diverging perspectives. According to Karin, another FS teacher, the teachers' rejection of the new Internal Curriculum resulted in part from misunderstanding the underlying purpose of the Internal Curriculum:

"I think, that it has not really been understood yet, what purpose could be served by using this instrument [the Internal School Curriculum]. I think the majority of colleagues see the Internal School Curriculum as unnecessary paperwork, which you

²⁸⁴ The daily newspaper Berlin 'Tagesspiegel' announced the government's intentions to publish school results of children's national comparative exams. (For further information see Nikolow, R., 2011. Schulen durchsichtiger machen (English transl. 'Making school more transparent'). In: *Tagesspiegel*, 16th February 2011. Available online at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/schule/schulen-durchsichtiger-machen/3845340.html> [Accessed: 20th February 2011]

²⁸⁵ German original: „[...] ich würde mir gerne eine Lernlandschaft als Raum vorstellen, wo wir den ganzen Tag irgendwie sind, wo wir hochengagiert Lust haben zu arbeiten, wo wir viel Zeit haben miteinander zu kommunizieren und in Ruhe unsere Ideen abzusprechen und dann jeder mit seinem Päckchen Maßnahmen nach Hause geht und mit Begeisterung das, was wir jetzt geplant haben auch umsetzt.“

²⁸⁶ German original: „Die Leistungsschiene ist der Tod [für jeden Unterricht].“

eventually file and dump in a corner... [...] I could imagine that it carries a lot of potential”²⁸⁷ (FS/No. 2/S/19 f.).

In both schools, one effect of the unsuitability of the governments’ educational approach and its perspective on schools was to engender a feeling of mistrust and devaluation amongst the staff. Heidi, a teacher in FS, felt her teaching skills were mistrusted when she had to carry out the standardised assessment tests VERA: “as a pedagogue you are not trusted to know the next step in the development [of a child]”²⁸⁸ (FS/Wk 3/65). Similarly, in Mt E.’s, Monica, the deputy head teacher, regarded the external school evaluation as devaluing staff and failing to capturing their actual practices and contribution:

“... how school is judged externally by government, by local authority, our school is deemed to be at risk of failing the children. It’s not true! Our staff [*are*] doing a fantastic job in *our* judgement. ... we think it [the governments’ low judgement] would demotivate and stop them doing the job they’re doing” (Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/15).

Moreover, it increased the staff’s workload, as shown by Ron’s and Carrie’s additional efforts to try to adapt the standardised IEP-form to their practices and each respective child. Consequently, staff also tried to pass responsibilities on to others, as Rüdiger, a Coordinator in FS, indicated at the meeting when he asked the others not to defer too much of the curricular content to his year group. And similar tendencies were recognised by Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager in Mt E.’s:

“...to a certain degree people just wanna go: ‘ok, it’s not my responsibility any more’, and that’s not right. [But] I’m not gonna take everything that’s passed to me. As class teachers, they should be handling some things themselves. [...] They need to maintain their responsibility to a certain degree” (Mt E.’s/No. 11/S/11).

The leadership in FS and Mt E.’s were responsible for ensuring that the schools met the government requirements. As a result, they mediated between standardised statutory requirements and staff’s individual educational practices. They exerted power over the staff to ensure a degree of compliance, while at the same time trying to buffer government requirements to allow for their own vision in the school:

“the pressure from the government [...] is buffered in this school up to a point. [...] at the moment it’s a political game we’re playing, where we’re trying to improve our

²⁸⁷ German original: „Ich glaube, dass das hier bei uns in der Schule noch nicht so wirklich angekommen ist, wozu man das Instrument nutzen könnte. Ich glaube das schulinterne Curriculum wird von der Masse der Kollegen hier nur als so’n überflüssiger Papierkram gesehen, den man letztendlich in irgendeinen Ordner in die Ecke stellt... [...] Ich könnte mir vorstellen, dass da ’ne Menge an Potenzial drin ist.“

²⁸⁸ German original: „Die Erfahrung wird dir als Pädagoge nicht zugebilligt, dass wir wissen, was der nächste Entwicklungsschritt ist.“

statistics, e.g. we are trying to meet government floor-targets for attainment in Maths and Science this year, in order to make sure we can carry on with our vision of making the very best education for all” (Monica, deputy head; Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/21 ff.).

Similarly, Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher in FS, advised the Coordinators at the meeting to stipulate lower, rather than higher, learning attainment targets in the curriculum to decrease pressure from government. In both schools, it appeared that the staff and governments spoke different languages: internationally, governments were striving for standardisation in order to ensure the schools’ accountability for their educational practice, while staff emphasised their desire for freedom and independence to develop their educational practice for themselves.

COMPARING STAFF ROLES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOMS BETWEEN THE SCHOOLS

In both schools, staff had far more responsibilities than their traditional concern with teaching curricular subjects, as the following staff accounts exemplify:

“...whilst we are following a core purpose of traditional learning, making sure our children are able to read, write, count, and apply mathematics effectively, [...] we are also looking at [...] the community, the range of languages that are first language, the difficulties faced by our children and families because of their housing, [and] what other factors could be barriers to that, so you know the pastoral issues...” (Monica, deputy head; Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/4).

“...we have to support them [the children] socially and emotionally in order to keep them fully engaged in their education. [...] In other schools, it isn’t looked at like that: there, school is a place to learn and anything else is social services job” (Allan, Pastoral Care Manager; Mt E.’s/No. 11/S/7).

“... because I’m the class teacher, I have all those organisational responsibilities: I have more contact with the parents, and also have an overview of my colleagues’ work [in this class]. So, all information is passed on to me, which I sometimes find rather difficult, because often I have to be the distributor of information as well. And then I have to talk to three, four, five people, pedagogues, subject teachers or additional people who are coming in from outside”²⁸⁹ (Heidi, teacher; FS/No. 1/S/3).

Allan’s account above reveals that the responsibilities of staff could differ between schools depending on the individual school context. While individual differences between staff roles applied to every other school, the international comparison between FS and Mt E.’s revealed

²⁸⁹ German original: „... weil ich Klassenlehrerin bin habe ich diese ganzen organisatorischen Fäden in der Hand, hab’ auch viel mehr Kontakt zu den Eltern, habe auch die Fäden für alle Kollegen in der Hand. D.h. bei mir laufen alle Informationen zusammen, was für mich manchmal ganz schwierig ist, weil ich oftmals auch der Verteiler von Informationen sein muss, und dann drei, vier, fünf Leuten ’was sagen muss, ob’s Erzieher sind, ob’s die Fachkollegen sind oder die Leute, die von außen zusätzlich in den Unterricht kommen.“

other distinguishing features of staff roles. In the following I will discuss three features, I perceived as most influential to staff participation.

Distributions of staff roles

There was a greater variety of staff roles officially established in Mt E.'s than in FS, but with a smaller scope of responsibilities for each role (see Box 24, p.210 & Box 25, p.211). For example, the responsibilities Heidi listed in her account of her role as class teacher in FS, could be distributed between three or more people in Mt E.'s: the contact with parents, of children who raised increased concern, was often the responsibility of the Pastoral Care Manager or the Inclusion Manager; the overview over the work of different members of staff was primarily with their respective line-managers; information was usually passed on through the Key Stage Manager, who overlooked all class practices in one Key Stage, or through members of the SMT.

While an increased differentiation of roles potentially caused inconsistent practice, as described earlier, a greater amount of responsibilities allocated to one role could limit focus on what one believed to be most relevant in educational practice:

“what has been laid upon us in the last few years [...] is quite a lot, so that we sometimes feel: ‘I would really like to concentrate on my teaching too!’”²⁹⁰ (FS/No. 1/S/4)

According to the increased subdivision of roles in Mt E.'s, the idea and practice of “management” was much more developed than in FS, with specific manager-roles. There were an Inclusion Manager, a Pastoral Care Manager, a Business Manager, an Extended Schools Manager and Key Stage Managers, who oversaw different aspects of education practice across the school, and also supported teachers, mostly in their capacity as advisors, as Allan reported:

“... probably the biggest thing they [the teachers] get from me in reality is just peace of mind [...] if you can pass it [your worries] on to someone you can feel some reassurance that you have done your thing and that [...] it is gonna be dealt with. [...] If we have to support the teacher for the child to be better off, than we support the teacher” (Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/10 ff.).

Staff roles to support staff participation

Generally the support of staff, as opposed to the support of children, was a major distinguishing element of staff roles outside the classroom, in contrast to roles inside

²⁹⁰ German original: „...was in den letzten Jahren an uns herangetragen wurde [...] ist schon sehr heftig, sodass wir schon manchmal das Gefühl haben: ‚Ich würde mich gern auch mal auf meinen Unterricht konzentrieren!‘“

classrooms. In FS, colleagues mostly supported each other in their individual interactions. There were only a limited number of official structures established specifically to support staff, which showed up in the staff's greater isolation and individualised practice than at Mt E.'s. Such structures, the Support Conferences and advisory meetings with teachers for special pedagogy, were only called to support teachers when issues arose with children, and they were not available on a daily basis. The only other person in FS I noticed who regarded "support for teachers" as her responsibility, also noticeable at the Coordinators' meeting, was the head teacher, Ms Mühlhausen. She saw this role as a particular strength she brought to her vocation:

"I cannot always organise new resources and support. But sometimes I help the person and clarify the situation by saying: 'yes, it's really difficult for you, we have to see how we bring stability into this from the outside through family support, through the social services and so on.' Here, head teachers are taken more seriously [by external services] than teachers, when they call for help"²⁹¹ (FS/No. 4/S/5).

In Mt E.'s, support for staff was a responsibility specifically allocated to more staff roles, and also an officially recognised feature of the school:

"...whilst we got all this going on for the children, we have to make sure that the adults in the school are following their own learning paths and managing and leading on these in a complex situation. [...] We have to make sure their needs are catered for at the same time as well." (Monica, deputy head; Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/5).

The head teacher and deputy head teacher regarded looking after staff as part of their roles:

"I suppose my role is about [...] trying to empower my colleagues and children to solve problems for themselves..." (Monica, deputy head, Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/2).

"...my job is to create the conditions for the teachers to do the best job they can." (Robert, head teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/8).

One way in which they supported staff was through staff development, which was strongly emphasised in the school: "...we have a focus on staff development" (Monica; Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/5). This included the leadership's aim to support the teachers' individual strengths, by developing individual roles:

"[we] created roles in the school that don't exist in other schools. [...] we have taken our budget and used it creatively" (Monica; Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/9 ff.).

²⁹¹ German original: „Ich kann nicht immer neue Ressourcen und Unterstützung organisieren. Aber ich kann manchmal Klarheit reinbringen in so'n Gespräch, dass ich das jemandem abnehme und sage: ‚Ja, du hast es wirklich sehr schwer, wir müssen jetzt zu sehen, wie wir von außen Sicherheit da einbauen durch Familienhilfe, durch Jugendamt und so.‘ Da werden dann manchmal Schulleiter ernster genommen, wenn der Notruf von uns kommt, als von Lehrern.“

Robert pointed out this individualisation of roles by describing Monica's role as deputy head teacher, which they had established according to her individual strengths and personality:

“Monica likes to be outgoing and doing all that, and if I stopped [her it] would be counterproductive really. But I mean if our next deputy were to have a different style to that, we will work out what that is” (Mt E.'s/No. 3/S/8).

Furthermore, Monica's role noticeably complemented Robert's role, who preferred working in the background and to “keep his head down” (Mel, teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/2). In particular, Monica's role was set up to respond to other roles and was therefore “ever changing [...] and related to need” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/2), as she described it herself.

Another example of a role that was officially individualised by the leadership, has been the Pastoral Care Manager, which “doesn't really exist anywhere else” (Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/9). Allan explained that his role was created in consideration of the particular circumstances of children and their families in Mt E.'s, his individual strengths and government requirements:

“Robert said: ‘we need to respond to Every Child Matters, we've got the money in, you are good at doing that, let's just bring all those things together and create a Pastoral Care Manager who can oversee the whole area.’ And then we just wrote it ourselves” (Mt E.'s/No./S/2).

The Inclusion Manager in Mt E.'s, officially named ‘Special Educational Needs Coordinator’ (SENCO), renamed his role following the changed scope of his responsibilities. He was responsible for all children who raised increased concern in their academic learning, and not only for children categorised as having “special educational needs”. In this way his role complemented the Pastoral Care Manager's role, which was concerned with the support of children who raised greater concern in regards to their emotional and social well-being.

In FS, such individualisation of roles was primarily seen in individual interactions between staff, mostly in their class teams, as shown earlier in Chapter 6. The support one could gain from colleagues' individual strengths, and from the development of complementary roles, appeared to have less recognition in FS and was only sometimes applied: “... sometimes you simply need to see that you use the strengths of individual colleagues...”²⁹² (Heidi, teacher; FS/No. 1/S/3). Role adaptations were very obvious regarding the roles of teachers for special pedagogy in the school, as exemplified by Margaret's role, discussed in the previous chapter.

A second element of staff development in Mt E.'s that contributed to the individualisation of staff roles, were the frequent opportunities for staff to undertake in-service education. In FS, the primary professional qualification received was from their

²⁹² German original: „...man muss manchmal einfach gucken, dass man sich die Stärken der einzelnen Kollegen zunutze macht...“

initial teacher education courses. Yet, in both schools, staff saw in-service education as more supportive and beneficial than pre-service education, because it was more closely related to their individual practice.

Beside staff development, another way in which the leadership team in Mt E.'s aimed to support staff, was by ensuring their well-being. During my fieldwork, they ran a year long project called the 'National staff well-being project'. This aimed to identify barriers to teachers' well-being, including potential areas of concern, such as workload, stress, self-esteem and roles. Luke, the Business Manager, identified workload and communication as the main areas of concern (Mt E.'s/No. 16/S/8 ff.). The support from the leadership team was acknowledged by teachers:

“... it's coming from the top, the interest in how staff are feeling and that they are happy [...] and therefore you can tell it's important. They [the leadership] do look after the staff in lots of ways” (Mt E.'s/No. 10/S/4).

Apart from the leadership roles, support staff roles involved the support of teachers along with Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, who considered the support of staff to be part of his role as well. Furthermore, the staff governor, legally required in all schools in England (HM Government, 2007) and non-existent in FS nor legally required in Berlin, could be seen as a support to staff. Lynn, TA and staff governor, reported: “...if any issues come up that they [the staff] are unhappy with, they can come to me” (Mt E.'s/No. 17/S/1).

The need of support in the schools was least acknowledged for leadership and support staff. Only Monica, the deputy head, stated her role as involving “support [of] the head teacher, in whatever capacity it is needed” (Monica; Mt E.'s/No. 6/S/2). All support staff in Mt E.'s, and also Ms Mühlhausen in FS, felt supported only in their individual interactions with other staff. Ms Mühlhausen particularly emphasised the personal trust she received from some teachers as supportive:

“I think there is a specific kind of person, a specific kind of teacher, who relates to me personally, just like team-partners. [...] They have a fundamental trust in me that I won't just do anything stupid, but that I have got reasons”²⁹³ (FS/No. 4/S/14 ff.).

²⁹³ German original: „Ich glaube es gibt 'nen bestimmten Menschentypus, 'nen bestimmten Lehrertypus, der mit mir persönlich kann, genau wie die Teampartner. [...] Die bringen mir ein Grundvertrauen entgegen, dass ich nicht willkürlich blöde irgendwas mache, sondern dass ich Beweggründe habe.“

Rigidly prescribed staff roles

Despite the individualised staff roles in Mt E.'s, discussed above, they were all more rigidly defined than in FS and, according to the legal requirement of staff performance management, reviewed by another professional, acting as line-manager:

“the line-managers direct you how you can perform your role. We discuss [...] how I can be deployed to the best use. [...] Normally we meet at the end of July and you are supposed to have a meeting again in September to set up your targets for the following year, your performance management target...” (Sue, EMAS teacher; Mt E.'s/No. 9/S/3).

Such rigid control of one's role and subservience to instructions, as described by Sue, is hard to imagine in FS, due to the strong objection of teachers to any statutory requirement.

Yet, the picture was complex. Rigidly defined structures generally counteracted individualised roles and therefore a person's participation. However, two elements, in particular, encouraged the participation of staff in Mt E.'s, in comparison to their absence in FS. One element was the clearer definition of staff roles, which contributed to a sense of belonging, and prevented too high expectations for oneself and others, as Luke, the Business Manager and Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, highlighted:

“... they [TAs] have more of a defined role [and] they started to become more integrated. So, they have got more of a sense of belonging [...] they now get professional development [and] are taking lots of stuff on board” (Luke; Mt E.'s/No. 16/S/4).

“Being clear about what they [teachers] should be doing, and being clear about what I should be doing. Things are gonna go much better afterwards because people are going to have realistic expectations about the support I am gonna give them and what they are supposed to be doing as well” (Allan; Mt E.'s/No. 11/S/18).

Similarly, at the Coordinators' meeting in FS, some, like Franziska, showed a preference for being given more structure for orientation and security. Franziska also commented on prescribed elements of the Internal Curriculum as facilitating educational practice.

The second element were the annual reviews of their work, which, despite their standardisation, furthered a culture of valuation of each other's contributions to educational practice, which Heidi, a teacher in FS, previously criticised as missing in FS.

CONCLUSION: STRUCTURE AND FREEDOM FOR STAFF PARTICIPATION

In this chapter, I investigated responses to staff diversity and effects on their participation in the schools in staff interactions and roles outside the classroom. The investigations revealed barriers to staff participation in both schools. They were established through hierarchical interactions between staff, and between schools and governments. Governmental requirements often dominated educational practice, despite various attempts by staff, especially the leadership, to buffer their effects. As a result, the leadership, had to apply increased power on staff to ensure the implementation of statutory requirements. Hierarchies between the staff in Mt E.'s were stipulated in the staffing structure, a network of staff, which prescribed interactions between staff in their daily practice, and, therefore, limited opportunities for individualised practices. Yet, this structure supported a staff community, that could be seen in the recognition of each other's contributions, or the support staff gave to each other, which many recognised as part of their role. By comparison, in FS interactions between staff were less prescribed, which promoted increasingly individualised practices. But this could also result in increased staff isolation, and a perceived lack of support, in the absence of forming close contacts with colleagues. Furthermore, it gave way to hierarchies, primarily between some teachers and the head teacher, promoted by personal and interpersonal factors, and not by externally defined staffing structures, as in the case of in Mt E.'s. This undermined government rhetoric on equal participation and shared responsibilities for school developments.

Apart from barriers to participation recognised in staff interactions, there were also barriers identified in staff roles. At Mt E.'s they resulted from rigid definitions, required compliance with statutory requirements, and the additional demands for greater adaptation to other staff roles in the strong staff network. However, clearly defined roles also provided feelings of security and a recognition of contributions made by staff to the school's educational practice. In FS, less rigidly defined staff roles supported increased individualisation, but the lack of role definitions sometimes offered insufficient orientation and valuing of one's work.

In conclusion, increasing staff participation in educational practice on the one hand required freedom for individual and complementary adaptations of one's role in interactions. On the other hand, it also needed a structure to offer security, to make one's role explicit to others and to have one's individual contribution to educational practice valued.

The greatest participation of staff in both schools took place during break times, offering structures which supported non-hierarchical staff interactions. Staff were not required to

perform a specific role or fulfil particular expectations, but were valued and reassured for their individual contributions. Such interactions created a space for “feeling at home” in school, which Heidi, a teacher in FS, once expressed as a desire for herself and others:

“... to feel at home means that you trust each other, that you feel valued, that you know you can come away from it. You belong here, so to say. You can be as you are and you don't have to play a role. You are accepted as who you are”²⁹⁴ (FS/No. 1/S/6).

²⁹⁴ German original: „... dass man sich heimisch fühlt heißt, dass man Vertrauen hat, dass man da anerkannt wird, dass man da weiß man kann sich zurückziehen. Man ist sozusagen aufgehoben. Man kann sich so geben wie man ist und man muss keine Rolle spielen. Man wird so genommen wie man ist.“

CHAPTER 8: EXPLORING RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY – OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

In chapters four, five, six and seven I introduced my two case studies and explored responses to diversity in Mt Ephraim's and in Franz-Skarbina-School to answer my first and second research questions:

1. How do two primary schools, in England and in Germany, respond to diversity?
 - a) How are their responses to diversity constructed in the roles of all those involved?
 - b) How are their responses to diversity constructed in the interactions amongst and between adults and children?
2. Why do schools respond in these ways?

In this chapter I look at all four of my research questions in three main sections. In the first section I summarise and compare my findings from all case study chapters and reintroduce the current literature I explored in chapter three. The findings of this section raise the question about the interdependence of processes of exclusion perceived by adults and children and whether barriers to one's own participation limit one's capacity to respond inclusively to others. This will be investigated specifically regarding staff participation in the second main section of this chapter, in which I approach my third research question:

3. How does the participation of staff affect their capacity to respond inclusively to diversity?

I find that barriers to staff participation limit their capacities to support developments towards inclusion in education, and therefore identify their participation as an inevitable condition for inclusive developments. This also begins to address my last research question:

4. How can the capacity of staff be increased to respond inclusively to diversity?

Given my findings this involves the more specific question of *how the participation of staff can be increased* to enhance their capacities to support inclusive developments in schools. This will be the focus of the third and final main section of this chapter, in which I explore collaboration as a way to increase staff participation and how it can be placed at the centre of a whole-school approach towards inclusion.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND THEIR RATIONALES

(1ST AND 2ND RESEARCH QUESTION)

In the first two parts of this section I review responses to the diversity of children and adults in their roles and interactions from my case studies and compare this with reports in the literature. Subsequently, I explore answers to the second research question, looking at the rationales for responses to diversity perceived in the two schools, again in comparison to the earlier introduced literature. I decided to pay primary attention to *barriers* to participation in this section and therefore focus on *support* for participation and inclusion when I address the fourth research question at the end of this chapter (see p.255 ff.).

RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY CONSTRUCTED IN ROLES OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS: STANDARDISATION AS BARRIER TO PARTICIPATION

In both schools children and adults were primarily referred to with labels, such as pupil, teacher, parent, parent governor or student representative. These were ascribed based on previous group selection according to criteria such as age and attainment (Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 1998a) and cultural background, including ethnic, socio economic and professional background. Additionally, in England professional performance was another criteria. As a result the created “similarities” between members of each group seemingly justified the allocation of standardised roles, as structures for participation, which unsurprisingly for many proved to be the primary barrier to their participation. In FS and Mt E.’s, what Emanuellson (2001, p.140) recognised for support teachers as being “forced [...] into their roles”, applied to everybody. In this way, adults and children were rarely acknowledged as individuals and their diversity was not used as a resource for educational practices. Yet, standardisations varied between roles with different excluding effects for adults and children.

Standardisation in staff roles as barriers to participation

Various influences on educational practice limited staff participation in both schools. The staff felt most constrained by increased and contradictory demands from the government especially following the introduction of the standards and inclusion agenda. This predominantly affected teachers, as opposed to support staff, and it was teachers who were also most critical of the requirements. This confirms Grunder’s (2005b, p.198) perception:

“probably there are only a few professions which face so numerous, contradictory, mutually excluding demands from society as teachers.”²⁹⁵

Apart from contradictions in government requirements, their standardisation and consequently unsuitability for individual school contexts limited the staff’s participation in educational development as well, and placed the staff in “very, very challenging circumstances”(Monica, deputy head teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/22). Correspondingly, in the literature in England, many criticised the National Curriculum as too prescriptive and over-demanding (Hargreaves, et al., 2007; Alexander, 2009). And Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2004, p.231) confirmed that: “[teachers] can find themselves in vulnerable positions”, if their views differ from official requirements. More specifically, staff in FS and Mt E.’s experienced growing pressures, feelings of insecurity and incapability. The latter matched Crowther, Dyson and Millward (2001, p.95) who noted a gap “between existing expectations of policymakers and the capacity of individual practitioners”. This was exacerbated in Mt E.’s and FS by pressures on time and through deficiencies in pre-service education. Consequently, the staff expressed a strong demand for in-service education, which in Germany remained widely unfulfilled. The staff’s unfamiliarity with new approaches to learning and teaching, such as vertical-year-groupings, was identified by Bastian, Combe and Reh (2002) as a particular challenge for them.

Apart from overburdening, the prescriptiveness of statutory requirements caused teachers in both schools to feel professionally devalued. Such feelings of devaluation had been related, for a long time, to the low status of the teaching profession and demands of parents (Wolfendale, 1988; Hargreaves, et al., 2007). Particularly since the increased ‘accountability culture’ “...teachers were subjected to what John Smyth (2002, p.3) describes as ‘an unrelenting politics of derision’...” (Ballard, 2004, p.98). This perspective I found well confirmed in Heidi’s statement about her role as a teacher in FS: “as teacher you always feel you are the one blamed”²⁹⁶ (FS/No. 1/S/6). Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher in FS, expressed similar feelings and particularly described the way teachers often condemned her decisions. She felt caught between her own interests, those of the staff and governmental requirements. The devaluation of head teachers had not been specifically considered in the explored literature.

In Mt E.’s, support staff said they felt devalued in their roles too, not by governmental requirements, but by teachers who did not acknowledge their work but regarded it “as peripheral to the core of teaching and learning” (Howes, 2003, p.148). And Luke, the Business Manager in Mt E.’s, indicated that their originally less defined role had promoted

²⁹⁵ German original: „Wahrscheinlich gibt es wenige Berufe, an die diese Gesellschaft so zahlreiche, widersprüchlich, einander ausschließende Anforderungen stellt wie an die Lehrkräfte.“

²⁹⁶ German original: „Als Lehrer hast du das Gefühl, du bist immer Schuld.“

this feeling as well. The DfES (2003c) highlighted the lack of definition of support staff roles as a primary barrier to their participation. In FS, support staff did not express any feeling of devaluation, possibly because in contrast to Mt E.'s, they worked much less in classrooms and were also institutionally separated. They were the only group of staff in both schools who did not say they felt devalued to some extent or wanted praise and acknowledgement of their individual contributions to educational practices.

Another barrier to participation of staff identified in standardised structures was their difficulties in gaining support for themselves, especially in FS. Staff was mainly ascribed the role of the “supporter”, whereas children were mostly seen as “supported”. The few structures that were meant to support staff and to increase their participation were often felt to be inadequate. For instance, Carrie, a class teacher, and Ron, the Inclusion Manager in Mt E.'s, had difficulties in applying the ‘IEP Pro’ software to document a child’s individual support provision due to its standardised format. Yet, this instrument was originally meant to facilitate the teachers’ work. Karin, a teacher in FS, criticised the increasing deployment of School Helpers as additional personnel, who she regarded as unqualified. Her view opposed more official perspectives presented in a Berlin newspaper article (2009) emphasising the importance and benefits of School Helpers for developments towards inclusion: “without School Helpers those children cannot participate in the lesson, or only to a limited degree”²⁹⁷ (‘Parents’ Centre Berlin’ and the Network ‘Supported children’²⁹⁸ cited in Gennies, 2010). Furthermore, the concept of a ‘self-governed school’ (SenBWF, 2004) was meant “to ensure teacher participation” (UN, 2007b, p.8):

“[this was] not only through teachers’ organizations but also by their direct participation in different consultative bodies, such as councils at the school” (ibid., p.8).

However, when applied in FS it was described by Kristina as “a joke”²⁹⁹ (FS/No. 5/S/18). Together with other teachers she saw the increase of compulsory staff bodies and meetings for staff as raising their workload while their voices remained unheard.

Standardisation in roles of children as barriers to participation

Children’s roles in the schools were predominantly prescribed by staff. This was most clearly revealed in Mt E.'s in the wide application of praise systems and the children’s school uniforms. In both schools children expressed their disagreement with the staffs’ instructions but mostly complied. For example, in FS, Ben preferred to be less often required

²⁹⁷ German original: „Ohne Schulhelfer können diese Kinder nicht oder nur eingeschränkt am Unterricht teilnehmen.“

²⁹⁸ German original: ‚Elternzentrum Berlin‘ und Netzwerk ‚Förderkinder‘

²⁹⁹ German original: „Ist auch so’n Witz ‚selbstverwaltete Schule‘.“

to be “supporter” for children in lower year groups, and Kevin did not want to read his book to Karin, his teacher. In Mt E.’s, Radwan, preferred to be in another table-group. Peschel (2009) observed the children’s limited participation even in educational approaches which were meant to offer them more independence, such as ‘open classroom’ approaches. Many governmental requirements in the education laws in Berlin and England supported such compliance required in the roles of children in schools. However, a few did not, revealing contradiction within the laws: for instance, in Berlin, the ‘Task of the School’ (SenBWF, 2004, p.8) emphasised the education of young people to become independent and active contributors to society. Or the inclusion statement of the National Curriculum in England stresses the necessity to adapt learning opportunities to all children.

Another characteristic of roles of children in the schools following standardisation, already briefly indicated, was to be primarily seen as the “supported”, which resembles Hudak’s (2001) notion of “students” and Ballard’s (2004) notion of “learner”. These labels designate all children as “in need of support” and “emphasise a concern for what is to be done and to be known” (Ballard, 2004, p.96) according to the governmental standards agenda. In this way they devalue the children’s individual competencies and limit their potential contributions to educational practice as Julia, a teacher in FS described. This also applied to all other labels ascribed to children, mostly by teachers, for example in referring to their additional language needs, which Hudak (2001, p.17) generally described as producing children’s “alienation from [...] themselves”. This was particularly noticeable in my case studies in the application of ability-based labels. These were assigned to a child following the teachers’ judgement of the child’s ability to perform according to the curricular attainment norm stipulated by government (DfEE, 1999; SenBWF, 2004). For instance, children were described as “Above Average” or “Below Average”, “special educational needs” or “special pedagogic support needs”. Any individual strengths of a child that were outside this norm were therefore of less value for educational practice or simply unrecognised. The dominant impact of the official ability norm on staff perceptions of children was most obvious in Mt E.’s where teachers referred to children as “bottoms” or “SENs”, instead of calling them by their names. I found such normative views on children’s skills also applied in academic publications and newspapers in England using phrases, such as “the average student”.

Another excluding effect of standardised ability labels was that they “deflected attention from the difficulties experienced by other students” (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, p.4/5) without a label that ascribed them an increased need of support. In Mt E.’s, Arjana’s and Luana’s desire to receive one-to-one support, as given to other children, remained unfulfilled. The standardised support of children’s learning, based on these labels is based on two assumptions: the homogeneity of children ascribed the same label and their fixed instead

of unlimited abilities (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004). Ideas of homogeneity were revealed in my study for example in a statement from Mel, a teacher in Mt E.'s: "children [were] of all the same ability" (Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/14) or in Karin's year-groupings considering them to have similar abilities in Eulen Class in FS. Ideas of fixed ability were indicated in staff expressions such as "the SENs [...] cannot do anything" (Mt E.'s/Wk 10/35 ff.) or "Nabil [will] never learn to read, write or calculate in his life"³⁰⁰ (FS/No. 13/S/2 ff.). Not all staff shared these perceptions. Some showed to be aware of diversity outside a category or label: "the needs of the children are not bound to year groups, but differ also within them"³⁰¹ (FS/Wk 4/30 ff.), Stefanie, a teacher in FS stated, hence she was keen to mix the groups in her classroom vertically. On the other hand, Lysandra, a member of support staff in Mt E.'s, found ability-based groupings and standardised support legitimate, because the children of one group were "slightly different but near enough the same" (Mt E.'s/No. 8/S/3).

Moreover, in my study, labeling children seemed to act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. For instance, in Mt E.'s Adanya's and Ikhlas' self-perceptions matched the expectations placed on them by their ascribed ability-based labels. This indicated that labels cannot only "[constrain] thinking about what children will achieve" (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.28), but directly limit children's achievements (Florian, 2009).

Standardisation in roles of parents as barriers to participation

Roles of parents in both schools varied. Overall, they were less considered as part of the schools than their children and the staff, particularly in Mt E.'s. This has been noticed in literature for a long time (Potts, 1983a; Wolfendale, 1988; Carpenter, 1997; Augé-Sollberger, 2001; Rüegg, 2001a; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003; Carpenter and Egerton, 2007; Kohn and Bembom, 2008). However, it also revealed that intentions to increase parent participation in schools set out in governmental policies, like the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) or the Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004), have not yet been fulfilled.

Only a few staff, such as Sue, the EMAS teacher in Mt E.'s, conferred on parents the role as their "child's first teachers" (Mt E.'s/No. 9/S/9), valuing them as equal contributors to educational practice and thereby supporting their participation. This perspective resembled Gloor's (2001) who described a school which sought parents' individual participation literally in the role of teachers and thus contributors to the school's curriculum.

³⁰⁰ German original: „Nabil [wird] nie in seinem Leben Lesen, Schreiben oder Rechnen lernen.“

³⁰¹ German original: „Die Bedürfnisse der Kinder sind nicht jahrgangsspezifisch, sondern auch innerhalb der Jahrganggruppen ganz unterschiedlich.“

However, most structures in Mt E.'s and in FS prescribed parental roles in educational practice. They established conditions for the engagement of parents which the majority could not fulfill: for example, speaking the main language(s) of the school, to be confident and take initiative, to be familiar with the school's educational structures and to share its dominant educational aims. Similarly, Von der Gathen (2008a) highlighted standardised arrangements and prescribed formats, such as 'individual parents' days' in Germany, to be unsuitable for parents but did not consider their participation in the development of alternatives. By contrast, in FS and Mt E.'s, most staff and parents believed that parents' cultural differences and "deficiencies", such as their language difficulties, impeded their contribution to the schools. In other cases the staff was not aware of the barriers parents experienced, which Noyes (2005) criticised regarding the implementation of concepts of pupil consultation. In this way, parents' individual strengths as potential contributors to educational practice were missed.

In contrast, parents who fulfilled the schools' conditions participated in the schools to a greater extent, for instance in roles as parents' representatives. They shared many characteristics with the staff, like socio-economic and ethnic background. Furthermore, it was these parents who more often contributed to establishing structures for participation, thus further promoting their own participation. Noyes (2005, p.537) had recognised this vicious circle in regard to children's participation:

"we know that pupils that have recognised forms of cultural and linguistic capital are advantaged by schools (Bernstein, 1977; Bourdieu, 1989) and there is every likelihood that these pupils have more to say and can express themselves in a way that is more readily understood, valued and thereby more likely to result in change [and thus] reinforce existing hierarchies."

The barriers to parent participation in FS and Mt E.'s evoked a variety of responses which potentially increased the parents' exclusion even more. Some parents accepted their limited participation, such as Sadik's father (FS) or Ghedi's father (Mt E.'s). Others started to "battle with the school over their child" (Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/10) as Jody, a teacher explained and Karin experienced in FS for example with Faruk's mother.

RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY CONSTRUCTED IN INTERACTIONS OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS: HIERARCHIES AS BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

In his study of teachers' perceptions of school development, Söll (2002) maintained that some teachers saw their interactions with each other as restricting, rather than supportive. I found this in my case studies, not only regarding interactions between teachers, but also between students, support staff and parents. More specifically, the interactions that imposed strains on relationships and acted as barriers to participation, were hierarchical. They were

much more evident in Mt E.'s than in FS, but apparently viewed less critically by children and adults. At the same time, the emphasis on developing a whole-school community was also stronger in Mt E.'s than in FS. Yet, staff in Mt E.'s seemed not to perceive a contradiction between hierarchical relationships and community building.

In FS, teachers strongly criticised their unequal participation, especially in their interactions with the head teacher, in which difference in status was most evident. The dominance of head teachers had been noticed in many other studies (Söll, 2002; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Peacock, 2005) but less in relation to barriers to staff participation and developments towards inclusion. I also found hierarchical interactions amongst staff in FS that, in contrast to those between head teacher and teachers, were not officially stipulated in the staffing structures. They were mostly recognisable as competitive interactions between teachers. Praise of staff members and feedback were less common than in Mt E.'s where this practice was of great importance. As a result, in FS staff were often more isolated which promoted a fragmented staff body. In Mt E.'s, the staffing structure, a network that prescribed interprofessional links, prevented such isolations. Yet, it did not prevent hierarchies amongst staff. This corresponds with Augé-Sollberger's (2001, p.75) perception that increased interactions "would not automatically mean that the quality of communication increased as well"³⁰². Unequal interactions, especially in Mt E.'s, were mainly noticeable between staff with different official roles: teachers and support staff and teacher and school leadership. In the UK literature, particularly hierarchies between teachers and support staff received great attention. They mostly referred to the excluding effects for support staff (Shaw, 2001; 2004; Howes, 2003; Hancock and Eyres, 2004; Devecchi, 2007b; Howes, Grimes and Shohel, 2009), and correspondingly stressed the benefits of more equal interactions for educational practice:

"this is an important element of the effective use of support staff. They feel valued and respected in this collaborative community. There is not a strong sense of hierarchy and differential power relationships. The ethos is one of sharing skills and supporting each other" (Corbett, 2001a, p.86).

In addition to the existing literature, in my case studies, class teachers felt that the support staff, especially personal assistants, limited the teachers' own support for a child. This was described in relation to Louise, a teacher in Mt E.'s and Andrew, Markus' personal assistant, and at FS between Karin, a teacher, and Paul, Nabil's School Helper.

In both schools, staff dominated interactions with parents which limited parents influence on educational practice (Potts, 1983a; Rüegg, 2001a). Stefanie, a teacher in FS,

³⁰² German original: „Das heißt nun nicht zwangsläufig, dass die Qualität der Gespräche gestiegen ist.“

criticised the absence of a link between external and internal worlds of the school. This was equally noticeable in Mt E.'s, for example, in the expectations staff placed on parents, the lack of representation of children's family backgrounds in the school or the staff's very rare visits to the children's homes. These practices differed with governmental requirements and other calls for increased contacts between schools and children's homes and other external communities (UNESCO, 1994; 2003b; Spalding and Januszewski, 1999; UNICEF, 2000; 2007a; DfES, 2001; 2003b; Alexander, 2009; Alexander and Flutter, 2009; DCSF, 2009b). For instance, Brenner (2009, p.55) criticised schools that "were under the illusion that they can provide a society-free space for their students."³⁰³ It is confirmed that Wolfendale's (1988) prediction of parents' increasing participation in schools has still not come true, as other also authors, such as Potts (1983a) noticed earlier. The conditional involvement of parents in school according to arrangements stipulated by staff, resembles a notion of parental involvement in the literature referred to as "taking part" in the school (Rüegg, 2001b; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003).

However, there were also individual exceptions to the standard pattern of parent-staff interactions, which I primarily noticed in FS. For example Ulrich, the chair of the Skarbina Parents Association, described more equal contacts between a few parents and staff. Furthermore, some teachers indicated the potential power of parents when they referred to pressures from their expectations, which Mack, Raab and Rademacker (2003) confirmed. While in some publications teachers had criticised parents for deferring their responsibilities to them (Rüegg, 2001b), this was not directly confirmed in my study. Yet, some teachers in both schools criticised parents for a lack of support for their child's education in school.

In interactions between staff and children staff were always the more powerful, which was also critically recognised in the literature (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Ares, 2007). Even when Margaret, a teacher in FS, said she was in a "team" with the children, this was a subtle way of applying power in comparison to other staff who simply demanded children's compliance with their instructions. The staff's noticeably stronger application of power over children in Mt E.'s than in FS, corresponded with policies I found, particularly in England. Those emphasised the dominance of staff in interactions with children (Education Act, 2006; DCSF, 2009c).

While in Mt E.'s, the children's compliance to staff instructions was mostly unquestioned, in FS, new educational approaches supported an increased independence of children. Following the interdependence of roles (Jaspers, 1999; Merk, 2003; Hart, Dixon,

³⁰³ German original: „...geben sich der Illusion hin, für die Schüler einen gesellschaftsfreien Raum bereitstellen zu können.“

Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Stamm, 2007), this also required teachers to become less authoritarian, which caused difficulties for some, such as Karin.

In both schools, the structures mainly supported interactions between class teachers and children, confirming the dominant perception in literature that interactions between teachers and children were at the core of processes of learning and teaching (Ballard, 2004; Ares, 2007). Yet, these structures in FS and Mt E.'s did not always take account of differences. For instance in Mt E.'s, Braydon chose Louise, his former class teacher, as his continuing person of trust.

Interactions could also be hierarchical between children. Apart from cases of bullying, unequal interactions mostly existed between children categorised as having "special educational needs" or "special pedagogic support needs" and others without this label. For instance, most interactions with other children of Nabil, in FS and Markus, in Mt E.'s, were based on their recognised need of support. It had been promoted by staff who presented Nabil and Markus as "needy" to a greater degree than other children, for example by arranging a Classroom job specifically for Nabil's support or through both children's personal assistants. Consequently, such interactions with other children limited the recognition of Markus' and Nabil's strengths as potential contributions to educational practice, and also raised questions about the idea of peer support as beneficial for the participation of children experiencing barriers to learning (Ares, 2007).

A characteristic of most hierarchical interactions I observed, was mistrust. Staff in both schools perceived mistrust of their capacities to know how to best support children's learning, from parents, and also as reason for increased governmental control of schools. Stefanie, a teacher in FS, justified the mistrust towards educational practice especially from parents from a Turkish background, who could not be sure that their interests would be met in the school. But staff also mistrusted parents to support their educational practice, as Karin, a teacher in FS, showed by her attempts to hide certain information about the children's national assessment test results from parents. Jody, a teacher in Mt E.'s, also found parents felt there was a lack of trust in their parenting skills. While Mack, Raab and Rademacker (2003) perceived distrust by parents towards teachers as well, Grunder (2005b, p.202) had a rather positive view, stating that "astonishingly, the perception of teachers amongst today's parents and children is not as bad as expected."³⁰⁴

Accounts from Karin and Heidi, two teachers in FS, also revealed the influence of trust on their interactions with children. In contrast to Heidi, Karin applied increased control and

³⁰⁴ German original: „Erstaunlicherweise, [...] ist das Lehrerbild heutiger Eltern und Kinder gar nicht so schlecht wie erwartet.“

power over children, the more she mistrusted their skills in working independently and taking responsibility for their learning.

As a result of hierarchical interactions contacts were often limited. For example, Jody presumed parents withdrew from contact with the staff because of the mistrust and expectations they faced from staff regarding their parenting. Following reduced interactions staff could be unaware about the barriers some parents perceived to their participation and rather presumed the parents' unwillingness was the reason for their limited engagement. Similarly, amongst staff, misunderstandings were also noticeable, particularly in hierarchical interactions. For example, Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher in FS assumed her work was unacknowledged by some teachers. Correspondingly, those teachers thought the same about Ms Mühlhausen's attitude to their work. Yet, in talking to me, they all expressed how much they valued each others' work.

RATIONALES FOR RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY IN THE SCHOOLS

The schools reflected the unequal role of different cultures in shaping the structures for participation. Dominant cultures were first and foremost stipulated in governmental requirements. For example, they prescribed curricular content, responsibilities of adults and children and also their interactions, such as in class and year group "teams" of staff, ability-based groups of children or parents' evenings. They were implemented in the schools in hierarchical interactions and mainly by staff, especially teachers and the school leadership, who were the most powerful voice in the schools. For instance, Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher in FS, directly indicated the purposeful exclusion of other cultures in educational practices when she talked about the participation of parents. It resulted from her fear of cultural infiltration and the loss of certain values in education in FS if she allowed parents with different cultural backgrounds an equal say in educational practice. And Jody, a teacher in Mt E.'s, stated her support of dominant cultures in her lack of willingness to negotiate any departure from existing educational practices when she criticised parents for not supporting her educational approach. Those who did not fulfill the expectations set out by the structures in place were often identified as in "need of support", which applied similarly to children. Children were identified as having a "special need" of support if they did not reach the required attainment targets. If parents had difficulties in engaging in the schools, some staff interpreted them as "needy" rather than as parents who desired other ways of involvement than those prescribed, as Sue, the EMAS teacher, and Karin, a teacher in FS, explained. Diversity of children and parents was mostly perceived as divergence from the "norm" and the aim was to reduce it. It confirms Ballard's (2004, p.96) criticism about the teachers' focus on "the utilitarian aspects of what a child does in school" following the government's

market-based agenda, which also affected parent participation. In this way, their individual strengths were devalued instead of being recognised as potential contributions to educational practice. These practices opposed the emphasis on the value of cultural diversity and democracy that formed the basis of the traditional humanist concept of *Bildung*, which was also part of some policy documents in Germany, such as in the Berlin Education Law 2004, as shown earlier (see p.70). This, once again, exemplified the inconsistencies of government legislations.

In summary, staff did not only support processes of inclusion but also of exclusion, which confirms other perspectives in the literature (Potts, 1983; Grunder, 2005a). For instance, Potts (1983, p.171) noticed the dominance of staff in interactions with parents and children as excluding, especially for children categorised as having “special educational needs”:

“the relative powerlessness of parents and children in their dealings with teachers and other professionals limits the extent to which children with special needs can participate in ordinary schools.”

However, some staff, such as Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager in Mt E.’s, and Stefanie, a teacher in FS, did recognise the monoculturalism in their schools as a barrier to participation. But their criticism had not led to change in the schools, revealing that they, and also all other staff, faced barriers to their participation as well. Staff had expressed feelings of devaluation, insecurities or perceived pressures, indicating that their own individual cultural backgrounds were not equally included in the schools either. This was not necessarily evident at the surface, but as in Booth (2005), I recognised that cultural values were not shared at the level of detail. For instance, in Mt E.’s, Louise and Andrew had different understandings of educational practice. And Mel’s criticism of the rigidity of the Healthy School Policy, indicated differences between her educational approach and that of the leadership. Furthermore, a lack of shared values in education existed between staff and governments. This was exemplified in staff attempts to buffer governmental requirements, or their difficulties in comprehending them, as shown at the Coordinators’ Conference in FS. In the literature, cultural differences between professionals were seen to impede their interactions (Howes, 2003; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003):

“[different professionals], head teachers, doctors or psychologists reveal that they think in different languages. No wonder team-work is difficult” (Potts, 1983a, p.174).

In my study, cultural differences between staff did not necessarily result from different professional backgrounds, but were part of individual differences. On the other hand most unequal interactions were established between people with different roles in the schools,

which, from my observations, was mostly promoted by organisational factors, in particular by the allocation of time for interactions. People in similar roles received most time for their interaction. For example, teachers in Mt E.'s were given official planning time together, while there was no officially allocated time for meetings between support staff and teachers, also noticed in literature (Blatchford, et al.,2009b). As a result, they mostly met separately, whereas increased and equal interactions between people with different roles were a result of personal initiatives. Consequently, the reduced "culture of dialogue" (p.141) which Mack, Raab and Rademacker (2003) identified between staff and parents, in my study also occurred between staff, especially those with different roles.

By noticing different cultures in FS and Mt E.'s, my study links with Black-Hawkins' (2002) finding of many school cultures, as opposed to one "school culture" or *the* "school ethos", which others identified (Terhart, 2001; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003; Wilson, 2003). Consequently, staff were not simply implementers of cultural values set out by governmental requirements. They also acted as mediators between different cultures, including those of children and their families, as well as their own. Other authors allocated this responsibility only to one group of staff: Reiser (1998) recognised it as part of roles of teachers for special pedagogy in developments towards inclusion in Germany; Howes (2003) identified support staff in England to have this responsibility; and Müller (1996 cited in Söll, 2002, p.13) ascribed it to mainstream teachers.

In summary of this section, my comparison of responses to the diversity of children, parents and staff in the case studies revealed that all of them experienced processes of exclusion related to the dominance of particular cultures. These were felt in individual devaluation, disrespect and mistrust for staff, parents and children. Similarly, Potts (1983b, p.197) recognised power inequalities to exist "at every level of the system", in classrooms as well as staff rooms. And Schläppi and Boss-Zinniker (2001) found that vulnerabilities of both teachers and parents were experienced equally. However, most literature on inclusion in education primarily identified barriers to participation for children or certain groups of children, such as those assigned the label of "special educational needs".

Children's and adults' similar experiences of exclusion, as well as the noticeable interdependence of their roles in interactions suggested to me another rationale for responses to diversity in schools that requires further exploration: the interdependence of processes of exclusion. In this case, for example, hierarchical interactions between policy-makers and staff would result in hierarchies between staff and children. Barriers perceived by one could limit his/her capacities to respond inclusively to diversity and thereby create further barriers for others. Consequently, processes of inclusion would have to apply to everyone, adults as well as children. According to my research, the question whether barriers to one's own participation, reduces one's capacity to respond inclusively to diversity, needs to be

particularly investigated for staff. They had most influence on responses to diversity in the schools, and their participation has so far mainly been treated peripherally in literature and research on inclusion in education, despite a noticeably growing attention paid to staff contributions to (inclusive) school developments (Terhart, 2001; Söll, 2002; Balshaw, 2003; Howes, 2003; Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Jackson and Bedford, 2005; Juul, 2009). For example, the newer discourse on the diversity among teachers (Georgi, Ackermann and Karakas, 2011) again focuses only on responses to the diversity of children without acknowledging the need for inclusive responses to the diversity of staff.

Furthermore, only a few authors, mostly from England, recognised aspects of staff participation as a pre-condition for the inclusion of children. But the interdependence of the participation of children and staff has not been widely studied. Noyes (2005, p.538) argued that prior to “mutual respect between staff and pupils’ (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004, p.63) [must be] such mutual respect amongst staff.” He regarded it as “a potential contradiction if [teachers] are to listen to, and act upon, pupil voices whilst their own voices remain unheard” (ibid., p.537). Similarly, Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2004, p.266) recognised:

“...responsiveness to students as trusted and respected partners can only be expected from teachers who are themselves trusted and respected partners in the educational process.”

Booth and Dyssegaard (2008, p.23) found:

“...it is hard to see how participation in education settings can be encouraged for children and young people if staff who work within them have no power over what or how they teach or the development of their own workplace.”

Moreover, most publications focus on teacher-child interactions and primarily refer to governmental requirements as the main barrier to the participation of staff. In contrast, apart from governments and teachers, I identified parents, other staff and children as influencing inclusion in education. Therefore, they will be considered in the following section in which I investigate the effects of barriers to staff participation on their capacities to respond inclusively to diversity.

STAFF (NON-)PARTICIPATION: EFFECTS FOR DEVELOPMENTS TOWARDS INCLUSION

(3RD RESEARCH QUESTION)

“Never ever were teachers so much under pressure and under such observation”³⁰⁵ (Kerbel, 2011). This statement from a newspaper article about school teachers in Berlin matches former descriptions about the limited participation of staff, not only in FS but also in Mt E.’s. However, staff also had the greatest influence on educational practice in both schools and the power to promote processes of inclusion, but also of exclusion for children and adults. These findings, together with my identification of the potential interdependence of processes of exclusion, raised my third research question, which I will approach in this section:

how does the participation of staff affect their capacity to respond inclusively to diversity?

Based on examples from my case studies I firstly look at the responses of staff to barriers they experienced to their own participation from governmental requirements, or in interactions with colleagues and parents. This is followed by an exploration of the effects of such responses on the participation of others. The responses include the transfer of responsibilities, buffering official requirements, withdrawal from interactions and reluctance to change educational practice. In these ways, staff primarily intended to increase their own participation which thereby proved to be another rationale for their responses to diversity and affected their capacities to support the participation of others.

TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The transfer of responsibilities I noticed as a frequent response of teachers to governmental pressures in Mt E.’s and FS. For example, Heidi, a teacher in FS, and Jody, a teacher in Mt E.’s, felt pressurised by the prescriptiveness of the curriculum:

“it is stressful for me, that the curriculum is so prescriptive. It’s always at the back of my mind that I will be made responsible: ‘why isn’t he able to do it? Are you not able to teach him?’ [...] As a teacher you always feel [...] you are the one who failed”³⁰⁶ (FS/No. 1/S/6).

“...time-pressures and curriculum-pressures and all the rest of it and at the end of the day SATs are always at the back of your mind [and] the question of evidence... the

³⁰⁵ German original: „Noch nie standen Lehrer so stark unter Druck und unter Beobachtung.“

³⁰⁶ German original: „Es bringt mir Stress, dass dieses Raster so vorgegeben wird. Ich [habe] immer im Nacken, dass ich zur Verantwortung gezogen werde: ‚Warum kann der denn das nicht? Biste nicht fähig, dem das beizubringen?‘ [...] Als Lehrer hast du das Gefühl [...] du bist ja derjenige, der versagt.“

parents get stressed out, the children get stressed out, the teachers get stressed out” (Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/16).

They were made accountable for a practice with which they actually disagreed: they were required to judge the children’s abilities by assigning them fixed levels of attainment, which they saw as inadequate to capture a child’s individual and constantly changing strengths. This was confirmed by other teachers, as well. In England, governmental pressure was even greater, through the publication of children’s “attainment levels”, which increased schools’ dependence on governmental judgements:

“...we come under a lot of pressure to improve the statistics [...], if this school failed an inspection, or the local authority lost confidence in the school, then they would change the leadership and therefore the team within the school...” (Monica, deputy head teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 6/S/21).

But in FS, Heidi also stated that teachers perceived judgemental pressures “from everyone, from society”³⁰⁷ (FS/No. 1/S/6), if a child did not achieve the required learning results. A child’s achievements were seen as “proof” of a teachers’ qualification, or lack thereof, as also Karin and some other teachers indicated in their worries about presenting the children’s results in national assessment tests to parents.

In response to these pressures, Heidi sometimes called for a child to be officially labelled as having an increased “need of support”. She actually disagreed with those practices, but they served her own participation:

“although I don’t regard those assessments highly, [but] if children are officially identified as “having learning difficulties”, [...] I deal with them very differently. I can be much calmer. [...] It’s not that beneficial for them, but for *me!*”³⁰⁸ (FS/No. 1/S/6)

Through a label, teachers in FS, and also in Mt E.’s, could reduce the pressures from government in various ways, thereby increasing their participation. A label meant that they could transfer their struggles to support the child to meet statutory attainment targets, onto the child. This was now the one “in need of support” while the teacher became the “benefactor and helper (this child has special needs and I will meet them)” (Thomas and Loxley, 2007, p.52).

Furthermore, some teachers in the schools transferred their responsibilities for the child’s learning on to the additional staff they received as a result of the labeling, such as support staff (Blatchford, et al., 2007), a teacher for special pedagogy in FS, or the Pastoral Care

³⁰⁷ German original: „...von allen, von der Gesellschaft...”

³⁰⁸ German original: „Obwohl ich von solchen Tests auch nicht soviel halte, [aber] wenn dann sozusagen für dich festgestellt wird, die sind lernbehindert, [...] geh [ich] ganz anders mit denen um. Ich kann viel gelassener werden. [...] Denen bringt’s ja gar nicht so viel, *mir* bringt’s was!”

Manager in Mt E.'s. In this way, teachers could avoid adaptations of their practices to the child. Hinz (2002) noted gaining additional resources as a common reason for labeling practices. In addition, in Germany, particularly the labels of "special pedagogic support needs" in the area of learning or in the area of cognitive development, removed curricular pressures from the teachers, because children with this label were freed from standardised assessments. They received a different curriculum.

Another example of staff transferring responsibilities in response to governmental pressures, was given at the meeting of the Coordinators' Conference in FS. Bettina, a teacher, suggested interpreting *learning* targets to be the learner's responsibility and to be distinguished from *teaching* targets. And Mel, a teacher in Mt E.'s, passed her responsibility for a child's lower achievements on to the National Curriculum when she stated:

"there needs to be a structure to children's learning. And then having this structure [the National Curriculum] makes it even *more* obvious if children like Braydon [...] stand out like a sore thumb" (Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/7).

BUFFERING STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICIAL REQUIREMENTS

In response to her difficulties in teaching vertical-year-groups, Karin, a teacher in FS, maintained her old approach and kept homogeneous year groups as much as possible. In this way she buffered the requirement of the School Beginning Phase, the vertical-year-group concept introduced in the Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004). This concept required teachers to teach children from year one and year two in one class. In FS it was even extended to children from year one to three. By keeping homogeneous year groups, Karin found she could make the increased complexity she perceived in vertical-year-group classes, more manageable. Booth and Dyssegaard (2008, p.20) described such practice as simplification of reality. Correspondingly, Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2004, p.187) noticed categorisation as a practice of teachers to simplify

"the differences among young people. Reducing many of these differences to one simple set of categories, within each of which pupils can for many purposes be treated as all very much the same."

Moreover, Wulff (2007) recognised simplification in the categorisation of ethnic diversity as resulting from insecurities caused by one's unfamiliarity with perceived difference.

A second reason for Karin's perseverance with a single year group approach was her unfamiliarity with the new, less authoritarian teaching role that was required for vertical-year-groups, which increased her insecurity further. To take on a new role, a teacher has to

take the “risk of letting go”³⁰⁹ (Schley, 2007, p.891) of familiar practices. But in order to do so, Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2004, p.269) stated that one had to “feel safe enough to take risks and try new things”, which was not the case for Karin. In summary, the primary causes for Karin’s buffering of requirements were neither the new concept of vertical-year-group classes per se, nor the children’s diversity, but her unfamiliarity and resulting insecurities and overburdening.

Other staff in both schools described buffering statutory requirements because they considered them unsuitable for their educational practices and impossible to fulfil:

“yes, those requirements exist [but] I can’t manage, I can’t do it. I neither know how one is supposed to do it, nor anyone who says they are able to do it”³¹⁰ (Kristina, teacher; FS/No. 5/S/6 ff.).

The leadership in FS and Mt E.’s buffered governmental requirements which they recognised as detrimental for educational practices in the schools and for their own and staff participation. As a result, the practices of staff were often different to those originally intended by government. My observation complements Howes’ (2003), who reported the discrepancy between official requirements in the role of support staff in England and the actual results in practice.

Apart from buffering governmental requirements, staff also buffered instructions from the school leadership with which they disagreed. For example, Mel, a teacher in Mt E.’s, opposed the Healthy School Policy. She tried to ignore it in her educational practice because, following her limited participation, she saw no possibility of engaging in dialogue with the leadership.

WITHDRAWAL AND RELUCTANCE TO CHANGE THEIR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Further reactions from staff to barriers to their participation in both schools were their withdrawal from interactions and reluctance to change their educational practices, which was confirmed in the work of other authors (Reiser, 1998; Feuser, 2002; Peacock, 2005; Krainz-Dürr, 2006; Hargreaves, et al., 2007; Stamm, 2007; Georgi, Ackermann and Karakas, 2011). Both responses were illustrated at the meeting of the Coordinators’ Conference in FS in discussion on governmental requirements. Many teachers found the majority of staff meetings not to be beneficial. According to Sandra, Heidi and Kristina, this was because they perceived their voices not to be heard and mistrusted the government to ever listen to them. They opposed the government’s emphasis on increased teacher participation in school

³⁰⁹ German original: „Wagnis des Loslassens“

³¹⁰ German original: „Ja, die Vorgaben bestehen, [aber] schaff ich nicht, kann ich nich’ Weiß ich nich’ wie man so was schafft oder wer sagt, dass es ihm gelingt.“

developments outlined in the Berlin Education Law (SenBWF, 2004). Ms Mühlhausen noticed a decreasing attendance of teachers at meetings and a reluctance to engage with new ideas, interpreting both as primarily down to personal characteristics of the respective teachers. In contrast, Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2004, p.269) saw staff's limited participation, more specifically their "work overload, plus feeling of demoralization", as reasons for their withdrawal and reluctance to change:

"...staff may not be immediately receptive to new ideas no matter how sound, or potentially appealing to teachers' fundamental values and commitments as educators" (ibid.).

Teachers in FS did not only withdrew from staff meetings, but also from other interactions with colleagues, if they felt devalued or criticised, as Gudrun and Heidi exemplified. Ms Gruber, a retired teacher and now teacher-educator, interpreted this reaction as teachers' relapsing into their traditional professional isolation, which Von der Gathen (2008b, p.8) described as a culture of "teacher individualism"³¹¹. In Mt E.'s, the staffing structures limited possibilities for such isolation of staff. However, the more pronounced power inequalities amongst staff there, could have resulted in a reduced "openness and willingness to listen to others" (Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton, 1998, p.34) reducing their contacts as well.

Furthermore, at FS, staff also withdrew from interactions with parents, in response to the pressure they felt through parents' expectations and criticism. For example, teachers agreed to "downplay" (FS/Wk 4/32) the children's national assessment tests and their results in front of parents. This meant limiting communication with parents and thereby excluding them from certain information. In Mt E.'s, Jody described herself and other teachers as feeling undermined over "what is professionally best for the child" (Mt E.'s/No. 15/S/9) when parents disengaged with their educational practice. In powerfully defending her professional expertise, she showed an increased reluctance to consider the parents' differing approaches to their child's education at home. Parents were not necessarily aware of the pressures teachers perceived from them. For instance, Layla's mother thought that the limited transparency of educational practice resulted from the teachers' workload.

Mack, Raab and Rademacker (2003) confirmed staff's rejection of parent participation in their research in Germany. They found a general reluctance towards opening a school to its surrounding communities because it could "further potential conflicts" (ibid., p.200). Staff were seen to have difficulties particularly in establishing contact with parents from cultural backgrounds other than those dominant in the schools, especially with a Turkish background.

³¹¹ German original: „Lehrerindividualismus“

EXCLUDING EFFECTS OF STAFF RESPONSES FOR OTHERS

The responses of staff to barriers they experienced to their own participation all involved an increased application of power on others. This had various excluding effects for children and other adults. They were most obvious where an increased power was openly described as a response to processes of exclusion perceived for one's self. In both schools this was the case for the school leadership. For instance, Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher in FS, indicated that she sometimes applied greater power in conflicts between her and staff:

“...I've got my own interests. [...] When I am dissatisfied, I recognise that I start intervening again and introduce my own interests”³¹² (FS/No. 4/S/18 ff.).

Similarly, Monica, the deputy head teacher in Mt E.'s, told me that staff hierarchies were inevitable to manage the complexities of urban schools. Furthermore, they served her own participation as she was part of the leadership team. Staff lower in the staff hierarchy, such as class teachers and support staff, expressed differing views. In Mt E.'s and FS, teachers and support staff described the dominance of the leadership as increasing barriers to their participation. This furthered tensions, conflicts and distance between them, which were in particular noticeable in FS. Especially conflicts between Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher, and staff, at times increased to such an extent that “school leadership was on one side and groups of staff on the other”³¹³ (FS/No. 4/S/12). Karin, a teacher, additionally recognised a polarisation in the staff against Marie Mühlhausen:

„... sometimes I've got the feeling that one should not have a really good relationship with Marie, because that can bring some disadvantages [within the staff]”³¹⁴ (FS/No. 2/S/9).

In other responses from staff to their limited participation, the increased application of power was noticeably more subtle. For instance, the labeling of a child was a powerful act from staff to transfer their responsibilities which had different excluding effects for children as also indicated in previous chapters. Labels deflected attention from children's actual strengths and contributed to the development of a negative identity, which “[depended] in large measure on the relationship between pupils and their teachers” (Robinson and Fielding, 2007, p.3). No one questioned whether without the curricular norm as measurement, Braydon, a child in Mt E.'s, would still “stand out like a sore thumb” (Mt E.'s/No. 7/S/7). It

³¹² German original: „...ich hab eigene Interessen. [...] Bin ich unzufrieden mit dem was inhaltlich läuft, merke [ich], wie ich schon wieder anfang zu intervenieren, wie ich meine eigenen Themen da rein bringe.“

³¹³ German original: “auf der einen Seite Schulleitung und auf der anderen Seite Teile des Kollegiums.“

³¹⁴ German original: „... manchmal hab' ich das Gefühl, man darf nicht so'n besonders guten Draht zu Marie haben, sonst hat man davon einige Nachteile [innerhalb des Kollegiums].“

is possible that by simply refusing to label a child, the difficulties teachers had with certain children and their “attainment” would disappear. This question occurred to me when I compared Heidi’s application of labels, in response to the challenges she faced in educational practice, with Mel’s statement: “they need more teachers in a school like this working with the special needs [children]” (ibid., p.7). Apparently, she saw challenges *because* of the children being labeled as having “special educational needs”. Did the staff struggles cause the application of the label or the label cause the staff struggles? In both teachers’ cases, their potential difficulties and need of support remained hidden under the label of the child.

Another excluding effect of labels were the separation of children and inconsistencies between classroom practices and additional support provision. This was also noticed by teachers in FS and Mt E.’s and matched the view of Booth and Ainscow (2002, p.4/5). They saw disconnected practices as a result of labeling and categorisation:

“...a fragmentation of the efforts that schools make to respond to the diversity of students grouped under different headings such as ‘special educational needs’, ‘English as an additional language’, ‘ethnic minority’, ‘gifted and talented’” (ibid.).

Moreover, inconsistent practices also resulted from the staff’s withdrawal and reluctance to change their educational practices. These findings complement Florian’s (2009) belief that different professional degrees lead to separated educational practices.

There were also noticeable inconsistencies between educational approaches of parents and staff, recognised by staff, seemingly without question:

“...the children are coming in here, speaking a language their parents don’t understand and are doing stuff that the parents can’t support them with at home...” (Jody, teacher; Mt E.’s/No. 15/S/10).

Such differences were a result of the exclusion of parents and their cultures, through the teachers’ powerful rejection in order to defend their own educational practices. The inconsistencies between the child’s education at home and in school, promoted further barriers to the participation of children, as exemplified in my study by Maggie, a child in Mt E.’s, and Farreq, a child in FS. Correspondingly, staff often perceived those children, whose parents were least involved, as the most difficult in schools. As a consequence, most staff criticised the parents’ limited understanding of educational practice as potentially detrimental for their child’s education in school. However, Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager in Mt E.’s, recognised that the teachers’ lack of insight into the child’s life outside school, had excluding effects as well:

“often just the teacher even knowing that there’s things happening in the background of the child totally changes the teacher’s attitude to the child [...] the teacher is a bit more empathetic and sympathetic...” (Mt E.’s/No. 11/S/9).

Staff rejection of parents’ increased participation in school, directly contradicted the perspective on parent-staff interactions set out in English governmental documents, such as the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001, p.16). This saw it as:

“essential that all professionals (schools, LEAs and other agencies) actively seek to work with parents and value the contribution they make” (ibid.).

My analysis of the exclusion of parents primarily as the result of limited staff participation, contrasts with, and supplements, other research findings. Those findings identify the staff’s lack of tolerance, respect and openness for different cultural, political or religious perspectives as a reason for the exclusion of parents – particularly those parents with cultural backgrounds other than their own (Schläppi and Boss-Zinniker, 2001).

Furthermore, inconsistencies in educational practice could limit the flexibility of roles of adults and children, to adapt to the individual and to constantly changing circumstances, and thereby reduce their participation. The support of more flexible roles had been one intention of the National workforce reform (DfES, 2003c) to enhance the participation of support staff.

Buffering governmental requirements was another of the staff’s responses to increase their own participation that simultaneously had excluding effects for children. This was the case when it prevented the implementation of governmental approaches – such as the vertical-year-grouping – that had the potential to overcome selective structures in educational practice.

STAFF PARTICIPATION: A CONDITION FOR INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

The descriptions above confirm the view put forward at the end of the previous section: a primary barrier for developments of inclusion in FS and Mt E.’s was the limited participation of staff. Staff responses to barriers to their own participation, created in interactions with parents and colleagues, as well as through governmental requirements, limited their capacities to respond inclusively to other adults and children. In some cases, they even applied practices, such as labeling, despite knowing that this had excluding effects on children, and, in this way, continued enforcing traditionally segregating practices (Potts, 1983a). Their responses prompted others to react in similar ways, which further promoted exclusion of adults and children.

This interdependence of processes of exclusion seemingly applied to processes of inclusion as well. Those staff who responded more inclusively to others reported fewer barriers to their participation in those interactions. For example, Sue, the EMAS teacher in

Mt E.'s, valued parents as equal partners and felt equally valued by them. Stefanie, a teacher in FS, increasingly supported the parents' diversity in school, and correspondingly described to perceive less pressure from them. Both teachers experienced parents as valuable contributors to educational practice which differed from experiences of other staff.

Following these findings, barriers to inclusion in education that have frequently been mentioned in publications as well as by people in my research, appeared to be secondary: it was not a child's increased "need of support", which firstly limited possibilities for its participation, as stated in the compatibility clause in policies on inclusion. Neither was it a lack of resources, such as limited time or personnel (Terhart, 2001; Howes, 2003; MacBeath, et al., 2006). Instead, primary barriers resulted from the inadequacies of requirements and demands that were imposed on the staff's individual educational practices, without their participation and therefore increased their "need of support".

Consequently, staff participation proved to be a condition for developments of inclusion, based on the recognition that support for the participation of children was interlinked with support for the participation of staff. Therefore, I suggest an emphasis on adults, and specifically staff, should be added to notions of inclusion, which yet focus primarily on children. For example, Booth's and Ainscow's (2002, p.4) approach to inclusion as removing "barriers to learning and participation [...] to direct attention at what needs to be done to improve the education for any child" could then become an approach to removing "barriers to *teaching*, learning and participation...".

STAFF SUPPORT FOR INCLUSION THROUGH STAFF PARTICIPATION

(4TH RESEARCH QUESTION)

In this section I will approach the fourth research question:

how can the capacity of staff be increased to respond inclusively to diversity?

Previous findings highlighted the view that the capacities of staff to respond inclusively to diversity were limited by barriers they perceived to their own participation. In this way, they already gave one answer to the fourth research question: the capacities of staff can be increased by removing barriers to their participation. However, the question remains how staff participation can be supported in practice. This will be at the core of this section.

Staff often found additional resources officially allocated to schools to support developments of inclusion unsuitable for their educational practice. Furthermore, they could promote segregating and thus excluding practices. Structures and arrangements that were seen as more supportive of inclusive responses to diversity were not those imposed on the schools, but those developed individually by adults and children. So far, those individual resources for inclusive developments in the schools have only received scant attention in this thesis, due to the dominant focus on barriers to participation in previous analyses. The case studies revealed a wealth of individual strengths to support inclusive developments, such as the unique insights and individual expertise, knowledge and skills of staff, parents and children. Consequently, in this final section of the chapter I will look first at resources and practices staff found supportive for their participation. This approach reflects literature that emphasises locally initiated school developments:

“... all communities possess the knowledge to identify the barriers that impede on development and how they might be overcome...” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.44).

As a result I identify collaboration as process which supports the participation of staff, and of everyone else in the school, by mobilising individual strengths to support inclusive developments locally. My research shows that individual capacities often remained unrecognised or unused, especially beyond individual practices. At the end of this chapter I will make some initial suggestions on how to support collaborations as a whole-school approach towards inclusion.

LEARNING FROM STAFF HOW TO SUPPORT THEIR PARTICIPATION

In both schools, some of the staff asked me for advice concerning how to support developments of inclusion in their educational practices. They seemed to want some kind of

“recipe” they could magically apply to all their lessons. In this way, some teachers expressed a serious desire for guidance, whereas others, primarily in FS, asked me this question sarcastically, indicating their suspicion of outside advice or instructions and their preferred independence.

On the one hand, the staff’s individual preferences once again confirm the unsuitability of standardised arrangements for enabling them to respond inclusively to children and adults. On the other, they indicate the staff’s expertise in knowing what support would be most beneficial to developments of inclusion, which points to the benefits of their participation. Therefore, I have based my following negotiations about staff support on their views.

Valuing individuals and sharing ownership

I identified two main elements in accounts from staff, in FS and Mt E.’s, they felt supported their participation. One was when they were recognised as individuals, including their individual strengths as well as desire for support. For example, Lynn, a TA in Mt E.’s, stressed her participation to be increased through the valuation of her individual strengths by other staff members. Heidi, a teacher, expressed a desire for a school where “you can be as you are, [...] you don’t have to play a role” (FS/No. 1/S/6). Correspondingly, other staff emphasised the benefits from being able to express their need of support, as opposed to only being ascribed the role of a supporter for others. For this reason Karin found the arrangement of Support Conferences to be supportive, and Judith, another teacher, described the supervision with Ms. Gruber, a teacher-educator, as helpful. In Mt E.’s, Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, supported teachers in their educational practice by talking with them about their difficulties.

Furthermore, the staff’s valuation of personal relationships in the school underlined the support they gained from being recognised as individuals. In Mt E.’s, teachers considered some colleagues as “close friends” (Mt E.’s/No. 10/S/4) with whom they could share “personal problems” (Mt E.’s/No. 7/S/10). And Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher in FS, said she felt most supported by those colleagues she felt closest to. Similarly, Corbett (2001a) recognised the opportunity to mention individual difficulties as reducing the staff’s fear of criticism from colleagues or parents.

Closer and more personal relationships were often promoted in both schools through increased working time together. However, Karin, a teacher in FS, spent less time with Maggie, a pedagogue, than with other staff, but considered her to be one of her greatest supporters and a good friend.

The second main element which staff frequently described as supporting their participation, was their sharing of ownership in education practice as equal contributors.

Robert, the head teacher in Mt E.'s, highlighted the necessity for staff of having their own responsibilities. Similarly, Ms Mühlhausen recognised the importance of ownership in motivating and supporting people in changing educational practice. In both schools staff shared ownership and responsibilities by taking on complementary roles. In Mt E.'s, this was partially supported in the network structure of the staff body. However, it was also recognisable in individual staff interactions, such as between Karin and Margaret or Heidi and Kristina in FS, and between Robert and Monica or Brenda and Lynn in Mt E.'s. Margaret and Karin and Brenda and Lynn had different professions and therefore their collaboration countered views in the literature which suggest different professions as causing distance between professionals in education (Reiser 1998; 2003; Sander 2004). The sharing of responsibilities by staff was less related to their official qualification than to their individual strengths, which links with the previously described recognition of staff as individuals. Individual strengths were mostly accessible through unofficial adaptations of staff roles, as exemplified in Margaret's version of her role as a teacher for special pedagogy in FS or Lynn's role as TA in Mt E.'s. In Mt E.'s, such role individualisation was officially supported for those higher up in the staff hierarchy. Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, Robert, the head teacher and Monica, the deputy head teacher, all participated in the writing of their role descriptions. In contrast to unofficial role adaptations, their individual strengths were in this way made available for the whole school, as Luke, the Business Manager, confirmed: "...when you get to [the roles of] assistant head teacher and deputy head teacher [...] you start to focus more on what the school wants" (Mt E.'s/No. 16/S/2).

In order to share responsibilities and work together, staff in both schools highlighted the same conditions: one was a common understanding of learning and teaching, which resembled findings of other research (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004). Yet, Heidi, a teacher in FS, regarded clear structures and communication as more important than common understandings:

"if there are clear forms of communication, if there are clear structures, you can engage in discussion and do not necessarily have to share the same view in the first place"³¹⁵
(FS/No. 1/S/2).

Ms Mühlhausen similarly found that transparency of decision-making reduced conflicts amongst staff that arose from different views and understandings.

Another element which supported interactions that increased staff participation, was an official allocation of time for them:

³¹⁵ German original: „Wenn klare Gesprächsformen herrschen, wenn klare Strukturen herrschen, dann kann man sich auch auseinandersetzen und muss nicht von vornherein auf einer Linie liegen.“

“this skill, to be able to listen to others, to respect the needs of the other, etc., has to do with the time and energy a person has available.”³¹⁶ (Kristina, teacher; FS/No. 5/S/8).

In Mt E.’s additional time resources had been provided for teachers through their PPA-time.

Correspondingly, those supportive elements were missing in interactions that promoted exclusion. For instance, in FS, the greatest constraint for parent-staff interactions was recognised to be their lack of shared understandings of learning and teaching (Franz-Skarbina-School, School Program, 2006). In Mt E.’s, staff interactions without officially provided time, such as between Sue, the EMAS teacher and class teachers, were limited and Sue also perceived some of those contacts as devaluing.

The support gained through sharing responsibilities, and recognising individuals in staff interactions points to the insufficiency of centralised and standardised developments in current education systems to support staff participation. Concepts, such as external school inspections or national assessments, reject the value of shared ownership and individual contributions, and reduce adults and also children to functionaries.

COLLABORATION AS SUPPORT FOR STAFF PARTICIPATION

The two main elements that supported staff participation in schools outlined in the previous section, namely the recognition of the individual and sharing ownership and responsibilities, I have identified as aspects of equal interactions. The significance of interactions for learning and teaching in the literature had been emphasised for a long time, firstly between professionals and later extended to parents and children (Wolfendale, 1988; Alderson, 1999; Lütje-Klose and Willenbring, 1999a; Rüegg, 2001b; Wilson, 2003; Carpenter and Egerton, 2007). I have only found a particular focus on the importance of equal ‘collaborations’ as opposed to hierarchical interactions in more recent publications (Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004; Noyes, 2005; Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008).

In collaborations, the individual is valued. Therefore, they include a notion of communication and dialogue that “depends on attempts to equalise the power of speaker and listener” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.24). This requires the consideration of different perspectives in order to create shared understandings, in which “people are accepted and valued for who they are” (ibid., p.24). In contrast, other interpretations see communication as conditional, for example, when parents are required “to be able to engage in dialogue at a particular level”³¹⁷ (Mack, Raab and Rademacker, 2003, p.141). Such communications, as

³¹⁶ German original: „...diese Fähigkeit, das Einanderzuhörenkönnen, Bedürfnisse des anderen respektieren usw., hat auch mit verfügbarer Zeit und Kräften des Einzelnen zu tun.“

³¹⁷ German original: „...dazu müssen die Eltern auf einer bestimmten Ebene dialogfähig sein.“

Mack, Raab and Rademacker describe, ignore power inequalities, which in FS and Mt E.'s caused an unwillingness of people to increase their contacts with each other.

Collaboration requires critical self-reflection which “may involve people in a painful process of challenging their own discriminatory practices and attitudes”, as Booth and Ainscow (2002, p.7) highlighted in regard to inclusive developments. This includes also those practices people consider as “inclusive”, based on the expectation of “continuing and changing exclusionary pressures” (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.29). In this way, if everyone takes responsibility for the participation of others, one's own participation will find support from others.

Apart from valuing the individual, the other element staff described as a support to their participation, namely the sharing of ownership and responsibilities based on individual contributions, was supported in collaborations as well. Collaboration facilitated the recognition and mobilisation of individual strengths in schools in various ways, by supporting “a wider concern for each unique, embodied, whole and entire person” (Ballard, 2004, p.96), mutual trust between collaborators and increased communication. Collaboration prevented standardisation, raised motivation and enhanced possibilities for people “to exercise their creative and critical faculties” (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004, p.269). Collaboration offered freedom as well as security to recognise diversity as a strength rather than as a burden which required attempts at standardisation. I found examples in the literature that confirmed such effects of collaboration. For instance, Peacock (2005, p.94) recognised in her school:

”...[staff's] individual achievements [...] have not, however, come about through rigorous lesson observations and targets but through flourishing in an environment of discovery, teamwork and trust.”

I identified a wealth of individual capacities in FS and Mt E.'s, which had remained unused by staff in their assigned roles, as have Söll (2002) and Booth and Dyssegaard (2008) in other schools. In particular, my international perspective promoted these findings: following my realisation that some of the staff roles I had seen in schools in Germany did not exist in Mt E.'s, I had to question my presumptions and explore each role individually. Ballard (2004, p.100) critically confirmed that the identification of roles is often dominated by cultural influences:

“when we talk of teachers and children, the words communicate culturally determined images and emotions...”

I noticed that official roles did not only differ *between* but also *within* the schools, as a result of different cultures.

Some authors perceived barriers to collaboration, such as existing professionalism or competition of different professional expertise (Wolfendale, 1988; Wilson, 2003; Robinson and Fielding, 2007). In contrast, I see the recognition of barriers as part of the continuous process of collaboration, aiming to overcome such barriers in support of an increased and equal valuation of expertises – whether considered professional or personal – and respect for existing knowledge (Booth and Dyssegaard, 2008, p.44).

I found notions of collaboration in various texts on inclusion, and eventually identified collaboration as process of inclusion that supports equal participation. For instance, Rinaldi (1997 cited in Fontanesi, 1998, p.2) recognised the aim of participation, to be “a ‘we’ that we give life to through participation.” It matches the two previously described aspects of collaboration, the recognition of individuals, and their equal contributions to developments of inclusive communities (see Box 26, p.261). This contrasts many other responses to diversity in educational practice, which emphasise difference between people, and thereby promote their separation instead of recognising “the necessity of joining with [others]” (Hudak, 2001, p.12).

Furthermore, Booth’s and Ainscow’s (2011, p.46) notion of “inclusive cultures” refers to processes of collaboration:

“inclusive cultures encourage a recognition that a variety of ways of life and forms of identity can co-exist, that communication between them is enriching and requires differences of power to be set aside. Inclusive cultures meshed together through shared values are welcoming to new members and therefore involve a preparedness for change” (ibid.).

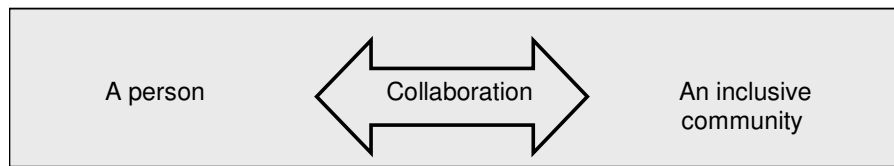
Following this definition, inclusive cultures and collaboration can be seen as mutually supportive. In FS and in Mt E.’s, I identified aspects of exclusive cultures, which consequently require cultural change to develop inclusion in education. Similarly, Luke, the Business Manager in Mt E.’s, recognised cultural change to be necessary for the development of collaboration between support staff and teachers in Mt E.’s: “...it’s a cultural shift and it would be a good thing to happen, but a lot of attitudes have to change for it to happen” (Mt E.’s/No. 16/S/6). Those attitudes can change through collaboration.

I found another reference to collaboration in Booth’s and Dyssegaard’s (2008, p.28) understanding of “inclusive support”:

“...all those activities which increase the capacity of settings (and people and systems) to respond to diversity in a way that values everyone equally”(ibid.).

In my view, “those activities” are collaborations, as they support the identification and increase of individual capacities to contribute to an inclusive community (see Box 26, p.261). In contrast to other notions of support, this one does not focus on people’s “needs”,

and, thereby, incapacity that requires support. Instead, it emphasises the recognition and increase of already existing individual strengths to develop inclusive communities.



Box 26 'Collaboration as process of inclusion'

COLLABORATION AS A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

What staff previously described as supportive for their participation also applied to the participation of children and parents. For instance, children were motivated when they could take on increased ownership of their learning, with fewer instruction from teachers. This had been exemplified in Mt E.'s by Zuwena's excitement and motivation when her friend Jada had explained some 'Numeracy' to her. Furthermore, in FS, Heidi, a teacher, justified her independent learning approach, by highlighting that children wanted "to be taken seriously [and] feel accepted and as equals"³¹⁸ (FS/No. 1/S/1). Kristina, another teacher, recognised especially the teachers' trust in the children's capacities to take on ownership of their learning, to support the children's participation. In regard to parents, Ulrich, the chair of the Skarbina Parents Association, stated correspondingly that also parents were more motivated when they felt some attachment to the contributions they made (FS/No. 10/P/9).

Moreover, the individual strengths of parents and children had remained widely unused in FS and Mt E.'s. For instance, these included children's knowledge about how to support their learning, such as Arjana's and Luana's ideas to mix groups of learners more often in Mt E.'s, or Layla's idea how the teachers could help Malte in FS. People in both schools stated different reasons why their strengths had not been accessed. These were all related to factors that could be prevented through collaborations. For example, Ulrich perceived a lack of space and freedom as restricting:

"the ideas exist, the people are here [...], but what's missing is the space to do things you want to do"³¹⁹ (FS/No. 10/P/15).

Julia, a teacher stated, that she rarely found ways to use children's individual strengths because of the rigid statutory requirements. In Mt E.'s, Sue considered parents to be a lost resource for educational practice, because they did not know how to make a contribution (Mt

³¹⁸German original: „...sich ernstgenommen fühlen [und] sich angenommen fühlen, [...] sich auf Blickhöhe befinden.“

³¹⁹German original: „Die Ideen sind da, die Leute sind da [...] aber es fehlt der Spielraum, die Dinge zu machen, die man machen möchte.“

E.'s/No. 9/S/7). In addition, I recognised that misunderstandings, between parents and staff, children and staff and amongst staff, promoted the loss of individual resources for educational practices. Yet, all people concerned with Mt E.'s or FS inevitably influenced educational practice, but their contributions were not always welcomed or considered as a resource.

Similarly, some authors confirmed that education principles, which supported the participation of children, were of equal importance for the participation of staff and other adults:

“... ‘the principles apply as much to adults as to children. [There are] no limits to individual potential in my dealings with colleagues, families, friends and with myself’ (Claire [teacher in the study])” (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004, p.70).

“Central to this approach of teaching [children] without ability labeling [LWL] is a process of valuing all individuals and celebrating each success. Reflecting on my work with the staff I now realise that I applied the same principle to staff development” (Peacock, 2005, p.93).

Furthermore, in Booth's and Dyssegaard's (2008, p.28) understanding of “inclusive support”, all adults and children are considered as equal supporters of inclusive developments and, therefore, also of each other's participation. This was confirmed in FS by Heidi and Kristina. The two teachers expressed to feel supported, by the children's increased ownership of their learning, in responding more inclusively to the diversity in the classroom. Correspondingly, Bastian, Combe and Reh (2002) found that children's support of each other, and their own learning, could reduce teachers' workload. In contrast, most other notions of support primarily identify support with support from adults (Devecchi, 2007a, p.66), and consequently lose the potentially supportive capacities of children.

Following these findings, I see collaborations as not only to be established between staff, but as a feature of a whole-school approach to school developments. The following ideas, which conclude this study, are starting points for such a conception.

CONCLUSION: DEVELOPING SCHOOLS AS “POOLS” OF INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES

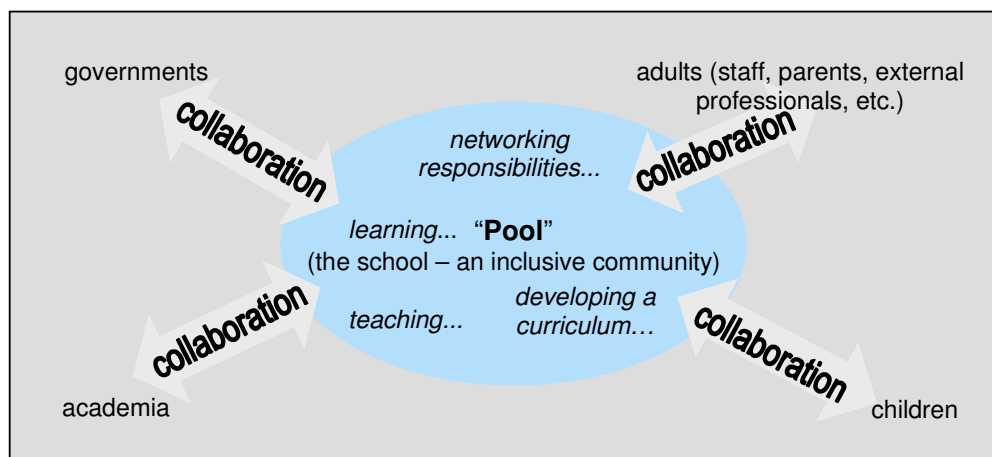
School can be viewed as a “pool” of individual capacities from all adults and children (see Box 27, p.264). The “pool” can be a dynamic system to promote developments of inclusive cultures and shared values. It is based on collaborations between and amongst children and adults, which, following Booth’s and Dyssegaard’s (2008, p.28) notion of “inclusive support”, seek and increase their individual strengths to remove barriers to participation for all. My understanding of learning and teaching underlying the “pool” recognises children, parents and staff to be equally concerned with education, which resembles others’ perspectives: “education also takes place within families and communities and in interactions with a variety of media” (ibid., p.22). This understanding includes the rejection of the idea of fixed abilities of children and adults (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004) recognising that “the teacher is, simultaneously, a learner, and the learner is, to a certain extent, a teacher” (Gash, 2005, p.66).

Responsibilities in the “pool” are distributed flexibly according to individual strengths and expressed needs of support and in response to ever changing circumstances of each school and individual. I use ‘responsibilities’ rather than ‘roles’ here to emphasise flexibility of action. Networking is a key responsibility in the “pool”. It involves the critical and continuous review of collaborations in order to identify barriers and supportive conditions for participation. The idea of this responsibility stems from my identification of individual people in Mt E.’s and FS, who had a particular expertise in establishing contacts with certain groups of people for sharing knowledge, and skills and who were also familiar with the structures of the school. In Mt E.’s, those were for example Sue, the EMAS teacher, who was frequently in touch with parents, or Allan, the Pastoral Care Manager, who established contacts between parents, teachers and external professionals. In FS, Ms Mühlhausen, the head teacher, was especially concerned with seeking staff contribution to school developments and responding to barriers the staff perceived from statutory requirements. And Heidi, a class teacher, took on responsibility for the support of collaborations between children in her class. These examples show that people with networking responsibilities are needed at every level of educational practice: in the classroom, between staff across the school, between staff and parents, between staff and professionals from external institutions, and staff and policy-makers. Furthermore, they are necessary in response to particular areas of concern, such as unequal interactions between support staff and teaching staff.

Notions of networking, presented in the literature, are primarily ascribed to members of staff. For example, Mack, Raab and Rademacker (2003) allocated the responsibility to

teachers to connect parents with the school. Howes (2003) recognised support staff as “mediators” (ibid., p.150) not only between families and the school, but also between children and teachers. In contrast, in my study parents and children, too were seen as capable of taking on networking responsibilities. For instance, Ulrich, the chair of the Skarbina Parents Association in FS, referred to parents promoting contacts in the parents’ body and between parents and staff, and also suggested generally: “... we should come back to using the strengths of the parents’ body more”³²⁰ (FS/No. 10/P/2). Similarly, Julian, a father in FS, had an idea of allocating some parents the role of a kind of “god parent” for new parents (FS/Wk 4/46) to introduce them to the structures in the school.

Recognising everyone as potential contributors to educational practice acknowledges “the inescapable truth that teachers [and other staff] cannot in fact do everything” (Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004, p.187) and in this way supports the participation of staff as much as that of children and parents. At the same time, it replaces the growing demand of additional resources for developments of inclusion in education, through the increased mobilisation of resources that are already in schools.



Box 27 ‘School as a “pool” of resources’

The “pool” model of school also carries implications for professional in-service as well as pre-service education. They were recognised in the case studies as well as elsewhere in the literature (Booth, Ness and Strømstad, 2003) to have the potential to strongly influence developments towards inclusion. A major focus of courses should be the development of skills required for collaboration, such as self-reflection and engaging in dialogue. The courses themselves should be collaborative. Calls for professional development for staff to work with others have existed for a long period (Wolfendale, 1988; Augé-Sollberger, 2001;

³²⁰ German original: „...wir sollten wieder dahin zurückkommen, dass wir mehr das Potential der Elternschaft nutzen.“

Jackson and Bedford, 2005). However, a “lack of training for both teachers and teaching assistants in working with other adults in a learning situation” (Edmond, 2003 cited in Jackson and Bedford, 2005, p.9) has still to be recognised.

Collaborative networks can begin in every school and everywhere, for example with seeking parents’ contributions to curricular developments, which would link the school, the children’s homes and their communities. In Mt E.’s, this could mean allocating networking responsibilities for collaboration between staff and parents, to support staff, who reflected the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the families with children at the school. I consider them to have a particular capacity to mediate between different cultural backgrounds. However, there are endless possibilities to develop schools as collaborative networks and “pools” of resources to support inclusion, and by sharing my ideas, I hope to initiate dialogue about such processes.

CHAPTER 9: POSTSCRIPT – RESEARCH RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

This study started with an exploration of responses to diversity in two schools, focusing on two main themes: ‘roles’ as structures for participation; and ‘interactions’ as an influence on those structures. Staff participation was identified as a main condition for inclusion in education. This was not only because of the key impact of staff on educational practice. A lack of participation of staff reduced their capacity to support inclusive responses in education. This could result in processes of exclusion for others, including colleagues, parents and children. Yet, staff participation has mostly been ignored in so-called “inclusive” development, and has been even more limited with the implementation of the standards agenda in education systems. The recognition of interdependencies between processes of exclusion in this study confirmed that inclusion has to apply to everyone. For such an approach to be successful, I identified the significance of collaborations in schools, as processes of inclusion that could mobilise individual strengths and reduce barriers to participation for all. Finally, I began to consider collaboration as the basis for education practice and a whole-school approach to inclusion.

My PhD research has been part of an ongoing journey during which I sought ways to understand and remove barriers to participation in educational practices. I experienced and reflected in-depth about processes of exclusion and inclusion inside and outside school. In particular, my international approach in this study proved to be beneficial, as it increased my understanding of these processes and their development in various ways. I had moved to England, where I experienced a cultural context that was different from that in Germany to which I was more familiar. This increased my sensitivity to cultural diversity around me, and at the same time enhanced my understanding of the detailed influences within my own cultural background. I increasingly experienced the importance of recognising the value of cultural diversity and cultural identity. For me it was rather new to find value in my German cultural background, because in the context, in which I grew up, “being German” had historically rarely been valued.

Furthermore, in England I experienced on the one hand exclusion *personally* through the dominance of cultures different from my own. On the other I recognised that I could impose my cultural values in interactions on others and thereby cause excluding pressures for *them*. This could arise from my lack of awareness of cultural differences and of my own cultural bias and prejudices. Friendships I developed with people from England, were based on the

continuous engagement with our cultural differences – more so than in friendships I had in Germany – as well as on the identification of personal and cultural similarities.

Beside those personal experiences of diversity and responses to it, the international comparison also supported my increasing knowledge of developing education systems and practices in schools. In this respect, most important for me was my understanding that all established structures, concepts and practices were attached to specific cultural contexts, and therefore neither fixed, nor generalisable, but changeable. Yet, they were often maintained long-term for various reasons, such as the existence of powerful structures, the comfort of familiarity or a lack of alternative perspectives. For instance, I recognised that the predominant isolation of teachers in classrooms, which I had seen in Germany, was not an inevitability but a particularly national feature of this profession. I also noticed that the concept of “special educational needs” was used more flexibly in England than the concept of “special pedagogic support needs” in Germany and that therefore no simple translation from one to the other was possible. These and the many other differences I found between responses to diversity in education in England and Berlin, promoted further questioning of existing structures and practices. In addition, they offered a wealth of alternative approaches, supported widening perspectives and motivated me to engage in dialogue with the seemingly “other”. For those benefits I would recommend international comparisons for any research, but particularly for studies on responses to diversity.

This study and my thesis have come to an end. Yet, I do not consider my research on inclusion and exclusion to be over. In answering my research questions, other questions have been raised that require exploration, such as how processes of collaboration in education and staff development for inclusion can be supported. An investigation of understandings of learning and teaching in the context of developments towards inclusion, that was originally intended as part of this study, is also still waiting; and there is a need for research on the role of support staff in developments of inclusion in education in Germany. This was particularly apparent in comparison to the great amount of studies on this group of staff in England. These studies highlighted, on the one hand, the often exclusive position of support staff in schools, and on the other their benefits for inclusive developments. Following my experiences of the schools as changing places, alongside my own changing perspectives, I could list many more aspects of inclusion and exclusion, which I feel encouraged to explore further. However, after this study, my first attempts will be to present my research in Mt E.’s and FS and in other professional and academic contexts, to discuss with adults and children how its findings could support their approaches to inclusion in education. Fortunately, FS is my new place of work as a ‘newly qualified teacher’. This will increase my opportunities to test out aspects of my findings. It is the closure of a circle, which began with my fieldwork and explorations of practice and continued in my theoretical analysis and the writing of my

thesis. Finally, it ends up back in practice which at the same time can provide new insights about how to support inclusive developments in education – a never ending journey.

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