An Exploration of Perceptions of Inclusion within One Multi-Academy Trust in Relation to the Process of End of Key Stage Two Statutory Testing within the Current English Educational Climate.

By

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Dedication

Dédié à Sidney O'Leary, Odette et Henri Schâringer pour leur inspiration et leur motivation.

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Abstract

This thesis explores adult perceptions of inclusion, with a key focus on pupils with special educational needs, within one Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in relation to the process of end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) statutory testing within the current English educational climate. The research aim was to question how inclusive is the drive for success in year 6 SATs for pupils with special educational needs and through this to explore whether there was a commonality of approach to inclusion in the final year of primary school; what opinions were of the impact to inclusion and inclusive practices of high stakes statutory testing and whether there was a sense of autonomy in meeting any challenges.

The use of figured worlds as a conceptual framework related to the aim to gain an insight into the thoughts, perspectives and concerns of the participants. Empowering participants through adopting feminist principles supported gaining an insight into the figured worlds inhabited by the participants, a picture unfolded of the challenges they faced and how these were dealt with. These challenges have, to some extent, shaped perceptions of inclusion and have certainly impacted on the belief of limitations to delivering an inclusive practice in the final year of primary school.

Data was collected from 5 case study schools over a 4-month period and involved 16 members of staff from different levels within the school hierarchy. Undertaking a case study approach, qualitative methods of research design were used, combining semi-structured interviews with a ranking task. The methods used in the main research study had been developed following 2 preceding initial stages to the research project – a senior leadership task and a pilot exercise.

Flexibility was built into the process to enable researcher reflexivity. This flexible approach also enabled adaptations to be made, necessitated by the global Corona Virus pandemic. Undertaking research during this time presented challenges as well as

opportunities. It was the first time, since its inception, that Key Stage 2 statutory testing was cancelled.

The findings illustrated some disparities between perceptions of inclusion and inclusive practices, for pupils with special educational needs, as a result of end of Key Stage 2 statutory testing. Also revealed were complexities linked to influences on the figured worlds of the participants. This was particularly evident with regards to the influence on inclusive practice of the social context of the current English education system.

In conclusion, this thesis posits that the complexity of contradictions between providing an inclusive education within the context of standards, driven via high stakes testing, has placed educational professionals in a position of competing priorities. This has resulted in constraints that have placed limits on both curriculum delivery and the autonomy of educators' professional judgement. The high stakes approach to testing, which has driven the standards agenda, has placed significant limitations on inclusive practice and impacted on perceptions of the possibility of inclusion.

Glossary

AHT Assistant Head Teacher.

BLP Building Learning Power. An approach to developing positive attributes for learning and life.

CEO Chief Executive Officer.

COO Chief Operating Officer.

CUSP On the cusp of change. In terms of this research cusp refers to children on the cusp of working at the next academic level up.

DfE Department for Education. The government department responsible for education in England.

DHT Deputy Head Teacher. This role is senior to that of AHT. A DHT can deputise for the Head Teacher in their absence.

EHCP Education and Health Care Plan. This is a plan for children and young people up to the age of 25 who require support greater than that provided through special educational needs support.

HT Head Teacher.

Key Stage 1 Following the Early Years Foundation Stage, KS1 includes Years 1 and 2 in primary school and covers the age range of 5 to 7.

Key Stage 2 Following KS1, KS2 includes Years 3 to 6 in primary school and covers the age range 7 to 11.

LP Lead Practitioner. A senior leader role within the Multi Academy Trust. LPs are experienced coaches and mentors, who support teaching and learning across all eight schools.

MAT Multi-Academy Trust. MATs operate more than 1 academy school. These schools are state funded.

NEU National Education Union. The largest teaching union in England.

Ofsted The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Ofsted is the government body which inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

Ofqual The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. This government department regulates tests, as well as qualifications and exams, in England.

PPA 10% of a teacher's working week is allocated for planning, preparation and assessment time. A PPA teacher covers the class teacher whilst they have their PPA time.

SATs Standard Assessment Tests. In primary school, these take place in the final year of KS1, year 2, and the final year of KS2, year 6.

SENDco Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

SLT Senior Leadership Team.

SRP Specialist Resource Provision. This is a provision, within a mainstream school, which provides specialist provision for children with an Education and Health Care Plan. SRPs specialise in supporting pupils with different primary areas of need such as Autism or Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

STA Standards and Testing Agency. Sponsored by the Department for Education, this agency develops and distributes all statutory assessments for schools in England.

TA Teaching assistant.

11+ Test A grammar selection process, whereby pupils are tested at the start of their final year in primary school, to ascertain whether they are of a high enough standard for secondary education at a grammar level.

Time Line of English Educational Events

1988 National Curriculum implemented, introduced through The Education Reform Act (1988). The most recent revision of the National Curriculum was 2015.

1991 SATs introduced.

1992 The first league tables, based on KS2 SATs results, were published.

2012 Teachers' Standards introduced as a baseline of expectations for professional practice and conduct of teachers.

2016 Changes to SATs tests for KS1 and KS2 to reflect the revised National Curriculum (2015).

2019 and **2020** KS1 and KS2 SATs cancelled due to Covid19 pandemic.

2021 Reception Baseline Assessment introduced.

2023 Year 2 SATs expected to become non-statutory.

Figures and Tables

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The intent of this study is to explore the perceptions of inclusion within one Multi-Academy Trust in relation to the process of end of Key Stage 2 statutory testing for pupils with special educational needs (SEND). The aim was to raise questions about the inclusiveness of the drive for SATs success – how was this perceived by practitioners working in this situation, were there challenges and if so to what extent did the research participants feel they had autonomy to overcome them.

The research is set within the current English educational climate and has a key focus on inclusion in terms of pupils with SEND. Within this research there is relevance for other groups of pupils, however in presenting an in-depth view and bringing new knowledge to the discourse on inclusion within the context of year 6 SATs this thesis intentionally focuses on the impact for pupils with SEND. The label of a special educational need can bring its own complexities and, as illustrated in this work, can lead to both overt and covert exclusionary practice.

The new knowledge brought by this research study is revealed through the insight into the lived realities of the participants. Through their stories, the barriers to inclusion and inclusive practice directly resulting from year 6 high stakes testing are highlighted and the challenges faced when working within the dichotomy of a testing metric that is not aligned to beliefs in inclusion for all is clearly evident. For pupils with SEND this had resulted in some experiences of tokenistic inclusion, system pressure leading to othering and a persisting view of the deficit model of special educational needs. Through the empirical and theoretical knowledge presented a need for active change through dialogue and engagement with the issues raised is pertinent.

The period of the research process began with an inclusion baseline task in November 2019, followed by a pilot exercise in January 2020. The main research study concluded in December 2020. In developing an understanding of inclusion within this context, the

research explored the lived realities of the participants through a case study approach. It provided an insight into the figured worlds they inhabited and how these were influenced both at the macro and micro level by various factors.

With representation from all levels of the educational hierarchy from five different schools, the collective thoughts, ideas and opinions shared could be indicative of wider perceptions of inclusion within the education system and certainly within literature. What was revealed through discussions were the struggles participants faced in terms of working within a system that perpetuated the value of high stakes testing. Evident within the data was the multifaceted impact of these struggles with far reaching implications for inclusive classroom practice in relation to pupils with special educational needs. At the time of the research study, this issue was not effectively addressed or recognised at the macro level of the policy makers within the English education system. The impact on pupils with SEND and staff was evident both in the research findings and in wider literature. Pedagogical implications were highlighted with the impact resulting in a restricted curriculum. Through shining a light on the struggles faced, this thesis aims to open up a space for wider discussion. The new knowledge presents, for the first time, views from across one MAT of perceptions of inclusion in relation to pupils with SEND and the process of KS2 SATs within the current English educational climate. This knowledge is a valuable addition to the wider discourse on inclusion with the voices of the participants, enabling the insight into their figured worlds, highlighting the importance of stimulating a wider dialogue at all levels, from school to government. What this thesis raises are points of crisis within the current English education system in relation to year 6 and the practice of inclusion for pupils with special educational needs.

A thread which runs throughout this thesis is the intricacy involved in discussions about inclusion and special educational needs. The term inclusion comes with associated complexities, not least of all when it becomes entangled with broader agendas. It is a term which has both attracted tokenistic use as well as complete omission from some educational

guidelines (Chapter 2: Literature Review, p. 56). Disagreement within literature about what it means to include is also evident and there are schools of thought that it is time to look beyond the term inclusion towards a more effective definition of the meaning (Terzi, 2005; O'Brien, 2020). It is against this convoluted backdrop that participants of the research study are forming their own perceptions of inclusion and the lens through which they view inclusive practice for pupils with SEND.

Within this introductory chapter, an overview of the context of the Multi-Academy Trust, within which the research took place, will be presented followed by an introduction to the wider educational context of the country. Preceding this, my background is presented to provide an understanding of the lens through which this study was created and carried out.

An overview of the significance of this study is presented. Finally, there is an overview of the research questions, the organisation of this thesis and each chapter within it.

1.1 Introducing Myself and My Motivation for this Study

In introducing myself, it is acknowledged that I bring with me views and perspectives shaped by my experiences. I have commonality with the participants of the research study in that I both inhabited the same figured worlds in terms of education and I worked alongside them. The ethical considerations of this and the advantages of occupying this position are explored in Chapter 3: Methodology (pp.66-124). The benefits of the shared place I held with the participants included having a shared position of understanding of the nuances of our discussions. As an educational practitioner, I understood the challenges raised by the participants; as a researcher I analysed these and was able to draw comparisons with the wider theoretical background.

I have had a career in education for over twenty years. This has included working with children from two to eleven years of age in pre-schools, infant and primary schools and specialist resource provisions. This has given me experience of education from the

perspective of a teacher, an advanced skills teacher, pre-school and school advisor, as a SENDCo, a school leader and as a Trust lead for SEND provision. These roles have led me to work across demographically diverse areas of a county in the south of England and to experience education in establishments which are private, voluntary and independent as well as those which are local authority or academy led. This breadth of experience has shaped how I view education and the English education system. It has brought me into close contact with not only year 6 statutory testing, but the broad range of statutory testing throughout primary education. My role as an education practitioner is underpinned by a belief in inclusion and inclusive practice. Fundamental to this is the need for equity to enable equal opportunity and a view that 'all learners [are] seen as having equal importance' (UNESCO, 2017).

I am also a parent who has experienced the English education system from the perspective of a mother with a child who has an Education and Health Care (EHC) plan. Viewing the educational journey through the eyes of a child with complex special needs brings another layer of perspective where the impact of educational policies and approaches are experienced at both a personal as well as a professional level. From this perspective comes experience of practice that was not always inclusive for my child. In terms of year 6, there was a recognition from the school of the challenges he faced. There was also an acceptance, for which no solution was offered, that he would struggle with the next stage in his education career, as he was not a homogeneous peg that would fit neatly into the 'round hole' of the education system. As a parent of a child with SEND, the figured world I inhabit added another layer to my personal journey that has developed and informed the way in which I view the English education system.

These life experiences have shaped and influenced my personal and professional values. They have both informed my choice of research focus and my recognition of the need for more research to focus on this area. It is an area which requires greater discussion and debate. Both the subjects of inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and

statutory testing, throughout my experiences in education, as a parent and as an educational practitioner, have attracted contention. In this respect, there is not neutrality in this choice of focus. However, as afforded through the roles I inhabited, there was both the recognition and the opportunity to present the voices of the participants and illuminate a much needed area of discussion.

As a head teacher, there is keen awareness of the pressures of school life and what has become, for me, an increasing juxtaposition between my own fundamental beliefs regarding inclusion, and the drive for standards in terms of the current measure of league table success based, as it is, upon the performance-driven culture of high stakes testing. As a researcher, the desire was to delve deeper into this and discover how others are engaging with the challenges I felt so keenly. From both the perspectives as a teacher and a researcher, there was a recognition that this is an area that requires greater dialogue.

My lived experiences have highlighted the complexities at play with regards to inclusive practice in the final year of primary school in England for pupils with special educational needs. There are agendas which compete, acute pressures felt at a school level and a far-reaching impact resulting from high stakes testing. Over the years of working in education, there has been an increased personal awareness of these challenges to my fundamental belief in inclusion and inclusive practices.

These personal lived experiences have afforded me insight into the world of this research study. It enabled a connection with participants through the knowledge that I face the same challenges and therefore a shared understanding of difficulties faced in terms of barriers to inclusion and inclusive practice in year 6. This was of central importance to the research study with its focus on facilitating a space for honest conversation about potentially challenging and contentious subjects.

1.2 <u>The Educational Context: Multi-Academy Trust</u>

The case study Multi-Academy Trust that took part in the research study is based in the south of England. It is comprised of eight schools in demographically different areas within a county where a grammar school selection process via testing is undertaken. Four of the schools were located in areas of significant deprivation.

All of the schools were within the primary phase of education, and comprised of both infants (age 4-7) and juniors (age 8-11). Two of the schools also had a nursery provision (age 2-4) and specialist resource provisions (SRP). The SRPs catered for pupils with a primary need of social, emotional and mental health needs identified on their education and health care plan.

The schools varied in size from half form to two form entry, with pupil rolls ranging from 95 to 450. Within this the schools had an average to above-average number of pupils with a special educational needs. Two of the schools were new within the past 4 years and had an above average number of pupils with SEND.

Taking part in the research process were participants representing a range of roles within the Multi-Academy Trust. These included the Trust leadership, head teachers, lead practitioners, SENDCos, class teachers, a planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) cover teacher and teaching assistants.

All the schools have a strong focus on offering a nurture provision and an inclusive approach is evident in the policy literature and Trust and school websites.

1.3 <u>The English Educational Context</u>

The current English educational context in relation to the final year of primary school is multifaceted. It is the final year of the primary National Curriculum, the ultimate culmination where Key Stage 2 has built on the foundations of the preceding Early Years

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. This seventh and final year in primary begins and concludes with testing. For those who chose to take it, the grammar selection test takes place within the first weeks of the academic year. At the other end of the year are the Standard Assessment Tests, which measure pupil attainment through a numbered score. These in turn inform league tables, which are published and rank schools according to the year 6 SATs results.

Pupils in the English education system are highly tested throughout their seven years in primary school. These are tests, screening, assessments and checks designed by the government's Standards and Testing Agency (STA). Whilst it is not within the bounds of this thesis to explore perceptions of inclusion for pupils with SEND in relation to the whole testing system, it is useful to note the amount of testing as it is part of the culture of primary education in England (see Table 1, p.24).

Table 1: Testing Overview

Primary Year Group	Test	STA purpose of the test
Reception	Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) Introduced September 2021 (delayed due to pandemic)	Pupils are assessed on entry, within the first 6 weeks of school, and the information is used to provide 'a cohort-level progress measure to the end of Key Stage 2' (STA, 2020).
Year 1	Phonic Screening Introduced September 2012	To assess phonic skills.
Year 2	Key Stage 1 SATs Introduced 1991 The last KS1 SATs are expected to take place in 2023 as the new RBA is to be used as a progress measure.	To measure attainment in maths, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
Year 4	Multiplication Check Introduced 2022 (delayed due to pandemic)	To check fluent recall of multiplication facts.
Year 6	Key Stage 2 SATs Introduced 1991	To measure attainment in maths, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Table 1 illustrates that throughout a pupil's primary education career they are currently subject to being tested, screened or checked in five out of seven years. This demonstrates the context of the highly monitored English primary education system which culminates in primary school with the high stakes year 6 statutory testing with publishable results.

The global Coronavirus pandemic brought about previously unforeseen changes in education systems. In relation to year 6, this was the first time the statutory tests were cancelled. It was a time when the Education Secretary stated 'we're putting our trust in teachers' in terms of pupil assessment (Williamson, ITV News, 24.2.21). Preceding this, there had been almost 30 years of high stakes testing in the final year of primary school. This approach had been maintained by governments from across the political sector and it is one which has attracted much controversy (Hall et at 2004; Gaunt 2019; Bousted 2019). This thesis explores this controversy and brings new knowledge by specifically exploring year 6 statutory testing in relation to inclusion for pupils with special educational needs.

1.4 <u>The Significance of This Research Study</u>

In undertaking the study, this research brings new knowledge to the discourse on inclusion. The broad ambit of the discourse about inclusion is focussed specifically upon pupils with SEND in one primary year group and within this on one aspect of this year group's experience. The research study aim was to raise questions about just how inclusive is an ambition for SATs success and it illustrates the far-reaching impact of this one experience, that of the year 6 SATs tests. A complex picture is revealed highlighting pressures felt. The results find resonance with wider research and literature, as well as bringing to the forefront a new insight into the figured worlds inhabited by those working directly with the challenges faced as a result of high stakes testing (Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion, pp.157-182).

The gravitas of this research study rests not with offering a panacea, but in opening up a discussion fraught with difficulties and controversy. The research focus is an area that has a very real impact on pupils with special educational needs, education practitioners and educational practice. By giving voice to lived experiences, the perceptions, thoughts and ideas of the participants are acknowledged and the challenges they faced are recognised.

The temporary cancellation of SATs offers an opportunity to review the way in which year 6 assessment has become dominated by statutory testing. This opportunity to 'trust teachers' (Williamson, ITV, 24.2.21) is the opportune moment to highlight the advantages of alternatives to high stakes testing and is the moment to reinstate value on teachers' professional judgements.

1.5 <u>The Research questions</u>

When considering the educational journey of pupils with SEND as they enter their final year of primary school the overarching question this research posed was how inclusive was the process of statutory testing. As part of this, the study also sought to discover three key points. Firstly, whether there was commonality of approach to inclusion in the final year of primary school in relation to pupils with special educational needs. Secondly, what were opinions related to any impact on inclusion and inclusive practices from high stakes testing and were there differences of perspective linked to job roles. Thirdly, was there autonomy in being able to meet any challenges.

With inequality evident throughout society (McDermott, Edgar, Beth 2011) what does inclusion look like in the context of Year 6 high stakes testing. A context underpinned by an economic agenda which promotes competition in the educational market place. From the perspective of policy this should be reviewed in light of how we prepare all of our pupils for the next stage in their education and beyond. From an educator's perspective there is the need to question how we approach the drive for success in SATs.

In exploring the research questions and any influence or impact on inclusion, this study used a qualitative approach. The process was made up of three stages – an initial senior leadership task, a pilot exercise and the main research study. Data was collected in the main research study through semi-structured interviews and a ranking task. The voice of the participants was paramount throughout the whole process.

In undertaking the main research study, the initial interview questions aimed to develop a broad sense of the participants' perspectives of inclusion.

1) What does inclusion mean to you?

2) What does inclusion look like in our society?

These opening questions were also a moment to relax the participants into the process, to stimulate discussion, reassuring that there were no right or wrong answers. Indeed, that it was not an 'answer' being sought but the perspectives, thoughts and opinions of those taking part. It was a moment to reinforce the value of what participants had to say and place them in the position of power as the holders of the knowledge being sought.

The subsequent three questions brought the discussion into the specific context of year 6. Again, these aimed to further reinforce the participants' position of power in the interview through discussion of their lived experiences.

3) I'm not a year 6 teacher, what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

4) What supports inclusion in year 6?

5) What are the barriers to ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a (job title) every day?

The final two questions focussed specifically on Key Stage 2 testing. These aimed to delve deeper into the participants' thoughts on SATs and any impact they perceived from these tests.

6) What factors affect the future aspirations of year 6 pupils who have been predicted not to/ don't meet the SATs standard?

7) What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Following the final question there was an interview task which asked participants to rank twelve aspects in terms of which were the greatest barrier to inclusion. Blank cards were included and the participants were invited to add any additional thoughts they may have. This quantitative ranking task, coupled with the accompanying discussion and the preceding semi-structured interview questions ensured a rich data set. A picture emerged of the impact on pupils, including specifically those with SEND, and staff of statutory testing, limitations to inclusive practice and reluctant acceptance of the current educational context of high stakes testing.

1.6 Organisation of This Thesis

This thesis is presented in six main chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the theoretical background to the research study is presented in the literature chapter. Chapter 3 then presents the methodological approach undertaken. Subsequently, the findings are presented and limitations explored in Chapter 4 and then analysed and discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 brings together recommendations from the research study and draws final conclusions. A supplementary seventh chapter shares researcher reflections following the research study.

1.6.1 Chapter 2: Literature Review

Exploration of the theoretical background, through the literature review, illustrates both the links with other work and the need for the specific focus on high stakes testing in year 6 brought about by this research study.

This chapter reviews literature in terms of three key areas. First, the areas of curriculum, testing and standards. This section begins with a presentation of the background context of education and economy. It is followed by an exploration of the standards agenda

and the background context of SATs. From this, four themes are investigated. These are the use of SATs focus groups as a way of 'legitimising' exclusion; school inspection; the 'gaming' approach of a competitive culture and finally the curriculum.

1.6.2 Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological approach taken and explains the purposeful choices made for research into the figured worlds inhabited by the participants using a case study approach which was guided by feminist principles. This begins by presenting the use of a case study as the methodological approach. Within this, the use of figured worlds as a conceptual framework is explained. There is a review of the social context and the roles of researcher and participant. The role of relationships is central to the approach undertaken and this is reviewed in terms of the research study and the broader social context.

Presentation of the research paradigm includes exploration of underpinning beliefs in relation to neutrality, truth and reality. This is followed by an explanation about the research design and the validity and reliability of the research.

The senior leadership task and the pilot exercise are presented. The five issues arising from the pilot exercise are explored. These include the areas of sampling, balance of power, depth of information gathered, time and reassurance of participants.

Presentation of methodology and methods includes a review of the adaptations made for the main research study. In obtaining the views of the participants and their perceptions on inclusion in relation to statutory testing in year 6, the use of semi-structured interviews and a ranking task enabled data to be gathered directly from those who had seen and experienced high stakes testing. Challenges faced with changes necessitated due to the Coronavirus pandemic are explored and discussed and the new opportunities presented.

Following this is a review of sampling from all three stages of the research study process, an explanation of how data was collected and analysed and the ethical considerations undertaken. At all stages the process was a reflexive one - researcher motivation was recognised and acknowledged, careful consideration was taken of how this may influence the research process and as part of a continuous cycle this informed the next stage of the process. Flexibility was built in to enable this reflection of both the process and my dual roles as a researcher studying within my own field of work.

1.6.3 Chapter 4: Findings

Within this chapter an overview of the findings of the senior leadership task, which provided a baseline of perceptions of inclusion, are presented. This is followed by a detailed presentation of the findings from the main research study. Within this section, patterns and key themes are identified, followed by a detailed presentation of the findings linked to each semi-structured interview question. This chapter closes with a summary preceded by drawing together similarities between the findings of the senior leadership task and the main research study.

Throughout the presentation of the findings, the voice of the participants remains of central importance. These voices offer a window into the figured worlds of the participants and an insight into both their perceptions and influences upon these perceptions.

1.6.4 Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

Presented through three key areas, Chapter 5 explores the interpretations and implications of the findings of the senior leadership task and the main research study. Through the evidence gathered, reasoned arguments are presented and contributions to the current field of knowledge highlighted.

The first area is that of perceptions of inclusion and in particular in relation to pupils with a special educational needs. Within this section the findings are analysed in terms of the use of language and external influences. The second area covers perceptions of statutory testing. Central to this discussion was the participants' expression of the pressure of SATs and the relationship of this with exclusionary practices, a narrowed curriculum and the label of 'failure'. The third area discusses the impact on educational practitioners' self-efficacy and sense of agency.

In summarising the chapter, the final section also explores limitations of the research and implications from this.

1.6.5 Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

The concluding chapter begins by presenting and examining the recommendations from the research study. The conclusion of this thesis is also an invitation to continue and expand upon the discourse about the impact high stakes testing has on inclusion and inclusive practice for pupils with SEND. Now more than ever, with the cancellation of recent SATs testing, we are presented with a real opportunity to highlight alternatives to the high stakes approach. To recognise the impact external factors can have, so that we don't accept that this is '*just how it is'* (Participant A, Appendix A, p. 222).

1.7 **Chapter Summary**

In its simplest terms, inclusion is the act of 'including someone' (Oxford Dictionary, 2021), however, as highlighted at the start of this chapter and throughout this thesis, it has attracted contention, friction and dispute. Inclusive educational practice is influenced by pressures both within and beyond the school. This makes the conceptualisation of inclusion anything but static and as illustrated throughout this thesis, there is a complex interplay of

relationships in terms of how inclusion is carried out in the face of high stakes statutory

testing in year 6. This is particularly pertinent in relation to pupils with special educational

needs where additional complexities are highlighted in this research study linked to

exclusionary practices through the use of language, omission and practice restricted by the

narrow focus of high stakes testing.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 **Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature from a range of sources that informed the research study. Literature on inclusion and primarily the impact of this on the current English education system in terms of statutory testing in year 6 were sought. By providing an insight into the context the research study situates itself within, the literature review encapsulates the environment and influences of the figured worlds of the research participants. It scrutinises the challenges faced within the current English education system in terms of high stakes testing and how that has shaped pedagogy in the final year of primary school.

This chapter begins with an identification of the literacy sources used and a broad overview of the background context. Following this, three key areas are explored. First, the background context of education and economy exploring context at the macro level is discussed. Within this, the review delves into the relationship between the debate around inclusion and curriculum, testing and standards. Second, establishing background context into the specifics of special educational needs and statutory testing. Within this section, through the consideration of literature, the impact of differences in terminology and how language is used and interpreted is explored. Third, literature which scrutinised practitioner self-efficacy, exploring any links with perceptions of inclusion, is identified. This section illustrates how educational practitioners are both agent and subject of the figured worlds they inhabit.

In summary, this chapter finds the review of literature does point towards three key conclusions. First, the use of some forms of terminology as legitimatising labels for exclusionary practices. Second, a priority towards testable subjects at the cost of a broad and balanced curriculum. Third, a pedagogy underpinned with concern regarding test-readiness leading to reduced self-efficacy.

It is within this discourse that this literature review problematises the notion of inclusion in terms of the complexities faced in the educational climate in England today. This is the climate within English state schools regarding pupils identified as having special educational needs, as they enter the statutory testing phase of year 6, their final year in primary school. The key research question to be answered from this research study is: "Just how inclusive is the drive for success in year 6 SATs for pupils with SEND?" As part of this – is there commonality of approach to inclusion; what are opinions on the impact of SATs on inclusion and inclusive practice; and is there a sense of autonomy in meeting any challenges? The culmination of this literature review highlights differences in perspectives and approaches, evident both at a macro level of policy and at a micro level of school processes and experiences. From this, common basal threads become evident – the inclusiveness, or not, of the term inclusion; motivations behind competing perspectives and the responsiveness of inclusive practices to changes in context.

2.1.1 Literary Sources

The literature reviewed in this chapter was sourced primarily from texts, journals and newspapers. In addition, political speeches and websites brought further perspectives to the debate; these included blogs, online talks and transcriptions. These were sourced using library and internet searches, both of which were chosen for the wealth of sources they could provide as well as ease of access. Searches for keywords were used to locate relevant sources. Keywords used were 'inclusion', 'inclusive education', 'inclusive pedagogy', 'perceptions of inclusion', 'SEN', 'teacher efficacy', 'high stakes testing', 'statutory assessment', illustrated in Figure 1. These were then refined further through the combining of key words, such as 'inclusion' + 'education' as explored in further detail below.

Figure 1: Total number of results from variant searches on 'inclusion'.

Inclusion
1 337 279

Inclusion +
Eduction
10 620 502

Inclusion +
Eduction +
England
3 978

Library
Search

Inclusion
348 000 000

Inclusion +
Eduction
677 000 000

Inclusion +
Eduction +
England
69 500 000
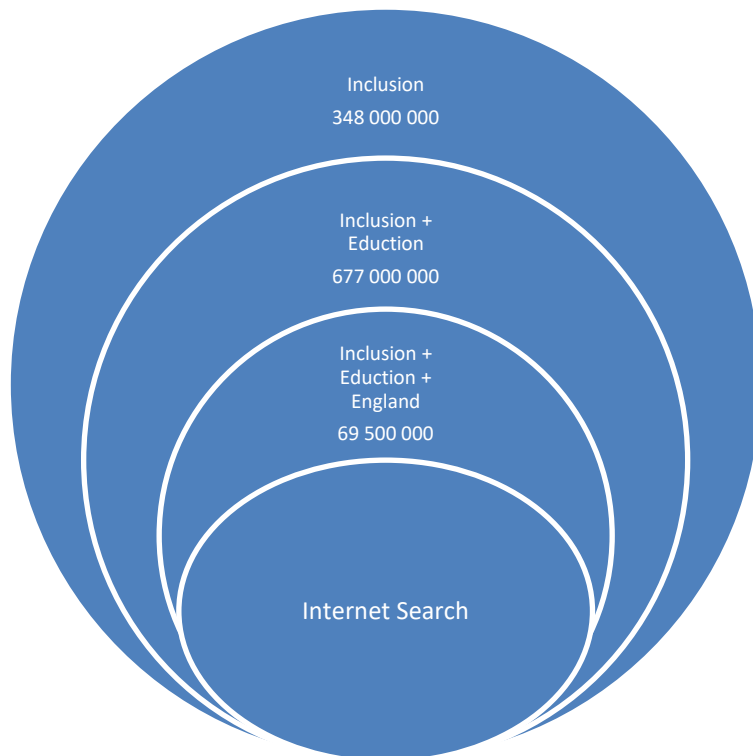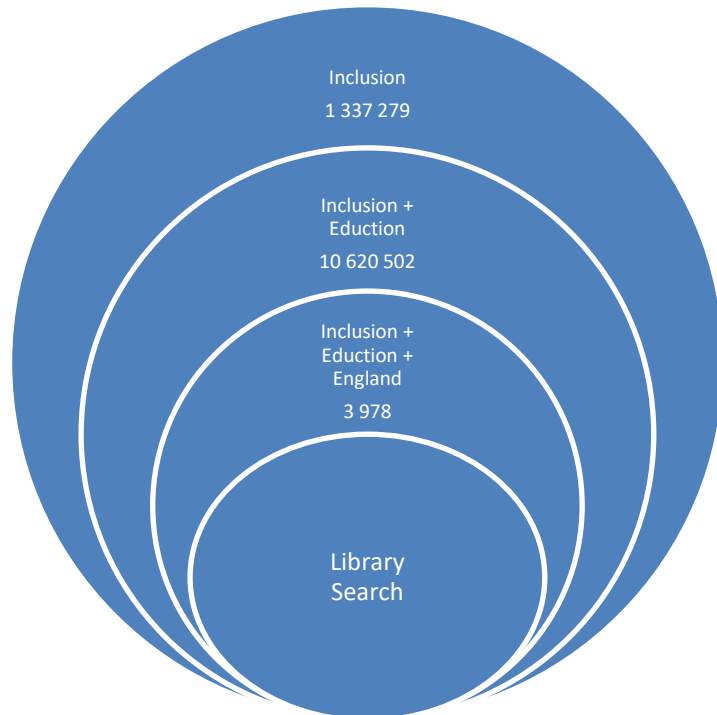
Internet Search

Initial searches were undertaken from the library and postgraduate services at Christ Church University, where an initial search for 'inclusion' revealed over one million results. Similarly, early searches, using the internet search engine Google, revealed a vast quantity of information related to inclusion – three hundred and forty-eight million results in 0.56 seconds. These vast numbers are indicative of the extent to which this area is discussed and debated. The plethora of information available does not equate to agreement about what inclusion looks like, or indeed many of the terms associated with inclusive practice. It is a contested area within which differing agendas can alter the meaning of the word inclusion. From the perspective of this thesis, inclusion is viewed as inclusive of all and thereby to have an inclusive approach there has to be equity.

Further refinement of the search words used brought to the fore different priorities, which in turn led to key avenues of exploration, as illustrated in Figure 2 (p.37).

Figure 2: Key word exploration.

Context	Terminology	Curriculum, Testing, Standards	Teachers
+ SATS	SEN + Use of Lanauge	The Standards Agenda	Self-Efficacy
+ SATS + SEN	Deficit Model & Labelling	SATS Focus Groups	Perceptions of Inclusion
+ Education + Economy	SEN + Use of Language + Context of SATS	School Inspection	Training & Professional Development
		Culture of Gaming	
		Curriculum	
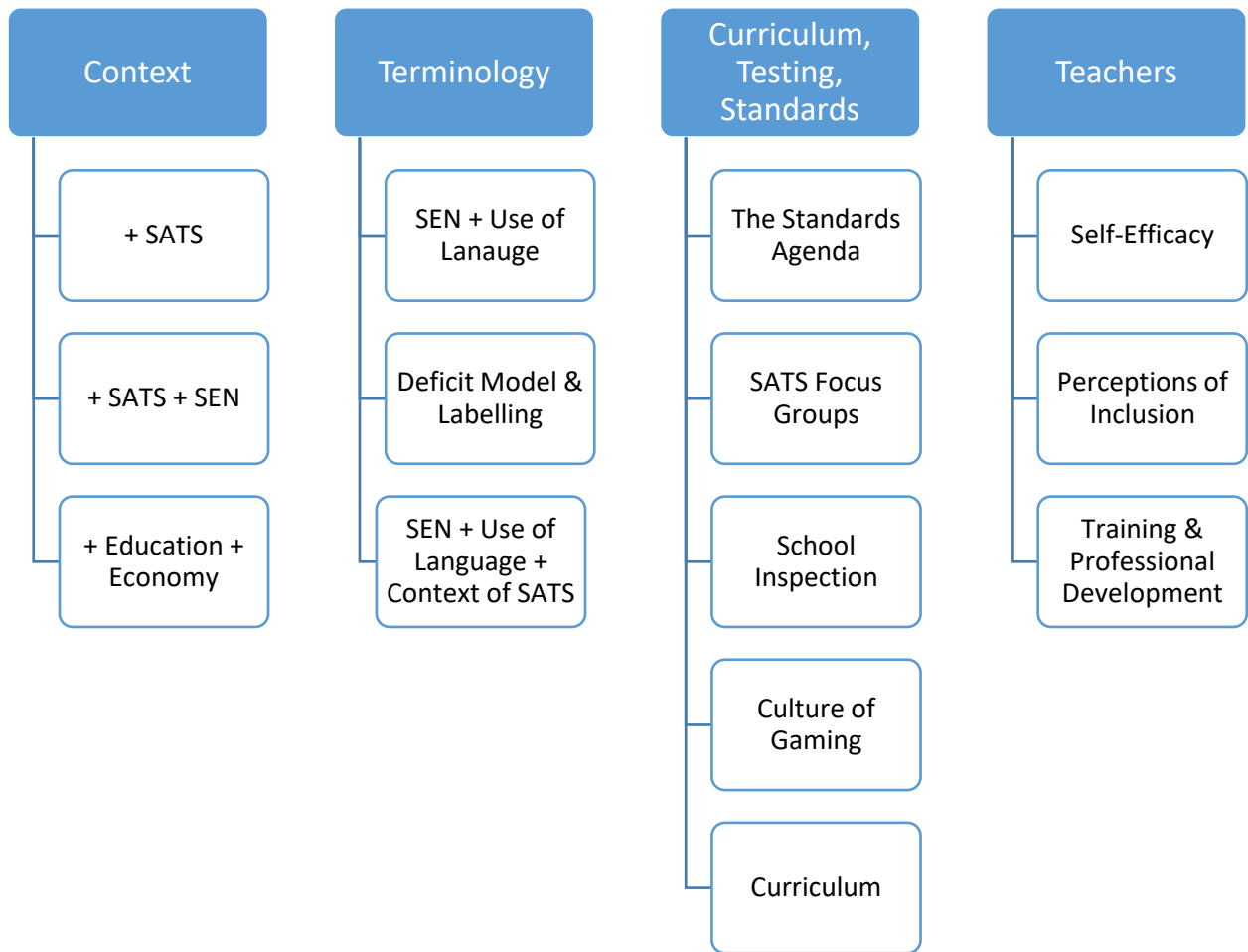
It is important to note that valuable sources were discovered at each stage. For example, the work on the social detriments of health by Marmot and Bell (2012) would not have been found once additional key words were added to the search engine, yet their findings on the role of context have resonance with the discussion about inclusion within the English education system. Bringing in additional key words brought to the fore seminal works such as those by Dyson (2002, 2011) and Ainscow (2004, 2006); in particular, their work on the importance of taking account of context and the gap that can occur between policy and inclusion in practice - both of which are areas which featured in the results of the senior leadership task and the main research study (Chapter 4: Findings, p.153).

In comparison to searches related to inclusion, those directly linked to Key Stage 2 Statutory Testing revealed a very different outcome, with 20 results from the library search

and over 52 million from the internet search. What was apparent from the online search is that these tests have been widely discussed in the English press, often including the use of evocative language – such as 'My Child Won't Benefit from SATS Exams – So We're Boycotting Them' (The Guardian, 6.7.17); '95% Teachers Say SATs are Harmful to Mental Health' (fenews.c.ok, 26.4.19) and 'They Turn Schools into Test Factories' (TES, 4.5.17). The expressive use of language frequently used in news reports relating to SATs found resonance with the participants, with questions directly linked to these high stakes tests eliciting some impassioned responses (Chapter 4: Findings, p.150).

Refining search criteria further through descending order of date revealed current literature written within the past 5 years, such as Dobson and Douglas' (2020) research about the motivations of SENDCos to undertake the role. Alongside this, delving further back revealed how little has changed over time. Such as the subject of the impact of the standards agenda raised in the work of Hall et al's (2004) 'SATurated Models of Pupildom: Assessment and Inclusion/Exclusion', which features again 15 years later in Gatto's (2019) 'Weapons of Mass Instruction a Schoolteacher's Journey Through the Dark World of Compulsory Schooling' and continues to be raised in works such as O'Brien's (2020) 'Has Inclusion Become a Barrier to Inclusion?'

The process of revisiting and refining the search is illustrated in Figure 3 (p. 39). This process of moving from an initial search of key words to the combination of key words and finally onto descending order of date was a flexible process rather than a linear exercise. At each stage there was value in the literature sourced. Each stage also helped to inform the next. For example, in the final stage of searching by descending order of date, literature found here was compared to older literature discovered during earlier stages of the search process. This resulted in links, as illustrated above, that could be used to make comparisons regarding what had or had not changed over time.

Figure 3: Process of Refining the Search

- Key Word Search

  A)Gathering of relevant information sought

  B)Informing the next stage of the search

- Search by combining Key Words

  A)Gathering of relevant information sought

  B)Informing the next stage of the search

- Search by descending order of date

  A)Gathering of relevant information sought

  B)Relevant links with prior searches explored
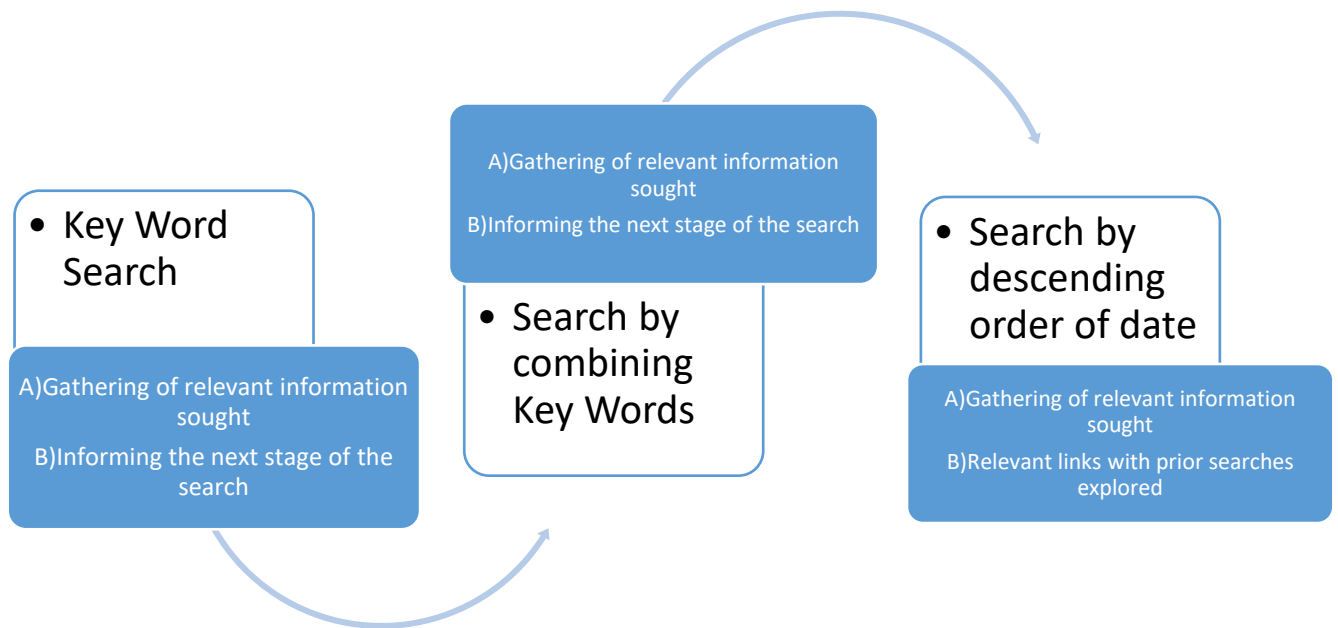
From the attention grabbing headlines of the news reports to the measured discussions and debates from wider literature, the recurrence of concerns with a high stakes approach to testing is testament to the challenges faced in this area. Evident within this is the impact on pedagogy and pressures leading to some exclusionary practices. Preceding an in-depth review of literature relating to these challenges is an overview of the background context.

2.1.2 The Background Context

The notion of inclusive education has been considered by many, since the conception of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), to have been a motivating agent for change in terms of inclusion in schools (Sanvolainen et al, 2012). However, the meaning and implementation of inclusion within education has remained a fiercely contested area (Gatto, 2019; O'Brien, 2020). Twenty-five years on from the Salamanca Statement the need for clarity in terms of inclusion and equity are still apparent (UNESCO, 2020, p.25). This reoccurring theme is explored throughout this literature review, as it impacts on discussions in terms of curriculum, testing, standards, the use of language, practitioner self-efficacy and perceptions of inclusion.

Underpinning this background context is the current hegemonic discourse which is filled with the sound-bite language of competition, marketisation and standards. This had led, some state, to the narrowing to measurable outcomes (Graham and Harwood, 2011), resulting in a pedagogy that leads to winners and losers (McBeath et al, 2006; McDermot et al, 2011; Gatto, 2019) and increases the division for those who are disadvantaged (UNESCO, 2020). There remains this uneasy relationship between inclusivity and the accountability of schools implicit within the current performance driven standards agenda (Graham and Harwood 2011; Boyle 2012, O'Brien, 2020). This is a relationship that is played out at a macro level of government policy as well as at a micro level of impact on practice in the classroom. Central to this, in relation to the research study, is the micro level impact the statutory testing of year 6 pupils has on inclusion for those with special educational needs.

2.2 Curriculum, Testing and Standards

To understand the review of literature linked to curriculum, testing and standards it is necessary to start with an overview of the context within which it sits. This section therefore

begins with an exploration of the background context in terms of the English education system and economy. This is followed by a review of literature linked to the interrelated area of the standards agenda. High stakes statutory testing being pertinent to the standards agenda is then scrutinised: first, in terms of setting the background context to SATs, and second, in exploring the relationship between these statutory tests and what some term as the 'legitimisation' of exclusion (Hall et all, 2004). Finally, this is ensued by a review of literature linked to the National Curriculum in England and school inspection.

2.2.1 The Background Context – Education and Economy

The Education Reform Act (1988) introduced the National Curriculum (1988). With this, the English education system was firmly located within the market place through the connecting of statutory testing results to published league tables (Sasson, 2018). It was during the 1990's that we first saw what John Major - speaking as Prime Minister - termed, the need to 'infuse education with greater awareness of the needs of the economy' (Major, 1991), and secondly the place of education in the global market place, in what Tony Blair, also speaking as Prime Minister at the time, described as 'a beacon to the world' (Blair, 1997). At a macro level, the current English educational context was set as one where the good of the nation was defined in terms of dependence upon the stability of the economic market (Barton and Slee, 1999). At a micro level, the pressure on schools led to an excluding pedagogy (Kennedy and Laverick, 2019; McShane, 2020, O'Brien, 2020). This had left England with an education system described in 2016 by the Office for Standards in Education as 'mediocre' (Wilshaw, 2016b) and has led to a situation where some exclusionary practices aim to ensure, what McShane (2020) terms as, a situation where 'low achievement can no longer reduce the average outcome scores' (p.262). The competitive system of league-tables is recognised by UNESCO as one which is 'creating new barriers to progress in relation to inclusion and equity' (2020, p.20).

The dominant discourse of a market-orientated education system has never been more pertinent as it is now that England, as part of the UK, has left the European Union. Now more than ever 'UK skills levels', described by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2015), need to be up to 'international competitiveness' (Wilshaw, 2016). What has to be questioned is whether the current commodification of pupils is the means to achieving this and at what cost to some of our most vulnerable pupils. Exploration of the practice of off-rolling undertaken by YouGov (2019) highlighted one of the costs, where, within the teacher participants, 50% linked the primary reason for off-rolling as 'to manipulate league tables' (YouGov, 2019, p.12). This approach of off-rolling involves the removal of a pupil from the school roll for the primary benefit of the school and not that of the pupil. The cost of this is discussed in greater depth within the 'SATs – 'Legitimising' Exclusion' section below.

Critical to this exploration of background context are the perceptions that influence: the values we hold, the approaches we take, the actions we carry out. This research study upholds the belief in inclusion as a question of rights (Barton, 2006; Petrou et al, 2009; WHO, 2011) and that education is a 'basic human right' for 'all learners' (UNESCO, 2020, p.24). An aim of government policy, expressed by the current education secretary, is to 'drive up standards and opportunity for every child in this country' (Williamson, 2019). To enable this 'opportunity for every child' it can be argued that education needs to be underpinned by an inclusive approach.

Contention arises with the way in which inclusion is perceived, by both those designing educational policy at a government level as well as those delivering education at a school level. This in turn leads to ensuring pivotal implications for the pupils in the English education system. Review of literature highlights that the notion of inclusion can be evasive, due to the numerous ways in which is it interpreted and influenced by the person, context and underlying purpose (Armstrong, 2011).

The background context reviewed, summarised in Figure 4 (p. 43), underpins the current situation within which this research study takes place.

Figure 4: Overview of current context.
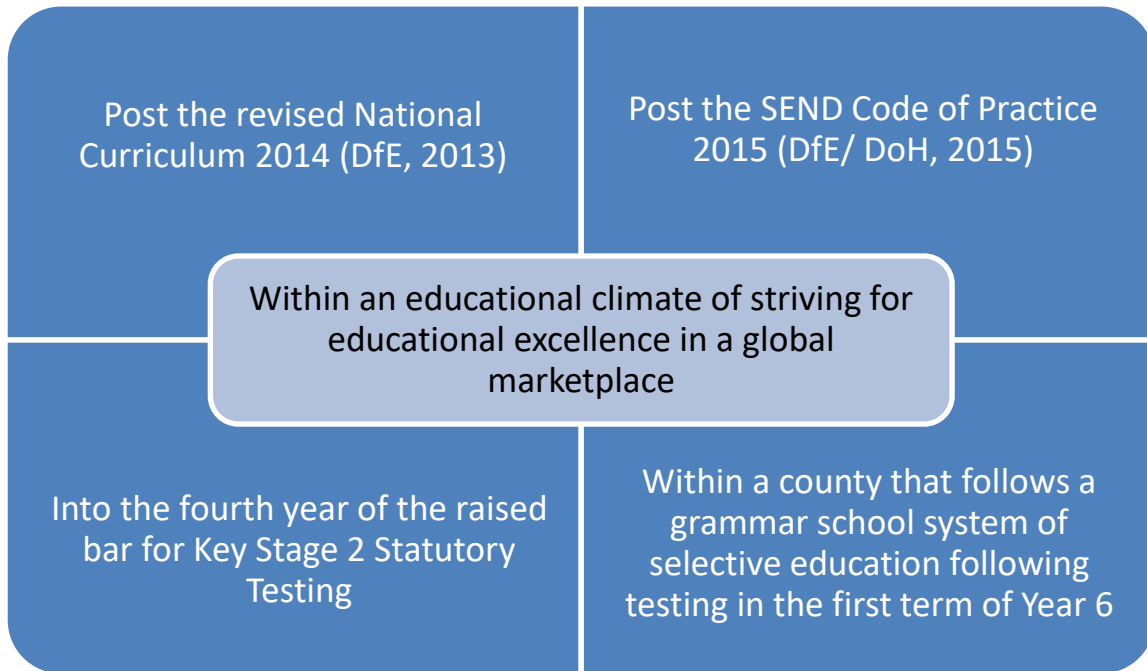
This is further underpinned by the global context of the Covid 19 pandemic. Within this context, the cancellation of the 2019 and 2020 KS2 SATs brought brief reprieve from high stakes testing, as there was no publication of primary school performance measures. This was to be a time, the education secretary proclaimed, to 'trust teachers' (Williamson, ITV news, 2021). This does leave the unanswered question as to whether teachers were not previously to be trusted. This turn of phrase does not lift the value of a profession where, as highlighted later in reviewed literature, self-efficacy and sense of agency is questionable. This is further impacted by the standards agenda, which in primary schools is intrinsically linked with the high stakes approach to testing in year 6.

2.2.2 The Standards Agenda

This agenda has underpinned much within this literature review. It is deeply evident within the background context and as reviewed, impacts on the way in which language is used in terms of expectations, special educational needs and inclusion.

It is unlikely that anyone would argue against the need for high standards within our education system. Calls promoting an education for all and every child reaching their full potential are heard around the country and appear within the policies and statements of the majority of schools. What appears to be more problematic is the encasement of a standards agenda for education within a competitive drive, which includes narrow accountability measures that do not sit easily with the pursuit of an inclusive pedagogy (Hall et al, 2004; O'Brien, 2020). By its very nature, a competitive climate has those who will gain and those who will lose. From the perspective of measuring school success, the league table format has clearly subjugated 'the equality and social justice agenda' (Hall et al, 2004, p.814) and as a consequence the capitulation of inclusion. At the crux of this subjugation is the global, market-led climate where Britain's place on 'the Champions League table' has huge implications for the education system (Boyle, 2012, p.4), and this can be felt keenly in year 6 of primary schooling, leading to evidence of some practices which are exclusionary.

2.2.3 <u>The Background Context: SATs</u>

In 2018, speaking as Chief Inspector for Ofsted, Spielman (2018) highlighted the importance of results, adding that they must be indicative of 'real achievement' (Spielman, 2018). The key issue raised within this statement – that of why results may not be a reflection of 'real achievement' – is central to the pressures felt by schools (Courtney, 2019; Gatto, 2019, O'Brien, 2020) and integral to discussions about inclusion within the English primary education system. For primary schools in England, these results refer to the National Curriculum Statutory Key Stage Two tests in Reading, Writing and Maths, more commonly known as the SATs. The purpose of these tests is described to parents by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) as 'a way of making sure every child has mastered the basics when they leave primary education' (STA, 2019). In the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements for schools (2019), amongst the statutory requirements outlined within this 61-

page guidance, the intention of SATs is described as 'to assess pupils' abilities in a fair and comparable way' (STA, 2019, p.27).

An internet search undertaken, using the search engine Google, of the statement *What is the purpose of KS2 SATs?* revealed 5, 810, 000 results in under 1 minute. Review of the first couple of paragraphs of the top 4 results highlighted a purpose of SATs beyond the aforementioned assessment of pupils' abilities. This is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Results: What is the purpose of KS2 SATs?

The Good School Guide	https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/curricula-and-exams/sats-standard-assessment-tests#:~:text=Sats%20(Standard%20Assessment%20Tests)%20measure,and%20the%20progress%20they%20make.	Within the first sentence stated 'ultimate **aim** of holding schools to account'
Third Space Learning	https://thirdspacelearning.com/blog/why-are-sats-important/	'judging a school's effectiveness'
The School Run	https://www.theschoolrun.com/what-are-sats-results-for	'in some respects … more important to schools than to the child'
BBC News	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-44126030	'ultimately the results are used to hold schools to account'
Date of search	1.9.20	

Revealed through this internet search a clear picture emerges of the perceived primary purpose of SATs. Instantly the reader is told SATs hold schools to account and judge the effectiveness of a primary school, with The School Run website positing that they

have greater importance to the school than the pupil. This is in sharp contrast to the government's published intent as explored below.

The four search results were followed by a suggestion box titled 'people also search for' and within this, the first two results were 'advantages of sats in primary schools' and 'boycott sats.' Featuring below all of these was the STA 'Information for Parents' leaflet, where on page 3, almost as a postscript, it is noted 'the tests are also used to assess schools' performance and to produce national performance data' (STA, 2019, p.3). The findings of this review of literature are suggestive of a disparity between the government portrayal and that of many others with regards to the primary role of statutory testing.

Spielman (2018) warned 'we should not incentivise apparent success without substance.' However, a consequence of 'a fair and comparable way' (STA, 2019, p.27) of assessment being coupled to school standards as part of the regime of high stakes testing had led to cases of success over substance. It has led to a system where schools have been likened to factories (Robinson, 2011; Gatto, 2019) with pupils as a commodity.

Contention for SATs has been an issue from their inception. When first administered in April 1991, SATs had been dubbed by many primary teachers as 'unfair and unworkable' as identified in the journalistic research of Wherrett (2004). These tests had been preceded two years earlier by the equally debated introduction of the National Curriculum and were followed one year later by the introduction of league tables. This government measure, by which to judge school performance, continues to bring much contention (O'Brien, 2020). The combination of the SATs and the league tables moved primary assessment into a new era of high stakes testing, where the results of one were linked very publicly to the other. Speaking as Prime Minister at the time, John Major (1991) had introduced this performance measure of schools in part as a support for parents who had, he claimed, the 'devil's own job' finding out about standards – both of their child and their child's school' (Major, 1991). Essential to this were tests and 'hostility to testing' was seen as to the detriment of 'less able children' (Major, 1991). A view echoed by Boris Johnson, speaking as the current Prime

Minister, who has stated that the abolition of testing would be detrimental to 'excellence' (Johnson, 2019). In this high stakes culture of winners and losers, it is questionable whose 'excellence' is being referred to. As the work of UNESCO (2020) has illustrated, this type of competitive culture creates greater disadvantages.

Whilst the structure and format of the SATs have undergone several revisions, it was the changes brought about in 2016 which may have resulted in the greatest dispute (Bousted, 2016; Farron 2016). These were the first year 6 statutory tests to be assessed against the new National Curriculum (2014). Speaking as Education Secretary at the time, Nicky Morgan's speech 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' (2016) promoted the importance of giving 'every child in primary school the chance to attempt more stretching questions' (Morgan, 2016). Two months after the SATs tests, Morgan argued 'we have raised the bar on what counts as good enough' (Morgan cited in Coughlan, 2016). An approach contested by others who felt the SATs were the 'hardest ever' resulting in year 6 children 'in tears' (ITV, 2016) and described by others as a 'shambles' (Bousted, 2016). Farron, speaking at the time as leader of an opposition party, the Liberal Democrats, went so far as to suggest that pupils had become 'lab rats in a big ideological experiment' (Farron cited in BBC news, 2016). Even the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) were quoted as referring to the SATs reading test as 'unduly hard' (cited in Staufenberg, 2017).

From this background context of SATs, clear struggles materialise. There is the emergence of an uneasy relationship between the dual purposes of these tests. The direct consequence of this is the impact on pupils with SEND in terms of inclusionary practices. Successful inclusion needs to be embedded within an education system (UNESCO, 2020). The system currently in place funnels pupils through the narrow 'spout' of statutory testing. What is required is aptly put by Peacock (cited in Gillen, 2021, p. 9) who posits the need for a system of 'assessment [that] serves rather than drives education.'

2.2.4 <u>SATs and 'Legitimising' Exclusion</u>

There is in England a legitimating climate of competition for the greater good in terms of England's global position. The introduction of the league tables had opened the doors to what some have described as 'gam[ing] the system' (Sasson, 2018). Pressure from this on schools (Reay and Wiliam, 1999; Nind et al, 2004), teachers (Reay and Wiliam, 1999; Ellis et al, 2008; Collins et al, 2010) and leaders (Kennedy and Laverick, 2019) is well documented, resulting in what Boyle (2012) describes as

A 'reduced …breadth and balance within the taught curriculum to support the pupil performance outputs (modelled on a factory production-line) of a small core of elite subjects – or more accurately the testable aspects or domains of those subjects' (Boyle, 2012, p.3).

Through this 'SATurated classroom economy' (Hall et al, 2004, p 810) the research of Booher-Jennings (2006), Boyle (2012) and Hall et al (2004) has revealed exclusionary classroom practices. Practices brought about by the accountability of the high stakes approach. First, where teachers might take on '"gaming" practices in order to artificially inflate schools' passing rates' (Booher-Jennings, 2006, p.758). Second, where coaching and preparation (Hall et al, 2004; Ricci, 2004; Boyle, 2012) has led to a climate where 'striving for success in SATs legitimates exclusive practices' (Hall et al, 2004, p.812). Third, through the surreptitious practice of off-rolling.

Booher-Jennings' (2006) research highlighted a pedagogical focus on 'the bubble kids' (those 'who can pass with a little help') because 'they'll give you the biggest return on your investment' (Booher-Jennings, 2006, p.757). The writing of Gatto (2019) suggests that this remains the case in America today. Whilst recognising that international comparisons can be complex when taking account of differences in contextual factors unique to the country, the findings of Booher-Jennings (2006) do resonate in the current educational climate in England (McDermot, 2011; Allen, 2012; Robinson 2016). In research that highlights teachers having to make compromises (Booher-Jennings, 2006), this picture of winners and losers of

the current system emerges. As Kennedy and Laverick (2019) so aptly put any 'quality without equity is not quality' (Kennedy and Laverick, 2019, p.477). A view also put forward by Terzi (2014) who highlights the detriment of quality without equity. To have one without the other 'is like issuing a ticket and keeping the door locked' (Sakellariadis, 2010, p.25). With the gaming approach of teaching 'bubble kids', the door is 'locked' to the most vulnerable pupils.

A further element of this 'gaming' approach is the practice of off-rolling, often seen as taking place 'behind the scenes' (YouGov, 2019, p.9). Again, we see a practice that is largely affecting pupils who are vulnerable, including those with SEND (Owen, 2019; YouGov, 2019, McShane, 2020). McShane (2020) cites this as having 'wider social implications' (McShane, 2020, p.259) with one participant of his research pointing out the 'gamble with life-chances' of the affected pupils (McShane, 2020, p 269). In terms of pupils with SEND, there is a chasm between reality and the DfE (2015) aim of 'a stronger focus on high aspirations and improving outcomes' (DfE, 2015). As with the focus on 'bubble kids' (Boober-Jennings, 2006), off-rolling also results in pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged through marginalisation.

Review of literature exposes these practices as symptomatic of an education system that is performance driven, due to the impact of accountability linked to high stakes testing. Whilst not noted within an Ofsted blog about off-rolling, written by a member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate, one of the first response comments was that this practice 'is largely triggered by league table positions – we all know this' (McGill in response to Owen, 2019). This is reinforced by the findings of the YouGov report (May, 2019) undertaken on behalf of Ofsted, which found that a majority of 68% of respondents identified the manipulation of reported results as a reason for off-rolling taking place. In addition to this it was also reported that the pressure of maintaining 'high performance' was felt by both school leaders and teachers alike (YouGov, 2019, p.3).

There is this assumption that 'ability is …something children possess in fixed amounts and that this can be measured through SATs' (Hall et al, 2004), resulting in a situation described in the US as 'in the name of improving schools' scores, some students must inevitably be sacrificed' (Booher-Jennings, 2006, p.758). Echoes of this are evident in Hall et al's (2004) finding that 'practice tends … towards that which is perceived to have the greatest consequences for the survival and status of the school itself' (Hall et al, 2004, p 815). The result of this is an exclusive provision (Hall et all, 2004), which the use of SATs reinforces (Reay and Wiliam, 1999; Hall et al, 2004; Gatto, 2019).

2.2.5 <u>Curriculum</u>

Exclusionary practices are not exclusive to the pupils themselves, but are also pertinent to the content of the National Curriculum. Linked to the pressure felt by SATs, there is concern over the impact of narrowing the curriculum to those areas to be assessed (Alexander, 2008; Boyle, 2012; Gatto, 2019). This is recognised by the government with Spielman (2020) identifying that 'determination to perform well in SATs' could 'skew the curriculum … to the detriment of other subjects' beyond those tested (Spielman, 2020). This could be as a result of what Benjamin (2002) describes as the clear definition of 'the borders of 'normal' success and of 'normality' (Benjamin, 2002, p.315). These borders being the ones required for success in statutory testing. Those beyond these boundaries run the risk of being marginalised. Boyle (2012) outlines three patterns of which elements of all can be seen at play here.

1. The teach to be measured approach of the accountancy model
2. The topping up of the empty vessel of the child of the banking model
3. 'The teaching and learning process [that] conforms to that testing metric' of the testocracy approach (Boyle, 2012, p.5)

High stakes testing firmly places the English education system within the accountancy model. Primary schools are measured against success in the final year SATs. Coupled to this is a curriculum, limited to the testing metric, with which pupils are 'topped up.' The cost of this is that non-testable subjects are side-lined and the curriculum is 'skewed.' The impact of this leading to a 'pedagogy of poverty' (Boyle and Charles, 2012) where reduced teacher autonomy (O'Brien, 2020) has a directed impact on inclusion. UNESCO (2020) make a direct link between 'higher levels of equity in learning' and educational professionals who feel valued (p.28). This is an area explored in detail in the ensuing 'Self Efficacy' section.

2.2.6 School Inspection

Intrinsically linked to the high stakes, performance-driven culture is the role of school inspection. England is located in a current climate where the framework for inspection has never been more challenging (Wilshaw, 2016b). Within this the current Ofsted protocol claims to look for 'the essence of what performance tables cannot capture' (Spielman, 2018). However, high stakes data remains ever present in the expectation that it will match practice. There have been claims that this has led to 'incremental improvement' in the number of primary schools judged good or outstanding (Wilshaw, 2016b) with 86% judged good or outstanding as reported in the 2018-2019 Ofsted Annual Report (Spielman, 2020). However, the question remains open as to the impact on pupils identified as having a special educational need, but not identified as 'a bubble kid', entering the statutory testing final year in primary. A reality recognised by Ofsted's current Chief Inspector, who has stated concern that a 'second-guessing' situation had been created, which could override the quest of 'real, deep knowledge and understanding' (Speilman, 2018). England is a nation where pupils encounter more high stakes assessment in comparison with other countries (Wedell, 2008). The result of this 'testocratic machinery' (Guinier, cited in Bryant, 2015) is what Gatto (2019) posits as a 'one-size-fits-all "testable" schooling' (p.27). The impact of this is a narrowed curriculum, where pupils are told how to learn to the test (Whalley, 2018; Bousted, 2019a;

Courtney, 2019; Gatto, 2019). This brings into question the validity of the data identifying 86% of schools as good or outstanding and the impact on inclusion, in particular in terms of pupils with special educational needs.

It can be argued that school success becomes meaningless, as the more this success is categorically specified within narrow margins the more likely it is to be found wanting (Reay and Wiliams, 1999). That is to say, one could question the level of truth in Wilshaw's (2016) claim of 'incremental improvements' towards raising the percentage of good and outstanding schools. Are schools in fact 'simply ticking the right boxes in order to survive?' (Jones, 2017).

2.2.7 <u>Summary: Curriculum, Testing and Standards</u>

In this climate, pupils with special educational needs are hindered in their success in terms of the predominant discourses (Benjamin, 2002a). A cause of this is highlighted by Booher-Jennings (2006), whose research into the 'bubble kids' found that privileging this group over others was 'viewed as neutral and objective' (Booher-Jennings, 2006, p.759). This has been seen by some as being in the interest of the greater good – that of the success of the rest of the pupils (Edwards et al, 2001; Hegarty, 2010). This raises the question, can practice that excludes a few in favour of the many really be considered legitimate? If the case to answer is writing off the few to enable greater success for the many, legitimacy in terms of inclusive practice is a long way off. However, as Hegarty (2010) and Edwards et al (2001) are positing in the interests of the 'greater good', inclusive practice is not a valid way forward with this view point anyway.

Hence what we see emerging on one side of the scale is a National Curriculum (2014) calling for 'a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based' (National Curriculum, 2014, p.4) and, on the other, high stakes assessment where judgement is limited to testing (Hall et al, 2004, p.801). This has led to, what Boyle (2012) describes as 'a reduced pedagogy'

where the demands of the education system assert conformity and compliance (Boyle, 2012). Within this accountancy model (Boyle, 2012) where only a 'narrow element of "smartness" is determined' (Guinier cited in Bryant, 2015) schools are caught in the middle and faced with the oxymoronic challenge of inclusion or standards.

2.3 Defining Inclusion: A Question of Terminology

The background of curriculum, testing and standards sets the context for the way in which language is used. It is a context where terminology adopts different meanings dependent upon who is using it and for what purpose. In exploring this, it is important to first examine the specific context in terms of statutory testing and special educational needs. This is followed by an exploration of SEND and the use of language; including the relationship between the deficit model and labelling and the use of language in terms of SATs and special educational needs.

2.3.1 The Background Context: SATs and Special Educational Needs

Literature suggests that context plays a crucial role, as a linchpin, in the discourse around inclusion (Pather, 2007; Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009; Dyson et al, 2011; Kozelski et al, 2011; Marmot and Bell, 2012). To be applicable and relevant, discussion about inclusion has to take account of the social, political and historical context. Data, reported by Department for Education identified that pupils with SEND are more likely eligible for free school meals (DfE, 2016a) and that SEND is 'most prevalent' in Travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy/ Roma pupils (DfE, 2016a). This data cannot be swept up in a one-size-for-all approach that ignores contingent differences. This is, however, still the case. With this data, it does have to be born in mind that it is measured against criteria set by the government and is situated around expected 'averages'. It can therefore be argued that it is more a way of othering than including. With the accountability standards measure of year 6

statutory testing, pressure is on schools through the inclusion of all pupils with identified

special educational needs in schools' performance data. The pressure is there through

measuring the attainment of pupils with identified SEND against that of all other pupils.

Special educational needs are described, by the Department of Education, as needs

'which call for special educational provision' (DfE, 2015, p.15). Whilst there are some

compensations made within the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements guidance (STA,

2019), pupils with SEND are still assessed against the one-size-fits-all measure of SATs.

Pupils who fall below 'working at the overall standard of the tests' (STA, 2019, p.24) can be

dis-applied, they are however still included within the schools' performance data. This

uniform approach to measuring school success highlights the 'common pitfall' of

generalisation (Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004, p.134) and results in a direct impact on

vulnerable pupils, as noted in the 'SATs – legitimising exclusion' section.

Having reviewed the background contexts in laying the foundations for further

discussion, it is imperative to start with an acknowledgement of the widely documented

extent of the uncertainty about what it means to include (Allan, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013:

O'Brien, 2020). Inclusion is a term many feel familiar with and there is often an assumption

of commonality of inclusion in practice and indeed of inclusive practices. However, a sense

of familiarity does not equate to a shared understanding of meaning and definition, or of

perception and understanding. The term inclusion is anything but straightforward and the

vast complexities within the terminology, as previously noted, have resulted in little

consensus amongst literature or policy. This has inevitably impacted on practice; where

ambiguity around terminology has been shown to lead to inclusive practice that appears

incongruous at best (Allan 2010), it has led to a gap between ideology and pedagogy

(Barton, 2000; Florian and Kershner, 2009; Florian and Spratt, 2013) and a public face of

school inclusion that does not necessarily reflect the embedded practice (Dyson et al, 2002;

Ainscow et al, 2006; Salovita, 2019).

Through review of literature, the emerging picture is clear that the issue of terminology within the paradigm of inclusion elicits as many questions as it does answers. What can appear as a lack of clarity, opposing and indeed contradictory messages impacts on the way inclusion is perceived and in turn on inclusive practice in schools. With dissenting views, underlying agendas and fed by differing motivations, the path to inclusion is anything but straight. In 2002, Schostak stated that words can often be open to more than one interpretation. This statement remains as pertinent today with regard to the discourse on inclusion. With accusations of the language of inclusion being 'emotionally loaded' (Low 2007) and 'tokenistic' (Hegarty 2010), there are calls to 'desloganise' and 'de-mystify' (Panther 2007). This is further exacerbated by the fact, as Engelbrecht and Green (2007) point out 'there is as yet no standard vocabulary in the inclusive education movement.' The reality for those working in education is a notion of inclusion that is described by language that is tentative, charged or loaded.

In defining inclusion, from the perspective of this research project, the definition of inclusion is encompassing of all – that is to say all pupils. However, it is not within the scope or purpose of this literature review to explore the whole breadth of debate around inclusion but to bring the review into the context of the research - inclusion as situated within year 6 of primary school in England in relation to pupils with a special educational need. The lack of consensus about the definition of inclusion has not been aided by competing agendas, particularly around the use of SATs. However, the very nature of the disagreements leads to the conclusion that it is of even greater importance to delve deeper into the reasons, motivations or justifications given for what can be opposing, contradictory and competing definitions. This is reflected in this research study, which seeks to make space for the conversational, to be flexible to allow for the unanticipated (Wood and Smith, 2016) and aims to ensure responses are not just a presentation of 'best face' (Creswell, 2013).

Within this time of uncertainty about the meaning of inclusive terminology, UNESCO's (1994) 'fundamental principle' of an 'inclusive school' where 'all children should learn

together' (UNESCO, 1994, p.11) is left challenging to translate into the apparent simplicity that the phrase 'all children should learn together' could suggest. Reviewing this statement within the current educational climate highlights sources of conflict, where the truth as portrayed by official rhetoric does not necessarily marry neatly to the wider discourse on inclusion (Dyson et al, 2002; Ainscow et al, 2006). This is noted in the work of Florian and Spratt (2013), who posit that the language of inclusion and inclusionary practice are both 'inconsistent' in their interpretation and susceptible to change over time (Florian and Spratt, 2013).

In turning to the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2016b), educational practitioners in England are advised to 'have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils'. Whilst accepting these fixed competencies are outlining the *minimum* expectations, the omission of any clear guidance on inclusion is notably evident. In terms of defining inclusion or inclusive practice, the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014) offers educational practitioners no clearer advice. Teachers are reminded of their obligations under equal opportunities legislation and it is stipulated that 'lessons should be planned to ensure that there are no barriers to every child achieving' (National Curriculum, 2014, p.7). However, within an educational state of panoptic surveillance, driven by competition, one could question just how easy it is to translate these obligations verbatim. There is a clear dichotomy between the aims of an education system, as outlined in official documents such as The Teachers' Standards and The National Curriculum, and the pressures under which schools are operating. This is crucial not only to understanding the messages teachers receive and how these are interpreted; but also to understanding any notion of truth in defining inclusion. It can be questioned whether there can be any such final truth, when the definition of the word can be based on different motivations.

What the guidance from these 'chalk face' documents fail to acknowledge can be summed up by Florian and Spratt (2013, p.122) 'inclusion is not a passive, being 'done to' certain groups of children, but a dynamic process that involves all children in the life and

learning of the school.' This resonates with aims put forward by UNESCO (2020) where the need for an all-encompassing 'culture of inclusion' is posited (p 25). The emerging picture is again clear, pupils in England are being educated within an era where inclusion competes in an incongruent relationship with an agenda driven by market-led standards (Hall et al, 2004; Allan, 2010, O'Brien, 2020).

2.3.2 Special Educational Needs: The Use of Language

Emerging from the debate around inclusion is further discourse suggesting that how language is used, specifically with regards to special educational needs, reinforces the status quo. Encompassed within this are concerns highlighted about firstly a deficit model upheld by the current status quo (Kugelmass, 2001; Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009; Florian and Kershner, 2009), and secondly, concerns about the use of labelling (MacBeath et al, 2006; Jull, 2009; Esposito and Carroll, 2019). A picture emerges of an increasingly complex situation where definition of inclusion is not only complex, sometimes to the point of contradictory, but also underpinned by divergent motivations. The consequence of this makes an understanding of the nature of truth regarding inclusion, and particularly the place of special educational needs within this, increasingly difficult to reach. The results are a language that can frequently 'obfuscate more than…inform' (Barton and Slee, 1999, p.7).

2.3.3 The Relationship Between the Deficit Model and Labelling

Whilst education professionals do not generally favour label first terminology, it is not unusual to hear examples of this; such as referring to 'that autistic child' or 'that SEN child'; putting the label first and thereby reinforcing a model of deficit. Described by Kugelmass (2001) as 'attaching a deviant status to children whose learning does not conform to societal expectations' (Kugelmass, 2001, p.48). This identification by label places the 'problem' with the pupil (Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009, p.198) and it is this which is underpinning

current policy and creates opportunity for a culture which is 'enabling outclusion' (O'Brien, 2020, p.305). Creating a label creates a space for that label, through which an 'other' (O'Brien, 2020), a difference is created and a deficit born (McDermot, 2011; Sobel and Aston, 2019). It leads to the pupils becoming hidden behind the label, behind 'the veil of a syndrome or condition' (Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009, p.200). This is in complete contradiction to inclusive principles and an equitable education system (Ainscow, 2020) and it is a picture that becomes increasingly complex as special educational needs is viewed within the context of SATs.

2.3.4 The Use of Language, Special Educational Needs and Statutory Testing

Within this context, words, such as special, have become somewhat of an oxymoron in terms of inclusion. On one side schools have the Office for Standards in Education proclaiming that 'promoting equality is at the heart of all we do' (Ofsted, 2016, p.2), whilst on the other side the pressures of accountability measures in the form of year 6 SATs are based on judgements of standards. This climate of winners and losers inevitably pushes against any idea of inclusion for all and further highlights the 'tension' linked to how inclusion is both defined and meant (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007). These are factors perhaps not considered by Wilshaw (2016), speaking at the time as Ofsted's Chief Inspector, when he stated that 'testing isn't a burden; it's an opportunity' (Wilshaw, 2016b). Wilshaw (2016) upheld testing as a means of 'address[ing] the long-tail of underachievement in our country' (Wilshaw, 2016b); a view that continues with the current Education Secretary, who posits that removal of SATs would be a 'recipe for disaster' (Williamson, 2019). Whilst arguing vehemently against what he terms 'the insistent shriek that testing is inhumane' (Wilshaw, 2016b), Wilshaw does not confront the dark underside to testing. Such dark undersides might be the pressure of accountability schools can feel, that can lead to the inappropriate use of the SEND label or having a selective approach to admissions as a means 'to avoid institutional blame' (Benjamin, 2002a, p.53). However, with pupils identified as having

special educational needs included in SATs performance data, it is questionable that 'blame' can be avoided. Is it more a case that schools have difficult choices to make regarding their role in terms of both admitting pupils with identified special educational needs and of 'gaming' the system as discussed earlier and explored further below.

Echoing the research of Booher-Jennings (2006) in terms of inclusion in year 6, this use of language to categorise has implications for putting pupils into different groups with regards to focussed teaching attention under the pressure of SATs. The outcomes based education of SATs (Gatto, 2019) can result in pressure to focus on the category of pupils who will provide the highest return. The research of Smith and Broomhead (2019) with SENDCos who are year 6 teachers discovered that SEND responsibilities took a back seat at the time of SATs. This is further exasperated by the label of 'failure' through not meeting the SATs standard (Wedall, 2003; Gillen, Jenkins and Watson, 2019; Kennedy and Laverick, 2019). As noted in the discussion of the research study this point relating to stress felt by 10 and 11 year olds sitting the SATs test featured prominently (Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion, pp.157-182; Analysis of the use of the words 'pressure' and 'stress' in relation to SATs, Appendix R, p.373).

2.3.5 Summary: Defining Inclusion: A Question of Terminology

The language used to define what it means to be inclusive adds to the challenge of the nature of truth of what inclusivity means. With multivocality involved in defining this term, it is perhaps inevitable that inclusion takes many different forms and can be seen, as in the research of Kennedy and Laverick (2019), to be a 'challenge' for those working within school. Equally the sheer amount written and discussed about inclusion is testament to its significance (Terzi, 2014). As noted above, the use of language is further challenged within the context of SATs, where pressure can lead to labels used for justification.

With the arrival of the revised SEND Code of Practice came the aim for 'a system which is less confrontational and more efficient' (DfE/DoH, 2015, p.11). One could contest on behalf of schools, in arguing what could be more confrontational than a climate where SATs results are used as a tool of accountability tied in with a standards agenda which is underpinned by a market driven education. A climate where, as explored above, some would argue special educational needs labels are used to add legitimacy to exclusion.

The current homogenous approach takes no account of the heterogeneous nature of pupils' progress and is underpinned by the irony of an education policy that promotes competition and selection, resulting in exclusionary practices on the one hand and a 'rhetorical commitment to inclusive education' on the other (Barton and Slee, 1999, p.3). Literature thus suggests that the contentious use of language around inclusion and special educational needs creates a ceiling on inclusion. Words are privileging some at the expense of others – making some more 'equal' than others (Benjamin, 2005).

2.4 Perceptions of Inclusion

It is within this 'hyperaccountable' (O'Brien, 2020) context of curriculum, testing and standards and conflicting use of language that educational practitioners inhabit the figured world of education and are developing their perceptions of inclusion. Teacher attitudes play an important role in the successful implementation of an inclusive approach (Pather, 2007; Salovita, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). These attitudes illustrate the truth that is within the experience of those working directly with pupils (Nind et al, 2004; Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Salovita, 2019). It is the truth of the daily experience of school leaders and year 6 teachers in meeting the needs of all pupils whilst ensuring an acceptable percentage in the school's SATs results.

In 'shaping' educational practitioners' attitudes towards inclusive education the research of Poon et al (2016) highlighted key limiting factors. Firstly, the level of training;

secondly, the amount of professional development; and finally, the extent of the availability of support and resources. These findings are by no means unique to Singapore (de Boer et al, 2010; Salovita, 2019; Ferriday and Cantali, 2020) and were also raised by participants in the research study (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). Whilst the challenges in making any comparisons between England's current position and Singapore, where inclusive education is 'still in it's infancy' (Poon et al, 2016, p.84) are recognised, it is interesting to note that both contexts have high stakes testing. In addition to this, the curriculum in Singapore, and in particular its approach to maths, has been upheld as an example of best practice for schools in England to follow. Within a climate of high stakes testing, Poon et al (2016, p.87) conclude that 'the system of regular examinations makes it hard for many students with SEN to stay within the regular education system.' This has also been illustrated within the English system through the use of legitimized exclusionary practices, such as the gaming approaches and the practice of off rolling.

The attitudes of educational practitioners will affect how successfully inclusion is put into practice (Avramidis and Norwich 2002, Poon et al 2016; UNESCO, 2020) and key to this is how well prepared they feel (de Boer et al, 2010; Vermeulen, et al 2012). This is also echoed in the research of Sharma et al (2007) and Sosu et al (2010) with pre-service teachers. Feelings of 'inadequacy' (Chong et al, 2007) are also linked to perceptions of inclusion in terms of different types of special educational needs. Findings from the research of Greek educational practitioners by Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) highlighted that attitudes changed based on severity and teachers were much more sceptical about inclusion of pupils with complex needs (Avarmidis and Kalyva, 2007). Within the English context, these findings are also reflected in the research of McShane (2020). Lack of training in the area of Autism, for example, has been noted by Wilkinson (2010), who highlighted the 'significant implications' of this. Significant indeed, as Autism is the highest area of primary need nationally for pupils with an EHC plan (DfE, 2020). Without adequate training teachers will

continue to 'feel at a loss' (Schuler, 1995, p.13; Kanakri et al, 2017) and fundamentally linked to this is the sense of educational practitioners' self-efficacy.

2.4.1 Practitioner Self-Efficacy

The link between teachers' self-efficacy and inclusive classroom practice is well documented (Özokcu, 2017; Kristiana, 2018; Miesera et al, 2019; Schwab, 2019). It is recognised that there is this relationship between a practitioner's belief in their capabilities and their abilities to be inclusive; the extent to which they feel able to use 'pedagogical methods which can fulfil the students' needs' (Kristiana 2018); their confidence in trying out new approaches (Feny Rahayu and Kurniawati, 2019) and indeed the impact on teachers' sense of wellbeing (Barni et al, 2019). Research has highlighted multiple reasons for negative self-efficacy including a lack of resources (Miesera et al, 2019; Salovita, 2019; Ferriday and Cantali, 2020), lack of contact or experience of pupils with SEND (Malinen et al, 2013; Miesera et al, 2019, Lindblom et al, 2020) and again lack of training (Feny Rahayu and Kurniawati, 2019; Schwab, 2019). The theme of training and professional development opportunities for educational practitioners shows clear impact on teachers' self-efficacy and in turn their attitudes towards inclusive education (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Wilkinson, 2010; Poon et al, 2016). This can result in barriers to inclusion through anxiety felt by educational practitioners (Poon et al, 2016). These teacher concerns, also evident in the findings of Chong et al (2007) amongst others, highlight the importance of prioritising professional development.

Within year 6 of primary education in England, there also exists the uncomfortable antithesis of delivering a provision that is inclusive and maintaining the race towards SATs results. This has been shown to have an adverse effect on educational practitioners' sense of self-efficacy (Benjamin, 2002b; Macbeath et al, 2006; Robinson, 2016; Smith and

Broomhead, 2019). With school improvement locked into the standards agenda, the ability of school leaders to promote inclusion is a challenge (Kennedy and Laverick, 2019).

With the links between teachers' self-efficacy and 'their teaching behaviours' (Klassen and Chiu, 2010, p.741), the well documented tensions experienced by teachers, in meeting the required standards of being at least in line with national SATs scores, make for a particularly testing environment for promoting inclusion (Macbeath et al, 2006; Collins et al, 2010; Sharma et al, 2012). It suggests a tokenistic use of the word at policy level as opposed to a guiding principle that can be effectively embedded into practice. It is also indicative of the contentions noted in the use of language to define inclusion. The research findings of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), also highlighted in the research of Sharma et al (2012), enunciate the fact that successful inclusive practices are primarily dependent upon high levels of teacher efficacy. With teachers often feeling that they are 'running to stand still' (Lupton, 2005, p.601-602) self-efficacy is somewhat overshadowed by the pressures of the current educational climate in England.

2.4.2 <u>Summary Perceptions of Inclusion</u>

In summary, high stakes testing coupled with the drive towards the narrow metric measure and a narrowed curriculum has led to reduced autonomy for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2012; MacBeath, 2012; Winch, 2013; Robinson, 2016) which in turn impacts on inclusive practice. The relationship between the context at a macro level and the impact at a micro level are aptly described by Robinson (2016, p.167): -

'When teacher education fails to expose and deconstruct these dilemmas, teachers may be left feeling compromised and inadequate, with the risk that they might disengage from the pursuit of more socially just practices.'

This is a predicament that needs to be exposed, discussed and examined as the impact is not only on teacher wellbeing but also on school efficiency (Barni et al 2019).

2.5 <u>Chapter Summary</u>

This literature review has highlighted the clear juxtaposition, in terms of statutory testing, between teachers' role in using assessment 'to secure pupils' progress' (DfE, 2016b) and then also as an instrument of accountability (Collins, Reiss and Stobart, 2010) that is the high stakes approach to the SATs. This is not simply a 'bleat about the tyranny of testing' (Wilshaw, 2016b) or a call, as the current Prime Minister suggests, to 'stamp out excellence' (Johnson, 2019). It is about recognising that high stakes testing has little to do with enabling pupils' next steps in their education (as is evident with many secondary schools opting to retest at the start of year 7) (Courtney, 2016 cited in Vaughan). Through the review of literature, it appears to have much more to do with holding schools accountable by reducing value to a point system and in the process showing holistic short-sightedness, the result of which ensures that society remain inequitable.

Review of literature has also highlighted the potential effects of this for schools if they don't do well enough, resulting in a reduced self-efficacy; the term 'special educational needs' used as a legitimating label for exclusionary practice; a curriculum reduced to a bias towards testable subjects and a pedagogy weighted with concern regarding test-readiness.

The commodification of education (Hall, 2004) is pertinent in today's 'global skills race', where the education system is placed firmly within an education market; leading to the view of schools as factories (Harris, 2017; Gatto, 2019). Within this, the role of SATs is as the 'regulatory mechanisms that link the conduct of individuals and organisations to political objectives' (Reay and Wiliams, 1999, p.348). This returns to Boyle's (2012) 'accountability-compliant model' of pedagogy (Boyle, 2012, p.5), with a one-dimensional approach to attainment (Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009; Guinier cited in Bryant, 2015).

Finally, this has led to what Robinson (2016) describes as the 'uneasy fit' between the debated descriptions of both inclusion and inclusive practice and special educational needs. The Children and Families Act (2014) outlined the legal right of pupils, that the term SEND

entitles them to a recourse that is additional to or different from that which is usually provided. In relation to the focus of this research study on year 6, it has been argued that statutory testing has had a narrowing effect leading to exclusionary practice, to the point where inclusion is seen as an 'uncertain concept' (Robinson, 2016, p.167). These contradictions of expectation that schools are facing (Boyle, 2012; Graham and Harwood, 2011; Robinson, 2016) within which conflicting agendas are at play, leaves inclusion 'ontologically fragile' (O'Brien, 2020, p.307).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology and methods that were followed in undertaking this study. This includes the methods used in sampling, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations.

In carrying out this research study, methods which were able to capture the voices of the participants were essential. Gaining an insight into the figured worlds of the participants was at the core of the research aim, to enable an understanding into their perceptions of inclusion of pupils with special educational needs within the context of the final year of primary school. It was therefore crucial that the approach taken enabled both the time and space for the participants to be able to share their thoughts, ideas and opinions. Considerations for data analysis had to then take into account how to ensure the multivocality represented, though the data set, was analysed in a way that respectfully represented the voices of the participants as true to them at that time. The structure of meaning emerged from the data, from the voices of the participants. To enable this, flexibility was built into the research process, which allowed space for intra-analysis during the research as well as during the analysis of the final data set.

In presenting the research methodology, this chapter begins firstly by examining the research paradigm and the methodological approach taken. The reasons and considerations for this approach are explored. Secondly, this is followed by a discussion of the research methods and why these tools and processes were used.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This research study was set within a qualitative paradigm that recognises that ontology is socially constructed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). To effectively seek a depth of understanding within this, it was important to be able to enter a discussion, to question, to listen, to respond directly with those experiencing the nature of the research focus (Lincoln and Guba, 2003). The methodological approach to the research design, outlined below, was deliberately chosen with this in mind. Adopting a case study approach and using feminist principles, the research design enabled a direct contact, where the development of a relationship that recognised the importance of an interwoven, connection between researcher and participant was key (Schostak, 2006; Olesen, 2011). To understand the frameworks within which the participants resided, it was necessary for the researcher to approach from a place of understanding, in terms of the figured worlds through which perceptions, thoughts and actions were created and interpreted. Set within a qualitative paradigm, this enabled the recognition of the importance of the voices that shaped the roles the participants undertook; that went towards forming their opinions of the education system; and, as noted in the literature review, impacted directly on how inclusive practice was translated in the classroom (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Poon et al, 2016; Chapter 2: Literature Review pp.33-65).

Working within this paradigm, three key elements were central. Firstly, the recognition that researcher axiology determined the research methods and that these were chosen with a specific purpose and therefore, could not be neutral (Morgan, 2020) as the methods chosen were a filter by which select elements of phenomena were experienced (Powney and Watts, 1987). Secondly, acknowledgment that the world is viewed by all via different reference frames (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and that these influence our beliefs, assumptions and bias (Morgan, 2020) as part of the figured worlds we inhabit. With this in mind, it was a deliberate choice that within this research, the voices heard were accepted as true to the participants at that time and in that context. Finally, acceptance that there are

multiple realities (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Creswell, 2013) and multiple truths (Reason, 1994; Wellington, 2000) and that this multivocality had the potential to add to the richness of the data gathered.

Set within the qualitative paradigm, this research study set out to engage with the theoretical problem posed by this research through a process, recognising the value and complexity of this process and accepting the limit that there was no precise answer. The research study aimed to expand the foundation of knowledge in this area by bringing new contributions. Whilst it addressed a practical problem – that of barriers that may exist in relation to inclusion in year 6 for pupils with special educational needs –, it did not presume to solve this problem but more offer grounds for theoretical discussion and a wider understanding from the perspective of a group of people who work directly in this environment. The research opened opportunities to explore whether there were shared beliefs or opinions within the participants (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) as well as any differences, which may have arisen based on each participant's experiences as unique to them.

3.3 <u>Methodological Approach : Case Study</u>

The purpose of this research study is to explore the perception of inclusion within one Multi-Academy Trust in relation to the process of end of Key Stage two statutory testing within the current English education climate in relation to pupils with SEND. Theoretical and empirical works in the areas of education, inclusion and special educational needs were used to explore this in depth, build on the current body of knowledge and gain a comprehensive understanding of this area.

Taking a multi-site approach of using one MAT as a case study enabled complex issues to be researched within a real-life context (Siggeldow, 2007; Yin, 2014, Ellinger and McWhorter, 2016). The research study aimed to find out about 'life as it is lived' (Burton and

Bartlett, 2009, pp. 21), to find out the perspectives from the figured worlds of the participants. Using a case study as a methodological approach enabled the research question of how inclusive the drive for success in SATs is to be explored in depth within the context of one Multi-Academy Trust. And as part of this explore whether there was commonality of approach to inclusion in year 6; what opinions were of the impact on inclusion and inclusive practices of SATs and in relation to this whether there was a sense of autonomy in the face of any challenges faced. It enabled this phenomenon to be investigated within the situation that is occurs (Dawes Farquhar, 2012; Yin, 2014) through interviewing participants who were directly involved.

In undertaking a case study as a methodological approach Dawes Farquhar (2012) highlights some potential disadvantages with regards to a lack of objectivity and ability to generalise. Careful consideration had been given to these points. The research design was undertaken with rigour, ensuring its suitability for the study. As part of this it was acknowledged that as the researcher I came with my own perspectives. This was addressed through the ethical considerations and the validity of the research. Researching from within was an intentional decision, it uniquely placed myself within a context from which I could have empathy and come from a place of understanding a figured world I shared with the participants. This was a position from which a 'connectedness' could be developed (Ashraf, 2010, p. 103) and a space created for honest conversations.

In relation to the second potential disadvantage, whilst the findings were bound to the socio-historical context of this case study, the recommendations have relevance beyond this (Yin, 2014). They have 'applicability' (Wood and Smith, 2016, pp. 72) beyond the one MAT, where the findings invite further discourse and engagement with the contentious issues that arose. Relevance beyond this one case study is also offered through the methodology which can be replicated. It is recognised that whilst this would not necessarily provide the same result, the value is in broadening the discourse around the contentious subject of high-stakes statutory testing and in particular the impact on pupils with special educational needs. The

subject matter of this research study goes beyond generalisations and further case study research should be encouraged, it is 'a step to action' (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2019, pp. 379).

Adopting a case study approach as a methodological approach was well suited to capturing the complexities (Yin, 2014; Wood and Smith, 2016) of the figured worlds of the participants. It enabled a rich depth of data (Ellinger and McWhorter, 2016; Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2019; Cleland, MacLeod, Ellaway, 2021) to be gathered from numerous sources of evidence about real lives (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019) and the influences on the participants' figured worlds at a micro, meso and macro level. Using this approach enabled the intricacies of the contentious areas research to be unravelled, to find a level of profundity that could not be achieved through a more numerical or researcher-removed approach. A case study approach was ideally placed to give voice to the participants, to explain and shine a light on a difficult and challenging area (Yin, 2014). With reflexivity an integral part of the approach there was scope to research and represent conflicting viewpoints and interpretations of inclusion from the figured worlds of the participants that differed from government rhetoric.

Using an approach that enabled flexibility supported the adaptions that had to be made to the research design in light of unanticipated events (Dawes Farquhar, 2012; Cleland, MacLeod, Ellaway, 2021). This was crucial in light of researching during a global pandemic which necessitated adaptations to be made to Stage 3 of the research process.

The breadth of evidence produced from having used this methodological approach enabled an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced with regards to the inclusion of pupils with SEND in year 6 in light of high stakes testing. Through the rigorous approach taken to ensuring validity and reliability, alongside researcher reflexivity, cause and effect conclusions could be drawn from the research.

3.4 Using Feminist Principles.

The methodological approach of using a case study was complemented by the use of feminist principles. Firstly, through the recognition that knowledge is socially and contextually located (Olesen, 2011, Yin, 2014) which aligned with the research aims of explaining, describing, illustrating and enlightening (Yin, 2014) the influences participants felt in their figured worlds which impacted on inclusion and inclusive practice within year 6 in light of statutory testing and pupils with special educational needs.

Secondly, through the value placed on the voice of the participants and the recognition that this knowledge was central to the research. This necessitated an approach that would do justice to the accurate representation of these voices. Accurate representation not only in transcription and analysis but also in enabling the participants to express their thoughts, ideas and opinions as fully as they wished – to 'express…experience in their terms' (Ashraf, 2010, p. 103). As such this could not be a methodological approach of strictly confined boundaries, it had to celebrate and make room for the biographical, there had to be scope to develop the voices of the participants. The approach taken was aware of and addressed potential power differentials in this process. Value was put on the development of a participant/ researcher relationship that aimed to be a collaborative discourse (Creswell, 1998) as opposed to a dualistic hierarchy. Undertaking reflexivity was central to the research process and enabled the development of a non-hierarchical relationship and one from which researching *within* was an 'asset' (Ashraf, 2010 p. 115).

The use of feminist principles further complimented the use of figured worlds as a conceptual framework. The approach taken intended to ensure that the participants had a sense of autonomy and that they felt empowered. By taking this approach the aim was that participants would share honest perspectives from their figured world by creating a space that placed them in the position of power.

Feminist principles also underpinned the intent of the research as a piece of work that invites discussion and change (Lather, 1991). It aimed to go beyond interpretation and actively engage others in debate on the contentious issues raised. Integral to this was taking a reflective approach which enabled my growth as an educationalist, practitioner and researcher. As such, the research presents a beginning not a finished product.

3.5 Conceptual Framework: Figured Worlds

This section begins by examining the use of figured worlds as a conceptual framework. This is followed by an exploration of the role of relationships, both in terms of the research study as well as in the broader social context. Finally, there is a word on exclusion. Discussion about inclusion necessitates by the nature of the subject a study of its antipode.

At the heart of the research study were the voices of the participants and in understanding how they perceived inclusion within year 6. Figured worlds was used as a conceptual lens through which to view how meaning was construed. The use of this lens shaped the way in which the research focus was planned, approached and analysed. It enabled an understanding of identity through recognising that these worlds form how we interpret and assign meaning (Holland et al, 2001).

The use of figured worlds was an enabling framework in recognising the multiple voices of the participants and wider associated literature; and that this can vacillate and be variable. Central to this was the language we use and how this corroborates our attachment to that figured world (Khalaf, 2020). This framework furthered understanding of the perceptions of inclusion of pupils with SEND within one Multi-Academy Trust in relation to the process of end of Key Stage two statutory testing by illustrating the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of the participants through their voice.

The social significance of this research was particularly pertinent to both the location and time within which it took place. It was accepted that the researcher and the participants

were within the social context in which the research was undertaken (Olesen, 2011; Haas and Haas, 2002). Importantly, as both researcher and participants shared a relationship with the social context of time and place, this enabled some areas of commonality in background knowledge and experience from inhabiting shared figured worlds.

This framework was particularly useful in examining and reacting to the complexities of inclusion within the context of high stakes statutory testing during the final year of primary school. Figured worlds provided the structure which enabled exploration of relationships. This specifically included the relationship between how government policy is translated in classroom practice; the relationship between delivering an inclusive practice and educational practitioners' agency (Wilkinson, 2010; Sharma et al, 2012; Poon et al, 2016); the relationship with teachers' sense of self-efficacy and specifically the relationship of these points when they are within the context of a statutory testing year group. This was an exploration of relationships from the lived perspectives of the real world of the participants (Schostak, 2006) and how the social constructs of everyday life, interpretation and comprehension are elucidated through the figured worlds of the participants.

Figure 5 (p.74) highlights influences on the figured worlds that were inhabited by the participants. As the findings illustrated (Chapter 4, pp.125-156), it was within and between these experiences and directives that discord arose. There was a view of inclusion for all restricted by working in an environment of high stakes testing, resulting for some in a reality that was '*just how it is*' (Participant A, p.222). This opposing quandary of a pedagogy underpinned by a belief in inclusion for all coupled with the reality of government directives regarding high stakes testing is examined in Chapter 6 Analysis and Discussion (pp.183-189).

Figure 5: Figured Worlds of Participants
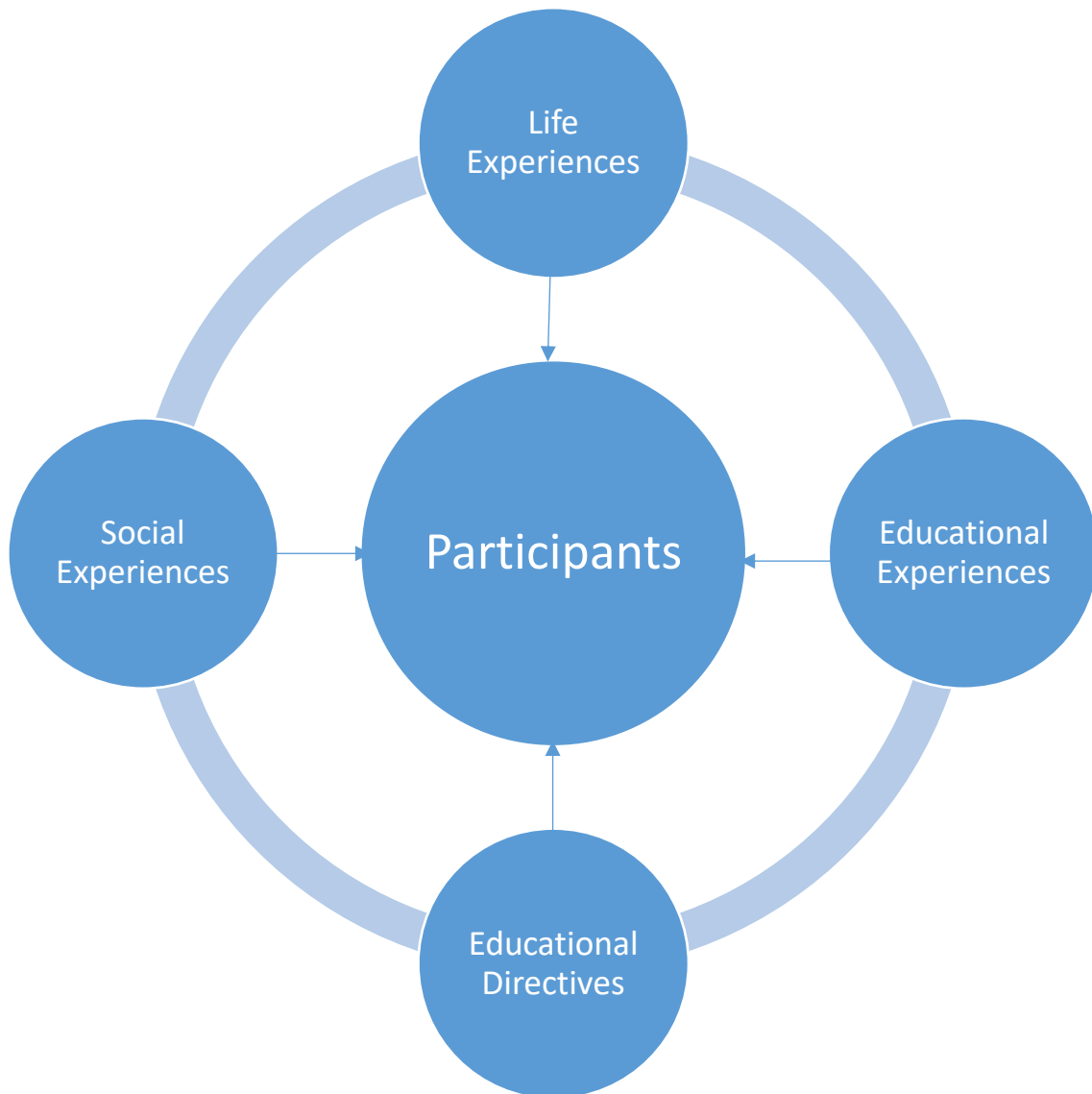
As illustrated in Figure 5 the research participants were central to the multiple and sometimes conflicting influences that inhabited their figured world. In defining perceptions of inclusion, thoughts and attitudes were shaped by life experiences, we bring with us our own lived history that moulds our outlook. Similarly, our social experiences influence the significances we assign and values we place (Holland et al, 2001). Alongside this, working within schools, our educational experiences impact our figured world and educational directives, as an external influence, can place us as subject rather than agent within our figured world.

The conceptual framework also explored any relationship with five key factors pertinent to the socio-historic context within which the research took place. Firstly, the participants were all working in schools within a county where a grammar selection process took place. This process involves testing pupils at the start of their final year in primary school to ascertain whether they are of a high enough standard for secondary education at a grammar level. It was within a time of change for statutory assessments with SATS for year 2 being replaced with a renewed Reception Baseline (September 2021). The research was located within a lengthy period of the use of statutory assessment at year 6 to measure school success. There was a drive for all new schools to have a Specialist Resource Provision and two of the schools taking part in the research had this provision. Finally, it was a time of great global unease due to the coronavirus pandemic. It was within these 'social conditions' that the truths as perceived to the participants were constructed (Haas and Haas, 2002).

Within this, figured worlds was used to explore how educational practitioners take what has been sanctioned and directed and translate this into practice; and how this preserves, maintains and reinforces the outlook of the figured world. Within this, it is recognised that connections, activity and application within a figured world are not removed from greater structures of power. In this respect, we are all both agent and subject within the figured worlds we inhabit (Holland et al, 2001). Exploring and investigating the figured world of the English education system enabled an understanding of the influence of this system and how educational practitioners' interpretation of policy impacted on the educational experiences of pupils.

In viewing inclusion through the use of a figured worlds framework, this also conversely enabled exploration of exclusion. In the face of some of the appositions within the education system, most notably a conflict between the concept of inclusion and high stakes testing, attention was brought to pressures within the system leading to evidence of exclusionary practices. This enabled exploration of differences between actual and

perceived inclusionary practices, and from this how greater power structures can constrain or limit practice.

Working within this conceptual framework, the research study aimed to bring new knowledge to the area of the impact on inclusion of statutory testing in the final year of primary school for pupils with special educational needs. Whilst recognising that the knowledge brought was located within its specific socio-historical context limited its transferability, it does pave the way for opening up further discussion and research into this area.

3.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underpinning the conceptual framework recognised that there is an impact on inclusion of pupils with SEND and inclusionary practice as a direct result of high stakes statutory testing and that this is part of a broad and complex picture.

3.7 Research Design

The focus area of the research is one which stimulates much controversy yet, with the context of this research study, has not been extensively explored. The research problem, being based on perceptions, dictated the qualitative approach taken. This nuanced exploration into the figured worlds inhabited by the participants would not have been possible via a removed form of quantitative evaluation. It is not the type of exploration that is computable or that can be measured by a purely numerical or rateable mean.

The approach taken for the research design aimed to facilitate opportunity to elicit conversation, discussion, storytelling from the participants to enable depth of description from the real-world context of the research focus (Ndegwa and Gutiérrez-Colón, 2019). It aimed to create a dialogue as true to the participants, to genuinely seek their perspective

and experiences (Oliver, 2010), to gain an insight into the multiple spaces which influence them.

A careful consideration of the research design was the position of the researcher within the process, maintaining objectivity whilst researching from *within*. Whilst the presence of the researcher would not have been an issue with a more removed, quantitative approach to data collection, the honest in the moment answers would not have been gained. To obtain an insight into the figured worlds of the participants, facilitating a space where this honesty could emerge was crucial. A more removed approach could also have enabled opportunity for rehearsed or 'best face' responses to be presented. Through a reflective approach, what could have been a potential limitation with regards to the position of the researcher was, with the measures put in place, an advantage. As a considered part of the contextual framework within which the design was created, the researcher was coming from a place of understanding with regards to the figured worlds of the participants. This was an advantage in gaining understanding of the polyphonic nature of the voices within these complex spaces.

Central to the research design was creating this space where stories could be shared and voices heard (Creswell, 2013); this required flexibility to be built into the approach. This aimed to enable the opportunity for pathways into the opinions and thoughts of the participants, including those that may not have been anticipated (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Howell, 2013) and in this respect it was recognised that research study was not a linear process (Wood and Smith, 2016). There had to be this space to gather the opinions and beliefs of those whose jobs were directly impacted as a result of the drive to measure school success through year 6 statutory testing. This drive to discover the lived realities as perceived by the participants influenced the research design.

The design was intentionally reflective and responsive with opportunity to reconsider or adapt elements of the design included within the model for conducting the research. As a case study it took an iterative approach (Yin, 2014). The process aimed to view and review

both the individual aspects of the process as well as the relationships between them (Maxell, 2012). This was achieved through seeking and acting on feedback from an initial senior leadership task, as well as by testing the modes of measurement via a pilot exercise. Feedback, which was acted upon, was from both my own reflections of the research process, as well as from the pilot participants. This process is illustrated in Figure 6 below which shows the journey taken from the start of the formation of an initial idea to creating a design to implement and test out. Analysis from this process then fed into a stage of review from which new thoughts evolved. These in turn led to adapting the approach taken and progression of the initial idea enabling the idea to develop and evolve in light of this reflective approach to the research process.

Figure 6: Reflective Research Process
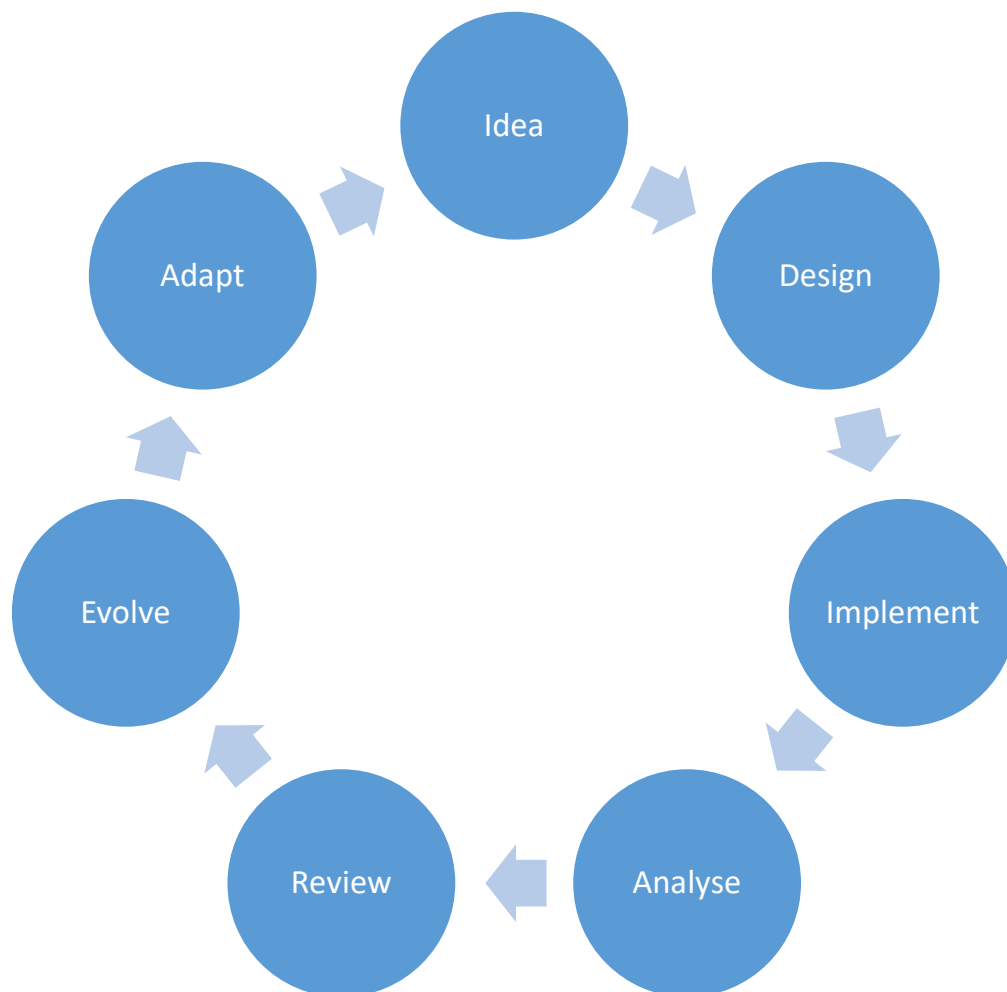
The aim of the senior leadership task was to use the thoughts, ideas, perspectives of those driving policy within the eight schools for two purposes. First, to use the data set to form the content of the subsequent pilot exercise. Second, by providing a baseline of opinion regarding inclusion, this was used as a point of comparison with the research study. With regards to shaping the pilot exercise, this in turn informed and shaped the research study, as illustrated in Figure 7 below. This process also enabled findings from each stage to be compared when building up a rich picture of analysis in terms of the perceptions of inclusion, as opposed to a fixed, deductive approach that would not have had the versatility to respond and adapt as the process evolved.

Figure 7: Research Stages
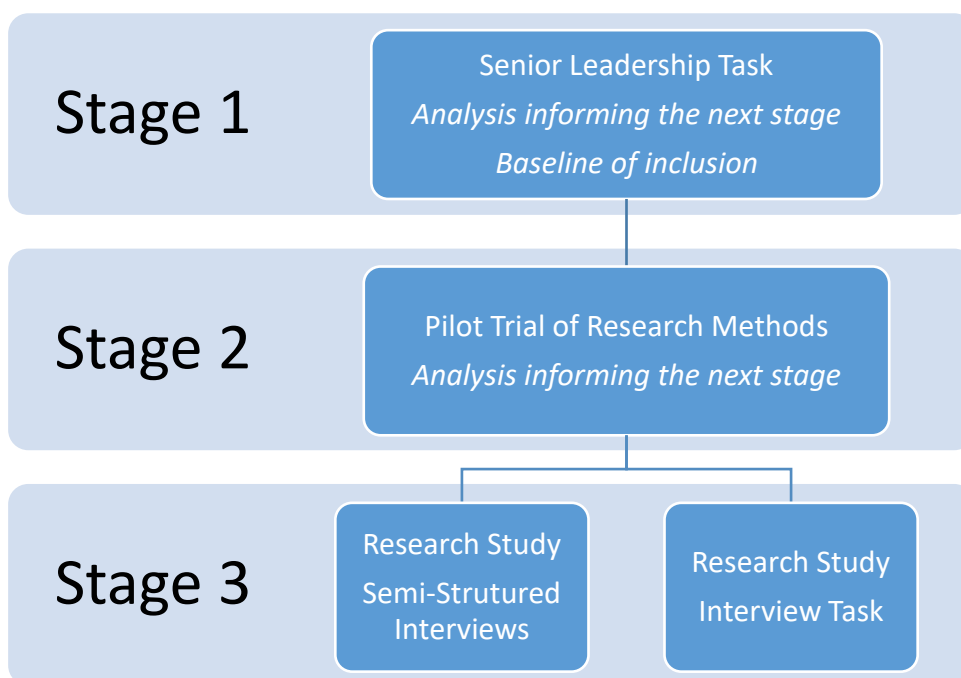
Whilst the three stages were chronological the reflective approach taken, at each stage, enabled the flexibility required to respond and adapt when researching lived realities which are not static or rigid. In the subsequent sections validity and reliability, piloting,

sampling, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations of the research design are explained in greater depth.

3.8 <u>Validity and Reliability</u>

In assuring the accuracy of the research study findings, Maxell's (1992) processes of interpretative and descriptive validity were undertaken. This rigorous approach taken ensured that the data was relevant to the research focus and true to the participants.

Interpretive validity was reinforced by the emic approach adopted. The position of the researcher within the figured worlds of the participants enabled empathetic sensitivity to the process of constructing meaning from the stories shared by the participants. Care was taken to represent, as true to the participants at that time, their beliefs, expression of feelings, values, perceptions, and the intuitive and immediate knowledge shared.

Verbatim transcription and use of a nominal variable classification, based on the open ended collection technique used, were part of the process of descriptive validity. The semi-structured interview approach gave participants the freedom to respond how they wanted, without restriction. The detail and description obtained from this process was validated with each participant at the end of each interview session.

In ensuring validity, an appropriate time scale was set that enabled sufficient time for the leadership task and pilot stage to be completed, reflected upon and any adjustments to the main research process put in place. The sample method used at all three stages reflected the requirements of the research. Considerations undertaken in ensuring an ethical approach to carrying out the research study ensured the participants were not pressurised into responding in any given way. The methodology was specifically designed to meet the elements of the study.

The reliability of the research study was ensured through the consistency of approach taken, underpinned by the contextual framework. Established research methods were adopted and a reflexive iterative process followed. This was underpinned by flexibility to allow opportunity for review to feed into improvements, with data visited and revisited, making connections with emerging cognisance.

Patton's (2002) categories of triangulated reflexive questioning were used as a framework within the reflexive iterative process. First, through self-reflexivity of the knowledge I brought with me. Second, through reflexivity about the participants of the knowledge they brought. Third, reflexivity about those reading the research and how the findings could be presented in a way that made sense and in a way that was true to the time and social context within which they were undertaken.

The research was located within the socio-historic context within which it was undertaken; there is therefore limited transferability. However, the findings do provide a basis for further knowledge within this area of study. The research is therefore dependable, as through the detailed report of the processes undertaken, whilst the same results would not necessarily be gained, the work could be repeated in other contexts.

3.9 <u>Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Research Process.</u>

Stage 1 of the process was carried out to provide a baseline for inclusion. This was undertaken with representatives from the senior leadership team of the Trust. This task informed the subsequent stage, the pilot exercise, and also provided valuable data which informed and could be used to draw comparisons with the main research study.

Undertaking a pilot stage was an important part of ensuring the reliability of the case study approach in the research (Ellinger and McWhorter, 2016). In carrying out stage 2, the pilot exercise, the aim was to remain true to the underlying intentions of the proposed research. That is, that it set out to investigate the socially constructed reality of the

participants as true to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). The reality beyond the headlines, the 'lived experiences' (Schostak, 2006, p. 22) of those working with the realities of teaching pupils with special educational needs facing year 6 statutory testing.

3.9.1 Stage 1: The Senior Leadership Task: Baseline of Inclusion (November, 2019)

The decision to begin the research process with a leadership task was aligned to the hierarchical structure in education. This was important in gaining an understanding of both the global and local spaces which influenced perceptions of inclusion. The starting point for exploring perceptions of inclusion was thereby with those who led on driving policy and practice in the schools - the leadership of the Multi-Academy Trust as well as leaders from each of the eight schools.

In determining the format, the primary consideration was in how to gain data that could meaningfully inform the next stage of the research and provide a baseline of perceptions of inclusion. This process began with reflecting upon the research aim of exploring perceptions of inclusion of pupils with SEND within one Multi-Academy Trust in relation to the process of end of Key Stage two statutory testing within the current English educational climate – was there a commonality of approach to inclusion, what were opinions to inclusion and inclusive practice in relation to SATs and was there a sense of autonomy in meeting any challenges. To gain an insight into these perceptions within the context of high stakes testing, it was necessary to find out what the participants felt did or did not support inclusive practice. This led to the formation of two initial key questions – 1) What supports inclusion in year 6? 2) Are there any barriers? These then provided the platform for the next stage.

Following permission from the CEO (Letter to CEO requesting consent - Appendix B, p.337; CEO informed consent form - Appendix C, p.338), the task was introduced during a senior leadership team meeting at which the research was introduced to the group. This location was chosen for the convenience of having the leadership team in the same location.

The research introduction began with asking the group if they would be willing to participate in a short task. Participants included 13 members of the Trust and schools' leadership; this represented everyone at the meeting and 80% of the total Trust and school leadership team at that time.

Whilst large post it notes were handed out for the exercise, no stipulation was made as to how little or how much to write or indeed that the response needed to be written (Appendix D, p.339). Participants asked questions related to this, to which I responded, 'whatever you feel is right.' The questions asked had included *'How much do you want me to write?'* and *'How do you want it written? Do you want bullet points?'*

The task was carried out anonymously and individually to ensure space for individual voice and avoid any potential influence that could arise from discussion as a group, which could lead to the development of a group culture as opposed to an individual one (Fontana and Frey, 1994). This approach also ensured larger personalities could not dominate the response, thereby giving equal opportunity to each individual voice. The success of this approach is evident in Appendix D (p.339) where the individuality of the original, handwritten, post it responses was evident.

Experience within the senior leadership group ranged from 1 year in leadership to 30+ years in that role. It was recognised that within this there would be a broad range of experiences and influences that would inform perceptions and contribute to responses (Haas and Haas, 2002). This was welcomed as a reflection of the senior leadership team who led the direction of the eight schools. This aspect was important throughout the research study where multiple voices, from a wide range of experiences added to the richness of the data sought.

The approach of careful consideration of the positioning of questions trialled during the leadership task would go on to influence the next stages of the research study as well. Within this first leadership task, the opening inquiry - 'What supports inclusion in year 6?' -

framed the question within the context of the focus on inclusion of the research, whilst remaining open ended enough to enable opportunity for the unforeseen and unanticipated (Wood and Smith, 2016). The second question 'Are there any barriers?' was deliberately placed so as to not influence the first with any suggestion that there may be barriers. This process of minimising potential influence was also implemented in the subsequent stages of the research. The success of this approach is illustrated in Appendix D (p.339) where the verbatim transcription from the post it responses illustrated new and additional information shared in relation to the second question. For example; in relation to supporting inclusion the need for pupils to feel included and successful was raised. This was added to in response to the second question with the reference to pupils' self-esteem. Alongside this several aspects were only raised in relation to barriers to inclusion (the second question) such as funding, the attitude of adults and SEND and vulnerable needs. Inputting this data into pie charts illustrated that within the barriers 'testing' was identified as having the greatest impact, 26%, on inclusive practice (Appendix D, p.339).

These results of the leadership task were integral to informing the ensuing pilot exercise and research study (Appendix D, p.339). The answers given in this initial task were used to shape the semi-structured interview questions and task of the pilot exercise. By following this process, the development of the research came from the data gathered from the leadership task, as opposed to an external construction devised solely in the capacity as researcher. Time, and space was made to enable the process of analysis, review, evolvement and adaptation.

Interestingly initial links with wider research become evident even at this early stage. Of particular note is the 'testing' that came top of the list for barriers against inclusion (Reay and William, 1999; Hall et al, 2004; Robinson, 2016). This and other links, such as SEN and other vulnerability perceived as a barrier (Alvarmidis and Kalyvva, 2007), provided the research base with an initial snapshot of opinion. In the sequence of the research, this was

designed to inform the next stage in an aim to build up the 'rich descriptions' sought (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013).

3.9.2 Stage 2 The Pilot Exercise (January, 2020)

The localised pilot exercise was carried out to determine the feasibility of the research and its methods. Recruitment of participants for this small-scale trial run involved choosing a purposive sample. Some knowledge on behalf of the participants would be required in terms of inclusion within the context of year 6; they would need to be able to relate to that situation (Ndegwa and Gutiérrez-Colón, 2019). For this reason, the pilot sample were chosen from within Key Stage 2. This sample was thereby broadly demographically similar to the target group and therefore had some knowledge of the year 6 SATs process necessary to be able to share an informed opinion. Early Years and Key Stage 1 teachers are potentially more removed from this and therefore were not included in the research pilot.

The pilot aimed to establish the authenticity in the research approach by establishing its workability and identifying any unforeseen challenges (Oliver, 2010). In essence it trialled the effectiveness of the research on a sample of participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019). Analysis of issues of feasibility and identification of any deficiencies of the pilot exercise was used to inform the subsequent stage of research study.

Data obtained from the senior leadership task had provided an initial framework for the dialogue promoted through the use of the semi-structured interview process at this trial stage. The use of a ranking task aimed to enhance the data from the semi-structured interviews and offer further opportunity for dialogue. Within the conceptual framework of the research study, the trial was not seeking to measure by quantity but to engage in the nuances of discourse offered through engagement with the participants.

As part of the reflective approach taken, several elements from the pilot exercise were reviewed, evolved and adapted for the ensuing stage of the research. These are explored in the issues highlighted below.

3.9.3 Issue 1 - Sampling

Reflecting on the process, including feedback from the pilot participants, (Appendix E, p.342), it was identified that a key group had been omitted from the proposed sample for the research study. This was particularly apposite to initial findings linked to the pressures of time. The sample plan originally included year 6 class teachers and from the leadership team – leaders of the Trust, head teachers and deputy and assistant heads.

The research of Maher and Vickerman (2018) and Smith and Broomhead (2019) highlight the pertinence of the pressures of time in relation to the role of the SENDCo. This group of course are also directly involved with provision of pupils with SEND in year 6 and any associated challenges relating to SATs (Smith and Broomhead, 2019). Following this reflection, SENDCOs were included in the recruitment of participants for the main research study.

3.9.4 Issue 2 – Balance of Power

Analysis and review of the pilot exercise also illustrated that steps put in place to alleviate the balance of power in relation to the researcher/ participant relationship had not been wholly successful. The 'day job' role of head teacher had remained ever present.

The dual roles of head teacher and researcher were not the sole aspects making up my identity; there was also myself as a learner and myself as a parent of a child with special educational needs. When undertaking the subsequent main research study these aspects were shared with participants as part of the researcher introduction. In introducing this level

of vulnerability, the aim had been to further build a rapport and remove the barrier of power

the aspect of head teacher had brought to the relationships in the pilot exercise. This

recognised the importance of 'disclosing' myself more fully to facilitate learning about others

(Fontana and Frey, 1994).

3.9.5 Issue 3 – Depth of Information Gathered

Depth of insight specifically related to thoughts, feelings and perceptions of statutory

testing in year 6 were lacking in detail at the pilot stage. Examination of the findings, shown

in Appendix F (pp.343-356) revealed the need for greater profundity. There was a need to

delve deeper into how the purpose and impact of SATs was perceived; to enable a fuller

picture - and the rich descriptions sought - of perceptions of inclusion in relation to the

process of Key Stage 2 statutory testing, for both the pupils now as well as for their future.

In adapting the process for the next stage of the research study, an additional

question directly related to the impact SATs may or may not have on inclusion in year 6 was

included. A final question was added Set B: -

7) What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in year 6?

The final list of questions (Appendix G, p.357) included the initial 2 introductory questions,

the following 3 open ended questions linked specifically to year 6 and a concluding 2

questions linked specifically to testing in year 6.

Self-reflection also identified the importance of allowing time within the interview

process to reflect on the responses given to ensure opportunities for greater depth of

understanding were not missed. For example, a view was posited by 1 pilot participant who

stated while recognising statutory testing as *'one of the main pressure points,'* added *'if you*

don't have a SATs test you're going to have another kind of assessment … you're always

going to need some kind of assessment' (Pilot Participant B, Appendix F, p.351). This led to

the placement of SATs lower down on the ranked task as a potential barrier to inclusion in

year 6. This was a response of particular interest as the schools do use other forms of

assessment. It could be suggestive of less value being placed on this form of assessment by the class teacher. Researcher reflection on the pilot process highlighted this as a missed opportunity to delve deeper. Mowat (2009) talks about language shaping 'not only belief but [also] perceived solutions' (Mowat, 2009, p.160). Probing further with this participant's answer could have revealed richer descriptions of this nature.

3.9.6 Issue 4 – Time

During the pilot exercise, the semi-structured interviews were held at the end of the school day. A purposeful choice aimed at finding the most convenient time in an educators' busy day (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019). Feedback from participants of the pilot exercise highlighted that the end of the school day had not had the intended convenience, Appendix E illustrates where this was mentioned several times (p.342). This was also evident from some of the answers to the initial questions.

The introductory questions of the semi-structured interview aimed to invite the participants into preliminary discussions about inclusion: -

1) What does inclusion mean to you?
2) What does inclusion look like in our society?

Interestingly whilst the answers to the first questions were generally shorter, participant feedback highlighted that the second questions took more thought (Appendix E, p.342). Comments included: -

> *'I felt on the spot with that question'* (Appendix E, p.342).

> *'I had my school head on'* (Appendix E, p.342).

Delving deeper into the feedback identified a certain compartmentalisation of having a 'school head' and a 'home head' and that thought processes were linked to location

(Appendix E, p.342). With the 'busyness' of the teacher role being one that is all encompassing.

This feedback shaped how the semi-structured interviews were undertaken in the main research study. An impact of the coronavirus pandemic (discussed in detail in 3.11 Adaptions for the Main Research Study section below, p.92) resulted in the need for a virtual means by which to undertake the research. This brought with it the potential of a solution to address the timing issue, as it gave participants greater autonomy over when to participate.

3.9.7 Issue 5 – Reassurance

Questions of reassurance raised by the pilot participants during the interview task regarding *'how do you want these ranked'* were answered with an open ended *'however you choose'* in an attempt to avoid the pit fall of pointing to what might be deemed as correct or veraciously desirable (Wood and Smith, 2016).

All three pilot participants had sought reassurance – *'Do you want it in a pyramid?'* Pilot Participant A (Appendix F, p.346); *'Do you want me to rank them?'* Pilot Participant B (Appendix F, p.350); *'So do you want me to put the ones which are the biggest barriers at the top?'* Pilot Participant C (Appendix F, p.355). This could be reflective of working in a sector described as some as a panoptic factory line (Robinson, 2016; Gatto, 2019), where a narrowed curriculum (Boutsted, 2019, More Than a Score, 2020) favours homogeneity over the individual (Whalley, 2018). A sector that is used to being told both what and how to do it. Participant feedback had encapsulated a feeling of not wanting to *'get it wrong'* (Appendix E, p. 342).

This sense of wanting to get it right resonated with the focus of the research. That of the impact of SATs – a right or wrong mode of testing – on inclusion in year 6. As critiqued in the literature review (pp.33-65), it is an approach that fosters 'winners and losers' both in terms of the children (Rouse and Agbenu, 1998; Gatto, 2019; Gillen, Jenkins and Watson,

2019; Kennedy and Laverick, 2019) and in terms of the league tabled schools (Hall et al, 2004; Boyle, 2012; Martin, 2019).

Adapting from this lesson of the pilot exercise, the introduction to the task in the main data collection placed greater emphasis on there being no right or wrong answer and re-emphasising the focus and value was on what the participant thought at that time.

3.10 Methodology and Methods

The qualitative methods adopted by the research, and trialled through the pilot, aimed to bring about a triangulation of findings by adding a ranking task to the approach of using semi-structured interviews and task discussion, ensuring rigour to the case study approach (Yin, 2014; Ellinger and McWhorter, 2016). As part of the methodology, four potential areas of critical incidents were examined. First, that of the potential for participants to present a 'best face'; second, the nature of language; third, the position of self and finally, the question of seeking truth.

3.10.1 'Best Face' Phenomenon.

In seeking out attitudinal responses from participants, a recognisable risk that the questions posed elicit what Fontana and Frey term 'socially desirable' responses (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p 364) which was taken into consideration. A jeopardy echoed by others including Powney and Watts (1987) who discuss 'which layer of truth [the participant] will make accessible to the interviewer' (Powney and Watts, 1987 p 44-45) and Cotterill's 'best face phenomenon.' (1992)

In minimising this risk, interview questions and the task were not shared prior to the interview, with the aim of capturing the in-the-moment responses of the participants. This sought honesty in spontaneity (Schostak 2006) and made space during the interview

process to allow for those moments of spontaneity. There was no expectation that language would be neutral and indeed this was welcomed as a way to elicit and convey a range of perspectives (Creswell 2013), as a way to capture what was true to the participants at that moment in time. By not pre-sharing the focus of the interview (at all stages of the research), the interviews and tasks aimed to go beyond surface level or pre-rehearsed answers – capturing the in-the-moment thoughts, feelings and perspectives (Howell, 2013).

3.10.2 The 'problematic nature of language' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018, p. 11).

The literature review (Chapter 2, pp.33-65) highlighted the ambiguity of language (Schostak, 2002)– differing interpretations (Armstrong, 2011), contested terminology (Nind et al 2004) and inconsistencies (Florain and Spratt, 2013).

In wording the interview questions, I had reflected on my own use of language so as to be aware of connecting with the participants (Cotterill 1992; Olesen, 2011) and avoiding ambiguity or value laden bias (Agarwal, 2020). This involved a conscious process of holding myself in check, ensuring I was acutely aware at all times of my own preconceived ideas to trying to limit their impact (Yin, 2014).

3.10.3 Position of Self

Recognising the potential impact of my socio-historic existence had led to recognising potential issues with the balance of power within the interviews (Goodson and Sikes 2001; Schostak 2006; Olesen, 2011; Wood and Smith 2016). I needed to take account of my reality as that of a learner, a researcher, a head teacher, a parent of a child with special educational needs. It was recognising that I carry a perspective moulded by my background and my experiences. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2018) highlight that 'appropriate parts' of the

researcher's subjectivity should surface. To state otherwise would be denying a truth – the truth that there cannot be neutrality.

Throughout this process, there had been the juxtaposition, dual roles of researcher and head teacher - researching in my 'own backyard' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p 25). Within both roles, I was participant researcher, however, essentially extra care needed to be taken during the preparation, planning and delivery stages around what Howell (2013) terms 'social dynamics.' Within my day job there was an uneven balance of power (Cotterill 1992; Goodson and Sikes 2001) both in relation to colleagues who worked for me within the hierarchy and those to whom I am accountable and answerable to. Adopting a feminist approach, the interviews aimed to be an 'interactive experience' within a 'non-hierarchical' framework as far as possible (Cotterill, 1992, p 594). Having taken this into account initial preparations included a cyclical and reinforcing process as illustrated in Figure 8 (p.93).

Figure 8: Cyclical and Reinforcing Process.

Grounding my introduction as researcher firmly within my studies at CCUC

Positioning myself solely as a learner in the process and avoiding the natural instinct of my day job to find solutions

During my reseach ensuring my physical appearance was different from the suited 'uniform' of my day job
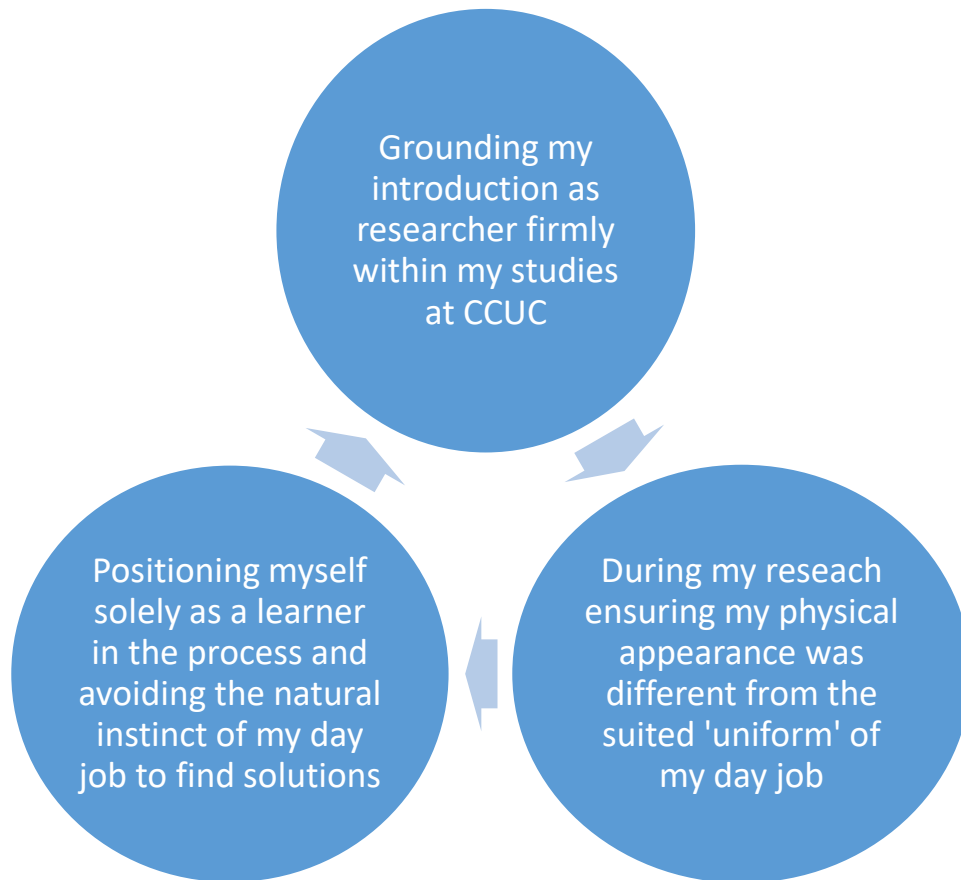
Whilst aware of the potential pit falls, the position of self had actually been advantageous in remaining true to the aim of a process of participation (Reason, 1994; Olesen, 2011). As an educationalist, I was ideally placed to work with and relate to educationalist colleagues. A view mirrored in the work of Howell (2013, p.183) who highlights 'If one is to accurately identify what is actually occurring in specific situations, it is necessary to go beyond the survey and involve oneself in the context of the research', being part of the figured worlds being explored enabled my understanding. The benefits of researching *with* people and building a connection is widely recognised (Kant, 1952; Powney and Watts, 1987; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Howell, 2013).

As identified by my investment in the area I had chosen to research (Howell, 2013), as well as my beliefs (Morgan, 2020), the position of self was part of the analysis (Howell,

2013). To this end, two-fold benefits of this research are, first, adding to a wider body of knowledge and second, my own introspection of my views, values and beliefs – my growth as a learner.

3.10.4 Seeking truth

In seeking homogeneous characteristics, the journey was made richer by welcoming disagreement or contention (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013) made possible by the flexibility of the qualitative approach undertaken. The potential cacophony of opinions highlighted the multiple realities within which multiple truths exist.

As Schostak (2006) highlights, 'no individual can step 'inside' the experience of another' (Schostak, 2006, p 14); what we can however accept is that by focusing on context we can 'understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants' (Creswell 2013 p25) and recognising that we can only 'know a thing through its representations' (Denzin and Lincoln 2013, pp.9-10) and that reality is 'the result of experience and thought which is shared through language' (Wood and Smith, 2016, p.60) both spoken and unspoken. Taking this on board, it is accepted that there is no one 'truth,' but more multiple realities as true to each participant.

3.10.5 Methods: Semi-Structured Interviews

The use of a semi-structured respondent interview enabled exploration of the experiences and connections the participants had made (Goodson and Sikes, 2001); the 'reality' actively created as the participants interacted within the world (Weaver, 2018). The semi-structured interview sought to go beyond the inquisitorial (Powney and Watts, 1987) in seeking biographical and personal accounts, bringing together potentially multiple interpretations of 'stories uncovered' (Howell, 2013). Semi-structured interviews lend

themselves to discovering directly from the source thoughts on the success of inclusion or indeed barriers that stand in the way.

As with the research of Creswell (2013), the research ideal was for participants to feel 'empowered' by this method. Working within a sector that is framed within the rigidity of the National Curriculum, Ofsted and statutory testing, the use of semi-structured interviews aimed to give back some autonomy and allow scope for the conversational. Educationalists can be told what to teach and to a certain extent how to teach it; they can be influenced with regards to opinions formed, but cannot truly be told what to think. In attempting to elicit these opinions and thoughts, the semi-structured approach to interviewing lent itself well to developing a more open, non-hierarchical relationship between researcher and participant (Cotterill, 1992; Creswell, 2013; Olesen, 2011).

The deliberate decision to use a semi-structured, as opposed to structured interview, method meant firstly - that the flexibility of this stage of the research study enabled opportunity for intra-analysis; secondly – this allowed scope for the interview to develop (Howell, 2013); thirdly, this meant there was opportunity to build upon what was said with each question a potential opening for more extensive discussion (Wood and Smith, 2016). This method was enhanced by the commonalities between the shared worlds of both the researcher and the participants, as for it to be successful, the researcher had to be able to understand the world of the participants. This enabled a fluidity to the interviews where the participants would feel comfortable expressing their individual experiences (Morgan, 2020).

In line with the feminist principles underpinning the research approach, within the interview process the opening question aimed to establish an empowerment within the participants by putting them in the position of power and knowledge (Oakley, 1981; Cotterill, 1992; Creswell, 2013). As part of this process, the initial questions were also planned as ice breakers, as a moment of phatic talk to facilitate the building of a rapport (Newton, 2010; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019). The intended impact of this had been three-fold. Firstly, to reinforce my role as researcher as opposed to a head teacher within the Trust. Secondly,

to open up the scope for the conversational (Powney and Watts, 1987); aiming to establish a more participatory researcher / informant (Oakley, 1981; Cotterill, 1992, Olesen, 2012) as opposed to a more passive researcher / respondent relationship. Finally, through attempting to relax the participants to overcome any potential tendency to 'perform' or 'create', any tendency to use the language of responses to show off what they thought the researcher might want to see (Paltridge, 2019).

Expression of views that may be controversial or unpopular, such as suggesting a polarity between what people say and how they really feel about inclusion, needed particular care taken. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2019) posit the researcher needs to be 'acutely percipient of the situation', highlighting that 'non-verbal communication may be critical in interviews' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019, p. 242). With this in mind, considerable care was taken to ensure neutral facial expressions and open body language to minimise the risk of any countertransference (Oliver, 2010; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019). This was particularly pertinent with the aim of the research being to gauge as honest a response from the participants as possible and avoid the 'best face phenomena' as highlighted in the research methodology (Powney and Watts, 1987; Cotterill, 1992; Fontana and Frey, 1994).

3.10.6 The Questions

In total the semi-structured interview contained 6 planned questions (see Table 3). These followed an open-ended format with the aim of remaining true to the intent of the process of being flexible. Half an hour per participant was allocated for this stage of the research, however, enough additional time was factored in should discussions elaborate.

Table 3: Interview Questions

Introductory questions: -
    1) What does inclusion mean to you?
    2) What does inclusion look like in our society?

Set A
    3) I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?
    4) What supports inclusion in year 6?
    5) What are the barriers to ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom (/as a SENDCO/ as a leader) everyday?

Set B
    6) What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard.

3.10.7 Use of Open-Ended Questioning

Question 1

I'm not a year 6 teacher, what can you tell me about the challenges?

Question one aimed to put myself in the role of the learner and not the 'expert.' By aiming to instantly put the participant at ease and in the position of power it was hoped that any potential embarrassment or fear participants had of revealing any judgement, indifference or parochialism (Powney and Watts, 1987) would be dissolved.

Taking the approach of Newton (2010) the semi-structured interview questions were noted down prior to starting the pilot, with the aim that they could 'be used more spontaneously in the interview without the need to refer to the schedule explicitly' (Newton, 2010, p. 2). In avoiding bias or leading (Hochschild, 2009), the questions were open ended.

Set A - open ended set questions linked specifically to Year 6: -

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to

inclusion?

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

5)What are the barriers to ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom

(as a SENDCO/ as a leader) everyday?

Set B - open ended set questions linked specifically to testing in year 6: -

6) What factors affect the future aspirations of year 6 children who have been predicted

not to or don't meet the SATs standard.

These were of particular importance in trying to obtain personal opinion, as far as possible

uninfluenced by myself as researcher. This endeavour had been further reinforced through

question 3 of the semi-structured interview, which placed the researcher firmly in the position

of the learner and the participant in the role of the expert: -

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to

inclusion?

3.10.8 Field Notes

During the pilot, interviews were audio recorded (adapted to video recording during

the main research study) with the use of field notes added in the main research study, a

sample of which can be found in Appendix H (p.358). Field notes were taken alongside to

enable both discourse as well as narrative to be captured (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Whilst

it was recognised that pen and paper could present a form of barrier, its use during the

interviews was only to briefly note, to aid capture of the information that was both said and unsaid during the interview to which I was privy.

The use of field notes enabled time to review, reflect and consider key points both of the research process and points raised by participants. They added another layer of information in clarifying and confirming meaning and were integral to the reflective planning process undertaken.

Time allowed for 'stimulated recall' (Powney and Watts, 1987) at the end of each interview allowed opportunity for the participants to add any further detail through their own validation (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). In remaining true to the methodological approach of the research, participant validation was done at the end of each semi-structured interview and task as opposed to sending a transcript to the participants for later response, as this could have clouded the in-the-moment truth the research sought.

3.10.9 Interview Task

As part of the measures used to avoid influencing the participants, the task was placed after the semi-structured interview to avoid any potential sway the statements may have had on the answers to the interview questions. In addition, the task was introduced with the question *Thinking specifically of year 6 – are any of these barriers to inclusion and if so can you rank them?* Posing the question in this way aimed to: -

1) Open the opportunity to the respondents that either all or just some of the cards could be used.
2) It was open to the respondent to rank the cards in any way they chose, avoiding any suggestion that there is a right or wrong approach and in particular avoiding any suggestion that it had to be linear.

The interview task was designed on priorities identified during the initial senior leadership task (Appendix D, pp. 339). During this task testing had been identified as the largest barrier to inclusion and this informed the 'Year 6 SATS test', 'Test readiness', 'Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs' and 'secondary ready' task cards. The 'Attitudes of adults' task card linked to the identification of this in the SLT task, as well as potential barriers identified as creating a 'self-fulfilling prophesy' and the effect on 'children's self-esteem'. The senior leadership task also identified 'SEN' and 'funding' as potential barriers. These were reflected in the task cards linked to 'SEN funding', 'in-year admission of a child with SEN', 'in-year admission of a child with complex SEN' and 'lack of early identification of SEN needs.' Finally, curriculum and planning were raised as potential barriers, and were reflected on the 'National Curriculum' and 'planning' task cards.

These priorities were reflective both of those who create and decide policy for the eight schools and of the current national context. As such they provided a valuable baseline from which to research the perspectives of the wider range of participants involved in the main research study. Using this baseline enabled comparisons to be made between the thoughts and opinions of those leading the Trust and the wider body of employees. It also highlighted the impact of both micro and marco influences. This added a breadth of insight into the figured worlds within which the participants resided and the influences upon them.

The development of the task cards underwent several improvements and adaptations. An initial draft, found in Appendix I (p.359), formed the basis from which the version illustrated in Figure 9 (p.101) was developed for the pilot exercise.

Figure 9: Interview Task Cards : Version 1 (Pre-Covid)

Year 6 SATS test eg: the test itself	**Test readiness** eg: a key focus on preperation for SATS test	Being secondary ready eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7
Attitudes of adults eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem	**Lack of early identificaion of SEN needs** eg: SEN needs not idetified pior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)	**National curriculum** eg: the content of the curriculum
Planning eg: time required for planning	**SEN funding** eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum	**In-year admission of a child with complex SEN** eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6
In-year admission of a child with SEN eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6	**Attitudes of adults** eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test	**Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS** eg: additional input soley for children within this group

Building on the initial draft (Appendix I, p.359), version 1 of the task cards included greater

detail as a guide for participants, as well as blank cards for any additional ideas they may

add. The additional detail remained faithful to the baseline provided by the SLT task, whilst

giving further context to support clarity of understanding. In line with the research design of

enabling space and scope for participant led contributions, blank cards were included which

enabled this flexibility. This version was successfully trialled in the pilot exercise.

3.11 <u>Adaptations for the Main Research Study</u>

The Covid 19 pandemic (2020) necessitated a rethink of the tools used and the

nationwide lockdown resulted in delays to data collection. It also enabled time to reflect upon

changes needed to the methodological design in line with government and university

guidelines relating to social interactions and carrying out research. Challenges for

researchers at this time are well documented (Austin and Gregory, 2020; Dodds and Hess,

2020; Gardner, 2020) and there was a need to be 'transforming into 'distance' methods''

(Lupton, 2020). Social distancing restrictions meant that the face-to-face interviews used

during the pilot study were no longer an option, due to the potential health and safety risk to

both participants and researcher.

3.11.1 <u>Decision Process</u>

Referring back to the process decision chart used to determine the planning process,

(illustrated in Figure 10, p.103) initial thoughts, concerns and questions relating to research

during a pandemic were noted.

Figure 10: Process decision chart used to determine the planning process.
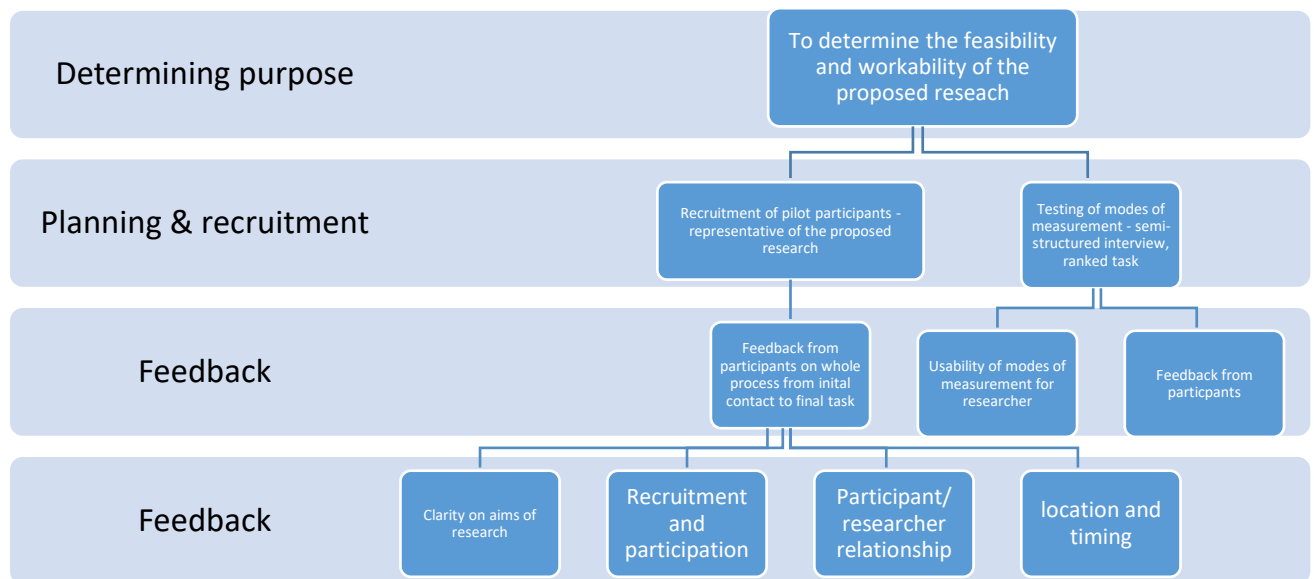
Following a review of the process decision chart, illustrated in Appendix J, (p.360), are the researcher thought process that were linked to concerns of how the core purpose and aims of the research could be maintained in line with government and university guidelines necessitated by the global pandemic. This reflexive process raised a chain of thought of key points that needed to be considered; this included the collection of data, potential impact on recruitment of participants, revisiting and revising the research ethics, how the participant – researcher relationship could be maintained during a time when face-to-face meetings were not possible. This inner monologue of concerns was refined through the use of a qualitative research framework (Salmons, 2020). Appendix K (p.361) illustrates the systematic approach that was taken in using the framework, with eight key areas raised for consideration. In considering each area maintaining the research aim of exploring how inclusive the drive for SATs success in relation to pupils with SEND was paramount. As part of this it was of primary importance that the research could still seek to answer whether there was a commonality of approach to inclusion and inclusive practices, what opinions were about any impact from high stakes testing and whether there was a sense of autonomy in

meeting any perceived challenges to inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in year 6.

This process stimulated key questions to consider: firstly, how could the planned semi-structured interviews and interview task be carried out virtually? Secondly, what technology would most effectively support the intent of the data collection process? Thirdly, what further considerations needed to be taken into account regarding informed consent, privacy and data protection?

The process undertaken to access the suitability of virtual alternatives to face-to-face interviews involved considering the pros and cons of different tools, as well as reviewing what had been successful or any barriers experienced by other researchers during the pandemic. Information gathered was fed into a process chart to support the development of conclusions (see Figure 11, p.105).

Figure 11: Process decision used to determine most appropriate tool.

Tool: Phone Calls

Advantages:

Non-intrusive

Participants may feel more comfortable & therefore be more honest if not face to face

Takes place in real time

Could aid focus on audio as other senses are removed

Disadvantges:

No non-verbal communication

Dependent upon phone signal

Cannot make a face to face connection with participant

Cannot be used to collect information about the task

Ethical Consderations:-

Can the intended relationship be built via non-visual means of communication?

Without the use of visual cues is there a risk of speaker overlay which could adversely affect the flow of the interview?

Conclusions:

Limits researcher/ particpant relationship

Limits data collection to verbal communication only

Tool: Live Video Conferencing

Advantages:

Non-intrusive

Able to capture both discourse and narrative, through what is communicated verablly as well as non-verbal

Takes place in real time

Recording can be replayed potentially enabling further analysis

Disadvantages:

Limits to non-verbal communication

Dependent upon wifi strength

Ethical Considerations:-

Participants may not feel comfortable being video recorded.

Conclusions:

Least limited in terms of researcher/ participant relationship

Can collect both verbal and non-verbal data

Use of video recording can be included as part of process of informed consent

Tool: Written Responses

Advantages:
Non-intrusive
Participants may feel more comfortable & therefore be more honest if not face-to-face

Disadvantages:
Lack of non-verbal communication
Cannot make face to face connection with participant
Potential for more rehearsed answers
Doesn't take place in real time
Ethical Considerations:-
Rehearsed answers would adversely affect the quality of the data set

Conclusions:
Significant limits to researcher/ particpant relationship
Limits data collection to written and potentially 'best face' communication only

In keeping with the aims of the conceptual framework of the research study, an enacted method of technology was needed to enable interaction and the ability for researcher and participant to relate. In essence the technology needed to be a medium to connect, as well as a setting for data collection. Interviews which aimed to capture the in the moment thoughts and opinions of the participants, required technology that enabled real time dialogue. The approach used also needed to be familiar to the participants to diminish any possibility of the technology being a barrier.

3.11.2 Virtual Interviewing

In terms of aligning most closely with the aims of the research, video conferencing resulted in being the closest match. An approach was required that would enable participants to feel comfortable enough to discuss their perceptions of inclusion in relation to

end of primary SATS and pupils with SEND – subject areas which were potentially ubiquitously contentious. In choosing which software to use, the field was narrowed firstly by software the schools did not use and secondly the use of Microsoft TEAMS© had been trialled by the schools and staff had already undertaken training in its use.

Dodds and Hess (2020) have described research during the Covid 19 pandemic as creating 'a challenging, yet opportunistic, environment' (Dodds and Hess, 2020). This rang true in terms of using video conferencing, as it broadened the time frame within which the semi-structured interviews could take place. Participants could have greater control, for example, on whether they chose to participate during the evening or weekends. This alleviated the issue that arose during the pilot exercise where some participants had felt caught up in the rush of the school day.

The global context of the time and the revised use of research methods brought new ethical considerations. Firstly, consideration of the mental health of participants in light of taking part in research in a time of heightened global concern. Additional consideration had to be undertaken relating to informed consent and confidentiality. These included, amendment of audio to video recording; prior consent sought to being video recorded; reassurance of any recording being saved on password protected lap top and destroyed within a 7-day time frame, once transcribed. Amendments were made in line with university guidelines and shared and agreed with my supervisor. Amendments to the participants invite letter and consent form are illustrated in Appendix L (p.362) and Appendix M (p.365).

The virtual interviews, necessitated by the pandemic restrictions, offered both challenges and opportunities. Whilst there were limits in how much of the participant that could be viewed on screen and occasional time lapses resulted in viewings not being as fluid as they would have been in person, the video recording did also negate the need to take as many field notes during the interview. This had a two-fold advantage. It enabled total focus

on the participant throughout the interview and task. It also allowed greater depth of analysis to take place whilst watching the recording, with additional notes being taken at this stage.

Recognising that some may have felt guarded being video recorded, every effort was taken to overcome this. These included prior sharing of the ethical guidelines followed; re-assurance of anonymity; prior consent of video recording sought; reassurance of confidentiality with recordings being saved on a password protected laptop and following transcription, within seven days of interview, the recording was destroyed

3.11.3 Virtual Interview Task

Figure 12: Interview Task Cards : Version 2

1)Year 6 SATS test eg: the test itself	**2)Test readiness** eg: a key focus on preperation for SATS test	3)Being secondary ready eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7
4)Attitudes of adults eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem	**5)Lack of early identificaion of SEN needs** eg: SEN needs not idetified pior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)	**6)National curriculum** eg: the content of the curriculum
7)Planning eg: time required for planning	**8)SEN funding** eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum	**9)In-year admission of a child with complex SEN** eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6
10)In-year admission of a child with SEN eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6	**11)Attitudes of adults** eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test	**12)Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS** eg: additional input soley for children within this group
13)	14)	15)
	16)	

An adapted version of the task cards was developed in light of carrying out the tasks via video conferencing. The numbers were added to simplify the ordering of the cards when working with them virtually.

The task was recorded via video conferencing following the interview. During the task it was left open to the participants how they chose to represent the ranking. Prior to each interview the statements had been randomly placed in an envelope and posted to the participant with the request they be opened only during the interview. This was explained to the participants to reinforce that the cards were in no particular order when sharing them on the video conference screen. Blank cards were included to allow opportunity for participants to add any additional statements they felt were pertinent. Each participant was invited to talk through the cards and place them in order. The researcher also placed the cards on a board as directed by the participant. This could be viewed by the participant via the video conferencing screen. The task was completed by the participant confirming that the cards were in the correct places, as they wanted them assigned. Participants were asked to email a photo of their ordered task cards to the researcher at the end of the interview. On receipt, these photos were compared for accuracy against the researcher board to ensure no changes had been made. The participant photos were added to the interview transcripts (Appendix A, pp.219-336).

Whilst half an hour was allocated for each semi-structured interview, including the task, flexibility was built into this with time planned at the end to enable time for intra-analysis (Howell, 2013; Davidsen, 2013) and the development of dialogue (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019).

Being able to re-watch and review the recorded interview process enabled the use of transcription symbols to accompany the field notes approach used during the pilot exercise (Table 5, p.116).

3.12 Sampling

Recruitment of participants required the involvement of educators who had knowledge and/ or direct experience of inclusion within the context of year 6. Whilst there was no expectation of participants having the same beliefs, thoughts or opinions (Morgan, 2020), participants did need to able to relate to that situation (Ndegwa and Gutiérrez-Colón, 2019). Within this, 'multiple ways of knowing' (Olesen, 2011, p. 421) were welcomed. The aim was not to seek consensus of 'truth' (Haas and Haas, 2002, p. 587) but more what was 'true' to the participants themselves at the time.

Throughout the leadership task, the pilot exercise and main research study stages, participants were invited and all who were asked participated. A participant overview is highlighted in Table 4 (p.113).

Undertaking research during a global pandemic necessitated ethical reflection on who was able to participate in the main research study. Coronavirus had impacted on every school in the MAT, resulting in class closures, new demands on remote teaching and staff illness. Consideration also had to be taken into account for the mental health and wellbeing of the participants who were working during a time of global pandemic. Whilst the original intent, planned pre-Covid, had been for all 8 schools to be able to participate in the research this had to be re-evaluated and resulted in 5 being able to take part. This represented 63% of schools and within this a broad range of participants from across the each school's hierarchy, as highlighted in Table 4 (p.113) and discussed in more details in section 3.13.3 The Main Research Study (p.114). This ensured a rich data set was able to be gathered.

Table 4: Participant Overview

	No of participants	% of those invited who participated	Participant representation	No of schools represented
The Leadership Task	26	100%	Trust senior leadership team – CEO, Deputy CEO, COO, Trust Lead Practitioners. School leadership team - Head Teachers of all 8 schools	8
The Pilot Exercise	3	100%	Key Stage 2 teachers of 1 school	1
Main Research Study	16	100%	TAs, SENDCOs, Yr6CTs, SRP CT, PPA CT, AHTs, DHT, LPs, HTs representing 5 schools.	5

'Implicit assumptions' came from the way in which those involved in the research awre termed (Oliver, 2010, p.9). The language choice of **participant** as opposed to **respondent** or **subject** was part of a considered thought process as the intention of the relationship between the researcher and participant aimed to go beyond a one-way process (Oliver, 2010). A one-way system would be the antithesis of the aim of the research in building a relationship through the approach chosen, to develop and evolve a dialogue and to readdress the balance of power between researcher and participant (Olesen, 2011).

3.13 Data Collection

Data collection was undertaken from the primary data of the research study and secondary data of the literature review. The empirical data was collected using a qualitative approach, which enabled a picture to evolve from the multiple voices of the participants in response to their perceptions of inclusion in the statutory tested, final year of primary school.

3.13.1 The Leadership Task

Initial collection of data totalled 26 responses as a result of all participants responding to both questions posed. Use of an inductive coding process, using discourse analysis, enabled this multivocality of qualitative data to be translated into both quantitative and qualitative representations of data. This was then used to inform the next stage - the pilot exercise. This initial stage had enabled 'patterns' (Paltridge, 2019) within the language to be identified. From these valuable comparisons were able to be made with the findings of the main research study.

3.13.2 The Pilot Exercise

Data was collected via the semi-structured interviews and interview task. Three participants took part in the pilot exercise and participated in all aspects of the process.

3.13.3 The Main Research Study

Participants ranged from the teaching and leadership teams at all levels of the school and Trust hierarchy. The whole process took place over 14 months and was undertaken via the three research stages outlined in the methodology.

With the 16 participants involved in the research study there were representatives from different levels within the school hierarchy, with some participants responsible for more than one role as illustrated in Figure 13 (p.115). This table shows the percentage representation of each role with a total of 57% leadership roles. The high percentage of participants who were leaders is significant as these are the people driving the vision for each school and thereby influencing the figured worlds inhabited by all participants. Within the leadership group were head teachers, deputy head teacher, assistant head teachers, lead practitioners and SENDCOs. 43% were primarily teaching roles (class teachers and

teaching assistants), however, it is important to note that all roles undertake teaching as an integral part of their job. Experience within education ranged from 5 to 17 years.

Figure 13

Percentage Representation of Roles of Participants

% Representation of Roles of Participants
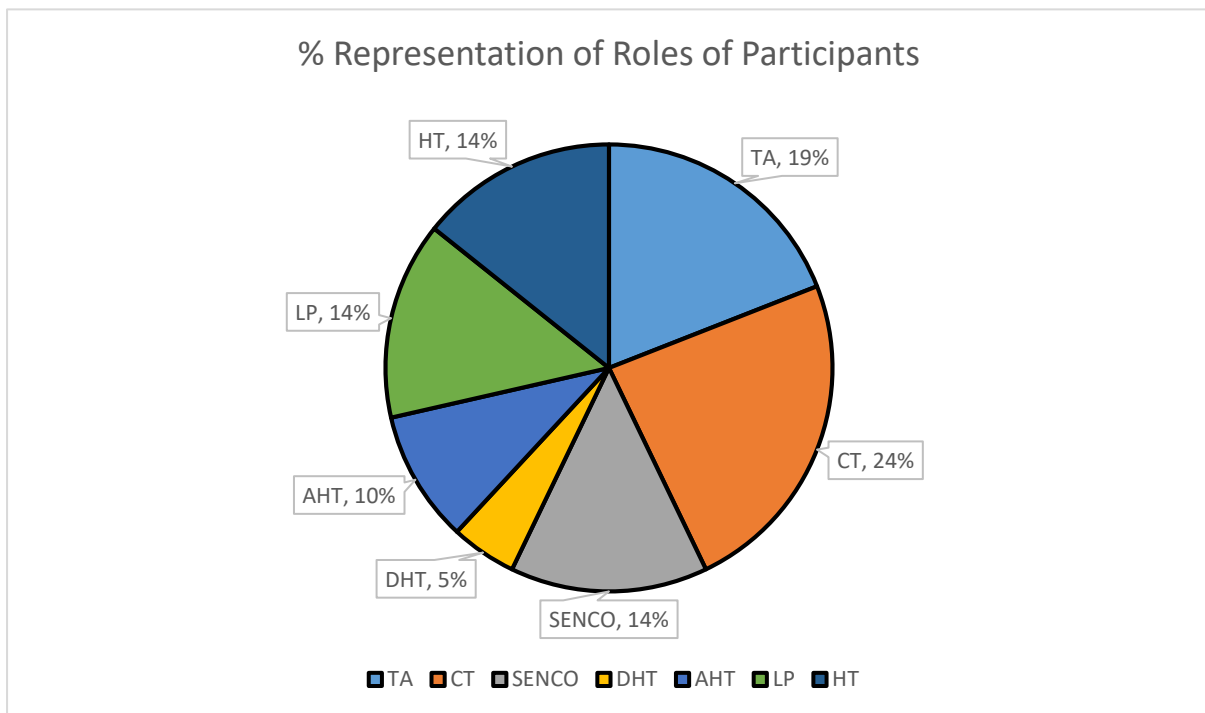
Job Role of Participant	Number of Participants who had this Role	% of Total Participants in this Role
TA	4	19%
CT	5	24%
SENDCO	3	14%
DHT	1	5%
AHT	2	10%
LP	3	3%
HT	3	3%

During this stage of the research, recording of the video conference was undertaken to ensure all data was captured. The interviews ranged from 8 minutes 27 seconds to 1 hour and 5 seconds.

Verbatim transcription accompanied by the use of transcription symbols (as illustrated in Table 5, p.116) enabled narrative and discourse data to be collected. In keeping with the

ethical considerations of the research study, recordings were transcribed within seven days of the video conference and then destroyed.

Table 5: Symbols Used in Transcription of Participant Transcripts.

Symbol	Characterisation
Words in bold	Participant emphasis
words in italics	Raised intonation
<u>5</u>	Pause (length in seconds)
<u>(L)</u>	Laughter
<u>(Q)</u>	Pace speeded up
<u>(S)</u>	Pace slowed down
<u>(BL-type)</u>	Body language

These methods of data collection, successfully trialled during the pilot exercise were fully adopted within the subsequent main research study.

Collection and analysis of data came with no pre-conceived theory or assumption. The deliberate choice to enable theory to develop from the data, aimed to minimise any researcher bias and avoid any associated misconceptions.

3.14 <u>Data Analysis</u>

As discussed in greater detail in the main research data analysis section content, narrative and discourse analysis was utilised to analyse the pilot exercise data.

The language of the participant was key in attaining a view of their perceptions (Newton, 2010). To obtain this it was important to give space to enable the participants to use their own words to respond (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019). To this end, analysis of the data followed qualitative methods through content, narrative and discourse analysis. Data was reviewed in terms of what was said as well as how it was said; scrutinising the pragmatics as well as the semantics. By analysing both the narrative and discourse, the aim

was to provide a full picture of both what was said and unsaid and to try to unravel any implied assumptions (Wood and Smith, 2016). Alongside this process a keen awareness of any implicit bias of myself as researcher was essential in holding myself in check when viewing and analysing the transcripts through my own lens of interpretation (Yin, 2014). Time allocated within the process to reflect, to 'de-automate', in ensuring a consistent and balanced approach was at the forefront of data analysis - to ensure that 'logical and rational thinking' underpinned the process of data analysis (Agarwal, 2020).

Analysis took place throughout the semi-structured interviews through conversation with the participants. The aim being to enable clarity and verification as an integral part of the interview process (Davidsen, 2013). In preparing the data, interviews had been transcribed verbatim from the video conferencing recording. The process of transcription itself became part of the process of analysis as pitch, tone or emphasis were noted (Paltridge, 2019).

Accompanying notes, made when reviewing the video conference recording, were also used with the aim of capturing a holistic transcription (Appendix H, p.358). A transcription of what was said orally as well as what was spoken through body language, capturing what Hull (1985) terms as the 'black market' of impressions gained during the interview and building up the information available to back up 'on-the-spot interpretations' (Powney and Watts 1987 p144; Hull 1985). Fontana and Frey (1994) warn of the 'residue of ambiguity' with 'the spoken or written word' (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 361) echoing the earlier perspective of Hull that only the participants own the 'unique rights to the interpretation of their own experience (Hull, 1985 p 28).

To analyse the data obtained from the research, it was first categorised and grouped within answers and comments of a similar type. The answers and comments came from analysis of both the semi-structured interviews and dialogue that emerged during the interview task. The aim was to aid with the identification of any common threads and to see if there emerged any 'socially constructed nature of reality' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013, p. 17)

within the figured worlds of the participants. The same approach, of discourse analysis through an inductive coding process used with both the senior leadership task and the pilot exercise, were then adopted in the main research study, as illustrated in Figure 14 (p.119). The use of colour coding of initial themes during the first review of the data trialled in the pilot exercise was used. This enabled common threads to be more easily identified within the breadth of data. Responses were then reviewed in terms of the amount that was said in relation to each of theme.

Figure 14: Inductive Coding Process: Data Analysis

Collection and reading of all data

Key theme of individual piece of data identified and colour coded according to theme

Common threads identified within the themes and colour coding brought in line with threads

Data brought together within each common thread

Word count of each thread undertaken

Word count ranked in bar graph
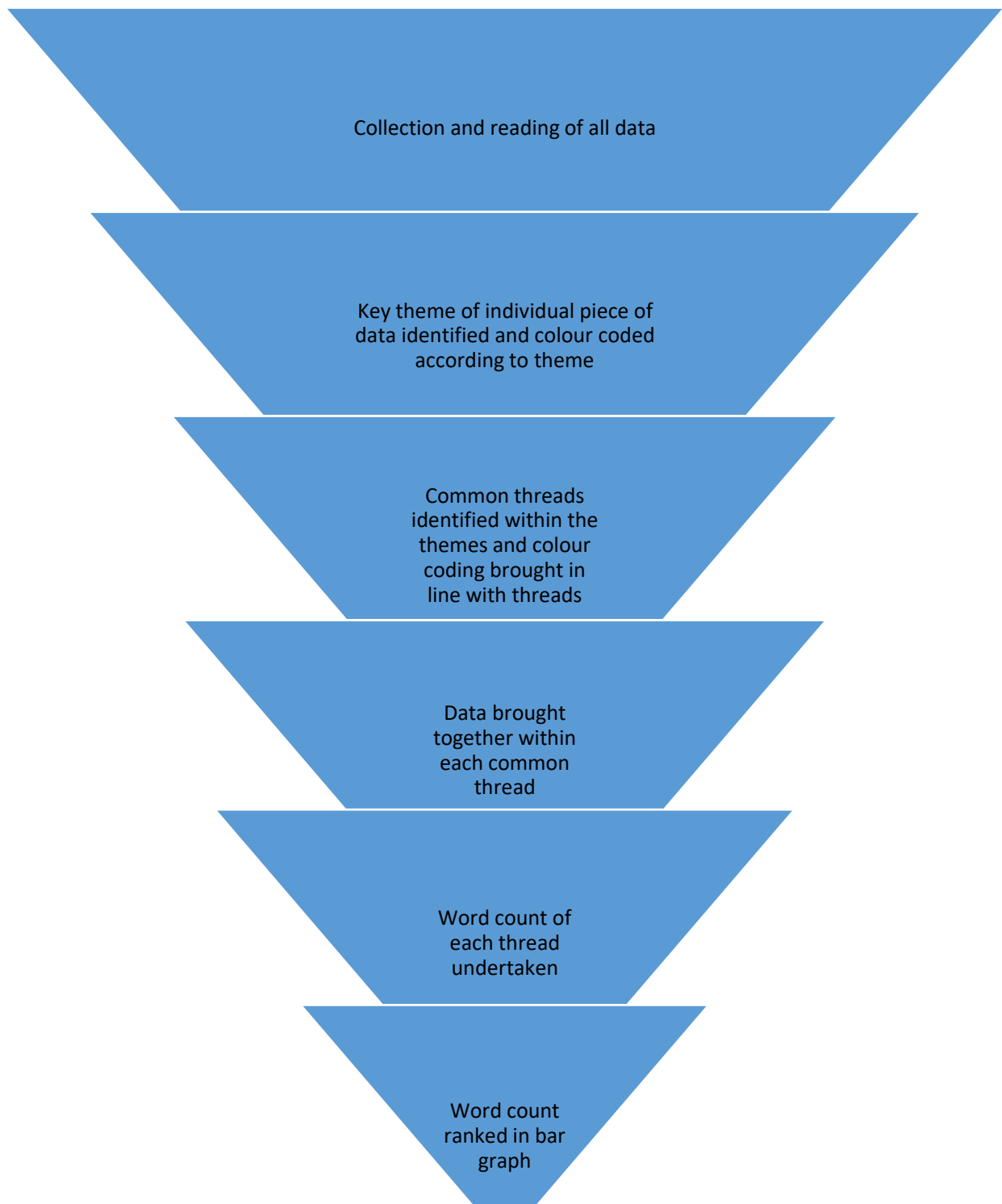
This approach enabled any connections between the multiplicity of voices to be highlighted and from these dominant themes were identified. The word count relating to each thread was used as an indicator of how much the participants had to say about each aspect (illustrated in Chapter 4: Findings, Figure 16, p.133). This was also backed up by reviewing the content of what was said. For example, what was said by the participant as opposed to them reading out the interview task cards or repeating a question.

Whilst recognising that themes and threads are subject to the judgement of the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 82), this approach enabled the identification of commonalities within the responses. This was in order to 'reflect on reality' as true to the participants and identify any links in relation to exploring the perceptions of inclusion in relation to the process of end of Key Stage 2 statutory testing within the current educational climate (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

Undertaking the data analysis by hand was a purposeful choice as it supported the reflexive approach taken throughout the research project. It enabled a relationship between researcher and the data to develop through first-hand experience. Through the time taken to do this, a depth of understanding could be developed. Taking this experiential approach enabled an insight into the figured worlds of the participants to be revealed, reflected on, analysed and reported in detail.

3.15 Ethical Considerations

The importance of ethical considerations underpinned the approach and undertaking of the research study and were taken in line with BERA (2018) guidelines and had been granted approval by the university's Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (Appendix N, p.367). With this in mind, the approach taken was 'open-minded and inclusive' (BERA, 2018). Measures were taken to ensure data was protected in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and university guidelines. Participants were approached via an

introductory letter, sent via email (Appendix L p.362). This was followed up by a follow up phone call and a consent form (Appendix M, p.365).

The research was carried out with respect and consideration given to 'research aspirations, societal concerns, institutional expectations and individual rights' (BERA, 2018). At all times the research was carried out in a polite manner, in the spirit of honesty and transparency.

Prior consent was sought and this was preceded by a full overview of the ethical measures and introduction to the research focus, including opportunity to ask any questions or raise any queries to ensure that consent would be informed. The overview provided was factual to ensure no deception or exaggeration.

Informed consent included understanding of confidentiality procedures and the anonymity of both the participants and the organisation within which they work. This included the anonymisation of participant interviews and the storing of transcripts and task results on a password protected computer. This aimed to reassure participants that they could speak freely without reprisal.

There was no discrimination within the group invited to participate. Everyone within the sampling category was invited to participate.

There was the right to withdraw at any time, for which no reason needed to be given and to no detriment to the participant. This included the right to withdraw during the process, so whilst every effort was taken to ensure a comfortable interview process, should a participant want to stop at any point, or skip a question, they could do so without any disadvantage to themselves.

Throughout the process measures were deliberately and purposefully put in place to ensure researcher influence was minimised; that there was no compulsion or influence to answer in a given way. In this way, every effort was made to ensure there was no coercion.

As outlined in the validity and reliability section, measures were put in place to ensure the representations of data findings were accurate and contained no misleading information or bias. A full record of research activity was kept and the process continually reflected upon and critically examined.

Accurate referencing ensured respect for intellectual property was honoured. Researcher competence was underpinned by a commitment to lifelong learning as part of personal professional development.

This research study has not received any sources of funding and the researcher declares no conflicts of interest. The study and its findings are presented in the spirit of respect that underpinned the whole process.

Changes in light of the Covid 19 were discussed and agreed at supervision. Following government and university guidance, amendments made recognised the need to be able to carry out the research study safely as well as to take account of the increased anxiety many people were feeling due to the global pandemic. With this in mind, the research moved to a remote method of data collections via software the participants were already familiar with, so as to alleviate any anxiety they may feel in taking part through virtual means. The use of video conferencing enabled, as far as possible, for the guiding principles of the approach to the research to be maintained. The semi-structured interviews and interview task were still carried out face-to-face, albeit via virtual means. The use of video conferencing also enabled greater participant choice over the timing of their participation. This linked to the ethos of empowering the participants as well as aiming to further alleviate any anxiety through greater agency.

3.16 Chapter Summary

With the pluralistic approach taken, all methods used were congruent to the underpinning philosophy of the research. Information gathered from the data analysis of both

the senior leadership task and the pilot exercise shaped the subsequent stages of the research as part of a reflective process. Throughout the process the emphasis remained on the lived experiences (Schostak, 2006, p. 22) of the participants, their thoughts, ideas and opinions (Ndegwa and Gutiérrez-Colón, 2019) – shaped as they are by their own reality as part of the figured worlds they inhabit. Within the conceptual framework of the research, these varied views were accepted as true to the participant at that time, they were celebrated in their own right and resulted in the 'rich descriptions' sought (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013).

As highlighted in the literature review (Chapter 2, pp.33-65), the role of context is central (Pather 2007, Runswick-Cole and Hodge 2009, Dyson et al 2011, Kozelski et al 2011, Bell 2012), and it is within the parameters of its context that this research is socially significant. Namely that the views sought are from those working with one MAT; the research was undertaken in a time when league tables persisted in being a measure of standards; year 6 SATS results remained as a key indicator of a school's success; the research had taken place within a county with grammar selection; there was a global pandemic significantly affecting the way education worked. It was accepted that as researcher, my realities were as socially constructed as those of the participants (Haas and Haas, 2002).

There was no assumption that a repeat of the research would provide the same results. It is located within its time and place and the certainty within education is that it is ever changing with 'intervening factors' (Howell, 2013, p. 183) that could change or effect opinion.

Through the wider questions opened up by this research, it is a platform for future research into this area. Would carrying out the research immediately prior to testing alter opinion? How will the abolition of Year 2 SATS impact? Will the increasing use of specialist resource provisions (SRP) within mainstream schools alter the status quo? It is an invitation to research 'the same phenomenon in different conditions' (Yin, 2014, p. 20).

The stability of the research is that it provides a picture as true to the participants in that time and place. It achieved its aim in that the reader is 'provided with an interpretation of the stories uncovered during the research' (Howell 2013 p184) through the multiplicity of contributing voices; embracing this multiplicity and enabling 'emancipation from seeing the world in one colour' (Denzin and Lincoln 2013 p198).

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 <u>Introduction</u>

The primary aim of the research was to gain an insight into and develop an understanding of any impact from statutory testing in Key Stage 2 on inclusion and inclusive practice, and through this to advance knowledge within the area of perceptions of inclusion in English primary school. This is of key importance with regards to special educational needs, as, in ensuring equity, there is a need to ensure inclusion for all, beyond terms and labels.

The findings of the research presented in this chapter start with a review of the preliminary two stages of the research. The senior leadership task (Stage 1) which provided a baseline for inclusion and data relevant to the main research study. The pilot exercise (Stage 2) used to inform the methodology. Findings from the senior leadership task are presented in detail first and illustrated here was a link between the views of the leaders of the Multi-Academy Trust and those working and leading each school. Combined with the findings of the main research study (Stage 3), this rich data set provided a detailed insight into the figured worlds inhabited by the participants. Through this, an understanding is gained of perceptions of inclusion within one Multi-Academy Trust in relation to the process of statutory testing in year 6 of primary school. A comprehensive presentation of the main research findings reviews results from each semi-structured interview question and the ranking task. This chapter is concluded with a summary overview of the key findings and how these will be explored in the subsequent Analysis and Discussion Chapter.

Reflected in the findings was the additional context of undertaking research during the time of a global pandemic. As highlighted in Chapter 3: Methodology (pp.66-124), the impact of illnesses related to Covid19 and the additional pressures of working with class and school closures affected the number of participants able to take part in the research. Restrictions

resulting from the pandemic were matched by adaptations to the research methods, ensuring that the number of participants remained sufficient to allow a depth of data to be gathered.

Full transcripts from the research can be found in the appendices (Appendix A, pp.219-336). The main research findings have been transcribed verbatim and include the use of transcription symbols used to capture unspoken elements, such as body language and prosody (Chapter 3: Methodology, Table 5, p.116). This enabled emphasis of key points to be identified through stress, intonation and gesture.

4.2 <u>Stages One and Two of the Research Process</u>

As detailed in the Methodology Chapter (pp.66-124), both Stage One and Stage Two of the research process informed the main research study. Data from stage one also enriched the findings from the main research study, enabling a comprehensive picture to emerge of the figured worlds of the participants and the influences on their perceptions of inclusion.

4.2.1 <u>Stage One: The Senior Leadership Task: Baseline of Inclusion</u>

In carrying out the senior leadership task, a baseline of perceptions of inclusion was gained from those who drive policy and practice within the Multi Academy Trust. With all senior leaders invited to participate taking part fully, the twenty six responses gained provided a core basis of knowledge (Appendix D, p.339). This provided an insight into the perceptions of those within the trust who design and construct school policy and through this influence school practice.

The senior leadership task was a linchpin for two key elements. Firstly, informing the next stage of the research process – the pilot exercise. The inductive coding process, using

discourse analysis, enabled the multivocality of qualitative data to be translated into quantitative data, which could then be used to inform the pilot exercise. The inductive coding process and findings are illustrated in full in Appendix D, p.339. Secondly, the findings provided a valuable point of comparison between participants taking part in the main research and the views of those leading the Trust. The 'patterns' (Paltridge, 2012) within the language that were identified contributed to the picture of the figured worlds of the participants that emerged.

4.2.2 Stage One: The Senior Leadership Task: Findings

Two questions were asked during this task. First, what supports inclusion in year 6? Followed by, are there any barriers? An overview of responses can be found in Appendix D (pp.339).

Data from the senior leadership task illustrated that the greatest support for inclusion in year 6 was considered to be **children feeling successful** (Appendix D, pp.339). The meaning of success was clarified through the post task discussion (Appendix D, pp.339). The feeling of accomplishment was in relation to the children having a sense that they can do or have a go at something without fear of *'limit[tation]'*. It was stated that this needed to take place in an environment where adults *'encourage'*, *'facilitate'* and *'scaffold'* and that this linked strongly to the pupils' sense of confidence in their own self-worth. The importance of this was evident in the recurrence of the terms *'self-esteem'* and *'confidence'* both during and after the task. Response I highlighted the need for pupils to have *'high self-esteem, confidence and resilience skills'* (Appendix P, p.369). Discussion following the task included reference to '*it's our job to develop the children's confidence in themselves*' and *'BLP* [Building Learning Power] *is more important in supporting their belief in themselves, in raising self-esteem'* (Appendix D, p.339). There was a prevailing sense of school being a place where mistakes are celebrated as a learning opportunity and that this was part of the

journey of feeling successful. This thread of **children feeling successful** was mentioned by 6 different participants of the task and made up 29% of all responses.

Following this 24% of the responses were made up equally of two threads. The first thread was **preparation for secondary school and wider life** which included broad reference to *'the skills'* needed (Response xi, Appendix P, p.369) as well as more specific reference to *'the ability to read, write and manipulate number to function in "the real world"'* (Response i, Appendix P, p.369). The second thread was **access to learning** which was mentioned by five different participants and included some specific references to work being differentiated. This included one participant who stated *'every child succeeding at their level'* (Response x, Appendix P, p.369). During the task, there was one overt reference to equity – *'equity – giving chn (sic) what they need – not the same'* (Response viii, Appendix P, p.369) and several references to *'access'*, including one who linked this to *'empowerment'* (Response xiii, Appendix P, p.369). This theme of equity through differentiation was picked up in the post task discussion and was linked to pupils' being enabled to take *'ownership of their learning'* (Appendix P, p.369).

Following this, in response to what supports inclusion, two threads were mentioned by two participants each and made up 10% of the responses given. Firstly, **children feeling included**. Responses here linked to feelings of both exclusion and inclusion with one participant stating children *'not separated out'* (Response iv, Appendix P, p.369) and the other noting *'feeling part of a learning community'* (Response ix, Appendix P, p.369).

In response to the second question (Are there any barriers?), participants had more to say. In comparison to the twenty-one different points mentioned in the first question, the subsequent question received mentions of twenty-eight different points. In considering any barriers to inclusion, **testing** received the greatest number of mentions and made up 26% of the responses. Within this group, four participants just mentioned the test itself and three gave further detail: -

'pressure of testing' (Response xxvi, Appendix P, p.369)

'focus on the achievers to get results – Too test driven' (Response xix, Appendix P, p.369)

'SATs focus makes them very aware of their differences' (Response xxvi, Appendix P, p.369)

This final comment also linked in with the thread with the second highest amount said about it – **children's self-esteem**. This thread made up 19% of the responses and was mentioned by five different participants. Comments here included direct mention of *'low self esteem'* (Response xv, Appendix P, p.369) as well as broader areas such as impact from social media (Responses xxi and xxv, Appendix P, p.369). During the post task conversation this was repeated through a discussion about the negative impact testing can have on pupils' self-esteem (Appendix D, p.339).

The two threads of **curriculum and planning** and **self-fulfilling prophesy/ attitude of adults** both made up 15% of the responses and were mentioned four times as barriers to inclusion. **Curriculum and planning** included responses that mentioned the curriculum itself (Response xiv, Appendix P, p.369), as well as the barrier of lack of access through the curriculum *'not been planned appropriately'* (Response xxiii, Appendix P, p.369) and the *'lack of knowledge/education'* (Response xv, Appendix P, p.369). Within the thread of **self-fulfilling prophesy/ attitude of adults**, barriers identified included *'adult perceptions and pre-conceived ideas'* (Response xvi, Appendix P, p.369), *'low expectations'* (Response xviii, Appendix P, p.369) and how adult attitudes can *'limit'* the pupil (Response xxvi, Appendix P, p.369). In the post task discussion, this was linked to the consequences for pupils' self-esteem (Appendix D, p.339).

The thread of **SEN/ vulnerable** children was mentioned three times and made up 11% of the responses given. These responses were linked to support (Response xxv, Appendix P, p.369), assessment (Response xvii, Appendix P, p.369) and identification of need (Response xiv, Appendix P, p.369). Within the post task discussion, pupils with special

educational needs were encompassed within the wider discussion of *'all'* pupils, for example summed up by one participant as *'all children, those with special needs, disability, all children'* (Appendix D, p.339). Finally, were the threads of **funding** and **secondary school/ secondary transition**. With regards to funding, one participant specifically mentioned a *'lack of high needs funding'* as a barrier (Response xxv, Appendix P, p.369). In terms of secondary school, one participant mentioned a barrier of a *'one size fits all model for SEMH'* (Response xx, Appendix P, p.369).

The insights gained from the findings of the senior leadership task drew comparisons with the findings of the main research study, illustrating areas of continuity and overlap of perceptions of inclusion within the figured worlds of those at the level of Trust leadership and those working directly within the schools.

4.2.3 Stage Two: The Pilot Exercise

As noted in the Methodology Chapter (pp.66-124) the pilot exercise enabled the research methods to be tested out prior to carrying out the main research study. With 100% engagement from the three pilot participants, this enabled effective testing of the semi-structured interview process and the ranking task. In informing the main research study, issues arose around sampling; the balance of power between researcher and participant; the depth of data obtained; the timings of the interviews and participants need for reassurance. These issues are detailed in the Methodology Chapter (pp.66-124).

4.3 Stage Three: The Research Study

The full engagement from all sixteen research study participants elicited a rich data set. The findings revealed a strong relationship with the patterns and themes identified in the

Stage One senior leadership task, where how the pupils felt about themselves, staff attitudes and the SATs test also featured prominently.

Figure 15

Voice of the Participants: Stage Three the Research Study

Figure 15 illustrates a holistic overview of the points considered important as discussed by the research study participants. Words are sized according to the number of times the participants brought them up in conversation. This snapshot view provided an initial insight into the figured worlds of the research study participants. Through this visual representation, it was clear that some areas, such as a key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs and the National Curriculum, featured more prominently in the overall discussions than other areas, such as planning or funding.

The snapshot overview was obtained through the use of an inductive coding process, which analysed data from both the semi-structured interviews and the ranking tasks. Reading through the texts, using information from what was said as well as what was expressed through non-verbal means enabled clarification of meaning and resulted in a word count analysis through which themes emerged. This resulted in twenty-five themes being identified. The word count related to each time key phrases or words arose in new sentences, this was used as an indicator of how much the participants had to say about each aspect (Figure 16, p.133).

Figure 16

Word Count of Each Theme: Research Study
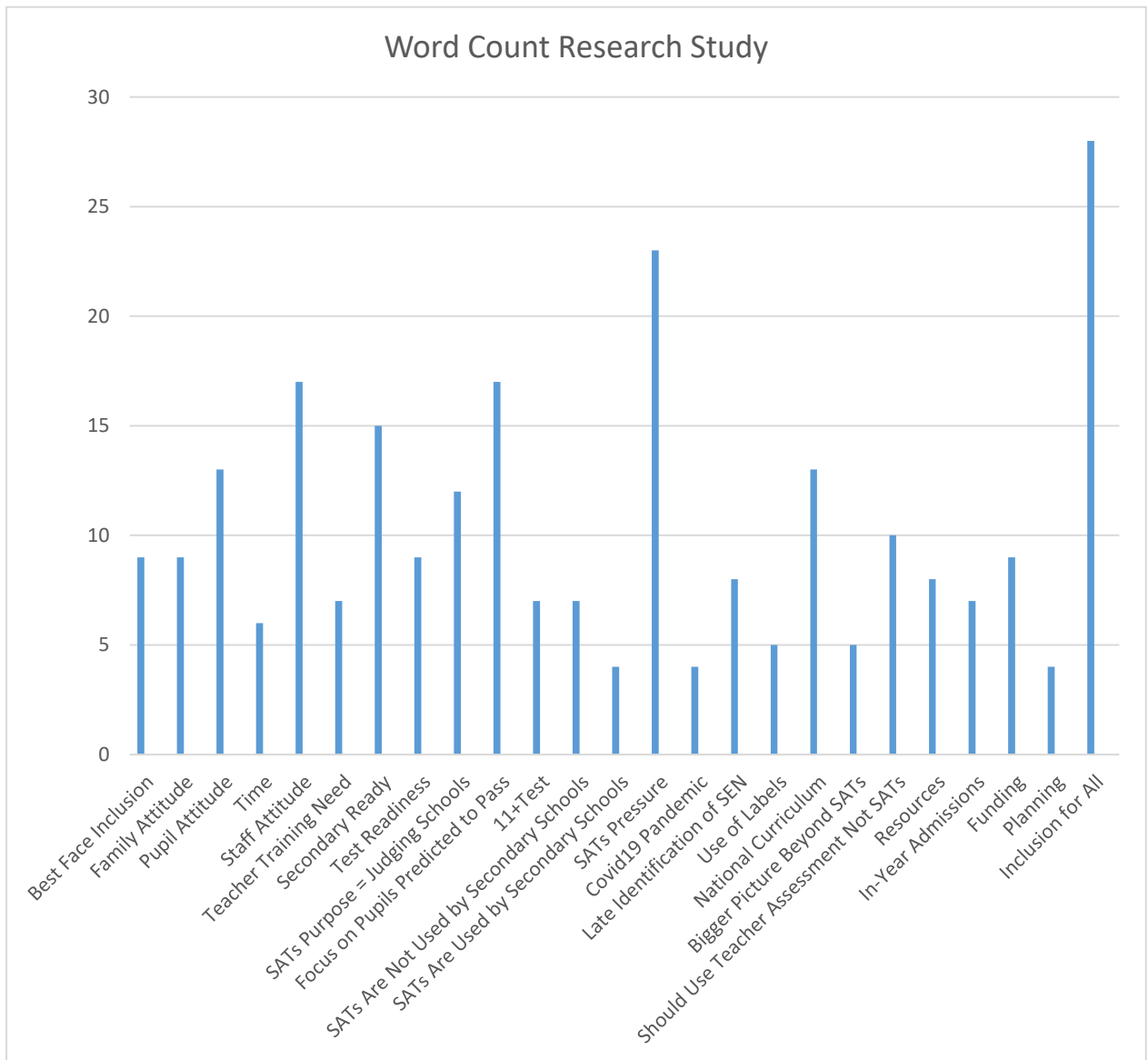
Inputting this data into a pie chart enabled review of participants priorities in analysing what was most of least discussed. This is illustrated in Appendix Q (p. 370). Taking up only 1% of the data set was **planning**. In terms of being a barrier to inclusion this was mentioned by five participants in relation to the need to adapt planning to meet the needs of the pupil (Appendix A, p.219-336, Participants B, H, I, O, P). Following this, each with 2% of the

overall data, were the threads of **SATs are used by secondary schools**, **Covid19 pandemic**, **if skills beyond SATs are not in place, labelling** and **time**. The belief that SATs are used by secondary schools was only expressed by support staff: -

*'it gives the secondary schools a **good** indication of the level the children are'* (Participant C, Appendix A, p.235)

'It helps the secondary school put them where they should be' (Participant E, Appendix A, p.250)

*'secondary schools use these to see where the children are erm **at**'* (Participant J, Appendix A, p.278)

A difference in the view of the purpose of SATs linked to a participant's job role was evident. The mention that SATs are not used by secondary schools arose seven times (3% of the data set). This was raised by class teachers, senior leaders and one teaching assistant who stated: -

*'I used to think SATS **were** important for secondary school, but [class teacher name] has said they <u>aren't (BL-hand up)</u> used by the secondary school. So <u>I don't really know</u>(BL – hand up) why we do them, because erm they are very erm **stressful**'*

(Participant A, Appendix A, p.221)

From those working as a teacher or leader this elicited some impassioned responses:-

*'once they go to secondary school they do that test **all** over again, start **all** over again. And if they are at a different stage <u>their SATs aren't looked at anyway. (BL- shakes head)</u>*

(Participant F, Appendix A, p.254)

*'The secondary schools in the area don't put any value by them. They use their own CAT tests when every child gets into school and have a look at the child's needs based on their abilities of the times. So I **don't** think that whatever grading these children get in their SATs*

*in the end of year 6 has **<u>any (S)</u> relevance** to their later life what so ever'* (Participant K,

Appendix A, p.285)

'in secondary schools they usually do CATs testing anyway as soon as they get in so I think

*it's a bit **redundant***' (Participant M, Appendix A, p.301)

From this, a pattern emerged where those more directly involved and accountable for the results of the SATs felt that these tests were otiose. This was embodied with dual feelings that the results had no impact on a pupil's future and that they were not used in the next stage of a pupil's education.

Also accounting for 3% of the data were the threads of **teacher training**, **late identification of SEND**, **in year admissions**, **11+ test** and **resources**. The late identification of SEND was linked, by one participant, to the inability to correctly resource for the SATs test (Participant D, Appendix A, p.238). Amongst other participants, there was a sense that there was not much time left by the time a pupil reached year 6 to put strategies in place to meet a special educational need (Appendix A, pp 219-336, Participants E, H, K, O). Featuring just above these with 4% of the data set were **test readiness**, **family attitude**, **funding**, **'best face' phenomenon** and the belief that there **should be teacher assessment not SATs**. Family attitude was mentioned in terms of non-inclusive attitudes brought into school from home (Appendix A, Participants A, p.219; K, p.281) and pressure regarding testing (Appendix A, Participant D, p.219).

The belief that the purpose of SATs is to judge schools was mentioned twelve times, making up 5% of the data set (Appendix A, pp. 219-336, Participants A, B, C, F, H, L, M, N, O, P). This is summed up concisely by one participant who stated: -

'To <u>judge schools!</u> (BL – slammed table) It's all about <u>erm league tables (BL – hands up)</u>

isn't it'

(Participant L, Appendix A, p.292).

Six participants proposed teacher assessment as a viable alternative to SATs (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants B, D, F, G, L, M, O). Of these six participants all were either teachers of year 6 pupils or senior leaders. At the point of carrying out the research study, the summer term SATs had been cancelled two years in a row (May, 2020 and May, 2021) for the first time in their history, due to the global pandemic.

Other threads also representing 5% of the data were **pupil attitude** and the **National Curriculum**. Pupil attitude was unanimously referred to in the context of it being a barrier to inclusion that adults need to support the pupil to overcome (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants A, B, D, G, J, K, L, O). This included non-inclusive perspectives a pupil may have brought from home, for example relating to homosexuality or religion (Appendix A, Participant A, p.219), as well as attitudes linked to behavioural needs noted by participants working in the SRP (Appendix A, Participants G, p.257; J, p.277). Participant K (Appendix A, p.281) highlighted the need for adults to support and facilitate in cases where pupils actions were not inclusive and were not able to build *'bridges'* themselves. Underpinning the voice of the participants in terms of pupil attitudes was the feeling of the need for the adults to adapt and, to sum up in the words of one participant, *'we need . . . be pro-active rather than reactive when it comes to inclusion'* (Appendix A, Participant O, p.316). Pupil attitude, in terms of their self-esteem was also brought up in relation to discussions around the pressure of testing, which is explored later in this chapter in relation to barriers to inclusion.

Making up 6% of the data is the barrier of **not being secondary ready**. This was mentioned by ten participants representing one TA, SENDCO and lead practitioner; two class teachers and deputy/ assistant head teachers; and three head teachers. There was agreement across all views expressed of the importance of pupils being secondary ready, of pupils having the skills needed for secondary school and the support from adults in the transition (Appendix A, pp. 219-336, Participants A, B, D, G, H, K, M, N, O, P). Within this group some expressed that supporting pupils to be secondary ready was something that took place after SATs (Appendix A, Participants A, p.219; B, p 226; H, p.261). Three

participants rated being secondary ready as more important than and not dependent on passing the SATs (Appendix A, Participants K, p.281; O, p.313; P, p.319). One participant summed this up as

*'to be secondary ready you need to <u>read and write, you need the 4 operations and basically</u> <u>you need to be able to compute them and that is</u> **not** <u>the same as jumping (BL-hands up)</u> through hoops to get through a SATs test'* (Participant K, p.287).

In terms of barriers to inclusion and making up three of the four largest threads were **staff attitudes** and a **focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs**, both making up 7% and **SATs pressure** representing 9%. There was a consensus of opinion amongst the eleven participants who mentioned staff attitudes, that negative staff attitudes are a barrier to inclusion (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants A, D, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P). This also linked with the thread of a focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs, described by one participant as: -

'that if there is the attitude that a child can't achieve then the effort is not going to be put in place that they can achieve' (Participant H, p.267).

Arising most frequently in discussions with participants, at all levels of the school hierarchy, was the belief in **inclusion for all** pupils. Comments relating to inclusion for all arose twenty-eight times and made up 11% of the overall data. This prominent and recurring thread of seeing inclusion as encompassing all has similarities with the findings of the senior leadership task. Responses to the first question – What does inclusion mean to you? – were frequently linked to the participants' immediate experience in that responses related to school or children. This was evident through the repeated pattern in many of the responses:-

'No children are left out'

(Participant A, Appendix A, p.219).

'No children are left behind . . . every child having the same opportunity as any other child in an educational setting'

(Participant G, Appendix A, p.257).

*'That every child . . **and** member of our community to be honest is equally valued, equally involved and has equal access to all aspects of our school life'*

(Participant K, Appendix A, p.281).

This was expanded upon by some participants (Appendix A, Participants I, p.271; H, p.261; L, p.291) who recognised that for there to be equal opportunities there has to be equity, there has to be some differentiation. This is significant in terms of inclusion in year 6 and is further impacted by other elements which participants identified as barriers to inclusion. For example, funding (which totalled 4% of participant discussion) and the need for this to ensure resources are in place to enable equity of opportunity (3% of participant discussion). In turn this impacts on in-year admissions (3%) and late identification of SEN (3%). In total this constituted 13% of participant discussion (Appendix Q, p.370), representing a significant view of how a potential barrier to inclusion can been seen to snowball cumulating in a wider issue. Embedded within this, some frustration was evident with elements that were beyond the direct control of the participants. One participant commented on the *'incredibly expensive'* nature of resources for SEND (Participant B, Appendix A, p.228) and two raised the *'completely ridiculous'* amount of time high needs funding applications take to process (Participant K, Appendix A, p.287) and the time taken up '*disput[ing]'* some outcomes of this application process (Participant D, Appendix A, p.244).

There was a recurring pattern through the senior leadership task and the main research study of the view of inclusion as encompassing of all. However, whilst expressed by all participants, its interpretation differed in the main research study. Further interpretations and implications from the participants' view of inclusion for all are critiqued in

the Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion (pp.156-182). This includes where specific groups were mentioned within this discussion of inclusion for all, and those that were notable by their absence. For example, in response to the initial two questions, SEND was only specifically mentioned by five participants (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participant A, B, D, G, O). Where special needs was explicitly mentioned, Participant A referred to the term in highlighting how some educators *'used to use words they shouldn't'* (Appendix A, p.220), giving an example of label first as opposed to person first language. This was also evident with a further three participants who used label first language in their responses – Participant E *'a SEN child'* (Appendix A, p.250) ; Participant F *'children who are SEN children'* (p.253) and Participant H *'SEN children'* (p.266).

The further four participants to specifically mention SEND did so as part of one of several examples. In each incidence special needs did not get the first mention (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants B, D, G, O). Five participants made reference more generally to ability or needs (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants C, F, H, I, L). Seven participants specifically mentioned other areas in terms of need such as race, religion, sexuality, background and ethnicity (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants B, C, F, G, H, K, P).

Eight participants made reference to inclusion either not being in place in all aspects of society or of there being a difference in what was said and what was practiced (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants A, B, D, I, J, K, L, M). Three strands are apparent within this discourse. First, the belief that society is becoming more inclusive expressed by Participant D. This participant did conclude their sentence with *'I guess'* (Appendix A, p.239). Second, statements made that parts of society are not or do not want to be inclusive (Appendix A, Participants B, I, K, L, M). In two incidences this was set within the current context – Participant K cited Brexit as a factor (Appendix A, p.281) and Participant L spoke of the need for the Black Lives Matter campaign as an example that society is not inclusive (Appendix A, p.291). Third, three participants commented on a difference between what people say about inclusion and how they act (Appendix A, Participants A, p.219; D, p.239; J, p.277).

In terms of the first two questions – 1) What does inclusion mean to you? 2)What does inclusion look like in our society? - the responses were shorter than the subsequent questions. These two questions had been designed to relax the participants; small talk to open up the opportunity to more in-depth conversation as the interview progressed. In answer to both questions thirteen of the sixteen participants used hesitation such as embolalia, hesitation markers or questioning (Appendix A, pp.219-336).

Building on the first two questions, the third question – 3) I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion? – aimed to put the participants in the position of power and ownership, as in ownership of the knowledge being sought for the research. Whilst responses were varied some common themes ran throughout. These are broadly categorised under six headings as can be seen in Figure 17 (p.141).

Figure 17: Interview Question 3: Participant Responses - I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Provision
- Resourcing
- Progress
- Educational practitoners role

Transition
- Transition to secondary school
- Transition between SRP and home class - SRP as an integral part of the school

Special Educational Needs
- Physical disability
- Mental and cognitive needs that require nurture provision
- Behaviours
- SEMH need

Pupils
- Pupils are older in year 6/ they have their own views
- Finding themselves
- Set friendship groups

Parents
- Non-inclusive views from home

SATs
- Children who are not working at expected level
- Teaching to the test
- Pressure regarding expected outcomes
- Impact on the curriculum

Answers to this question were generally longer that the first two questions. Whilst hesitation pauses were still evident and there were some tentative comment clauses, notably '*I think'*, there was no questioning - seeking clarification or reassurance - leading to greater flow to the responses given.

With regards to answers linking to provision, these fell broadly into three categories – resourcing, progress, and the role of educational practitioners. Four participants' answers were classified under the heading of provision. In terms of resourcing, this was mentioned by one participant in a broad sense referring to resources to *'encompass differences'* (Participant D, Appendix A, p.240). One participant referred to progress including this in two different ways. First, they outlined progress as opposed to academic levels stating that progress *'goes hand in hand really with inclusion'* (Participant H, Appendix A, p.262). Second, whilst noting that *'the focus often for a year 6 teacher is on the end point'* inclusion and progress *'should look the same'* in every year group (Participant H, Appendix A, p.262). Two participants referred to the role of educational practitioners: Participant O noted the need to differentiate provision so all can access (Appendix A, p.313). This was echoed by Participant P who stated that it is for teachers to adapt to meet the needs of the pupils. Participant P also warned that if provision has not met pupils' needs it can lead to a narrowed curriculum experience and consequently shallow understanding in some areas due to additional time required for interventions, potentially taking the pupil out of class (Appendix A, p.319).

Three participants linked their responses to transition. Participant G specifically mentioned transition linked to the SRP (Appendix A, p.257). Transition to secondary school was a common theme that ran across the responses of all three participants (Appendix A, Participants G, p.257; M, p.296; O, p.313).

In terms of the special educational needs of the children, this area received the most responses from different participants with five including this in their responses. Participants B (Appendix A, p.226) and G (Appendix A, p.257) referred specifically to physical needs.

Participants B (Appendix A, p.226) and N (Appendix A, p.305) noted anxiety and the need for nurture and Participant N brought this into the current context of the impact of Covid 19. Participant J (Appendix A, p.277) spoke of behavioural needs and Participant K (Appendix A, p.281) gave a specific example linked to SEMH need. Whilst five participants referred to SEND it is notable that two-thirds of the participants did not, this omission of reference to special educational needs in terms of inclusion is explored in the Analysis and Discussion Chapter (Chapter 5, pp.156-182).

In relation to the pupils themselves there was similarity in the responses of three participants who answered in terms of the children knowing their own mind more due to their age (Appendix A, Participants A, p.219; I, p.271; O, p.313). The pupils 'finding themselves' was noted by two participants (Appendix A, Participants B, p.226; M, p.296) and one gave a specific example involving friendship (Appendix A, Participant K, p.281). The impact of the influence of parents, when views from home may be non-inclusive was mentioned by two participants (Appendix A, Participants A, p.219; L, p.291). Examples of non-inclusive views linked to homosexuality and different types of families.

With regards to the SATs test, four participants included reference to this in their answers to question 3. The commonality in the answers was negativity. Participants B (Appendix A, p.226) and M (Appendix A, p.296) referred to the impact on children who are not at the expected level. Participant P developed this by highlighting the aspects of the curriculum that may be missed and the danger that a key focus on the test could result in the same outcome in subsequent years as well, resulting in a continuous knock on effect and leading to *'a very narrow understanding'* in some areas of the curriculum (Appendix A, p.322). Having a key focus on the teaching to the test is a theme also noted by Participant F who states that some pupils could end up *'not being included in the majority of the learning in the second half of the year '* (BL – head down throughout whole response) (Appendix A, p.252). Three of the four participants made reference to SATs pressure (Appendix A, Participants F, p.252; M, p.296; P, p.319).

Question 4 – What supports inclusion in year 6? – elicited shorter answers. However, they were also responses that generally came quickly without hesitation or tentativeness. The responses are grouped under three headings (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Interview Question 4: Participant Responses - What supports inclusion in year 6?

Provision
- Staff support for pupils - interventions, scaffolding, enabling, providing positive affirmations
- Adapting practice to meet pupil need
- Recognising behaviour as communication
- Resources to reflect diversity of school
- Resources to meet SEN
- Planning

Transition
- Transition to /communication with secondary school
- Being secondary ready
- Transition between/ communication with SRP and home class

Training
- Teacher training
- Expertise

A commonality in the responses to question 4 was the role of the educational practitioner. This was evident throughout a breadth of answers from supporting children at playtime (Appendix A, Participant A, p.219), to resourcing (Appendix A, Participant D, p.239) and adapting practice to meet need (Appendix A, Participants H, p.261; O, p.313).

One participant answered in the negative stating *'not teaching to the test. Being able to teach the breadth of the National Curriculum'* as their response to what supports inclusion in year 6 (Appendix A, Participant F, p.253). Alongside this, others did add comments

relating to the challenges they face in providing an inclusive approach. These feelings were evident in their comments which included: -

'it is a <u>balance (BL – hands up).</u> You have to prioritise focus, and often it's on the children on the <u>CUSP' (BL- should shrug</u>) (Appendix A, Participant H, p.262).

*'if there is a focus on children passing the test **some subjects** are going to be marginalised'* (Appendix A, Participant F, p.253).

'they don't always get that time though, because you have to focus on children on the CUSP so that they will pass the <u>SATs (BL – hands up).</u> It is a pressure to be honest'

(Appendix A, Participant E, p.249).

This sense of unfairness of children not always getting *'that time'* was echoed by another participant who stated: -

'can mean that there's a lot of … attention on children on the CUSP. There is definitely a pressure – on the children – and the teaching team'

(Appendix A, Participant L, p.292).

These feelings are further reflected in the fact that having a key focus on children predicted to pass the SATs came out as one of the top three barriers to inclusion within the research study and was mentioned by eleven participants across the interview process (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, H, K, L, N, P). Within these responses, there was recognition from all eleven participants of the impact on those children who are not the focus. Included in these responses was the recognition of not being able to help pupils who are not the focus in the way that was felt they needed (Appendix A, pp.219-336, Participants A, B, C, E), that *'other children might become lost'* (Appendix A, Participant P, p.333) or have limits put on their achievements (Appendix A, Participants B, p.226; C, p.233) and a necessary focus on test readiness described as unfortunate (Appendix A, Participant D, p.239). There was an apologetic and resigned nature to these responses illustrated through

comments such as *'it's not fair'* (Appendix A, Participant A, p.223), *'you're <u>limiting (BL – hand up)</u> children who could achieve with a bit more input sadly'* (Appendix A, Participant B, p.231), *'year 6 has a big focus on SATs unfortunately'* (Appendix A, Participant L, p.292).

Question 5 -What are the barriers to ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a (job role) every day? This question evoked answers linked to the primary role of each participant. It was within these roles that similarities could be found as illustrated in Figure 19 (p.147).

Figure 19: Interview Question 5: Participant Responses - What are the barriers to ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your role every day?

TA
- Playtime fall outs
- Sharing my time
- Covid19 challenges to being able to carry out interventions
- Addressing non-inclusive views from home
- Having to focus on pupils who will pass the SATs/ not being able to focus on other children
- Getting pupils ready for SATs
- Own understanding of the year 6 curriculum
- Supporting behaviour - especially if pupil has been out of education for a while

SENDCo
- Time - limit of own time in relation to work load
- Money - cost of resources/ obtaining funding

DHT/ AHT
- Training and support of staff - when there isn't understanding of inclusion/ recognistion of non-inclusive practice

LP
- Time - limit of own time so only get to focus on CT who need support, don't get to work with CT who are able to extend expertise
- CT knowledge
- Ensuring training is understood
- CT mind set
- CT confidence
- When a pupil's needs are seen as a barrier

CT
- Adpating practice to meet needs of challenging behaviour - problem solving
- Prioritising adult support (made harder by Covid19 disruptions)
- Wide range of class need
- Focus on pupils on CUSP/ pressure on pupils and staff

HT
- Adapting access to meet parent requirements
- Adapting practice to medical needs of staff that may arise
- Pupil views influenced by non-inclusive views from home

Within the responses, there were similarities across job roles. The pressures of time were noted by SENDCOs and LPs; as well as by TAs and class teachers in relation to the impact of Covid19 on prioritising adult support. Both TAs and class teachers also noted behavioural needs as a barrier and the role of the adult in supporting and adapting. These two groups also both mentioned a focus on CUSP children. Both TAs and head teachers mentioned the need to address non-inclusive views from home.

Within the answers to question 5, four participants identified the value of staff training. The need for training to support with behaviour (Appendix A, Participant J, p.277) and special educational needs (Appendix A, Participant I, p.271) was mentioned; alongside a recognition that training is needed if staff don't identify that they are not inclusive (Appendix A, Participant D, p.239). One participant eloquently described the need for training as: -

'It's quite a dance sometimes in the classroom and it's enabling the teacher … to learn … that dance' (Appendix A, Participant P, p.325).

Across all of the responses given during the research study process, training totalled 4% of the responses.

Responses to the final two questions prompted longer answers from the participants. Discussions included greater detail and evocative use of language.

6) What factors affect the future aspirations of year 6 pupils who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?
7) What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to year 6 being a statutory testing year?

In relation to question 6, the responses were mixed with regards to impact on pupils' future aspirations and the answers were not a clear cut yes or no. Wider implications were evident in the participants' responses, as illustrated in Figure 20 (p.149). Seven participants stated a direct impact from SATs on future aspirations; a further four participants, whilst not directly referring to the statutory tests themselves, did refer to the effects of associated

pressures. A third of the participants cited the importance of looking at the bigger picture, for example they stated: -

SATs are *'**not** wholly representative of who they are and what they can achieve'*

(Appendix A, Participant D, p.241).

Everyone has *'worth and value (BL – hands up)'* (Appendix A, Participant B, p.229) and *'everyone has got a talent'* (Appendix A, Participant O, p.314).

Three participants felt the 11+ grammar school placement test had a far greater impact on future aspirations, with one participant stating that this test *'matters a **great** deal'* (Appendix A, Participant K, p.286).

Figure 20: Interview Question 6: Participant Responses - What factors affect the future aspirations of year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Impact on Secondary Education
- There is no impact as secondary schools do not use these results
- There is an impact as secondary schools do use these results so pupils may start lower down and not catch up/ catch up interventions may mean missing out on certain subjects/ pupils may start secondary with an adverse label

Impact on Well Being
- Impact on self-esteem and confidence
- Pressure from parents/ self/ peers
- Feeling of failure / believing self to be a failure
- Pupils might be 'signed off' by school
- Can lead to adverse behaviours

Skills Beyond SATs That Impact
- Emotional understanding
- Social skills
- Organisational skills
- Academically ready (not in terms of SATs)
- Self-esteem and confidence

In summing up the potential impact on future aspirations one participant warned that it can *'create a bit of a ceiling of how you view yourself and what you can achieve'* (Participant M, Appendix A, p.300). This level of concern is evident in the responses to the final question. In their answers to question 7, the participants exhibited more passion through their use of emotive language, such as: -

'Just nasty'

(Participant B, Appendix A, p.230).

*'it puts a massive amount of **stress** on children at quite a **difficult** point in their life anyway'*
(Participant G, Appendix A, p.259).

*'Utterly pointless . . . I don't agree that an **arbitrary value** that's achieved through a <u>2 hour</u>
<u>(BL-hand up)</u> paper in the middle of May is an indication of that child's ability'*

(Appendix A, Participant K, p.286).

The word pressure is used nineteen times in response to participants' thoughts on year 6 statutory testing; that is equivalent to 54% use of the word across all seven questions. Alongside this, the word stress is referred to fifteen times throughout the interview process. This calculation was based on how many different questions these key words appeared in and is illustrated in Appendix R (p.373).

Analysis of participant responses to question 7 revealed three broad themes, illustrated in Figure 21 (p.151).

Figure 21: Interview Question 7: Participant Responses - What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Perceptions of Purpose of SATs
- The purpose is:-
  *gauging pupils levels
  *informs secondary school
  *prepares pupils for tests
  *informs league tables
- There is no purpose:-
  *only provides a 'snap shot'
  *doesn't inform secondary school - secondary re-test
  *just a political tool to judge schools

Perceptions of Impact
- Time and expense that could be more effectively used
- Detrimential to a full education - narrows year 6 curriculum
- Labels pupils
- Consequences for the school of poor results
- Publised results=high-stakes=pressure on schools
- Pressure and stress on pupils, staff, school
- Can lead to 'factory schooling'

Ideas of Alternatives to SATs
- Teacher assessment
- Assessment of learning
- Ongoing formative and summative assessment

In terms of the pressure felt by children as a result of statutory testing, this was evident in the participants' responses relating to the impact on pupils' self-esteem (Participants A, p.219; I, p.271); their wellbeing (Participant B, p.226), how the pupils feel (Participant G, p.257) and the potentially adverse effect of being labelled as a result of not doing well (Participant D, p.239).

In analysing all of the responses in relation to perceptions of inclusion in the final year of primary schooling, the top three areas identified as barriers to inclusion were SATs pressure, which constituted 40% of the top three responses; a key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs (30%) and the attitudes of staff (30%) as illustrated in Figure 22 (p.152).

Figure 22: Top 3 Barriers to Inclusion: Research Study

Top 3 Barriers to Inclusion : Research Study

Key Focus on Pupils Predicted to Pass 30%

SATs Pressure 40%

Attitudes of Staff 30%

■ Key Focus on Pupils Predicted to Pass 30%　■ Attitudes of Staff 30%　■ SATs Pressure 40%
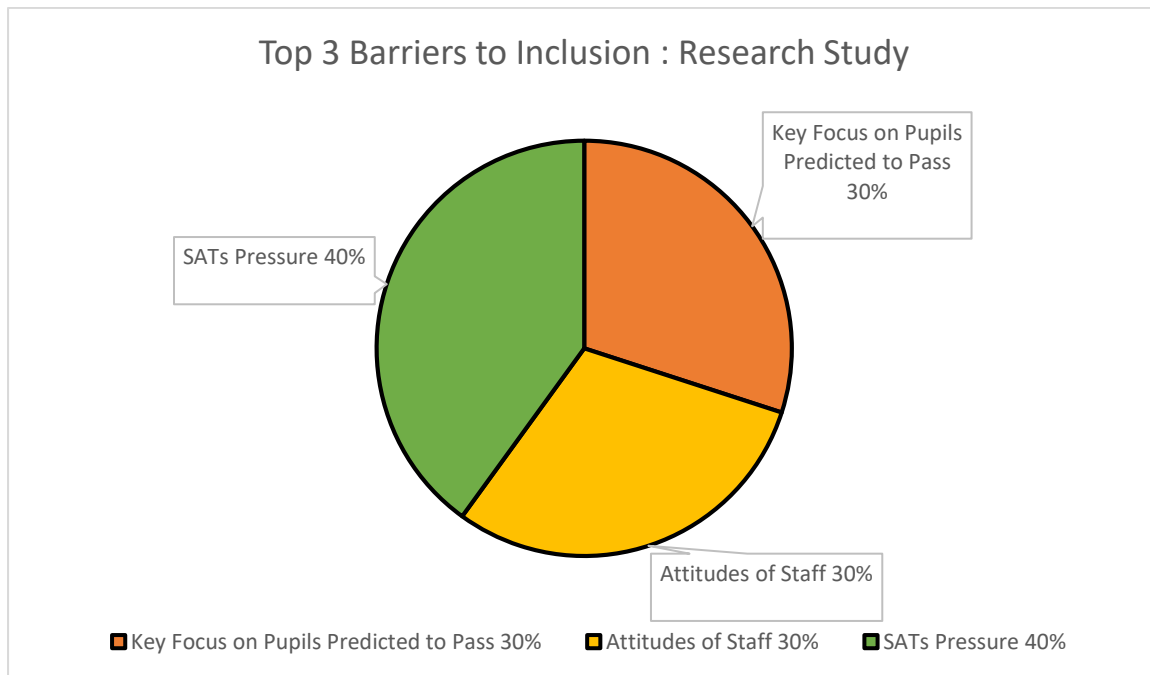
These, and indeed all, the responses reflected the experiences of the participants. Not only their current experiences within their current school, but also previous employment in education establishments, as well as perceptions received from the social world around them such as the press, union publications and government announcements and directives. The combination of these experiences illustrate a powerful insight into the figured worlds inhabited by the participants, as well as the influences that impact upon them.

Researcher field notes (an example can be found at Appendix H, p.358), alongside the use of transcription symbols, illustrated a range of emotions, reflected through body language, during the research study, particularly once the participants grew more comfortable with the process. Increased confidence was evident as the process evolved, with responses developing and more depth to the stories, thoughts and opinions being shared. The emotive responses to the final question in the semi-structured interview were not evident in the opening responses. Frustration was noted in some responses, for example, to question 2, where a difference between what inclusion should look like in society and what it does look like was expressed. This was evident in the body language used. For

example, the body language of Participant A became more animated when, pressing for further detail in response to their answer, they were asked directly *Do you think our society is inclusive?*

*'Erm, goodness, erm – not always. I do – erm <u>think (S)</u> people, **some** people like to **think** they are inclusive, but erm sometimes <u>the way they act is not inclusive at all (BL – shrug).</u> Erm, it's like when you talk about the **<u>importance</u>** <u>of language (BL – hand up)</u>, I know <u>some (S)</u> people here (sigh) at XXXX who used to use words they **shouldn't** <u>(BL – no action with hand).'</u>*

(Participant A, Appendix A, p.220).

This emphasis through the non-spoken in response to contradictions in society with regards to inclusion are also evident in the transcripts of Participant B (Appendix A, p.219), Participant D (Appendix A, p.239), Participant I (Appendix A, p.271), Participant J (Appendix A, p.277) and Participant M (Appendix A, p.296).

The view into the participants' figured worlds through the responses they gave highlighted a commonality in the frequency of emphasis through non-verbal means to stress a point. These points were routinely present when conversation came to points of potential controversy or disagreement with policy, such as the 'best face' phenomenon of inclusion or participants' thoughts on the government policy of statutory testing in year 6. Attention was drawn to key words through the use of body language and accenting or stressing key words. For example: -

*<u>'Not everything (BL – hand up)</u> can be **measured** by a <u>test (BL – hand up)</u> (4) in **fact** most things <u>can't (BL – hand up).</u> Look at the SRP, the children make **massive** progress, that's got **nothing** to do with **SATS**.*

*<u>**Progress** is more **important**. Progress and <u>teacher assessment (BL – hand up)'</u>*

(Participant F, p.255).

Emphasis was also used to elicit the opposite. For example, in response to question 7 when Participant P was asked for their thoughts on SATs testing in year 6 their response was: -

*'Um hummmmmm, oh I **love (S)** it as you can tell (L – sarcastic tone)'*

(Participant P, p.328).

The credibility and relevance of the research findings are further strengthened through comparison of the responses given at both the senior leadership task and the research study. This highlighted the recurring points of similarity, reinforcing the insight into the figured worlds of the participants. Trends were evident at all levels of the Trust hierarchy, with stage one being undertaken by the Trust and school leadership and stage three by a broader range of participants from support staff, year 6 teachers and school leadership. Tables 6 and 7 highlight these trends.

Table 6: Comparing Similarities: Supporting Inclusion

Supporting Inclusion			
Role of Staff	Training & Support		The Next Stage
	Staff	Pupils	
Access to learning Pupils feeling included & successful Equity for pupils & all reaching their potential Staff attitudes	Staff training & CPD	Intervention & resourcing	Being secondary ready/ ready for wider life Being secondary ready/ equipping with life skills Smooth transitions
KEY: SLT Task Research Study			

Table 7: Comparing Similarities: Barriers to Inclusion

Barriers to Inclusion			
Role of Staff	Provision	Testing	The Next Stage
Attitude of adults Pupils self-esteem SEN Attitude of staff Pupil attitude Late identification of SEN	Curriculum & planning Funding Funding & resourcing Impact on National Curriculum of focus on SATs	Testing SATs test Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs	Not being secondary ready Not being secondary ready
KEY: SLT Task Research Study			

From Tables 6 and 7, patterns in the perceptions of staff from across the whole Trust hierarchy are evident. The role of staff and the importance of preparation for the next stage in a pupil's journey are clearly identified as aspects which support inclusion in year 6. In terms of barriers to inclusion, similarities are drawn across four areas – role of staff, provision, testing and preparation for the next stage in a pupil's journey.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The research findings illustrate a complex interplay from incongruent agendas which impacted on and caused a rift between participants' perceptions of inclusion and the reality of inclusive practice in year 6. This resulted in a pressurised space within the figured worlds inhabited by the participants. Within this space there was, on the one hand, the unanimous participant view of inclusion as inclusive of all. There was also the reality of working in an environment of high stakes testing. From this, there was a direct impact on the self-efficacy of the participants, where they found themselves to be both subject and agent within their figured world. The rift between perceptions of inclusion and reality of inclusive practice that the findings show, is explored in depth in the Analysis and Discussion Chapter (pp.157-182).

Where the research findings offer an initial view into the figured worlds inhabited by the participants, the Analysis and Discussion Chapter will build on this, developing a rich overview through analysis and synthesis. This will be achieved through critical analysis of the findings in terms of three key areas. First, the participants' perceptions of inclusion. This will critique the elements underpinning the complexity of what it means to include by exploring 'othering' through omission, gaps between people's public and private expressions and practices of inclusion and finally the implications for inclusive practice of influences beyond the school setting. Second, the participants' perceptions of statutory testing. With the key words of pressure and stress featuring prominently in the research study findings, the Analysis and Discussion Chapter investigates the basis for these feelings. Integral to this is

an exploration of the impact on the delivery of the National Curriculum in year 6, a culture of winners and losers, the strategy of hot housing and exclusionary practices. Third, the impact on self-efficacy and agency. This final section examines how the participants were both agent and subject within the figured worlds they inhabited. A cause and effect relationship became apparent related to the perceived pressures of year 6 statutory testing.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Grounded in the research data this chapter interprets the findings and explores the implications. Patterns, relationships and correlations are identified and findings are contextualised in previous research and theory. New insights into the field of inclusion are discussed and their consequences reviewed. These points are then précised in the chapter summary and limitations of the research study examined.

Using a case study approach with the use of figured worlds as the conceptual framework for this study enabled a detailed insight into the thoughts, opinions and influences of the participants through analysis of the research findings. This view into the socially and culturally constructed worlds (Holland et al, 2001) of the participants revealed the challenges faced in delivering inclusive practice for pupils with SEND alongside the expectations of high stakes testing in the final year of primary school. Uncomfortable disparities between belief in inclusion and the reality of inclusive practice in year 6 were disclosed and varying meaning attached to the language of inclusion and the language of SEND was highlighted. In line with the theoretical framework of this research study, a complex picture was revealed in which the detrimental impact of year 6 SATs on inclusive practice in the final year of primary school was evident.

Analysis of the research findings illustrate this relationship between inclusive practice within the context of year 6 statutory testing that is contentious and difficult. The drive for high stakes testing is one which privileges some over others. The result of this is a system where participants are left with an impossible juxtaposition between their belief in inclusion for all and a system which does not enable this. This is evident within the figured worlds they inhabit and leaves them in a cause and effect relationship where a drive for SATs results is mirrored by a reduced sense of professional agency. The implications of this are a narrowed curriculum and practices which exclude. Participants were positioned largely as subjects

within this figured world, with the perception of being unable to alter the status quo. The impact of this had resulted in compromises being made on what those professing 'inclusion for all' believed.

Central to the themes which emerged from the data are the voices of the participants. It is appreciated that we each come with our own identity and agency as well as the capacity to be part of a greater group consciousness, and that within this we are both subject and agent through the influences of our social context. We both affect and are affected by the figured worlds we inhabit. Throughout this chapter, individual contributions from the participants are recognised alongside their collective contribution, evident through the insight into the co-constructed space of the figured worlds they inhabited.

It is also acknowledged that there is a researcher lens through which the data is examined. A lens born from researcher experiences not only as a researcher but also as an educator, sharing and taking a role in influencing the co-construction of the participants' figured worlds. Sharing this space with the participants enabled connection, through emerging aspects of researcher self as an educator (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018). Time given for participants to respond, to develop the conversation and share their honest in the moment thoughts gave opportunity for an empowering (Cresswell, 2013) of the participants to surface; they were in the position of power through the ideas and opinions they had to share. This was evident both through the extended responses as the interview process developed and in the honesty of the opinions shared, the latter being particularly notable when discussion veered into territory that could be considered controversial (Chapter 4: Findings, p.150). This empowerment of the participants enabled a genuine insight into the figured worlds they inhabited and from this the influences that shaped their thoughts, opinions and ideas. The position of researcher as *within* enabled an objective empathy with the participants. Whilst holding in check any emotional response, by having adopted a reflexive approach, I was able to approach the research from a point of knowledge and understanding.

This research set out to explore the perceptions of inclusion in relation to pupils with SEND within one Multi-Academy Trust in relation to the process of statutory testing at the end of Key Stage 2 within the current educational climate in England. As part of this exploring whether there was a consistent approach to inclusion and inclusive practice, what opinions there were about the impact of high stakes testing and whether there was a sense of autonomy in relation to any challenges faced. With the research being undertaken during a global pandemic, the impact of Covid 19 was mentioned by some participants. More recent developments as a result of the Coronavirus situation, such as the government decision to cancel year 6 SATs for the academic year 2021-2022, occurred just after the research had taken place and are therefore not mentioned. The limit put on the number of participants who could take part due to researching during the pandemic was unavoidable. There was however, representation from the majority of schools and across all three stages of the research process. Forty-five participants took part in the research process (senior leadership task, pilot exercise, main research study). The 26 involved in the senior leadership task and 16 in the main research study, represented all of the schools and resulted in a rich data base from which patterns could be identified within the findings.

In interpreting the research findings and discussing implications, this chapter examines three key, interrelated areas starting with an examination of perceptions of inclusion. This exploration is based on participants' overarching views of inclusion and bringing this into the specific context of SATs and pupils with special educational needs. Examining holistic perceptions of inclusion is underpinned by the importance of the use of language. This includes what the participants felt inclusion means, the definition of this term to them and how this was carried out in practice with any internally or externally imposed barriers. From this point analysis of participant dialogue revealed exclusionary practices that were both hidden and overt. Hidden in the sense that the discourse suggested exclusionary actions were not consciously realised as such, for example, the process of 'othering' through omission. However, overt through a reluctant acceptance of pressures from wider influences

in the form of government directives that led to exclusionary actions such as, a key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs to the detriment of those not predicted to meet the standard.

Examination of the second key area focuses on participants' perceptions of SATs. In analysing this discourse, this section begins by considering the underlying reasons for feelings of stress and pressure and through this reviewing the wider context. What is evident here is the impact from the macro level of government on the micro level of school and the repercussions of this on how inclusion, or even the possibility of inclusion, is viewed. This is followed by an examination of three points – first the impact of SATs on the delivery of the National Curriculum, second the culture of winners and losers perpetuated by high stakes testing and finally, the 'legitimisation' of exclusionary practices. Key points raised from this analysis include the practice of hot housing, the impact on the curriculum, exclusionary practices and the impact of the label of failure.

Elements from both of the first two key areas explored culminate in having a direct impact on the third area. The culmination of pressure felt through working within the context of high stakes testing impacts on the ability of the participants to feel a sense of independent free choice in the way teaching is delivered in year 6. Within this section, this impact of externally imposed normative expectations leading to a cause and effect relationship are examined and the impact on practitioner self-efficacy and sense of agency is explored. This section explains how the issues outlined in response to the first two key areas have had a detrimental impact on practitioners' ability to have control over inclusionary practice and indeed their belief to affect change in relation to inclusion in year 6.

Discussion and analysis draws on the findings of the seven research questions and the ranking task of the research study. Into this discussion, comparisons and links with stage one of the research, the senior leadership task, are made alongside connections with wider literature. Through this, key themes are highlighted, their significance examined and future ramifications explored.

5.2 Key Findings, Interpretations and Implications

5.2.1 Perceptions of Inclusion

The findings have illustrated that discussion around inclusion, introduced through the first two interview questions – What does inclusion mean to you? What does inclusion look like in our society? – and developed throughout the rest of the research study, were largely based on a belief of 'inclusion for all' (Chapter 4: Findings Chapter, p.137). This correlated with the findings of the preceding senior leadership task (Tables 6 and 7, p. 153; Appendix D, pp.339) and had huge relevance to the research study. Whilst answers to these first two questions were generally shorter, the commonality of opinion illustrated a belief in including all from all levels of the Multi-Academy Trust hierarchy. From this, comparison could be drawn with the guiding principle of the Salamanca Statement of schools which 'include everybody' where learning is supported and educators 'respond to individual needs' (Mayor, Preface of Salamanca Statement, 1994). Participants had expressed a sense of '*ensuring that we are catering for all children and ensuring that every classroom is inclusive'* (Participant D, Appendix A, p.239). From this, the sentiment of including all pupils is evident and it could be concluded that there was a clear understanding of inclusion. Further analysis revealed a more complex picture as explored below.

The language of 'equal opportunities' was used by participants when discussing inclusion. Whilst, bar one mention during the senior leadership task, equity was not explicitly referred to in the research study; equality was discussed in these terms. There was reference to the need to differentiate or adapt. This illustrated an understanding that equality within inclusion is not a one-size-fits-all approach. However, despite this, what became apparent through analysis was that within this belief of inclusion for all there lay complexities. A belief in inclusion for all was not accompanied by a clarity of what it means to include and specifically what this means for pupils with special educational needs facing year 6 statutory testing. Limiting factors on the ability to carry out inclusive practice were also evident and are explored later in this chapter. As the figured worlds of the participants unfolded through their

responses and as their stories emerged, it was clear that the belief of an all-encompassing approach to inclusion was convoluted. As a researcher who inhabited the figured worlds of the participants, this complex picture was not unexpected and was in line with the theoretical framework of the research, which recognised that discussion of inclusion in terms of the final year of primary education and specifically for pupils with special educational needs in England is part of a broader picture that can be perplexing, complicated and problematic (Chapter 3: Methodology, p.77). The discussions with the participants highlighted a reality for them where there was little consensus about what it means to include from government documents and guidance (Chapter 2: Literature Review, p.56).

This nebulous grasp of what it means to include was evident through two key areas of contention. First, a complexity born of the participants' actions. At the heart of this was exclusion through omission and use of language. Second, a complexity born of external agendas and directives. The results of these wider influences led to a difference between personal held beliefs of what inclusion looks like and the reality of inclusive practice. Evidence illustrated a clear impact of government policy on pedagogy (Boyle, 2012; Gatto, 2019; Bousted, 2019) resulting in a testocratic teaching and learning experience in the final year of primary school.

Both the internal and external influences on the two key areas of discord impacted on participants' perceptions of inclusion and revealed multiple layers within the banner of inclusion for all. This is of significance not only in terms of personal understanding of inclusion, but is also indicative of a culture within the figured world of the participants of forces beyond their control impacting on their ability to carry out an inclusive practice. This places the participants as subjects within their figured world under the control of a greater agent.

As illustrated in Chapter 4: Findings (pp.125-156), the impact of wider influences became increasingly apparent as the interviews progressed and is explored in depth below. This draws parallels with the work of many others, including Gatto (2019), who has

highlighted the contested nature of the difference between a perceived meaning of inclusion and the implementation of inclusive practice. O'Brien (2020, p. 298) who, on reflecting on inclusion in relation to the current education system of the time, pointed out an 'inclusion confusion' and his reference to the 'multidimensional and multi-positional' nature of inclusion draws comparison and is reflected in this research study in relation to pupils with SEND (ibid, p. 300). This is evident in the tripartite of factors involved; the belief of the participants in inclusion for all, the gap in understanding of the term and the influence of wider factors on inclusive practice.

A significant, recurring pattern from the research study was the absence of the term SEND in response to the first two direct questions about inclusion. These results could suggest, through the exclusion of explicit reference to special educational needs in terms of inclusion, that there was an 'othering' through omission. There is, as noted in the work of McDougall (2017), an imbalance within the discourse of SEND. The omission of direct mention of special educational needs could be symptomatic of a discourse from the perspective of those who are non-SEND and the normalisation of non-SEND. This is further perpetuated through the use of labelling, as explored in detail below. Omission is synonymous with marginalisation and the oversight of special educational needs leaves this area side-lined (O'Brien, 2020; McShane, 2020).

In balancing this evidence it is important to note that, as put forward in the Chapter 4: Findings (p.140), answers to the first two questions were generally shorter and that, throughout the whole of the participant transcripts from the research study, there are sixty-four references to SEND and special needs. However, these were largely found in the task discussion in relation to the cards given for this. It could be an oversight, as one participant suggested by stating *'ah I should have used these in my answers'* (Participant K, Appendix A, p.287). There was also evidence through the shorter answers, greater hesitation and seeking of reassurance evident in response to the first two answers that participants could have been wanting to present their 'best face' answers (Creswell, 2013). As noted in

Chapter 4: Findings (pp.125-156), responses grew in length and detail as the interview progressed giving scope for the insight into their figured worlds to develop through the honesty of the in the moment feelings expressed (Howell, 2013).

Nevertheless, the evidence is of a broader view of SEND in terms of othering by omission through firstly, the sweeping up of need in broader terms of **ability** or **need**; second, the majority of participants omitting direct reference to SEND; and thirdly, when SEND was mentioned it was placed after other areas perceived as need. This was illustrated in comments such as '*gender, religion, erm, or sexual orientation, or ethnicity'* omitting any reference to SEND when discussing inclusion and tolerance (Participant K, Appendix A, p.281). What is revealed through this examination of the discourse is the awareness of different types of need within which special educational needs were either a low priority or not featured at all. This view is further perpetuated in participant responses to subsequent questions as more was revealed in relation to the pressures that were part of the participants' figured worlds. Through this, also revealed, was an increasing discord between an initial view of inclusion for all and the reality of inclusive practices. A space where practitioners' views of inclusion were challenged by the constraints of working within the system of statutory testing in the final year of primary schooling.

The theme of 'othering' was also evident through the use of label-first language (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). An example of this is highlighted in the response to question 2 - What does inclusion look like in our society? - by Participant A (Appendix A, p.219) who spoke of *'some SEN children'* and noted experience of colleagues referring to *'**that** ASD child'* emphasising this point by also raising their hand as they spoke. This resonated with the 'deficit-born paradigms' posited in the research of Kugelmass (2001, p.48) and the work of Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009, p.198) who warn of seeing the 'problem' as being located with the pupil; as well as Ekins (2012, p.163) who calls for value to be placed on 'difference and diversity' and a move away from the view of 'a problem to be dealt with.' The use of deficit language with its roots in the medical model of special needs is

in contradiction with the way participants spoke of the need to *'adapt'* planning (Participant D, Appendix A, p.239), to deliver lessons which are *'meeting the needs of children'* (Participant H, Appendix A, p.269) and that meeting need is down to the teacher's approach (Participant P, Appendix A, p.319).

The use of deficit language was presenting special educational needs as a 'conceptual proxy for disadvantage' (Choudry and Williams, 2017, p.247) where label first language presented the idea of a disadvantage as first and foremost. It placed a pupil in a group of 'other' and consequently sets a standard for the concept of disadvantage. This opened the potential, as described by O'Brien (2020, p.303), for pupils with SEND to be 'framed as the damaged goods on the education market stall.' Conversely this then also set the standard for those not in the 'othered' group, those who were not disadvantaged. Through this, a power imbalance was created, which was at odds with the inclusion for all statements postulated by the participants. This finds parallels with the research of Barron (2014, p.251) where pupils' access to different figured worlds was inhibited due to their 'designated identities.'

A dichotomy is presented in the research findings between evidence of elements of the medical and psycho-social model of inclusion. This prioritisation of labels is reductionist in that it focuses on a perceived deficiency and reinforces what McDougall (2017) has termed a 'conceptualisation of 'normal'' (p.359). The significance of environment, social factors and wellbeing are overlooked and the pupil with SEND is thereby 'othered'. To just look to the medical model is what Deacon (2013, p.858) terms looking for the 'magic bullet.' With language a key semiotic tool of the figured worlds we inhabit, the results of the research study highlighted the need for opening up a discourse about the use and power of language.

Revealed through this analysis is evidence of a lingering legacy of a medical view of special educational needs. A legacy perpetuated by a lack of clarification about what it means to include and a lack of national drive from government to embed meaningful

inclusive practice within policy. As examined in Chapter 2: Literature Review (pp.33-65) it is not in the interest of the current culture of competition to promote inclusion.

Within the participants' perceptions of inclusion there was a journey from the overarching belief in inclusion for all to an othering, by some, via omission or labelling. This disjuncture is reflective of what Terzi (2005, p.443) terms 'the dilemma of difference.' There is a balance to be sought between identifying a need to enable equity and avoiding objectification through a label that risks demining the humanity. For many, this has opened up the need to bring the discourse into one which supersedes traditional discussions about inclusion (Terzi, 2005; O'Brien, 2020). The research study has highlighted the need to see children as individuals, to enable a personalised learning journey where difference is celebrated and used to support each child into the next stage of their education. The desire of the participants to achieve this was clear. Equally clear from the research findings were the parameters within which the participants worked in relation to the final year of primary school. Parameters which led to othering through omission or practice. Coupled to this there was some evidence of the sweeping up of SEND within broader terms. The findings have illustrated exclusionary practices which would disempower (Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009) pupils with SEND. From this is can be deduced that this can lead to a situation that enables a justification – a label or reason – as to why a child has not succeeded in the homogenous status quo of year 6 SATs.

The study results are indicative of the wildly disputed discussion of what inclusion means, as highlighted in Chapter 2: Literature Review (pp.52-57). With no definitive guidance on inclusion within the National Curriculum or the Teachers' Standards (Chapter 2: Literature Review, p.56) a gap is created. This has paved the way for confusion that is particularly evident when participants' perception of inclusion is challenged by the way in which the education system is run in the final year of primary school. Integral to this is the influence of the wider context in which the schools were operating. The influence of government directives regarding statutory testing and the pressure of adding high stakes to

these tests through publishable results. As highlighted in the Chapter 2: Literature Review (pp.33-65), there is a broad and complex picture at play here, which was apparent in the research results and is discussed in the next section.

The complexity of what it means to include was also brought to the foreground in the responses half of the participants gave to question 2 in terms of a lack of, or contradiction with, the term of inclusion in broader society. Again there was an insight into the convolutions of the figured worlds the participants inhabited. Figured worlds where there was the perception that *'Sometimes (S) people __think (S)__ they're inclusive but __they're not (BL – hand up)__ really'* (Participant J, Appendix A, p.277) and where a presentable face of inclusion may be portrayed *'but that's it'* (Participant D, Appendix A, p.239). Evident here is the perception that there is a semblance of inclusion that is not matched in reality.

This inclination to present socially desirable responses, mentioned in relation to society, is equally pertinent to the participant answers relating to othering. In both cases there may be good intentions behind responses and perceptions. Certainly when participants took part in the research they appeared earnest and genuine in their discussions and the methodological approach to the research was underpinned by accepting what the participants said as true to them at that time (Chapter 3: Methodology, pp.66-124). As this chapter proceeds with analysis of the discussions about perceived barriers to inclusion in year 6, light is shed on the quandary of differences apparent in initial conversations about what inclusion means. What became evident were situations where desirable attributes were accompanied by motivations that could shift with reality. Insight into these motivations came through the wider discussion of the specific context of perceptions of inclusion in relation to the process of end of Key Stage 2 statutory testing within the current English educational climate. The role of teachers as intermediary between their practice and government agenda is challenging and as put forward in the research of Avalos, Perez and Thorrington (2020, p.229), which highlights 'the importance of understanding teachers' perspectives when

examining policy enactment.' This is explored in the next section in relation to the agenda of high stakes testing and its impact on pedagogy and delivery of the National Curriculum.

5.2.2 Perception of Statutory Testing

The context of statutory testing is at the forefront of this research and discussion of SATs elicited some impassioned responses, evident through the use of expressive and powerful language (Chapter 4: Findings, p.150). It also featured within the top 3 barriers to inclusion at each of the three stages of the research process (Chapter 4: Findings, p.152). The significance of this is that it revealed the impact of high stakes statutory testing was a prominent feature in the figured worlds of the participants and one they held strong views on. This section will examine the impact of the influence from the national education field of power on classroom practice and the relationship of this with participants' perception of inclusion.

The theoretical framework, within which this research sits, recognises that there is an impact on inclusion for pupils with SEND in year 6 as a direct result of high stakes testing (Chapter 3: Methodology, pp.66-124) and this is reflected in the research findings (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). The results of the research study find comparison in the wider body of research where the detriment of being labelled a *failure* with regards to SATs is highlighted (Kennedy and Laverick, 2019; Jenkins and Watson, 2019); where pressure to hot house for SATs is noted (Booher-Jennings, 2006; Sasson 2018); where the resulting impact of a narrowed curriculum is posited (Graham and Harwood, 2011; Bousted, 2019) and where the impact of this has led to a reduced teacher autonomy (Robinson 2016; Smith and Broomhead, 2019) and pressure that has led to exclusionary practice (McShane 2020; O'Brien 2020).

Pressure linked to statutory testing was a key theme from the results of the research study, notable both by the amount of times it was mentioned (Appendix R, p. 373) and that it

was named as the top barrier to inclusion (Chapter 4: Findings, p.152). The tension felt by the participants resulting from the SATs process itself, the impact on wellbeing, the feeling of judgement and concern for the consequences of not achieving, is reflected in wider literature (Chapter 2: Literature Review, pp.33-65). The work of Hall et al (2004) highlighted a 'SATurated classroom economy' (p.810) that the research study has shown is as relevant today. This is underpinned by the culture of 'data-driven accountability' (Kennedy and Laverick, 2019, p.444) that has led to pedagogy defined by high stakes testing (Hall et al, 2004). This is far removed from the government advertised approach to measure pupil progress and identify need (STA, 2019). A testocratic reality within the figured world of the participants where the primary purpose of SATs is to hold schools, and teachers, to account is revealed.

The research study results illustrated that this sense of pressure was a catalyst from which other consequences emerged, the impact of which led to a reduced sense of agency. This is illustrated in Figure 23 below where the result on a narrowing of the curriculum as a result of SATs pressure was mentioned by 9 participants (56%), the impact of a label of 'failure' by 13 participants (81%) and exclusionary practices by all 16 participants.

Figure 23

Participant View: Pressure of SATs
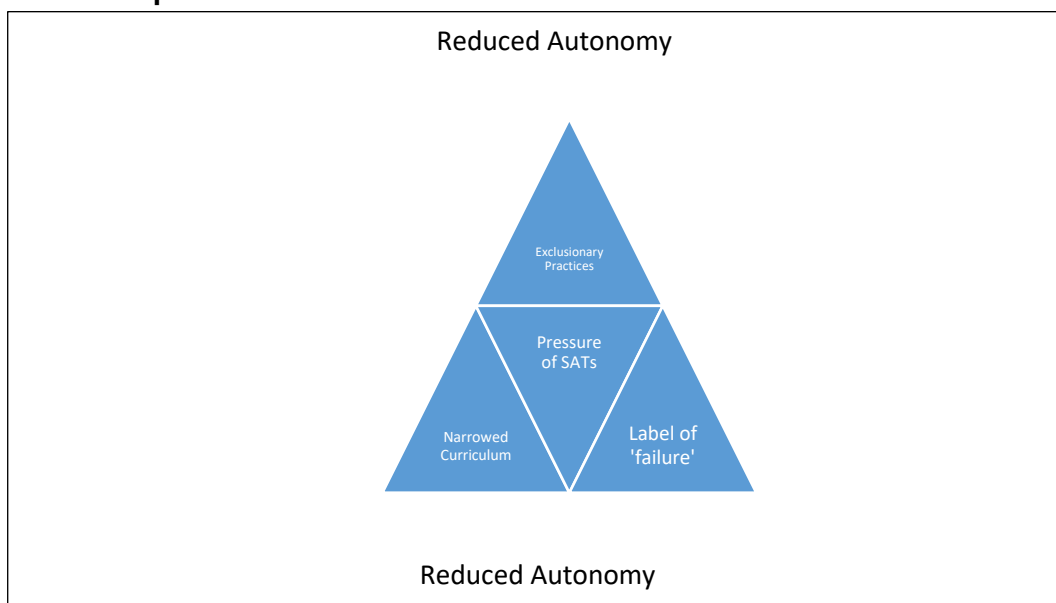
To understand where the feeling of pressure originated from and the impact on inclusion, it was necessary to first understand the purpose of SATs as perceived by the participants. Just over 60% identified the judgement of schools as the main reason for statutory testing. This meant that participants were working with a test that they perceived primarily judged schools, and by extension themselves. This was evident in comments such as the purpose being *'to judge schools!* (BL – slammed table) *It's all about erm league tables (BL – hands up) isn't it'* (Participant L, Appendix A, p.292) and *'it's just about judging schools. It's an unnecessary pressure'* (Participant M, Appendix A, p.302). Coupled to this was a perception that the tests had no measurable positive, impact for the pupils. Summed up by one participant as '***What** is the point of having these children jump through hoops that they will **never** use again'* (Participant K, Appendix A, p.286). The prevailing perception was of the adverse impact of the SATs on pupils in year 6 in terms of wellbeing (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). This has resulted in a reality of preparing for and administering tests that participants felt had either minimal or no quantifiable benefit. Working in this way led to a restricted sense of agency over classroom practice and a situation that was at odds with the participants' perception of inclusion for all. Their expressed belief in inclusion was being capped and their year 6 practice of teaching constrained. This reality of the participants' figured world does not reflect the government stance on driving up standards (Williamson, 2019) to which testing was seen as integral (Johnson, 2019; Williamson, 2019). This reality was one of a one-size-fits-all testocratic system. High stakes testing cannot be equated to the 'excellence' proposed by the current Prime Minister (Johnson, 2019) when the drive towards this narrow metric is resulting in capping teaching and learning within the boundaries of the testable. This is not equipping children with the skills needed for the twenty first century (Butler, 2020) and is certainly not conducive to inclusion for all.

This difference between the reality perceived by the participants and the published intent of the tests (Chapter 2: Literature Review, p.45) is notable and evidence of another layer to the complex context influencing the figured worlds inhabited by the participants. At

the crux of this are the high stakes credentials of SATs, through the use of publishable results. As critiqued in Chapter 2: Literature Review (pp.33-65) this type of high stakes testing is an approach that fosters a culture of those who will gain and those who will not, both in terms of the children (Gatto, 2019; Gillen, Jenkins and Watson, 2019), leaders (Kennedy and Laverick, 2019) and in terms of the league tabled schools (Hall et al, 2004; Boyle, 2012; Martin, 2019). Analysis of the research results illustrated the impact of this at all levels of the hierarchy. Both the senior leadership task and the research study highlighted a reality of purpose of the SATs in the judgement of schools and a reluctance in accepting the status quo including a recognition of the negative impact on pupils (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). The unease around the current situation with high stakes testing was evident in the SLT discussion about the need to prepare pupils for the test (Responses 5, 6 and 7, Appendix O, p.368), described by one participant as *'it's not right'* (Appendix O, p.368). Having already identified testing as the greatest barrier to inclusion, the subsequent discussion revealed a sense of priority in ensuring the children had the skills to sit this test that they were going to have to do. A sense of making the most of the situation so as not to disadvantage the children with the conditions within which the tests have to be carried out. This sense of having to prepare children for something which is perceived as a barrier to inclusion, was also evident in the main research findings (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). Participant D expressed that they didn't agree with the test, however, also a need to ensure *'the children are prepared, even though it can be difficult'* (Appendix A, p.219-336). Participant H, who was a proponent of the wider skills children need beyond those which are testable, recognised a need to prepare the children for SATs – *'for test conditions'* which are *'not a natural way of … learning' (*Appendix A, p.265). The view of participants as subjects of their figured world is reinforced through this insight into their lived reality, of preparing children for tests that judge professionals but do not have the measurable benefit for the child that they claim (Williamson, 2019; STA, 2019). It therefore appears that it can be tentatively suggested that far from ensuring each pupil is 'master[ing] the basics' (STA, 2019) SATs are leaving some pupils marginalised along with teachers' sense of agency.

Within the national context, whilst the largest teaching union announced 97% of class teachers would like SATs scrapped (Weale, 2019) and are in support of the union's 'toxic testing campaign' (Brown, 2019), the government deems any removal of year 6 SATs a 'recipe for disaster' (Williamson, 2019). From the government perspective, SATs are exalted as 'a very important part of our architecture to raise attainment' (Hinds, 2019). The National Education Union's (NEU) research has gone on to identify that 84% of teachers noted a particularly negative impact of SATs on pupils with SEND (NEU, 2017) and 90% of teachers felt SATs had a negative impact on pupil wellbeing (NEU, 2018). Whilst limited to NEU membership, it is worth noting that this is research undertaken within the largest of the teaching unions.

It is within this context that the research participants have formed their perceptions of inclusion. Within this background there is an emerging picture of understanding why there was a gap between the view of inclusion as all-encompassing and a practice in reality that was not necessarily aligned to this. This practice being one which has included some exclusionary actions. Actions viewed as necessary due to the nature of the education system in relation to year 6. By gaining this insight into the figured worlds of the participants it is possible to investigate and shed light on the reasons for exclusionary practices (Hines-Datiri and Carter Andrews, 2020).

The practice of hot housing, having a key focus on those predicted to pass, noted by almost 70% of the research study participants is inextricably linked to resulting exclusionary practice. These findings find resonance with wider literature in the research of Whalley (2018) and Courtney (2019) of children explicitly being taught how to pass the test; the coaching approach is highlighted by Boyle (2012) and the focus on the children predicted to pass noted in the research findings of Booher-Jennings (2006) and Robinson (2016). This had resulted in the 'gamed' system referred to by Sasson (2018). The language of choice, or rather lack of choice, used by the participants evidenced a reluctant role in this gaming of the education system (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). The mention of a key focus on children

who are on the 'CUSP' is mirrored by the 'bubble kids' highlighted in the work of Booher-Jennings, the children who 'who can pass with a little help' (2006, p.757). In both sets of research, there was also the recognition that this came at a cost to other pupils. Those pupils whose appointed identity was 'non-CUSP' were thereby denied access to the focus group (Barron, 2014). It is this cost that perpetuates the culture of winners and losers both in terms of pupils, of those who can fully access the teaching and those who cannot (Gillen, Jenkins and Watson 2019; Gatto 2019), and in terms of the curriculum, with a key focus only on testable subjects.

This has led to a conflict for the participants who expressed the desire to be inclusive, a belief in inclusion for all, but equally felt constrained through the pressure of high stakes testing. A ceiling was placed on their ability to carry out practice they believed to be inclusive. The reluctant acceptance expressed by some participants highlighted that this was not a situation they felt comfortable with (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156).

Research results expressing concern over the narrowing of the curriculum find resonance in literature (Whalley, 2018; Gatto, 2019), in the research of teaching unions (Bousted, 2019) and from the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Spielman, 2020). The research study highlighted both concern for a narrow curriculum in year 6 and a potential narrowing further down the school as well, to the point *'where Key Stage 2 is preparing for year 6'* (Participant M, Appendix A, p.301). In launching Ofsted's annual report 2018-2019, HM Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills warned of a situation where the curriculum was sometimes 'skew[ed] … just too far towards literacy and maths' as a direct result of the drive to accomplish good SATs results (Spielman, 2020). With twelve of the research study participants viewing the purpose of SATs to judge schools, it is questionable how this situation can change (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). What the participants were not saying was not that schools should not be judged on their performance and held to account, but that in terms of the pupils there were alternative, more meaningful, ways of measuring success. The use of teacher assessment

as an alternative was raised by participants. This has been a point posited since the start of high stakes testing as evidenced in the work of Bangs (1990) and more recently the More Than a Score report 'Beyond the Exam Factory' (2017) and the work of O'Brien (2020). The perceived lack of value placed on teachers' professional judgement impacted participants' self-efficacy and sense of agency and is examined later in this chapter.

Participants also emphasised the importance of progress. For example, the recognition of importance of progress and that not all things can be *'measured by a test'* (Participant F, Appendix A, p.255), and the meaning of inclusion being linked to enabling every child to make '*the **progress** that is possible for them'* (Participant H, Appendix A, p.261). It is significant to note that judgement of schools in the English education system via high stakes testing does not take account of progress made from a child's starting point.

Participant H went on to raise an interesting point in stating that *'intense progress'* made in the run up to SATs is not sustained as it lacks depth (Appendix A, p.265). This is suggestive of the surface level memorisation put forward by Gatto, where children 'merely *receive* schooling' (Gatto, 2019, p.xiv). Both Gatto (2019) and Robinson (2011) warn of limits of the narrowed curriculum and the need for greater breadth and depth. The research of Boyle and Charles (2012, p.117) has raised concern that a narrowed curriculum can lead to a 'pedagogy of poverty.' The research study findings illustrate that this view is further extolled by participants. For example, Participant H highlighted the importance of being '*emotionally literate*' and the need to be: -

'able to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses so that they then can pursue the things that they are good at, … which I feel would lead to them making kind of good choices in the future thinking about later life choices'

(Participant H, Appendix A, p.264).

This theme of skills beyond the testable that are of more importance to a year 6 pupil now and in their future were also evident with Participants O and P: -

'Everyone has got a talent, everyone has got a skill, but it's us finding it for them and then believing in themselves that they can achieve the very best of whatever level they can achieve'

(Participant O, Appendix A, p.314).

*'the way you lead your team in football is remarkable. The … the way you sit quietly and daydream or **absorb** an aspect of life **so** fully and **totally** you know … all traits that can be used as strengths within their life right now and in their future'*

(Participant P, Appendix A, p.327).

Participant P warned of the narrowed curriculum resulting in pupils never being exposed to the *'full richness'* of non-testable curricular subjects (Participant P, Appendix A, p.322).

Within the context of the current education system in England, it is clear that there are challenges faced by educators due to the high stakes nature of statutory testing in year 6. The research evidence, coupled with that from wider literature (Booher-Jennings, 2006; O'Brien, 2020), is suggestive of a situation where the pressure of results has normalised a practice that drives towards good results at a cost. This is a normalisation born of external forces and the irony of a standards agenda that leads to limiting outcomes beyond testable results. It is a 'hyperaccountable' system (O'Brien, 2020), with a 'one-size-fits-all' approach (Gatto, 2019) that does not take account of the 'holistic development' of pupils (Whalley, 2018). A homogenised system that is curtailing progress in some key areas, both in terms of pupils and the curriculum due to high stakes testing driving the standards against which primary schools are judged.

The participants united belief in an inclusive education system running like a thread through the research is at odds with the system of high stakes testing. It is clear from the apologetic and resigned nature of the responses when discussing these pressures and the strong views of the testing that this is not a system that sits easy with the participants (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). We are presented with a 'multi-positional' (O'Brien, 2020,

p.300) reality of inclusion. One representing the belief of the participants and one constrained by nature of year 6 high stakes, statutory testing. Could it be that the current English educational climate is necessitating a need to present a 'best face' inclusion whilst reality constrains these efforts? Underpinning this is the sense that *'it's … just how it is'* (Participant A, Appendix A, p.222). There is empathy with the research of Avalos, Perez and Thorrington (2020) of a constrained professionalism limiting teacher autonomy.

In the following section the impact on perceptions of inclusion and high stakes testing will be explored in terms of the effect on the participants' self-efficacy and sense of agency. Within this, there is a notable feeling of a restriction with autonomy of one's own professionalism.

5.2.3 Self-efficacy and agency

The current English education system, with regards to the high stakes testing in the final year of primary schooling, has resulted in constraints in the feeling of control or capacity in the belief to follow an inclusive pedagogy in year 6 as perceived by the participants. This was summed up by one participant as

'*one barrier could be the **system** in which we find ourselves in terms of the education system. Erm err you could argue the curriculum could be a barrier, limits err put on due to focus on SATs'* (Participant P, Appendix A, p.324).

This is reflected in the wider literature of Boyle (2012) who has noted a diminished pedagogy, as a result of a 'testocracy model' within education of teaching to the test. This model of education is not applicable to the fast paced, globally connected world, as a highly pressured approach to testing a narrow metric does not prepare pupils for the future (Butler, 2020). This approach disregards any form of difference that does not fit into the confines of a homogenous approach. Opportunities to celebrate and learn from difference are lost along with professional sense of agency. Guinier's description of the American education system

as 'testocractic machinery' is equally applicable to England, where an 'over-emphasis' on the results of SATs tests is at the expense of alternative modes of assessing a pupil's levels (Guinier cited in Bryant, 2015). The intense level of accountability high stakes testing brings with it has led to a constricted pedagogy in year 6 and is reflected in the reduced teacher autonomy noted in the work of O'Brien (2020).

The research study participants expressed the need to focus on pupils predicted to pass and explicitly linked this to the publication of SATs results, even though this was at odds with their perception of inclusion as being inclusive of all. As the findings have illustrated it was acknowledged that this was detrimental to pupils and did not serve a purpose beyond the judgement of schools (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). The context of statutory year 6 testing was prescribing a prescriptive pedagogy. Within this Hall et al (2004) have described teachers as 'institutional actors' (p.813) and we are reminded that it is the system that constrains not necessarily the educators. As highlighted by the research study participants, this is not a position they wanted to be in, however, it was their reality. The reality of working with high stakes testing in year 6. A reality over which participants felt little if any control and one where the lack of sense of agency and impact on self-efficacy was clear. The limits to the practitioners' abilities to be authors of change highlighted the importance of raising this issue and of shining a spotlight on the impact of year 6 SATs. The courage of the research participants' honesty is a catalyst to open up this contentious area to wider debate.

As illustrated through the exploration of the participants' perceptions of inclusion and of the system of statutory testing, the latter inhibited the realisation of the former. There was a cause and effect relationship that was inter-related and impacted on the autonomy of educators (illustrated in Figure 24, p.178). The discourses the participants were exposed to within the figured worlds they inhabited had restricted the space they could author. The inherited discourses associated from the education system, with establishment-directed

views and directives related to SATs impacted on performance and delivery in the classroom.

Figure 24: Cause and Effect
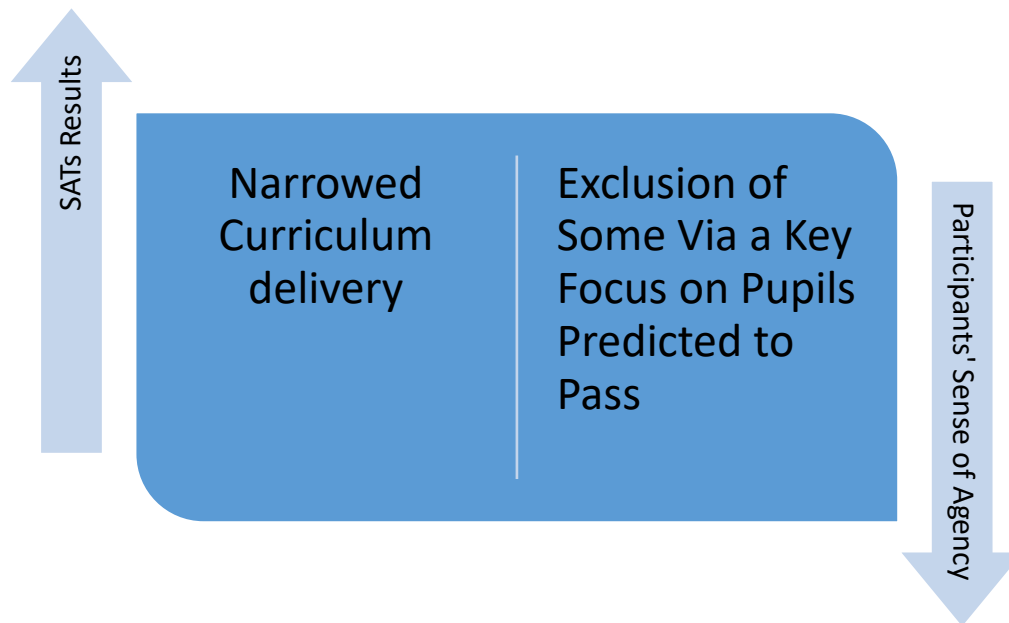
Identity within the figured world is developed in a manner, described by Barron (2014) as that of a 'bricoleur' (p.255). The assortment of language and enterprises we collect on our journey result in knowledge and understanding that can both offer potential as well as moderate or limit. The figured world of education inhabited by the participants was limited to varying degrees (Hines-Datiri and Carter Andrews, 2020). With regards to high stakes testing, there was a feeling that the line was drawn in terms of being able to reject or negotiate the current status quo.

In both the senior leadership task and the research study SATs featured one of the top three barriers to inclusion in year 6 (Chapter 4: Findings, Figure 22, p.152). Within this context, participants in the research study specifically noted a key focus on pupils predicted to pass the test as a notable barrier. The leadership task highlighted access to learning as a key component of successful inclusion. In both data sets underlining this perceived barrier to inclusion was pupil wellbeing. The leadership task participants identified the need for pupils

to feel successful and that this impacts on their self-confidence and sense of self-worth; that there needs to be space to grow and learn by making mistakes. The leadership task and the research study also both identified staff attitudes as a potential barrier to inclusion. All of these aspects can be linked back to the cause and effect relationship between inclusion and high stakes testing. The research study illustrated a reluctant acceptance of the impact on pupils, both from the pressure of taking the test and from those who are not the focus as they are not predicted to pass. This reluctant acceptance becomes part of the staff attitude and is an outcome of the restrictions on practice placed by the statutory testing system. The result is a self-perpetuating vicious cycle which is beyond the realms of personal autonomy to effect change.

It is clear that the participants had and did express their voice within the contentious space of year 6 testing and equally that this was limited within the confines of current educational circumstances regarding SATs. Within the work of O'Brien, this is reflected in the 'de-professionalised and scrutinised' feeling of teachers (2020, p.303). In addition to the work of Hines-Datiri and Carter Andrews (2020), who posit that the position and prioritisation of high stakes testing within the world of school is a figured world that disempowers educators. This is in sharp contrast to the aims proposed by UNESCO (2020, p.37) of the need to support educational professionals in advancing equity and inclusion and the need for 'the curriculum and assessment procedures' to be designed 'with all learners in mind.' By gaining an understanding through insight into the figured worlds of the practitioners, a dialogue can be opened up to enable a metamorphosis of what Choudry and Williams (2017, p.248) term 'a context for transformation and change.'

5.3 <u>Limitations</u>

Undertaking research across 2019-2020, at a time of global pandemic presented some initial limitations to the methodology of the research process. Limits were imposed in

relation to socialising, the need to follow government guidelines on social distancing and contact with others. With the importance of building a relationship between researcher and participant, to enable an honest and open dialogue, at the centre of the process, this was a cause of concern. However, as explored in Chapter 3: Methodology (pp.66-124), these limitations became an opportunity to approach the research process in alternative and innovative ways. Researching how others had approached this potential barrier enabled effective alternatives to be implemented, a robust approach to be maintained and this potential limitation to the methodology to be overcome as is evident in the rich data set (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156).

There are potential limitations with this research study that remain and the results should be considered in light of these. In presenting these limitations, there is also opportunity for this to stimulate further research.

The intent of the research was to explore perceptions of inclusion in relation to year 6 statutory testing within one Multi-Academy Trust in relation to pupils with special educational needs. This both dictated and limited the sample size. From this, it has been possible to present a detailed analysis, but one which was limited to representing the views of the forty-five participants taking part. This research has resulted in a reliable and valid data set, but again one limited to this group.

As outlined in this chapter, there are strong links with wider literature and other research in the fields of inclusion, special needs and education. An aim of this research has been to open up a much-needed wider dialogue on the issues and challenges to inclusion faced in the final year of primary school. Whilst this research study is limited to the perceptions of one group of people and an insight into their figured world, this is a figured world potentially shared and co-constructed with education practitioners far beyond this one Multi-Academy Trust. With this comes the opportunity to stimulate debate beyond the limits of this research study.

A second limitation was imposed by the time within which the research took place. The research was situated within the time of undertaking it. The influences on the perceptions of inclusion held by the participants were located within that social-historical time. The figured worlds revealed through the research process are not static realms, but ones which adapt and change in response to the challenges of the time (Barron, 2014). Whilst providing a rich insight into the views of the time, there is the accepted possibility that these views are limited to the time in which they were gathered. This opens the door for future case study research potential for comparisons to be made. In light of changes in the English education system the impact of new measures, such as the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA, 2021), on inclusion in year 6 will be interesting to note. With the cohort progress measure of the RBA will there be potential for opportunity or challenge to inclusive practice in year 6? To assess the impact of change, the voice of those working with these changes remain of central importance.

Whilst there are these limits to the research, in terms of sample and time, the

process outlined in the Chapter 3: Methodology (pp.66-124), ensures that the research procedure is transferable. From this, comparison with another group of participants, undertaken at a different time is possible. This is central to the aim of this research study in placing importance on the need for further discussion about the challenges to inclusion faced in the final year of primary school in England. It is also central to the approach of using a case study, where the invitation is to research this situation in other contexts (Yin, 2014).

5.4 Chapter Summary

Through this Analysis and Discussion Chapter the aim has been to shine a light on the figured worlds of the participants. To recognise and validate the very real challenges faced, and through affirming the participants' experiences, highlight the need to open up to wider discussion the area of inclusion in relation to the final year of primary schooling. To face the

contentions within it, celebrate those working with the challenges and find a way forward to a more inclusive system.

Throughout this chapter, the many conflicting relationships that are part of the figured worlds the participants inhabited are noted. There was a discord between a perception of inclusion as inclusive of all and a discourse that included the use of label-first terminology or othering by omission. What had been clear was that there was good intention in the participants' perceptions of inclusion and that there was not necessarily a conscious intent in the 'othering' of some pupils. This illustrated the importance on opening up a wider dialogue about what it means to include and the role and power of language within this.

The need for wider discussion is further emphasised through the national contention about what it means to include and indeed the contradictions that can appear to promote a superficial version of inclusion within the highly prioritised high stakes testing of the English competitive education system. As with the research of Hartsfield and Kimmel (2019) the view into the figured worlds of the participants has highlighted the privileges of some over others. By its very nature, competition, and a competitive education system, will have those who benefit and those who do not. Again the relationship with inclusion is disputable.

The words of Spielman (2020) 'the strength of a school is not just measured by how well it educates its high achievers, but by how well it educates all children' resonated with the views of inclusion shared by the participants. The belief in inclusion meaning all pupils included. The current English educational context, however, perpetuates a climate where there is incoherence with inclusive practice (Allan, 2010; Gatto, 2019) and there is an inequality that manifests itself in the context of SATs leading to gaps between ideology and practice (Barton, 2000; Florian and Kershner, 2009; Florian and Spratt, 2013). The current situation is aptly put by one of the participants who spoke of the *'ceiling'* being put on inclusion (Participant M, Appendix A, p.281). As noted, this in turn impacts on teachers' professional identity, their sense of value, trust and respect.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

This research study addressed a practical problem, that of barriers that may exist in relation to inclusion in the final year of primary school in relation to pupils with SEND. As stated in the introduction chapter (pp.17-32) this study recognises that questions of inclusion go beyond those related to special educational needs. However, in seeking a rich depth of data the aim of this research was to specifically view inclusion in light of the year 6 high stakes testing for pupils with SEND and through this bring new knowledge to the discourse on inclusion as well as special educational needs. It sought to explore whether there was commonality of approach to inclusion in the final year of primary school in relation to pupils with special education needs; to find out about the participants' opinions with regards to any impact on inclusion and inclusive practice of year 6 SATs and to discover whether there was a sense of autonomy in meeting any challenges.

It did not presume to solve this problem but more offer grounds for theoretical discussion and a wider understanding from the perspective of a group of people who worked directly in this environment. Through using a case study approach the research findings evidence that there is a need to highlight the impact that a high stakes approach to testing is having not only on inclusion but also on the belief that inclusion is possible in year 6 beyond a practice limited by the confines of SATs. The findings have revealed a figured world in which constrictions on pedagogical approach have led to practices which exclude. Conflicts felt by participants between their belief in inclusive pedagogy and the high stakes pressure of year 6 SATs was palpable. In sharing views, thoughts and opinions on a difficult and contentious subject the participants have been brave in their honesty. The importance of their contributions and the new knowledge brought to the discourse about inclusion in the context of statutory testing is acknowledged. The research findings reveal a discussion that needs to be brought out into a wider forum. The need to instigate change is evident through

the new knowledge brought by the stories of the participants as well as evidence from wider discourse within literature (Chapter 2, Literature Review, pp.33-65).

From undertaking this study, three key recommendations are proposed. These are broadly based around opening up a wider discourse about firstly, the impact of high-stakes testing on inclusive practice; second, what it means to include and third, education practitioners' sense of self-efficacy.

First, a wider dialogue about the impact on inclusion and inclusive practice from high stakes testing at all levels from school to government is recommended. As highlighted in participants' responses to the interview questions directly relating to SATs, there can be an impact on the future aspirations for some pupils, as there is pressure and this does result in an adverse effect on delivering an inclusive pedagogy. What has been highlighted is an insight into a figured world where excluding practices are normalised, not through overt agreement, but as a result of the high pressure approach to testing year 6 pupils. Professional sense of agency is constrained as difficult choices are made that conflict with a belief in an inclusive pedagogy. It is a status quo where the public face of 'excellence' via testing (Johnson, 2019) is a facade when assessment through year 6 SATs, this study suggests, does not benefit the pupils and the narrow testing metric coupled with the high stakes emphasis constrains educational pedagogy. This disparity between the public face of SATs as posited to parents in government literature where these tests are presented as a 'measure' of 'pupil progress' and to 'identify if they need additional support in a certain area' (STA, 2019) is in contrast with the reality, revealed through the insight this research afforded into the figured worlds of the participants. A reality of statutory test papers that, it is suggested, have no impact beyond a publishable school result.

For some of the participants, this current social construct has led to an interpretation of pedagogy that is not aligned, in terms of statutory testing in the final year of primary school in England, with their belief in 'inclusion for all'. The reality experienced by the participants have been constructed through this social context (Haas and Haas, 2002). The

language of year 6 SATs - 'high-stakes', 'published results', 'league tables' – has corroborated an attachment to a figured world where these disparities exist. A world where working with an approach that is believed to have an adverse effect on pupils and staff results in education practitioners placed firmly as subjects in their figured world.

The second recommendation is for a continued dialogue on what it means to include, reviewing the way in which the language of inclusion and SEND are used and the relationship of this with 'othering.' Participant responses highlighted disparities between a belief in inclusion for all and what inclusion looks like in reality, both within school and wider society. There was also a wavering understanding of what inclusion for all means. Othering through omission, labelling or low prioritisation needs to be replaced with a more personalised approach to recognising, valuing and celebrating difference. It is not enough to accept that there is commonality of understanding, this needs to be developed through collaborative discourse. Giving everyone a voice enables the space for a shared understanding to develop and this approach of collective ownership has the potential to empower a sense of agency for all involved.

The third recommendation builds on this need to reflect on the self-efficacy and sense of agency of education practitioners working within the English primary education system at this time. The sense of reluctant acceptance of the status quo, evident in some of the participant transcripts (Appendix A, pp.219-336) is testament to the inimical impact of a standards agenda driven by high stakes testing on teachers' sense of professionalism. This research study has enabled an insight into the figured worlds of the participants. New knowledge is contributed to the wider discourse on inclusion, through the review of the impact of standard assessment tests in year 6. The insight gained into the figured worlds inhabited by the research participants revealed dedicated practitioners who have the pupils at the centre of their beliefs about inclusion. Also revealed was the extent of the challenges faced in carrying out the inclusive practice they believe in when it comes to the final year of primary school. The participants' perceptive of their beliefs in inclusion is in confrontation

with their perspective of what is possible to achieve with the reality of year 6 SATs. The collaborative discourse mentioned in relation to the second recommendation has the potential to empower, to reinforce a sense of agency and enable a change of direction in how the current impact of the pressure of SATs reinforces the outlook of the figured world not only of the participants, but others who may also be feeling the same sense of a reduced self-efficacy in the face of year 6 statutory testing.

The three key recommendations posited above embody key issues that have resulted in points of crisis in the English education system in relation to inclusion in the final year of primary school for pupils with SEND. There is need for dialogue to take place at all levels, from school to government to enable the relationship between high-stakes testing and the impact on inclusive practice to be critically examined.

This thesis has presented evidence from the research study as well as from wider literature and research of the adverse effects of a system that promotes a high stakes approach to testing. New knowledge brought by the specific context of this research study has provided insight into the figured worlds of the participants and has clearly shown that the drive for success in year 6 SATs, within this context, is not inclusive. This is a pressurised system from which research participants reported negative impacts on their pupils and themselves. This can leave pupils with SEND, and indeed any pupil who does not fit the testocratic system, marginalised (Guinier, cited in Bryant, 2015). This finds resonance with the work of O'Brien (2020, p.300) who states that the system of 'normalisation of an education system where winning comes before wellbeing' must end. The need for a continued dialogue at all levels of the education system is paramount. There is need for review at the macro level of government policy for an approach to the measurement of success which has a pupils' best interest at the centre. The current system regarding statutory testing in the final year of primary school is without merit. As perceived through insight into the figured worlds of the research participants, the year 6 SATs are largely ignored by secondary schools, this leaves a year 6 pupil as an actor in the judgement on

school performance, not a role that will meaningfully assess their successes in their own right and support the next stage in their education career. Skills for the future, that the pupils of today will need, cannot be measured through a narrow testing metric (Butler, 2020) and cannot be supported by the enforced, constrained pedagogy that results from this.

Within the contentious debates about what inclusion means, there are interesting proposals promoting a different way forward. Based on the principle of capability equality, Terzi (2014) offers an approach grounded in social justice. My research study highlighted participants' belief in 'inclusion for all', which was frequently linked to the expressed need to adapt approach or provision within the school they worked at. What Terzi proposes is a dialogue that goes beyond this, that we look beyond the physical establishment of a school towards 'educational equality' and provision of quality (Terzi, 2014, p.1). This calls upon the need to re-evaluate the way in which SEND is viewed. As proposed in my research study, there is the need to see the pupil beyond the special educational need. To take a more holistic view that recognises psychological and social elements not just biological ones. To take a more comprehensive view of inclusion that looks beyond the perceived solution of the 'magic bullet' approach (Deacon, 2013, p.858). Posited by Terzi (2014) is a change in how we view schools, to move towards viewing the system through the lens of 'educational equality' (Terzi, 2014, p.2) and provide equity through recognition of 'capability limitations' (ibid, p.8).

The recommendation to review the way in which the language of inclusion and SEND is used also finds resonance in the work of O'Brien (2020). Again, there is a strong focus on the way in which language is used. As illustrated through my research study, language is inherent with power (McDougall, 2017; O'Brien, 2020) and not only shapes our figured world but also that of 'perceived solution[s]' (Mowat, 2009, p. 160). The research findings have shown that the use of deficit-based, label-first language persists (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). O'Brien (2020, p.308) puts forward an argument for a more 'enabling concept'. To reverse the discourse and move towards one which promotes the positives of difference

and where this is valued alongside 'commonality' and 'similarity' (O'Brien, 2020, p.308). A position UNESCO (2020, p.28) promote is one where 'individual differences [are viewed] not as a problem to be fixed, but as opportunities for enriched learning.' There is a need to move beyond the position of 'normalisation' of those who are non-SEND, to move past the 'othering' of those who fall beyond the concept of normalisation. There needs to be a move towards viewing inclusion in terms of a holistically efficacious system. Inclusion that is truly viewed as inclusive of all, as opposed to an approach of us and them – with the privileged, empowered, position of a normalised *us* (McDougall, 2017) already within the camp of inclusion and *them* being those beyond who need to be included.

The current system in relation to year 6 SATs is serving an injustice to teachers and pupils. It is limiting curriculum and pedagogy, placing a *'glass ceiling'* on inclusion (Participant M, Appendix A, p.281). This view of a limit to inclusion was a thread that ran throughout the research findings and highlights the need for this study and for the wider discourse this research calls for on the impact of high stakes testing. Whilst discourse at the micro level of schools is important, this thesis calls upon the need for this to take place at the macro level too. Over thirty years ago the Salamanca Statement (1994) concluded that inclusion cannot 'advance in isolation'; it has to be part of a drive led at a national level. The alternative is a system of detriment that is reluctantly accepted as 'just how it is' (Participant A, Appendix A, p.222). A system where inclusion has been weaponised to suit different agendas (O'Brien, 2020), resulting in a mere veneer of inclusion.

As gatekeepers of education (Hartsfield and Kimmel, 2019, p.443), teachers are in a challenging position. As put forward by the research study, there is recognition of the negative impact of SATs and limits placed by fields of power that influence the pedagogy possible to achieve in year 6. As the findings have presented, this in turn has an adverse impact on education practitioners' self-efficacy and sense of agency (Chapter 4: Findings, pp.125-156). The research of UNESCO (2020, p.28) has demonstrated valuing the profession leads to 'higher levels of equity in learning outcomes.' What this research study

has brought to the forefront is a situation where high stakes testing is tolerated, as there is no feeling of control to change. Participant sense of agency in this respect is encumbered. There is a restriction on volitional will leading to a sense of lassitude with participants' subject to a greater, more powerful agent in their figured world. As the findings have illustrated (Chapter 4, pp.125-156), this impacts on both perspectives and actions resulting in a pedagogy that is not inclusive. Space needs to be made to enable education practitioners to feel that they do have the authority to question, challenge and envision a more equitable way forward. Questioning of the current English education system in relation to year 6 SATs and the journey towards a more inclusive provision requires those working in education to feel 'empowered' (Ekins, 2012, p.161) and in the current absence of this coming from a macro, government level it must be fostered from the micro, school level.

This thesis has presented the case for the need for wider dialogue about the impact of a high stakes testing approach to provision for pupils in their final year of primary education in England. Informed by wider literature and my research study, it is clear that there is indeed an impact that needs addressing. There exists a perception of inclusion, below which the research participants have shown that there are gaps. Echoed in wider literature is a place where exclusionary practices have become the dominant normative expectation. It is time to confront the assumptions resulting from this veneer of inclusion and to take our place in reshaping the current dominant narrative that has been ascribed to the current English education system.

Chapter 7: Reflections of the Researcher

The process of reflexivity has been an important part of this research study and has underpinned the whole approach. Taking a reflective research process enabled ideas to develop the design which could be implemented, analysed and reviewed. This in turn gave time and space to evolve and adapt into new ideas. Through this, the reflexive iterative approach taken when engaging in a hands-on way with the data and emerging knowledge supported the reliability of the discussion and analysis (3.14 Data Analysis, p.115). The use of Patton's (2002) process of triangulated reflexive questioning (3.8 Validity and Reliability, p.81) recognised the knowledge brought by myself, the participants and the readers of this work. And further reflexivity, necessitated by undertaking research during a global pandemic, supported a problem-solving process. At this point, with a retrospective view of my research, this reflexive process continues. In reflecting on this study, it has impacted myself as a researcher, as an educational practitioner and as a leader in education. I have evolved and adapted through undertaking the research and from this new knowledge has been shared. New ideas for the next stage in this work have also been generated because the intention remains that this study is a beginning - it is, as reflected on further below, an invitation.

In the introduction chapter (p.19) I recognised this research was borne of my own motivation to address the negative impact on inclusion and inclusive practice for pupils with SEND testing in the final year of the primary education system in England. The new knowledge brought by my research has reinforced my view that the impact of high stakes testing on inclusion needs to be more widely debated. The research findings have shown that the drive for success in year 6 SATs was not conducive to inclusive practice. Opinions relating to the negative impact of high stakes testing were broadly felt across the whole educational hierarchy of participants involved. Alongside this it was evident that this was an area of challenge over which participants felt little control.

As a researcher I admired the honesty of the research participants in discussing such a contentious issue and was motivated to continue writing about and highlighting this area of

challenge in the English education system. As an educational practitioner and leader, I was motivated to instigate change from within. This final chapter shares perspectives from my own reflexive practice as a researcher and as a professional, and it is very much a beginning rather than a conclusion.

This research study invited my own further reflections and actions as well as calling upon readers to engage with the discourse of the impact of year 6 high stakes testing on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. As this work highlights it is a contentious and difficult issue and the new knowledge from the research study presents an opportunity 'to see the world…in a new way' (Siggelkow, 2007, p. 23).

In offering my researcher reflections this chapter focuses on three key areas. Firstly, reflections are presented linked to the unique context within which the study took place and the impact this had on two areas of the research methodology. Secondly, researcher reflections on the new knowledge brought by the research study are shared. Finally, there is an invitation to engage.

7.1 <u>Reflections on Methodology</u>

This section offers further reflections on the contributions bought by the unique time and context within which the study took place in relation to two issues raised with the research methodology and how this process shaped my personal growth as a researcher.

Chapter 3: Methodology documents both the challenges and opportunities of undertaking research during a global pandemic. This unprecedented time brought with it new realities that had to be taken into account to ensure the research was carried out safely.

Working within education during this time called for significant changes, that often had to be implemented rapidly, in response to the developing situation. England had experienced its first national lockdown in response to Covid19 and it was a time described by the Prime

Minister as a 'critical moment' (Johnson, 2020). As a researcher this called for a comprehensive review of the research design to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the participants and myself. Reflecting back on this time highlights the significant level of concern experienced during this period. The ethical foundation of the research study had to be amended and a balance was required that had everyone's welfare at the forefront and enabled alternative ways to carry out the research while remaining true to the aims of the research design. It was a time of significant growth as a researcher and I was acutely aware of researching a contentious area during a difficult time of global instability that already demanded much resilience, adaptability and flexibility from educational practitioners.

In finding a way forward, a process of taking a measured approach was needed. Reflecting back really highlights for me how the use of tools such as the qualitative research framework (Salmons, 2020) and process decision charts supported me as a researcher and enabled me to grow in the face of significant challenge. Taking this sanguine, solution-focussed approach enabled a way forward that used methods aligned to the aims of the research. It was an approach that took account of the mental health and wellbeing of the participants, as well as my own. It enabled me to find a way to ensure the 'rich, thick, description[s]' sought from using a case study approach (Ellinger and McWhorter, 2007, p. 9) could still be gained. Reflecting, as a researcher I faced two really significant challenges to the research design – firstly not being able to meet participants in person and secondly the impact on the number of participants able to take part.

The development of a participant-researcher connection was paramount to the study and non-negotiable in terms of the aims of the research design of seeking to build a rapport (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2019), to foster a conversational exchange (Powney and Watts, 1987) and to empower participants (Cotterill, 1992). The challenge of finding a way to carry out a research methodology that relied on relationship building at a time of national lockdowns which limited contact was not insignificant. In remaining solution-focussed and working through options systematically new opportunities were revealed. The use of video

conferencing supported the honesty of response that was sought and complimented the case study approach taken to gain an insight into the figured worlds of the participants. As a researcher this process of problem solving helped to develop my skill set and reinforced my belief in finding a way forward that makes no compromises in remaining faithful to the purpose of the research design.

The second key area impacted was being faced with a reduced number of participants who were able to take part in the research study due to school closures and illness related to the pandemic. Reflecting I still feel it was important to keep the parameters of those participating to practitioners with direct experience of year 6 statutory testing. There could have been a temptation to broaden the field in light of reduced numbers to, for example, the teaching teams of other year groups. This however, would not have brought the depth of knowledge sought through those whose real-world context was directly impacted by year 6 high stakes testing. An unanticipated strength of the research design at the time, was the recruitment at Stage 3, the research study, of participants at every level of the schools' hierarchy. This ensured a breadth of views, thoughts and opinions that could also be compared and contrasted with the data gained from Stage 1, the SLT task undertaken by the MAT leadership.

Reflecting, I believe the central role of taking a reflexive approach throughout was highlighted. The considered approach taken made room for the unanticipated (Dawes Farquhar, 2012; Wood and Smith, 2016; Cleland, MacLeod and Ellaway, 2021) enabling new opportunities to be presented and developed my own learning journey as a researcher.

7.2 Reflections on new knowledge

The bravery of the research participants in their honesty is acknowledged and celebrated through this work. The use of figured worlds as a conceptual framework enabled an insight into contentious areas during a time of global difficulty. The new knowledge has

brought a unique contribution to discourses on inclusion, the impact of high stakes testing and special educational needs. Giving voice to this carefully considered group of participants was an intentional and important part of the research study. It also presents future opportunities to engage with the contentious issues raised. The potential for subsequent research from different schools or MATs perspectives, from families or local authorities will add to the body of new knowledge brought by this research study. As a researcher I present my research study as a catalyst to a broader debate and engagement with the points of crisis raised.

For the first time perceptions of inclusion with one MAT have been researched in relation to the process of high stakes testing in the final year of primary school for pupils with special educational needs. There is no assumption that a repeat would reveal the same results. In reflecting upon the research, a strength is that it invites engagement, and further case studies should be carried out. 'The same phenomenon' should be explored 'in different conditions' (Yin, 2014, p.20). In light of the issues revealed through the review of literature and the research findings we should all take an active role in contending the impact of the drive for success in high stakes testing.

Whilst knowledge is linked to social and historical context (Olesen, 2011; Yin, 2014) it invites engagement with the contentious issues raised, it 'provoke[s] thought' (Siggelkow, 2007, p. 23) with the uncomfortable. This study shines a light on areas that are in contention with current government policy in England, it makes recommendations that are not in line with the current status quo and it highlights significant points of crisis within the current education system. For an education system to promote 'excellence' (Johnson, 2019) it requires a curriculum that truly is 'broad and balanced' (DfE, 2014) to which all pupils have equitable access. Reflecting on the empirical and theoretical knowledge offered by this research study in terms of statutory testing in year 6 the English education system is one operating within a straight-jacket.

7.3 An invitation

It is posited throughout this thesis and proposed by the research recommendations (p.184) that this work is a beginning, it is an invitation to participate in the dialogue. This is particularly pertinent with the unique time within which the study was undertaken. High stakes testing had been *sold* to parents as a 'fair' way to assess pupils (STA, 2019, p. 27). However, when the pandemic necessitated the revocation of SATs, space was made to discover other fair ways to assess educational ability.

The cancellation of SATs did not inhibit pupils 'master[ing] the basics' (STA, 2019) or prove to be deleterious to 'excellence' (Johnson, 2019). It was a time when educators showed great adaptability in ensuring pupils accessed education despite challenges of distance, time and resourcing. It was also a, long overdue, time to 'trust teachers' (Williamson, ITV, 24.2.21). This was an opportunity to not only 'trust' educators but a chance to return autonomy to professionals. It was a time to pick up on what had already been questioned regarding whether SATs are an indicator of 'real achievement' (Spielman, 2018). It was time to stop the use of high stakes testing as a political tool and the moment to reconsider the current practice of SATs testing in year 6 at government, school and an individual level.

The Department of Education have a unique opportunity to re-evaluate the impact of high stakes testing in year 6. Concerns around the culture of 'second-guessing' have already been raised by Ofsted's Chief Inspector (Speilman, 2018). Year 6 needs to be a year rich in curriculum and preparation for secondary school, not one where schools are 'ticking the right boxes in order to survive' (Jones, 2017).

When reflecting on what my study offers I would say the most important finding is that there is an urgent need for education practitioners to have a mindset that embraces discussions and debate about inclusion. These should be 'intimate' to the school (O'Brien, 2021, p. 343) to take account of context and location. There is a need for an outlook that

welcomes difference and does not enable the confines of high stakes testing to inhibit or limit inclusive practice. Delivering a rich curriculum which enables all pupils to be equipped for their future (Butler, 2020), may need to encompass a return of year 6 SATs, but it cannot afford to be restricted by it. Changing the perspective of high stakes testing from the dominating limiting factor to inclusive practice to one where SATs becomes just one part of the wider, more important work, undertaken in year 6 returns autonomy to education practitioners. It returns the ability to act as agent rather than subject within the figured world of primary education. My reflections have led me to the view that we need to transfer the drive for SATs success to the drive for educational success, of which SATs may be part. At every stage of the research study process it was recognised by participants at all levels of the educational hierarchy that preparation for the next stage of education and life was more important than SATs results. Whist the findings were not a surprise to me I do feel that as an education leader in adopting a whole school inclusive approach the two do not need to be mutually exclusive, we just need to ensure that inclusive practice is the driving pedagogy not high stakes testing.

As a school leader I recognised my role in taking up the mantle in driving forward this approach. Reflecting on the research findings, time needs to be deliberately set aside in school to discuss with all staff what is meant by inclusion and inclusive practice for pupils, whatever their needs. In carrying out this research study the aim of bringing new knowledge was coupled by my own learning journey. It has highlighted the advantages of taking the feminist principles I valued as a researcher into my professional role – the need to make space to empower colleagues, to ensure their voice is heard in undertaking collaborative discourse (Creswell, 1998) about inclusion, about special educational needs, about equity. To take the practice of reflexivity used as a researcher and adopt it to my educational practice in enabling collaborative discussions and debates. Being aware of the balance of power and ensuring that in working collaboratively there is not the default to the *solution finder* role but instead that space is made for all to have shared input and responsibility for

the discourse. To make space for us all to add 'critical layers of reflection' to our practice (O'Brien, 2021, p. 343).

The result of this work has enabled my school to become a showcase school within the MAT for inclusion. This has represented, as part of my reflexive approach, a further beginning both in the sharing of practice and creating space for collaborative dialogue with other colleagues as well as the continual development of my own school. Whilst the research study took the deliberate approach of inviting specific members of staff to participate to enable the rich data set sought, the resonating impact on my own learning journey as a school leader has involved a wider breadth of stakeholders. Exploration of the perceptions of inclusion with one multi-academy trust in relation to the process of end of key stage two statutory testing within the current English educational climate has led to developing whole school practice that has been shared and discussed with colleagues at all levels of the MAT hierarchy. The journey continues, as discourse about inclusion moves beyond the bounds of the research study to explore perspectives from pupils and families.

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Appendix A: Research Study Participant Transcripts.

Key	
Black text	Participant
Blue text	Researcher

At the start of each task an explanation was given – the placement of the cards was

confirmed with each participant at the end of the task.

Participant A			
Date:- 8.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** TA	**Years in Education:** 11 + 2 as a volunteer
1)What does inclusion mean to you?			
Erm, I think it means including **everyone**. Including all children. No children are left out. (5) You mention no children are left out . . . Yes (3) this can be tricky at play times, when some children <u>don't include (BL – hand up)</u> others in their play. I think this is harder in year 6 when children get older. They have set <u>friendship (BL – hand up)</u> groups. Part of my job is helping children with this at at at playtimes. Helping any children who have erm been <u>left out (BL – hand up).</u> It's harder now with the bubbles, you know erm some children have friends in other bubbles they **can't** play with.			
2)What does inclusion look like in our society?			
Oh goodness, erm, that's hard, erm – I think, I think **again** it is about erm every one being included. Again no one being left out – erm or erm feeling <u>left out (BL – hand up).</u> (5) Do you think our society is inclusive?			

Erm, goodness, erm – not always. I do – erm think (S) people, **some** people like to **think** they are inclusive, but erm sometimes the way they act is not inclusive at all (BL – shrug). Erm, it's like when you talk about the importance of language (BL – hand up), I know some (S) people here (sigh) at [school name] who used to use words they shouldn't (BL – 'no' action with hand).

(4)

You know, erm like with traveller children or some SEN children (BL- hand up).

(3)

You know erm (5) like that erm (5) you know like **that** ASD child (BL – hand up).

Thank you.

My next question now is specifically about Year 6 . . .

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Erm, err, I think because the children **are** older, they know their own minds more. Sometimes they **are influenced** (BL – hand up) by their parents' views that erm that might not (BL – hand up) be very inclusive. Erm, it's like we have some children whose family belief is that homosexuality is wrong, it's you know from their erm religion (BL – hand up).

(4)

We talk about this in PSHE and things like that, but it's hard for those children because that's what their parents say.

(5)

Erm, err, so it's like erm attitudes erm from home that the children repeat (BL – hand up).

Thank you.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

As I said already helping children at playtimes if they feel left out. And like I said having discussions when children erm might erm say things erm that aren't inclusive. Yes, I think. Yes.

Children who might leave others out at playtimes – and sometimes this changes on different (BL – hands up) days. So, children might get on one day and not the next (BL – hands up).

And then when children come with different views from home, as has happened recently. (5)

Are there any other barriers?

(8) erm it is hard sometimes **sharing** your time among all the children. Some erm, need (S) you more than erm others you know. (5) and that's **hard**. You can't (BL – hand up) always do all the interventions you want to do you know. **Especially** at the erm moment because of Covid you know and being so short.

I hope that's right? (L)

Thank you. You don't need to ask me if that's right as it's your opinion and that's what is important for my research, so thank you for sharing.

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Oh goodness (5) yes (4) ok. I used to think SATS **were** important for secondary school, but [class teacher name] has said they aren't (BL – hand up) used by the secondary school. So I don't really know (BL – hands up) why we do them, because erm they are very erm **stressful** (S), you know (5) can be **stressful** for the children and for the class teacher really. It's a lot of pressure.

But if they're not used in their secondary school I don't think it will affect their future. Not (BL – hand up) like the [11+] test --- erm that affects their future **of course (BL – hand up)**.

(3)

Because it – depending on their result (Q) - it **it can**, **does** affect what school they can go to. You know like grammar (BL – hands up).

As I mentioned what's the point (BL – hand up). Sorry (BL – hand up) but what is the point **really**. **Don't** (BL- hand up) stress children out that's what I think.

It is erm a barrier **because** (BL – finger pointing up) it's **stressful** for the children. Affects their self-esteem. Some children don't (BL – hand up) stand a chance and they are not going to be as much of a erm focus you know. It's erm, erm just how it is. (5) the pressure you know. (sigh)

TASK

Oh, erm.

OK.

So do you want a erm, list?

However, you would like to do it is fine.

OK.

So, erm.

OK.

I'm just going to read them all first.

-

So I am – I'm going to put SATS at the top.

(5)

You're putting SATs at the top?

Yes. Because it is **stressful** and it <u>isn't used (BL – hand up)</u>, you know by secondary schools. I think it's used to see how well schools are doing. But there must be a better, *less stressful way*! A way that is actually about the children.

-

Then I'm putting oh goodness **yes** – erm number 12 the key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS.

(10)

That's interesting . . .

Because if I am having to work with these children all the time others <u>can't (BL – hand up)</u> also have my help and I think they need it, like erm (5) I said. It's not fair.

I think, I think test readiness, number 2 goes with this because erm it's again about working with those children isn't it.

Working with those children . . .

Yes, the erm the the ones who might pass.

-

Then attitudes of – both – attitudes of adults. If adults erm have <u>bad (BL – hand up)</u> attitudes erm towards the erm children they erm aren't going to do as well.

-

Being secondary ready – erm, no because that's something we do after SATs. So that's not a barrier erm.

I can't say about planning and national curriculum. Is that alright?

Of course, just include the ones you feel are barriers to inclusion.

OK, ok, so then erm –

SATS, test, attitudes

Oh, yes number 5 – because year 6 is **very** late to identify SEN needs and that child might have missed out on a lot.

Funding again I don't really know about this. Or in-year admissions.

So –

Yes, I think that's it.

(5)

No, I think I said all I wanted to. As I said I think SATs is the biggest barrier because it is

so pressured.

That's it really isn't it. It's not about the children.

Yes, that's it.

Thank you very much.

1) Year 6 SATS test

eg: the test itself

12) Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS

eg: additional input solely for children within this group.

2) Test readiness

eg: a key focus on preperation for SATS test.

11) Attitudes of adults

eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test

4) Attitudes of adults

eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self esteem.

5) Lack of early identification of SEN needs

Duration: 15mins. 10 secs.

Participant B			
Date:-11.12.20	**Consent Form** **Signed:** Y	**Position:** SENDCo	**Years in Education:** 11 + 2 as a volunteer

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Erm (S), inclusion is ensuring that *everybody*, no matter their background, their needs, erm (S) special needs, their erm sexuality, their erm, ooo just anyone their race, creed, religion, should be included. And that they're not marginalised as a result of erm (S) something that they are not in control of or their life choices.

Thank you.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Huh, I think (S) **within** our society we have a, for the most part a culture where people **want to** be inclusive. Erm, sadly there are still groups and that **don't** want to have that *diversity* of erm people included within their erm their workforce, or their social groups or they want to keep themselves contained, which is really sad. But overall I think we strive to ensure that we have options and available erm (S), things are available for people no matter where they're coming from. So we have accessibility in terms of the buildings and err the furnitures and things. We might have accessibility in terms of hearing loops. We might have accessibility in the erm, people can live through their life choices in their dress codes and things. Erm (S), there are times when that can be a hindrance I suppose in that some people may feel **threatened** in the stereotype that they may have been given through their life or brought up with.

Erm, but on the most part I think people try very hard. As a general.

You mention life choices in dress codes and things . . .

Yes, erm, like their sexuality.

(6)

Thank you very much.

I think (S) children in year 6 tend to be finding themselves. Erm, and I think people and young adults find themselves a lot *earlier* than perhaps they did when I was a child. Erm, they're aware of themselves a lot more, they're also aware of pressures because of social media. So, erm (S), children **might** have been opting to express themselves a lot more at this point and that can cause challenges if other children don't have the, erm, encompassing nature (BL – hands up). So it can lead to isolation of individuals because of their life choices or, err, their desires to express themselves in different ways. Erm (S), having said that there's also hopefully (BL – hand up) a move where children are more accommodating and more understanding and more accepting now than they would have been again possibly back when I was younger or when my parents were younger definitely. Yes. So I think we have to be mindful of that.

But overall in terms of inclusion in year 6 if it was a **physical** disability that's dealt with very well. Erm, and educationalists and schools ensure that physical disabilities are supported, erm, by making reasonable adjustments and allowances for children that need additional support and time. Erm, and I think (S) that's not just physical but the erm, mental challenges or cognitive challenges which children may face. So (S), for example, if a child had an anxiety teachers and adults around the school are very mindful of that. So they provide that additional nurturing support (BL – hands up) for their charges.

Thank you. I think you've answered a bit of the next questions which is . . .

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

(6)

Is there anything you would like to add . . .

Erm (S), I think the chall- the erm, the conversations that are had with year 6 into the transitions (BL – hand up) for secondary education is really important to support that inclusion because the primary staff know those children incredibly well. They're going, for

the most part, into very **large** settings and some children could become lost or erm, just overlooked. Not through lack of care from secondary, but just from the sheer vast scale that they're dealing with. And if it's a child that has particularly emotional needs (BL – hands up), sometimes if they're up against children in a secondary setting that have a lot more physical outbursts or behavioural outbursts, more sensitive children can be overlooked. So those conversations need to be very apparent and supportive.

Erm, was that the right, was that the question?

Thank you, yes. You don't need to ask me if it's right as it is your opinion and that is what is so valuable to my research. So thank you.

Now, thinking specifically about your role as SENDCO . . .

5) What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your school as a SENDCO every day?

Erm, time, money, erm (S), I think it's, there's one of me and sometimes there's a lot of draw on my time from parents and understandably (BL –hand up) their child is the one and only and important to them. But understanding that there are numerous children I am responsible for supporting and encouraging (BL – hands up), erm, within the setting. Also it's not about a child having a label, it's about the support for them.

Time, err, money because budgets are always tight. Erm, I think we're very fortunate here that if there's something we need we have it and we can utilise it. Erm, but I know from experience that there, SEN resources for example can be **incredibly** expensive. Erm, so that then can create challenges for children that need additional support by them not having instant access *maybe.*

Thank you.

6) What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Parental erm pressures, erm, their own **pressures** that they put on themselves from peer maybe. Erm, and how they perceive themselves within the hierarchy of a classroom (BL –

hands up) setting. Because children are very cute when it comes to knowing their level and they talk, they compare themselves. So I think that can knock confidence sometimes and self-esteem.

(6)

Erm (S), especially I think if children aren't given the option to see that it's ok the SATs is academic but academia isn't the be all and end all. Erm, and actually they have worth and value (BL – hands up) with society and their futures as to what their strengths are. Erm, so I think the SATs can limit children if they don't have that support to understand the bigger picture.

Thank you. My last question is . . .

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

(sigh) I **don't** like it. Erm, and I think I'm talking, that's from both the parental (BL – hand up) point of view and from erm, being in schools (BL – hand up). I think actually a one moment snap shot, which is what the SATs provide, shouldn't be a judgement on the child, shouldn't be a judgement on the school and erm, on the class teacher. And whilst everyone says it isn't **we know** as teachers and educationalists we put those pressures on ourselves.

Erm, I think I am fortunate to work in an environment where everybody, or the majority of the staff have very high expectations (BL – hand up) of their own teaching delivery and what they want to provide to their classes and the children here as a whole. Erm, and the SATs becomes a barrier to that because it's a pressure (S). It's an ongoing pressure that they have. And also it be- it takes away some of the fun (BL – hand up) elements of the times. I think we're quite fortunate that our teachers again can steer their way around it. But children become so consumed by this is SATs week, I've got to do this, I've got to do that, I've got to erm, perform – that probably has a negative and the opposite erm,

outcome to what they're looking for. And no matter how much parents say they don't put the pressures on the children, children can still feel that they've got to perform for their parents and they see it as a judgement on their head. It's a big pressure to carry and is bound to affect wellbeing. Just nasty. Not needed (BL – shakes hand). Teacher assessment.

Thank you very much.

Is there anything you would like to revisit or add more detail about before we move on to the task?

I know here everyone puts the children first and erm (3) I guess what I'm saying is that the tests don't help that.

TASK

It's not in my setting is it, it's just a general –

However, you want to take it. There's no right or wrong answer, it's all about your opinion.

OK.

Takes me a little while to read them.

No problem. That's Ok.

Barrier to inclusion in year 6?

Yes please.

OK.

Oh I see.

OK.

Erm (S). I've grouped them almost because, and then I've I think I've tried to pyramid (BL – pyramid with hands) them as well. Erm, the 3 main ones I've would say are the lack of early *identification* of SEN needs, erm, the year 6 SATs test as in the test itself, erm, and I think the national curriculum. Erm, because I think it focusses mainly, the SATs test doesn't cover the whole of the curriculum so it doesn't incorporate all of the different aspects that the children could actually excel in. It focussed on the 3 the core subjects.

Erm, I then have the next row down together I think SEN funding and the in-year admission of a child with complex SEN needs. Erm, **purely** because if you haven't got the funding you can't support that child so that can then cause challenges with the inclusion for that individual.

Err, I also then put together the key focus on the pupils predicted to pass the SATs test and test readiness, because if children might be able to pass but they need that little bit more support (BL – hand up). So if you're only focussing on those you know are going to - you're limiting children who could achieve with a bit more input sadly.

And then the next group I have is planning, attitudes of adults erm, towards those predicted to pass. Again. And the in-year admission of a child with SEN, **purely** because it depends on the point at which that child joins and whether the planning allows that child then to have the support put in place quickly enough for them to achieve.

That's what I've got.

Thank you very much.

Oh and I did, sorry, have on its own a separate one. Being secondary ready, because I think, erm, for the most part being secondary ready will come with nurture and support and tends to come after (BL – hand up) the SATs.

Is there anything you would like to go over again, or any more detail you'd like to share?

No, thank you.

Thank you very much for your time and participation, it is much appreciated.

Duration: 15 min. 32 sec.

Participant C			
Date:- 11.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** TA (Yr6)	**Years in Education:** 10

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Ooo, it means making sure that all children are included across all activities irrespective of their needs. Yes. Is that right? (L)

Thank you. You don't need to ask me as remember there is no right or wrong answer. It's your opinion which is valuable to me. Thank you.

You mention needs . . .

Yes, you know all different types of needs.

(5)

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Erm

Erm

Are you talking about school society or general society?

However, you want to interpret it.

Oh my god, say the question again.

What does inclusion look like in our society?

Erm

Ok

It looks like everyone being treated equally and everyone being given the same opportunities. And everyone is accepted for who they are, race, religion, what they are and no one is erm, lost for words, that everyone has fair opportunity to do the same as everybody. I can't find the right word I'm looking for sorry.

That's OK, it's absolutely fine. This is all about opinion, so there is no right or wrong way to respond.

You mentioned everyone being treated equally, do you thinks this happens in society?

Not always, no. Sometime erm people <u>erm (S)</u> discriminate don't they.

Erm (6)

Thank you.

Now, thinking specifically about year 6.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Yes, and no if I'm being honest. I think, I, I think that, how can I say this. <u>When(S)</u> it comes to getting children ready for their SATs there are possibly children that erm, because maybe they're not quite academically where they should be erm, you kind of have to make a decision about if you're going to focus time on them and therefore take it away from children who maybe working at or very close to working at greater depth. And therefore sometimes decisions have to be made about which child you're able to give the time to. (5) Which would therefore mean that you are not including everybody, because unfortunately one person or two people there's only so much you can do.

Thank you

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

<u>Erm (S),</u> I think across all the year groups, not just year 6, I think yes it is supported because that's what a TA is in the class for. To make sure that erm, you know that all children are being included. And that if there are children who are struggling that they get caught and have the opportunity to have extra one to one support. Err and that is probably more imperative that they have that in year 6 actually because they are very much thinking about SATs. Erm, there's a lot more in-depth interventions for SATS put in place, for those who can pass. Err, and there's defiantly a much bigger focus on interventions in year 6 from my experience.

Thank you.

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a TA every day?

Having to focus on children who will pass the SATs.

Because it means that some children don't get your attention and they might need it. They probably do need it.

So yes SATs, or **getting ready** for them, can be a barrier.

Erm, not really in the respect that SATs happen when they are aged **10**. Erm, a lot can change when they go through life. I **don't** think, you know, from SATs they go onto secondary and they've then got further examinations where they can prove themselves. Err, I think that unfortunately with those children that are struggling to get to the required level for SATs I think that in itself is what is going to make future lives difficult not the actual tests. I am making sense.

Yes. Thank you very much. There's just one last question.

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Ooo, now there's a tough one. Erm, what are my thoughts. Erm, I can see reasons for them and reasons against them to be honest with you. Reasons for them is it's really good to gauge where children are by the time they leave primary school. It's a really good way to measure obviously the primary school. Erm, you know, it gives the secondary schools a good indication of the level the children are at in basic maths and English. It prepares them for tests, erm for exam like situations. Erm, it makes them realise you know that actually you do need to take school seriously. Erm, so I think there's a lot of positives for it. Erm, I also think there are some negatives. Erm, I think from the teacher's point of view, for staff, it's a lot of pressure. They need to get the children to a certain level. Erm, you know you feel that you've got to make that happen. Erm, and you worry what the consequences might be if you don't get the marks that err that you'd like. Err, I think it does also put a lot of pressure on children, err, they are very young to be under that

pressure. Erm and I do think it does affect some children adversely in the respect that they worry too much about them. Because it's drilled in very much in year 6 that it's all about SATs, erm, and I think some children react well to that and I think that some children don't. Erm, so children you know you like try to reassure them that it doesn't matter, erm, but ultimately you do want them to do their best.

I think, you know, I think there's good and bad for them to be honest with you. It depends what side of the fence you sit on.

You mention worrying about the consequences if you don't get the marks, I think you said, that you'd like . . .

Yes, erm, for the school. Erm consequences for the school, it doesn't look erm good does it.

(4)

Parents, Ofsted.

TASK

Ok. OK.

So right what I think are barriers to inclusion in year 6.

Ooo, quite a lot of them I'd say looking at this.

OK, erm.

Some of them are quite similar aren't they.

I don't really know what order to put them in to be honest with you.

However, you want. It doesn't have to be lined order. You may have several bunched together. Or however you want really.

OK.

Right ok. I could sit here for hours.

So I've kind of got 4 together which I would say would be the top erm barrier. So I've got test readiness, key focus on preparation for SATs. Erm, attitudes of adults to those not predicted and the one that says those who are predicted to pass the SATs. Key focus on

pupils predicted to pass the SATs. I would say they're all at the top. So that's my top 4 I think.

They're all barriers I think really.

Erm, then I've got in year admission of children with SEN and complex SEN, lack of SEN funding and lack of early identification of SEN needs.

Erm, and then I've got the actual SATs test themselves and the national curriculum, so the content of the curriculum. Erm, cos obviously if a child is struggling to access the curriculum they're not going to do very well as we push forward with SATs.

(6)

Is there anything else you would like to add any detail to from your responses to my questions or the task?
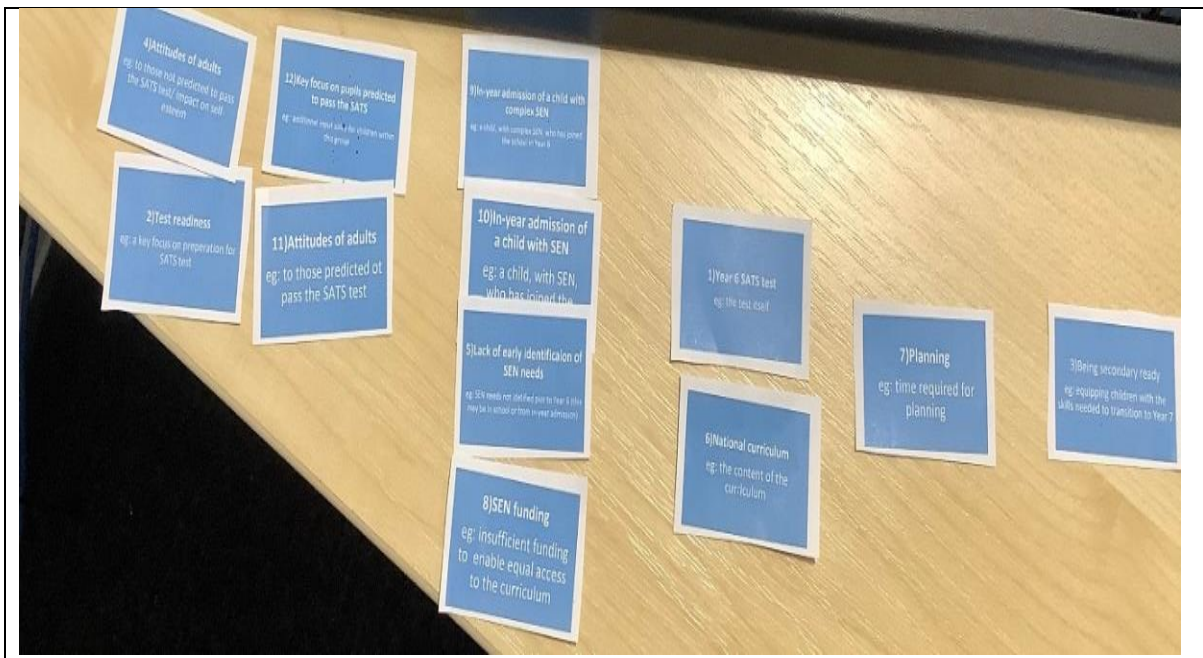
Erm

Erm

Ah, yes (4)

And then finally I've got being secondary, no, then planning. Erm, because obviously you need to do the planning for certain children and you might not have time. They would come at the bottom.

Thank you very much. I really appreciate your time.

Duration: 11mins. 43secs.

Participant D			
Date:- 12.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** DHT	**Years in Education:** 10

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Erm so is that inclusion in education or inclusion in general?

However, you want to interpret that is fine.

OK. So for me inclusion in education is ensuring that we are catering for all children and ensuring that every classroom is inclusive.

(5)

Thank you. What might that look like?

Any child of any ability or any specific need, special needs that they may have is catered for in a mainstream classroom. So (S) it's making the adaptions to make sure that erm every provision possible can be put in place.

Thank you

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Erm. In our society, as our school, I'd say that we're a very inclusive school. We ensure that we meet the needs of all children in any way that we can and we make those adaptions to ensure that that's possible.

Erm, in society in general I would say that inclusion over the last I don't know probably 10 years has got a lot better with people's acceptings and understandings of people and erm diverse needs I guess.

There are still **some** who **aren't** inclusive, or say they are but that's it (BL – hands up).

Thank you.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Erm. So (S) obviously when children reach year 6 they may be experiencing erm I don't their **finding** themselves more than younger children so we're finding that they may want

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to express themselves in different ways. And it's ensuring that we are very accepting of that and we are encouraging them to be themselves and let them know that it's ok for them to be themselves.

Erm, I think the way we address inclusion within our school is thinking about different books that we can share with the children that might encompass differences and ensuring that we have that level of equality in that we are encompassing all of those erm areas. Whether it be by different books we're getting in or erm just directing children to specific websites that we can share with the children in the class. Taking that time in PSHE lessons to address any difficulties which year 6 children might be having with erm regards to feeling included.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Yes, as I mentioned it's about recognising the diversity of the school and making sure you have resources in place to reflect that.

It's also about having resources to meet children's needs, for example special educational needs.

So that there can be equal access for all children support and resources need to be differentiated to meet any needs.

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your school as a DHT every day?

Erm. I **don't** think so; I wouldn't say there are any barriers. Because I think it's about erm cos everyone can have their own perceptions about things and it's being very open minded. And it's ensuring you're erm very accepting of everybody as a community in the school and thinking about how you can best support everybody to ensure that they feel included. Erm, err whether it's erm thinking about specific individual needs, whether it's about celebrating other cultures and I think at [name of school] we are very good at celebrating erm because the diverse range of children and staff that we have within the

school. And it's about making sure that everybody feels that they have a place within our school society and how that can be celebrated. So I don't personally feel that I have any **barriers** that support inclusion within our school.

Do you think it's like that everywhere?

No, erm. It's not. It's something we have really worked on as a school.

Thank you.

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Erm, I think it very much depends on the vision of their family erm with SATs because I'm very aware that some children particularly within our current year 6 class they have had a lot of pressure put on them to achieve for example the [11+] test. And erm additional tutoring and things like that. This expectation of err what their parents' vision is for them. Erm, with regards to sats I think I don't think children should be defined by those results They shouldn't be labelled. Erm, thinking back to when I was a child I found testing very difficult erm and always underperformed in tests because of the pressure. Now (S) it might be the same for some of our children. It doesn't mean to say, you know, looking at course work and how they perform across the the year erm that that's SATs results can't define them as a a child and their ability. So I think as long as the children are very aware that this is just a test erm and it doesn't define them and their capabilities of what they can achieve then it shouldn't impact upon what they can achieve in the future.

Erm, so it's about having that positive mind set and knowing that it's a one off test and actually it's not wholly representative of who they are and what they can achieve.

Thank you. My last question is -

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Erm, I don't agree with it I believe that erm our children are tested to much throughout their time in school. But we've got to do it, so we have to make sure the children are

prepared, even though it can be difficult. I think that err teacher assessment should be as erm enough err as we are obviously the professionals educating the children throughout their time with us in the school. And our judgement should therefore erm have a higher weighting than that of the SATs result. Because as I've said in answer to your previous question erm some children will underperform in test conditions because they find it very stressful and that level of anxiety that it produces for them and it doesn't give that all round picture erm of what a child is capable of. And I think with regards to the [11+] test as well I think it's great that we do get to have head teacher appeals and things because we're able to provide more evidence which is obviously that teacher assessment of how how a child can perform.

(4)

Thank you, is there anything further you'd like to add, or would you like to revisit any of the questions?

So yeah I don't agree and I I think it should be down to our judgement as educational professionals.

Thank you.

TASK

Ok.

OK.

Can I just talk through each one is that OK?

Absolutely.

Erm. **So** number 1 year 6 SATs test and I've previously said obviously some children don't cope well in a test situation. Erm. And unfortunately because the tests are compulsory erm they have to take them and erm some children who erm might have anxiety around test conditions that is **obviously** a barrier to erm to to those children. And erm they therefore might underperform.

Erm. So test readiness I think unfortunately   children - we do have to train them to pass a test if you like. And they do have a lot of test readiness erm in practicing those test papers being a focus and I think I think as a supportive measure because they have to undertake the test there is no choice in that matter. So that I think is a supportive measure for the children.

Erm. With regards to being secondary ready erm that once again we are equipping the children with the skills they need for transition to secondary school. Err erm I don't think that's a barrier. It's being supportive.

Number 4 the attitudes of the adults, so eg: those not predicted to pass the SATs slash impact on self-esteem. I think this can be a bit of a barrier to inclusion in terms of erm thinking about you know, when children come into year 6 and it's defined as well these children are not going to pass. So these children are going to be the children we're going to focus on. It's I don't know how much I can say. You know not writing children off but it's (8)

That's fine, yeah. So (S) trying not to write children off, but also understanding that some children become a focus and others don't. You know what I mean.

Erm, lack of early identification of SEN needs. Well this could be a massive erm. So erm this obviously is a barrier to how we can be inclusive to children in year 6 with regards to SATs and things. Because if we're aware of what their SEN need is you can apply for extra time for children you can apply for erm. This is all with regards to SATs isn't it Stella or just to year 6 in general?

Whichever way you want to take it really.

Yeah, ok, so. Lack of early identification of SEN needs is definitely a massive issue erm because the children because we're not being as inclusive as we possibly can be because we're not correctly catering for their needs. Erm, because we're not doing everything we can be doing. That correct form of education that they actually require.

Erm, national curriculum.

Erm

(8)

So (S) it's about ensuring that we are adapting erm for the children and making sure that if they're not directly accessing the content for their year group we're making sure that we are erm adapting what it is that we're providing for the children. Making sure that we are meeting their needs within erm the correct framework for them.

Erm. I **don't** think planning's an issue because. Oh time required for planning. Our teachers get a day a fortnight to plan. Planning. I think because we as we go if things aren't appropriate and things haven't quite worked then we adapt as we go. We have the skeleton format for our planning and being able to input as we go. And I think that a lot of our teachers are really good at that adapting their practice as they go. Erm, to ensure that it's ticking the right boxes for the children.

Erm. SEN funding, insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum. Erm, funding's obviously a really tricky thing. Erm and this can be a barrier to inclusion thinking about certain children that we've got in the school who do have an EHCP erm and high needs funding has been applied for those children and it's constantly rejected because they're not deemed to be of high enough need to have the high needs funding which is something that erm I have disputed in the past, erm, with the funding team. This obviously takes time that could be used elsewhere. And so it can, it can erm definitely present as a barrier erm to inclusion for those children if their funding is not awarded.

Erm, in year admission for a child with **complex** SEN - a child who's joined in year 6. Erm. Provided that that child who joins the school erm who obviously has a complex SEN need, erm as an in year admission, providing that we know exactly what their need is erm we should therefore be able to cater for that child erm and get put the right provision in place. Erm, obviously if they are in year and they've come and say for example the previous

school haven't transferred over all the documentation, I have seen this in the past, which means that it's the other school that's being a barrier to inclusion by not providing the correct paperwork. Erm, but that's I suppose all like an admin side of things. But actually every child has the right to an inclusive education regardless of when they join the school erm whether it's September or whether it's, you know, December. Erm, it's about us erm providing the child to equip them with being able to understand the curriculum.

Erm, number 10 in year admission of a child with SEN oh sorry it's the same as number 9.

Erm, I think number 11 is the same as number 4 Stella.

Oh yes, not to pass. Yes, I think so.

And then there's erm key focus on children predicted to pass the SATs. Focus on children in this group. Yeah, erm, so I think is that not being inclusive to the other children in the class because we're driving more to the success of these children who are predicted to pass by giving them that additional input. What are the other children doing in that time because we're not, it might be that they're doing something that's more appropriate for them. Erm, so we are being inclusive with regards to their ability, but it could be looked at that we're not being inclusive to those children just because they're being regarded as not going to pass and we're giving the additional input to the children that are. So it could be seen as a bias really, erm, towards the children who are expected to pass.

Are there any ones you feel are bigger barriers than others?

Erm. SATs. I think lack of identification of SEN need because the earlier we have identification of those needs the quicker we can get things in place for for the child. Erm, and ensure that actually we are equipping them with the right tools to be able to access the curriculum. Erm, in a way that is right for them. So yes that is a massive barrier for the children.

I think **attitudes** of adults, both cards, is actually a barrier as well. It's about staff being open minded about how's best to support every child and every child's entitled to an

education at the end of the day and one that is appropriate for their level of need and erm their level of ability.

Erm, I think in year admissions for a child with SEN, 10 and 9. So it's making sure that we have all of that paper work, ensuring that we are well informed. If we're not well informed, we therefore can't ensure that we are ticking all the boxes for the child and getting the right provision in place. Erm, information is key and making sure we have that joined up approach with that previous setting erm to make sure we have the correct information for the child.

Erm and obviously funding as well is key, if a child is entitled to that funding. And it's that battle of being able to get that funding and having to prove this and prove that. It's jumping through a lot of hoops really. And yes at times that can be a massive barrier.

So I think those are the key, the key ones there.

Thank you. Would you like to add any more detail or any further thoughts to share?

No.

Thanks.

Thank you very much for your time, it's really very much appreciated.

1)Year 6 SATS test

5)Lack of early identification of SEN needs

4)Attitudes of adults
eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test /impact on self esteem

11)Attitudes of adults
eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test

10)In-year admission of a child with SEN
eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

9)In-year admission of a child with complex SEN

8)SEN funding
eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum

Duration: 25mins. 5 secs.

Participant E			
Date:- 15.12.20	Consent Form Signed: Y	Position: TA (Yr6)	Years in Education: 4

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Oh. Erm, I don't know I've never really thought about it to be honest. Inclusion in class do you mean, like (4) erm, erm (6)

However, you want to take that. However, you'd like to interpret it. As I said there's no right or wrong answer.

Yeah, inclusion erm, I can't think off the top of my head.

Erm, to give everybody a chance to do something they need to do. You know like, everybody in the class, or the school, of the year group gets a chance to do better or something. Yeah. I think. Yeah.

Thank you. The next question is

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Erm, groups isn't it. It's like groups of people here, groups of people there. It doesn't seem like there's a lot of inclusion now. I think groups tend to stick to one group, another group sticks together and it's, it can be difficult sometimes I think.

Thank you.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Erm, I think the biggest challenge is the children who aren't quite up there.

(6)

Could you explain that a bit further . . .

Erm, giving them a bit more of your time to help bring them up level with the rest of the class. (4)

Thank you.

So, that would be something which support inclusion which is my next question.

Yes, I think my time as a TA with the children is what can support them the best and can help inclusion. Because these children need that time to help them with the work if it is beyond them. They don't always get that time through, because you have to focus on children on the CUSP so that they will pass the SATS. It is a pressure to be honest.
Erm, I think my barriers would be, especially with year 6, would be the level of understanding I have of their work. Erm, and as much as they're learning I'm learning with them. So I find that a little bit of a barrier for me. (4) Any other barriers . . . Also like I said not being able to share my time with all the children who might need it like. The pressure to work with those who might pass with that extra help. I've only got 2 questions left. The next one is
Yes, I think you could erm. You try as much to help them as - outside lessons by doing interventions with them. But I think in some cases some people need a lot more than just the odd intervention. A lot more teaching which obviously can't be done in school which is a shame. But I think it will affect their future. In what way do you think it might affect their future? Erm, well I think erm the secondary school may not put them – have them in such a high level group. So they'll be starting secondary lower and may not catch up. Thank you. My last question is . . .

Erm, I don't - , erm I know it's used as a kind of a for when they move onto secondary school. It helps the secondary school put them where they should be. Erm, I **don't really(S) think** they need it, if I was honest. I think, I think they're a little bit **unfair**. Because they've done all that work, I don't think they need to be tested. And like I said it might, might limit them I think at the start of secondary.

So yes it can be a barrier in that way I think.

Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Just is it's a barrier erm the SATs.

TASK

Right.

I don't think that's a barrier, I don't think funding's a barrier really, cos the helps here for them if they need it.

Erm.

So ranked from most to not did you say.

Yes, thank you. From the largest barrier to inclusion to the least.

Right, erm.

Yes, probably the SEN complex, the child with complex SEN. I mean it could be a child, a SEN child, for year 6 who is in our SRP and that can be a real challenge. They've not only got the transition in their last year of primary, but sometimes they have also missed a lot of primary. So yes I think that one can be a real barrier.

In-year admissions, that would be a big barrier. I think I would probably put that first.

Attitudes of adults.

Number 4 next. Attitudes of adults towards those predicted to not pass the SATs tests. It's not every adult, but – you know.

Erm, to those not predicted to pass the SATs test.

Erm.

National curriculum may be or maybe not.

Yeah lack of identification of SEN. That sometimes does go amiss. Some kids are good at hiding it. But also if it's not noticed until Year 6, or a child has come from another school and it hasn't been noticed that can be a barrier as there is not much time left.
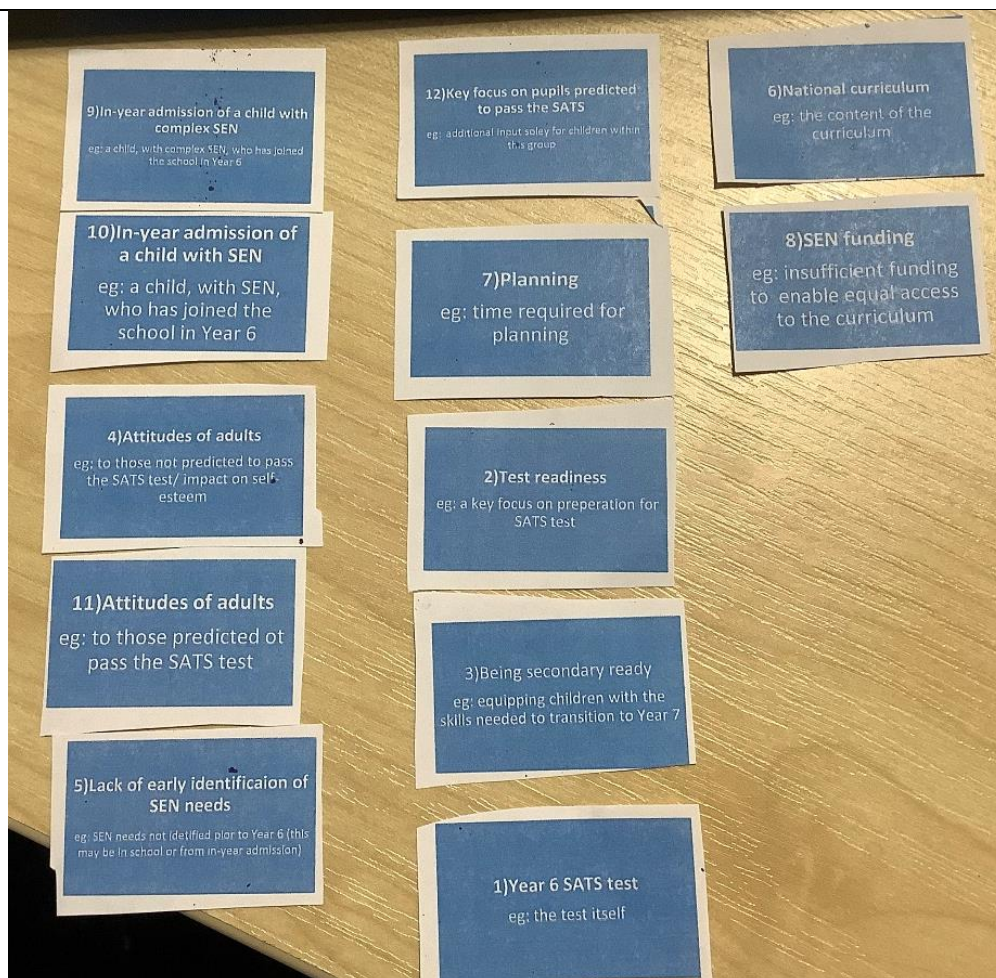
Test readiness. Yeah.

Funding, I wouldn't put.

Right I think I'm there.

Thank you very much. Are there any responses you'd like to add to or go over?

No.

Thank you so very much for your time and participation.

Duration: 8mins. 27 secs.

Participant F			
Date:- 16.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** Lead Practitioner	**Years in Education:** 16

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Erm, inclusion, making sure that everybody despite their background or ability are able to achieve the best that they can be. (S) That would be my answer. (BL – head goes down)

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

(sigh) Erm, **society** (3) I would say society is nobody is prevented (3) from doing anything (S) because of race, religion, cultural background, or socio-economic dooblypiff. Erm, you know what I mean.

Thinking specifically now about year 6 and I know you've had, particularly recently, experience of teaching in that year group.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

(4) In year 6 specifically, when you say specifically, I think it depends on where you work. Some issues can be that we're teaching to a test that erm, that is not used. It doesn't inform the child's learning what so ever it only informs the **school** and league tables because as soon as children leave primary school setting they go to year 7 and the first thing they do is do a test (BL-shakes head) as soon as they arrive. So anything, the teaching that we, the **pressure** that we put ourselves under as teachers and as institutions I think is unnecessary(S) and it can be the if if you are in a school teaching to the test then if you're definitely not going to make the results then you're not going to get to the end result that the school want you to get you will not be included in the majority of the learning in the second half of the year. (BL – head down throughout whole answer)

Thank you.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Not teaching to the test. Being able to teach the breadth of the national curriculum.

(8)

Yes, because if there is a focus on children passing the test some subjects are going to be marginalised. If you're just focussing on the test.

Thinking specifically now of your role as a lead practitioner are there any barriers to ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your role?

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a lead practitioner every day?

Oo (8) I don't know (3) I'm just thinking.

Sure.

(9)

I think in my role particularly my time is taken up **mainly** with people who are of the lower ability. Rather than people who **excel** in the subject. So I'm [subject area]. So anybody who excels in the subject (Q) I don't really get to spend time with them and helping them develop their skills even more. Because I am I am developing the people who have the **least** ability all the time. I think that would be the only issue, that I spend most of the time with the people with the least ability rather than people across the board, helping everybody despite their, and that is purely a time thing really. Just time.

Thank you.

I've just got 2 questions left

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Ah yes definitely. I think erm, children who are SEN children, but some of the children (BL – head down) are low socio-economic – what's the word – basically lower down on the social standings, I can't remember the word, social

(8)

Their background. Which means it's not the fact that they haven't got the ability to do these things, **I believe** that it would take more time and effort for some people who than their **worth** to actually get these things done.

Erm, so **SEN** is more difficult. Because SEN children – if they're not going to make it it's very difficult, **but** I think sometimes we we sign off people rather than putting the extra effort into those people. I think we we **literally** look at a person and think oh she's never going to make it (BL –shakes head) and we just leave these children and let them go. When in fact with a bit of support and encouragement and **effort**, and I know it's money and time and people, but I think they would make it if people believed in them and give them some time.

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Erm, (3) I don't think I think they've come to a point **now** where we're using their being used just for **league** tables. It doesn't, like I've said before(Q), it doesn't inform the child's future. It, well it informs it in the **short term** to say to us this is where this child **is**. But once they go to secondary school they do that test **all** over again, start **all** over again. And if they are at a different stage their SATs aren't looked at anyway. (BL- shakes head) The only thing the SATs inform, in my opinion(S), are league tables and the government. I don't believe they're any, I don't think there's any **justification** in them. There is there is a school of thought that you know err how do you know how well people are doing there. I just think you just have to trust the people and trust them to do the job in the first place. You have to **trust** their opinion.

But I think everybody deserves to do well despite their ability, their age or the social-economic background.

(5)

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Well (3)

Not everything (BL – hand up) can be **measured** by a test (BL – hand up) (4) in **fact**

most things can't (BL – hand up). Look at the SRP, the children make **massive** progress,

that's got **nothing** to do with **SATS**.

Progress is more **important**. Progress and teacher assessment (BL – hand up).

Thank you.

TASK

(participant took some time to silently look at all the cards and then read out the order

below)

1 SATs

6 NC

4 Attitudes of adults (to those not predicted to pass)

2 Test readiness

3 Being secondary ready

12 Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs

7Planning

5 Lack of early identification of SEN needs

9 In-year admission of a child with complex SEN

10 In-year admission of a child with SEN

8 SEN funding

11 and 4 are the same, which confused me (L). As no11 is attitudes to those predicted to

pass. Ah yes. That goes up with 4 then.

It goes up with 4. . .

Yes, because it might be at the expense of the other children.

Side note(Q) on the curriculum, it caters only for a minority of students, rather than a

flexible curriculum that could enable children to find their niche and excel at it, everyone is

good at something. The current curriculum works only for those who are more academic in writing.

Thank you, is there anything else you would like to add or any responses you would like to revisit.

No, thank you.

OK, thank you very much for participating, it is much appreciated.

Duration: 14mins21secs.

Participant G			
Date:- 16.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** SRP CT	**Years in Education:** 17

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Inclusion means to me no children are left behind. Erm, and every child having the same opportunity as any other child in an educational setting.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

No race, gender or disability should be treated erm differently. And we should all be erm accepting of everybody else and the same opportunities to access **services**, education, work everything.

Thank you. My next questions are specifically about year 6. So thinking about that year group.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

I think there are always challenges to inclusion in the fact of academic levels, different physical abilities. So I think as staff here you need to be aware of those and make sure that we **are** giving the right support enabling those children to feel included at all times. And obviously here at [name of school] we have our erm SRP provision erm here so we do have some year 6 children within the provision. So we need to make sure that we are, that they feel part of the SRP but also part of their home (Q) class too. That means regular contact with their home class teacher and (S) erm wherever possible, in non-covid times, to integrate with their peers in that classroom as much as possible. So we are going to set up from next term video questions to send to each class so they can feel included that way.

(3)

Thank you. And that sounds like an interesting idea. . .

Erm, I think with year 6 obviously you need to think about transition with them. **So** making sure they feel included within that process of transition. So that means all members of staff, like all <u>secondary schools, (BL – hand up).</u> all working together as a team to make sure that those children have the same opportunities. It's also the transition to our school, especially if the child is year 6. Often they have also been out of education for quite a while as well.

Yeah, so making sure they feel supported in every way really.

So yes, support, smooth transitions. Really good communication and making sure everything is in place to support that child, be it in the SRP or in their mainstream classroom. That's really important, again especially in year 6 as it is so near to the end of their time in primary.

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as an SRP CT every day?

I think that some of the barriers erm, are due to children's behaviours and risk assessments. I think that definitely can be a barrier, because you need to always think of safety as **paramount** and sometimes due to children's **safety** we have to make decisions where maybe they can't be included in a certain way. But we always try and come across those barriers and try and find alternate ways for them to be included **in** something, it might not be **exactly** the same activity but it would still encompass the same. So we try and look at it that way. Erm, we try and provide, make sure they're included in absolutely everything we do as a school. So if it's school trips they're included, erm swimming for instance they're included. We try and facilitate that whether it means putting on extra staff, asking parents to help and support. I think that is what we try to do. Obviously there are always going to be barriers but we try and look at them and try and problem solve as best as we can and come across those things and deal with them effectively so they're not, they don't feel excluded from anything.

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

I think it's always hard isn't it. I'm not a massive fan of erm <u>testing in schools. (spoken quietly)</u> I'm just not a massive fan of it.

(6)

You mention you are not a massive fan . . .

I think that children feel an immense amount of **pressure** <u>to (S)</u> reach a certain target and I think that sometimes when they know they're not going to reach that target I think, no matter how much work we put in to support them, they're always going to feel a little bit like they've failed. So I think that can have an impact on their **wellbeing** moving forward. Erm, but I do understand that we <u>have to test children (BL- hand up)</u> and things like that, that is the way we do it in this country. It can be even more challenging for our children in the SRP because they already have additional challenges in their life, be that academic or social or emotional. Erm, but yeah I think we have to be very mindful of those children and very supportive in every way that we can be. But not necessarily it shouldn't hold them back. If the support's in place, then they should flourish just like any other child.

Thank you. My last question is . . .

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Erm, I'm not a massive fan of them to be honest. Erm, I think it puts a massive amount of **stress** on children at quite a **difficult** point in their life anyway. They're growing, they've grown so much during their time in primary school. They've got a **big** milestone of moving to a new a new placement where they don't potentially they **don't know** anybody. Their whole support network that they've built on for their last 6 years or whatever has now gone. So I think SATs is another **added** pressure. Err, we could be doing teacher assessments rather than erm, putting children through a really big pressure.

Thank you. Would you like to revisit any of your response or add any further detail?
Yes. I understand that there might need to be some formal assessments, but I do think it does put an awful lot of pressure on children at a quite young age, when they've got lots of exams and stuff to come in the future. It's an added pressure that they don't necessarily need at age 11.
Thank you.
TASK
(task completed without comment)
Thank you, is there anything –
No, I think that's it, thanks.
Thank you very much for taking part, it is much appreciated.
Duration: 12mins19 secs

Participant H			
Date:- 17.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** AHT & Yr6 CT	**Years in Education:** 11

Erm, it means that everyone who erm has whatever need they have are actually their needs actually are met within whatever setting it is. It can be a classroom, it could be you know the general school setting, erm, it could be any setting in society really. It's just making sure that the needs of whoever it is are met.

Thank you. My next question was . . .

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Erm

So if you're thinking about a school setting, it's thinking about erm the planning you would put in place for a child, or even an adult in your school setting that means that their need has been looked at and any kind of intervention or provision has been planned for.

In society, if you think about inclusion I think sort of about not just inclusion for erm a physical need or a err(S) academic need it's about thinking about what you know people with social groupings. Making sure all aspects in society that different social groups are given erm equal opportunity, which doesn't necessarily mean they're all doing the same thing, it means they are being provided with the opportunities to do anything anyone else could do.

Thank you.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Erm, I'd say that if you're thinking about the end points that the child needs to get to at the end of primary school, at the end of key stage 2, that's err a really strong focus for a year 6 team. So, inclusion is about making sure that every child in that class has the chance to make the **progress** that is possible for them. So it doesn't mean it's necessarily to

academic level that they're reaching, but it's from their starting point and making sure they are able to reach an end point which is in line with their starting points. So it kind of goes hand in hand really with progress and inclusion.

If you're thinking about erm(S), the ability to the the or if you have the right provision for a child then they can make the progress that is expected or even more than that. So inclusion in a year 6 classroom should look the same as inclusion in a year 5, year 4, year 3, year 2, year 1, reception and nursery. It shouldn't be any different. The planning for provision should be exactly the same. It's just thinking about the focus often for a year 6 teacher is on the end point, the end of key stage 2 levels. So that's always a consideration for planning intervention is the thing that I would say that Year 6 teachers have to balance.

Thank you. So you're saying about having the right provision in place for the child. . . .

Yes.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Erm, it's about the, erm where you place erm adult support. Erm, the planning you would put in place in terms of the actually level you are providing a child. Erm, the from a class teachers point of view being able to analysis the gaps that a child has so you can then see what they need to be able to do to be included amongst the rest of the children. Some will need extra help, training. Erm, think of anything else.

You mentioned in Year 6 the focus is often on the end point. . .

Yes, so it is a balance. You have to prioritise focus, and often it's on the children on the CUSP.

Thank you.

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a Year 6 CT and AHT every day?

Erm, I think **time pressures** and erm, sort of physical, the physical aspect of having staff members is always an issue. That's not an issue that's necessarily restricted to year 6 that's down to the time you have as a class teacher. Erm, it's about prioritising as-

sometimes as well. I feel that erm, if there is a particular end point that is needed for certain children that you have to make a call as a class teacher, whether that's as year 6 or not actually, you have to make a call where that provision goes. And I think that there are needs across the class that you know that are so wide spanning that at times it is difficult to meet the needs of all children at all times. So a particular term might need a particular focus. Erm, if you're thinking academically about you know having a focus on reading so erm. I'd say that's a bit of a barrier in the sense that you can't do everything all of the time. I suppose would be the point I'm trying to make.

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Erm, I think that as a year 6 teacher you have to think about the fact that they are moving onto a new setting and that does that does mean they need to be academically ready. But it also means that they need to be have the right level of **emotional** understanding. They need to have the right level of social erm, skills. They need to make sure that they have erm, organisational skills. So all the things that are not to do with being able to read, write and add up, times and whatever in maths, those are the things that are equally important. So, I'd say that a child would have a barrier if they do not have some of those skills, not necessarily the academic skills. So if you're thinking about the actual assessment, there are child who won't meet the required level but that will be successful when they go onto secondary school and will be successful when they leave school, and leave education, because they have a particular drive, they have erm, the ability to communicate with others, they have particular passions that they're interested in which might be the thread that they follow. Erm, and we do not assess those things through formal national testing. And I think that there are many cases where children are going to be incredibly successful because they have all those other skills.

Erm, so I think that I really do believe that you have to be academically ready to move on from primary school because a child that can't read to a fluent standard will really, really struggle not just in the next part of their education, but they'll struggle in their adult life. Erm, and there are other aspects of the curriculum, like mathematical aspects where it is really important that they have an understanding of those skills. Erm, and even if that's just the understanding of being able to know what the processes are, not necessarily being able to do them all erm, based on mental methods or based on written methods, but to know what those processes are is going to be **really** important for later life. But I'd say the biggest thing for me with a child being successful is them being, erm, emotionally literate and being able to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses so that they then can pursue the things that they are good at, erm, which I feel would lead to them making kind of good choices in the future thinking about later life choices.

Thank you. My last question is

7) What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Erm, I think that erm, as a form of assessing children it is a – I believe that assessment is **really, really** important and I think that a formal, national way of testing I understand the point of it. But I think that the erm, the accumulation that comes with year 6 of the previous 3 years and then 4 years including year 6 is **not** (BL – hand up) the right way to test because erm, there is I believe an attitude in schools, and I think it is amongst teachers that the end point of year 6 is where the work is done and that there is not necessarily as much need to get children to exactly that point and be really, **really rigorous** with your assessment in the previous 3 year groups. If we're thinking about key stage 2. And I think that that is very dependent on the teacher, you can have great teachers who can assess very accurately, but I think there is a tendency not to have as much of a focus on the previous 3 year groups which I think means that progress can look amazing in year 6 and that's because of the focus towards the test. And I think that that progress is slightly

deceiving. I think almost, not it's fake progress, I can't think of the right way of phrasing it but it's almost like it's erm, it's **intense** progress that is not necessarily going to be sustained over time. Whereas, if there was as much of a focus in the previous 3 year groups you would have you would have had this sustained, <u>really deep (S),</u> **progress** that means that children are able to recall all of these concepts and ideas and they're completely secure. Erm, whereas I think that the children end up being able to succeed in these SATs tests, but it's a very, it's almost like erm, it has a very short life span that success. It's a **success** for a test point and it's not a success for a longer period of time and I don't think all of those children take those successes with them into secondary school. I think they go with a level and that level isn't always maintained, because it's almost like short bursts that needed that stamina to get to a certain point, erm, rather than being able to really embed some of those skills that maybe they could have done if it was over a longer period. But you've got to make sure the children are ready for the test, it's not a natural way of teaching erm learning, but they've got to do it and we've got to try and minimise effect on a child's well-being by **preparing** them for test conditions.

And of course the SATs are testing English and maths – not art or –

No, and I think that **really** shows a limitation. It's almost setting out for children that these are the skills that are – and they are <u>**high priority skills**</u> (BL – hand up), obviously as I said you know the the ability to move on with - from education with the ability to read is **essential**, but I think it's almost showing them and that if you're only focussing on this on formal testing, the other aspects are not as valuable. And I think it's, I think that really we need to raise the profile of other skills and that might be art and sports and dance whatever it is, but I'm actually thinking raising the profile of even not on subject based skills, things like I said about communication and being able to organise yourself. I feel like those skills need to be given a higher priority to show children that actually to be to succeed in life these are the skills that are going to perhaps give you more capability to manage situations rather than priority of you know those 3 core subjects.

TASK

Barriers to inclusion. Are you thinking about a barrier for their later prospects?

Oh right.

Ok, I've put as the lowest barrier is, maybe I'm thinking along the wrong lines. I've actually put planning at the bottom because I think that because if there's time required for planning that's the job to to plan in and to ensure there is planning there erm, to ensure that inclusion is happening and to ensure that every child's you know gaps are being looked at and needs are met. Erm, so I don't think that's a barrier. I think it would definitely be a barrier if someone can't plan and their planning is ineffective. But if you're thinking of actually the act of planning that's not a barrier.

Erm, err I would say that erm I've then got erm – do you want me to do them in order because I can jump to the top.

Oh ok.

Erm, I've put at the top erm lack of early identification of SEN needs.

(5)

I think this is a big thing for me that I think that if we cannot leave that identification to the last year of primary school those children have far better chances of succeeding. Err, obviously for SEN children in a class have barriers, their specific barriers them, but if the barriers are identified the provision can be put in place. So I'd say the lack of identification is a barrier, not the fact that the child has a SEN need not necessarily the barrier.

Erm, I've then got erm, I did put in-year admission of a child with complex SEN as a barrier as the next highest barrier and the reason I put that down is because it's very dependent upon whether you have the right communication between settings so that child

gets the provision that they need. And it might be that the provision wasn't identified in the previous setting or that it was identified and that the communication hadn't happened and I find that in-year admissions in year 6 can really be **quite** challenging because you don't necessarily get all the information that you need immediately and then there's the pressure that you only have a certain amount of time before they then leave your setting to go to secondary school. So I think that is a barrier.

Erm, and then I've got erm – I put hum – I put attitudes of adults as the next barrier because I kind of think that you as the adult, or the adults in the classroom TAs and class teachers, and actually it doesn't have to be that it can be attitudes of other members of staff SLT as well, is that if there is the attitude that a child can't achieve then the effort is not going to be put in place that they can achieve. And I think that there's a really difficult balance for adults to recognise the difference between progress and attainment. Because if they think oh that child can't actually meet the attainment level the provision then is not surrounding the child to help them to get to a certain level, but it's recognising that actually you need to put the provision around there so that they can make the progress from their starting points. So I think attitudes of adults is a real barrier (BL – head nod).

Erm, which then makes me put key focus on children predicted to pass the SATs as the next one down as that's the same as the attitudes isn't it. If you have got such a focus on only the ones that are going to pass then that means the others aren't going to get the provision that they need erm, and I know that is something that I know that I had in my mind is that you pool your resources around children that can possibly meet a certain attainment level. Erm, and that means that may be some of those children that aren't going to meet that level don't necessarily get the foundation intervention that they need. And that's something we've been thinking about isn't it when we've been thinking about our erm, use of err, adults and TAs next term about yes addressing children who are on the CUSP but then ensuring that you know TAs in class are being able to give those children who are lower and aren't going to meet the attainment level are still getting the

intervention that they need. Not necessarily because they're going to meet the attainment level but because they need to make progress. And also because they have certain needs that need addressing.

Erm, - and then erm, - test readiness as the next **barrier** because it very much depends on whether the children have been given the opportunities to practice the test. And it's not something I really like, if we could strip it back I would, you wouldn't be spending all of that time on test readiness. But unfortunately I don't want to sit a child down in front of a test at the end of their academic year in year 6 and then to not be successful in it, not only in the level, but also be successful in the moment and be upset by it and be stressed by it. So a focus on test readiness is something that teachers need to have but then it's a barrier to other aspects of children's learning and other needs.

Erm, err – mmm I'm struggling to think about SEN funding because I think with SEN funding it is one of those things where if, and it's very much the stipulation of if, things have been done in the past, so if all of the right channels have been followed and the evidence has been collected, if that child need particular funding then they should have it because there should have been the evidence to sort of collate around it. Erm, I think kind of my knowledge of the system means that I know that some children don't necessarily get the SEN funding that they may be should because of the hoops you need to jump through to prove that that child needs the funding. So I'd say that's kind of it is a barrier but put it a little bit lower down because it's very dependent upon whether you've been able to prove it or not.

Erm, and then – being secondary ready I would put – no – SATs tests next. I think that it is a barrier but I think it's very much dependent upon the approach. It's not the actual test that's the barrier it's the attitudes around the test that's the barrier. It's the pressure, it's the erm, reporting of that data, it's the expectation that you have to get a certain number of children there, a certain number of percentages. Erm, it's this concept around national expectation versus school levels. Erm, so I think it's not the test, if that's being a bit picky

about it, it's not the test itself it's the talk around it and the erm status that test is given by erm, the government, Ofsted, whoever is kind of like looking at erm err performance of schools.

Erm, and then I've got being secondary ready next and then national curriculum and then like I said I put planning at the bottom. I say the national curriculum in itself is not a barrier to learning **because** if you are a teacher that can take the national curriculum and develop err lessons that are engaging and that are meeting the needs of children then the national curriculum is not a barrier. I think it's very much erm, if I could add one I'd put, I don't know if I'd phrase it right, but I'd put erm teacher training is a barrier. Erm. If teachers are not trained to plan and assess effectively and that could be early teacher training as in student teachers and also continued teacher training throughout a teacher's career. Erm, so I think those 2 are actually a bigger barrier because if they are done poorly then that's an erm that's one of the biggest barriers I'd say erm to a child's erm inclusion and progress and level of success. Because if the staff member there that's in charge of their education is not adequately trained and equipped then there's no way that that child is not going to make progress.

Thank you very much. Is there anything further –

Just thinking back to your last question

It's progress that is really important

Yes, not the intense, fake(L), run up to SATs progress, but deep progress.

Deep progress . . .

Yes, through time spent on the breadth of subjects. Not narrowed to SATs.

That's it really.

Thank you so much for participating.

5)Lack of early identification of SEN needs

eg: SEN needs not identified prior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)

10)In-year admission of a child with SEN

eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

9)In-year admission of a child with complex SEN

eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

4)Attitudes of adults

eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem

11)Attitudes of adults

eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test

Teacher Training

Continued teacher development

12)Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS

eg: additional input rates for children within it's group

2)Test readiness

eg: a key focus on preparation for SATS test

8)SEN funding

eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum

1)Year 6 SATS test

eg: the test itself

3)Being secondary ready

eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7

6)National curriculum

eg: the content of the curriculum

7)Planning

eg: time required for planning

Duration: 28 mins.

Date:- 17.12.20	Consent Form Signed: Y	Position: PPA CT	Years in Education: 13

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Erm, I, it means including everybody of all race, sex, erm, <u>ability, (BL-shoulder shrug)</u> so they're all able to access **what** everyone's doing. Everybody is included, but they might need different things so so so there erm can be equal **opportunity** for everybody.

Thank you.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

<u>Erm, gosh.(S)</u> I think, I think it's **varied** I don't think it's erm, I **don't (S)** erm see it as being inclusive <u>everywhere you go (BL – hands up).</u> I think there are areas where you erm notice the <u>difference (BL – hands up)</u> in people. I think schools are really good at inclusive practice. Erm, but I'm not sure it's the same when you go <u>outside (BL-hands up)</u> of a certain environment.

Thank you. You mention it is perhaps not the same when you go outside . . .

Erm, yes (4) people, some, don't always act inclusively – they may say it but not erm do it.

Thank you. Thinking now specifically about year 6.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Erm, I think because the children are slightly **older**, they are, their understandings are **different** to the lower end of the school. So therefore they have, they're more opinionated in the classroom so I don't know, I think as a as a class we try our best to include people, but I think children tend to erm <u>make it more challenging. (BL- nodding and smiling)</u>

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Erm, I think making sure that children are working in mixed ability groups.

(6)

You mention working in mixed ability groups . . .

Erm, because a lot of the time that's when they feel separate from everybody else if they're given different work and things like that. It's like a label. I think and and <u>basically being (BL – shrug)</u> asked and supported in questions when you're in a classroom. So you know a lot of the time they won't put their hands up so may be including them in that way, so they feel part of what's going on.

It's harder with Covid! (L) You can't mix.

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom a PPA CT every day?

Erm, well I don't think for me personally because I have quite a lot of experience with children with special **needs** and abilities. So for me personally, provided I'm given the resources in the classroom that I'm in, quite good at adapting as well. So for me <u>personally (BL – shrug)</u> I don't think there is a problem, but, hopefully I do ok.

Some people might need more support or training.

Thank you. I've only got 2 questions left.

Firstly . . .

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Erm, I don't think it affects their future, because I feel from experience and from <u>my own (BL – hands up)</u> children, having them both gone through that, I feel that not everybody achieves their best in an <u>examination (BL – hand up)</u> environment. So if they don't achieve a high SATs score doesn't mean they're not going to do well later on.

Thank you. My last question is

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

(4) Erm, I'm not sure, it's a hard one <u>isn't it (L),</u> I'm not sure what we achieve by it **personally**.

(6)

You're not sure what we achieve by it personally . . .

I think, I know it's figures that the school (BL – shrug) can use to work on erm, to **hopefully** (BL – shrug) progress. But I do think it's a lot of pressure for children to be put under at that age, **knowing** what lies ahead (BL – hand up) for them when they go to secondary. Because it's quite different and more challenging. It could affect their self-esteem if they feel they haven't done well.

Thank you.

Do you think there is another way for school to, as you put it, get the figures for them to work on?

(5) Erm, yes (5) erm, we assess the children all the time. So, erm, this could (BL – shrug) be used.

TASK

Right to the least. Bear with me then.

Sure thing.

Sorry I'll be with you in a minute.

That's absolutely fine. Take your time.

Can I just ask a question with one of these?

Yes, of course, yes.

There's in year admissions of a child with complex SEN. So would we, would that child have funding if it's complex. They should have funding or not.

However you chose to interpret that is fine.

That's fine. So –

OK.

I'm nearly there.

Oh there's loads of them.

Erm.

Am I doing the highest ones at the top did we say. The first ones yeah.

That would be great, thank you.

OK. That's what I'm trying to do.

I am there.

OK I think I'm there.

Which one did you feel was the greatest barrier to inclusion?

Erm, I said erm I said number 10 the in-year admissions of a child with SEN coming into year 6. Because we don't know, I know we get the paperwork, but we don't really know that much about the child, their abilities and year 6 is really quite a key year for them moving on. So yeah, that would be my top one.

And then I've put secondly I've put erm, early identification of SEN needs because if people aren't **aware** or you know, you've got people working with children who aren't able to spot things. Because a lot of the time you are reliant on people coming to you (BL – hand up) and saying there is an issue with this child and if you haven't got the staff around that are able to identify problems, unless it's been identified for you by someone else, that could be a barrier.

Erm, I've also put attitude of adults quite high up because I think (3) that's quite a big deal. If if people don't understand the child very well erm, and they can't **cope** with their needs, that could be a big barrier towards towards the child.

Erm. National curriculum again is another one because I don't think, as much as we differentiate the work, we still have high expectations of some children that we know are not capable of being what the expectations are. So I think that can be a barrier.

Erm, (4) and funding is another one, because that's a tricky one isn't it. Funding is one I believe to be up there.

Erm, and I and I think **planning** could also be a barrier because I'm very slow at planning.

Erm, and when you're trying to plan for different (BL – hand up) needs and abilities in a

classroom that takes a lot of time, and sometimes the time that you have isn't sufficient to get the best for those children. Erm.

Secondary ready, I'm not really sure about that one. And test readiness, I'm not. They all are they all are barriers to a point, but how much of a barrier it –

Erm, I think the SATs one and the test readiness erm and being ready for secondary school I think they are barriers, but I would put them quite low down (BL – hand points down) because there are other things that I think are more important in getting them there first so.

Thank you is there anything further you would like to add, or would you like to revisit any of your responses.

Yeah, yeah I think that's all of them. Nothing else, thank you.

Thank you. I really appreciate your participation.

10)In-year admission of a child with SEN
eg: a child with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

5)Lack of early identification of SEN needs
eg: SEN needs not identified prior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)

4)Attitudes of adults
eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem

6)National curriculum
eg: the content of the curriculum

8)SEN funding
eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum

7)Planning
eg: time required for planning

1)Year 6 SATS test
eg: the test itself

2)Test readiness
eg: a key focus on preparation for SATS test

9)In-year admission of a child with complex SEN
eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

12)Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS
eg: additional input soley for children within this group

11)Attitudes of adults
eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test

3)Being secondary ready
eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7

Duration: 10mins. 57secs.

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Participant J			
Date:- 17.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** TA (SRP)	**Years in Education:** 5

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Erm, err inclusion means to me –

Erm, it's when everyone is included.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Erm. Erm. When everyone is included.

Is this what you think it looks like in our society?

Not always to be honest. Sometimes (S) people **think** (S) they're inclusive but they're not (BL – hand up) really.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

In the SRP the children have additional needs(BL – hands up) , additional erm, challenges. (5)

Additional challenges . . .

These can lead to behaviours that **exclude** them from the rest of the class. So, erm, for example they may be violent or disruptive. We work as a team to try to support the child through this.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Working as a team. (5)

Working as a team . . .

Knowing that behaviour needs are a form of communication. So, erm trying to understand (BL – hand up) what the child is trying to communicate.

It can be difficult if the child joins in year 6.

(6)

You say it can be difficult if a child joins in year 6 . . .

Yes, because, erm we don't have long with them. There – there's not long to put strategies in place to help them. - And some children, erm, have not been in education for a long time. Like [child's name], he was out of education for a year. That can be very (BL – hand up) **difficult**. It is important to treat each child as an individual, what will work with one won't necessarily work with another.
5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a TA every day?
I think, erm, like I said in the last question. Supporting with behaviour. Especially if they've not been in school for a long time (BL – hand up). (3) Oh and having training, so you erm you know how to support with behaviour.
6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?
Yes, erm, I think it could because secondary schools use these to see where the children are erm at.
7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?
Erm, err, err – I think - I understand we need to test children to see where they are. But it can be really stressful for the children, **especially** (BL – hand up) in the SRP, even though we do practice with them. The teacher does assess the children all the time so it's a shame (BL – hand up) that's not enough, as that's not stressful.
TASK
OK.

Do you want them in a line?

OK

-

Mmm

Definitely in-year admission of a child with complex SEN. Especially in year 6 as there's not much time left to help (BL – hand up) them.

Erm, yes that's my number 1.

Actually, can I put next to this SEN funding. As if there isn't the funding we are limited, especially erm in year erm 6.

Attitudes, those are the same – oh no I see. So yes the attitudes next. How an adult approaches a child can have a big impact and make a big difference – erm, good or erm bad.

-

OK.

-

Ah also as my number one I'm going to put number 5. Because that erm is erm err going to have a big impact in year 6 as there's no time left really.

Erm.

Yes.

-

Those are the main ones for me I think.

Thank you very much. Is there any more detail you would like to add, or any of your responses you would like to go over?

No, I think I'm good thank you.

I really appreciate you participating, thank you for your time.

Duration: 9mins.10secs.

Participant K			
Date:- 18.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** HT	**Years in Education:** 8

Erm, inclusion means that every child erm **and** member of our community to be honest is equally valued, equally involved and has equal access to all aspects of our school life.

Thank you, and -

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

(3) Of my gosh, erm, so for the [school name] demographic do you want me to speak as locally as that?

However you want to take it is fine.

So erm, may be I'll go top to bottom. Nationally, erm I think that some areas of our country are more inclusive than others. I think part of that is demonstrable through erm, our recent Brexit negotiations and back and forth thing. I think there are a set of people, **a percentage** of people, in this country who are very inclusive and tolerant of anybody, no matter their gender, religion, erm, or sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Erm. And equally I think there are a set of people in this country that **do not** value or do not consider those things to be equal, erm and that is a position that makes me personally sad. (BL-nodding) As seen in Brexit.

Erm, within my **local** community I think inclusion is an interesting and varied concept. So obviously as a school not only do we teach inclusion, but we support it and try to forward it in every single means possible. (BL-hands up) Erm. However, we are a homogeneous, white, (BL-hands up) British community with very limited erm, - **otherness** or faiths, or sexual orientation, of ethnicity itself, erm, all those elements you would naturally include in the bracket, (BL – speech marks made with fingers) umbrella term of inclusion. So whilst we as a pillar of our community approach inclusion in a very broad and open way, I can't say that it's necessarily **reflected** in the people and practices we see around us.

So, we've got both the national and the local level going on (BL- hands weighing) there and I think it's important you know that we recognise that [name of town] especially, we have **potentially** slightly a skewed erm interpretation on some elements of inclusion, erm, but as a school we work very hard to overcome (BL-hand up) all of those, erm, perceptions *that children may bring and that staff may bring* in fact, erm, let alone parents. Erm, but then however (BL-hands up) that's not necessarily replicated in the wider environment.

Thank you.

Sorry that's a bit rambely. (L)

Not at all that's a really useful answer, thank you very much.

I'm going to bring it now very specifically into the context of year 6 if I may and ask . . .

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

(4) - no, erm, I think there is a mmm, well partially. Yes to be honest I think there is a particular child who has a behavioural erm, an **SEMH need** and he is identified as an easy target by the other children in the cohort, to (S) lump all of their **problems**, erm their fallouts and any grievances that may have are always this particular child's fault. Erm, and I think that due to his **condition** erm, it's he's an easy target and he will get the reaction that the other children want from that and they are not necessarily that inclusive of him. Erm, we've also had a new girl start, erm, and I think there's a bit of unpicking (BL – hands up) to do there, because she is of a different ethnicity (BL – hands up) erm, and has come to us from **India**. Which is fantastic because of course we embrace and support anybody who comes to us. Erm, **now** whether it's because she's joined at the end of her primary school career or whether she's from a different ethnicity she's found it very hard, despite being a **lovely**, bright, **wonderful** child to converse with to form any strong friendships in the year group. **Now**, I'm not (S) immediately going to jump on the it's because she's a different ethnicity bandwagon because obviously by year 6 most children

have made **very** concrete friendship groups. Erm, but at playtimes it is quite distressing sometimes to see her (3) wandering around the playground by herself. So we've actually ended up forming a little group erm, who have supported play at playtimes and she has wandered over and chosen.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Yes, so I think **positive** affirmations supports inclusion. Where teachers and adults can see that the children aren't able to build these bridges themselves I think that it's really important that they get supported. Erm, intervention with that in whatever capacity that looks like, be it through you know a disability, a lack of perspective on another faith, erm, a behavioural need erm, an ethnicity and like a sexual orientation choice(BL- hand up), whatever it is I think the adults in the room, if the children aren't able or capable or mature enough to make those links(BL- hand up), and those bridges(BL- hand up), themselves I think we have to step in and guide them(BL- hand up), and facilitate(BL- hand up), that. Now I think it's important that we don't **preach** unto them or direct them too, because ultimately these children have formed their life opinions to date from somewhere. And it's often a very challenging time for these children when they have these viewpoints questioned because naturally that brings into play family held (BL-hand up) beliefs and wider societal held beliefs they're suddenly unsure of and that can be quite an emotionally difficult time for these children. So it's it's really important whenever an adult does intervene that it's **really** gently scaffolded and supported. And like I said almost **mediated** and facilitated rather than – you will go and work with this person and you will do this (BL – hand up) and so on and so forth, because you know children resent that they're struggling with an internal imbalance (BL-hands up) they need to address already between a erm, societal acceptable (BL-hands up) view point of certain things and perhaps their family members or whoever may hold different beliefs to the social norms as it were. And that can be quite a challenging time so it's about **honesty**, **fairness** and facilitation I think. In my opinion.

Erm, probably (L), erm. I'd like to say from a school and a **teaching** point of view I **don't see** any barriers within school. What I do see is what I've basically just talked about where children and parents bring (BL-hand up) their own opinions, which they are entitled to, but I don't necessarily, or we as educators don't necessarily agree with, or potentially actually cannot support. Erm, when they bring those attitudes and opinions into the school environment it can become very **confrontational**, it can become aggressive and it can become **very hard** to(S) make, but erm well you can't make, but do you show these people that there is an alternate and **valid** point of view. Erm, especially with some of the families who are from particular backgrounds (BL-hand up), for example traveller backgrounds – one or two families here who are of a particular background **really** aren't interested in how we perceive things or alternate (BL-hand up) perceptions. They have quite openly expressed to us **this** is what we've taught our families and **that** is what we're going to stick by and **that is that** and if you don't like it **tough**. Erm, so that as a **leader** can become quite challenging to work with (S) in terms of getting people to tolerate or **accept** alternate points of view.

But from our children themselves, with the children we currently have in school erm, I don't think there are any massive barriers.

Now I have had previous cohorts (BL-hands up) if you want me to talk about them, where there have been some **immense** barriers. So last year's year 6 for example, erm, we did have one erm (S), black boy and he was **subject** to racist abuse by erm 2 or 3 of the cohort. And it actually ended up that we had to get the police involved erm, to (S) show them the severity of these, err, you know (BL-hands up) their actions basically. Because we tried mediation (BL- hand up), we tried facilitating face to face meetings with the children and the parents of the child, we tried all the resources (BL-hand up) that were

available to us as a school. Erm. But actually, because of the challenging nature of the characters in this **cohort** and they did have **severe** SEMH needs erm, - they err they (S) almost take a perverse **delight** in being deliberately provocative (BL-hands up). So we decided to go down the line of police involvement (BL – hand up) in the end to show them that not only do we take this **incredibly seriously**, because everyone is equally valued here, but this is the kind of trouble you can actually get into from this kind of erm, abuse because it's not tolerated and it's not legal. Erm, and I think then there was not only an in school (BL-hand up), I think with some of our challenging characters there's a notion of oh well it only matters in school it doesn't matter outside and actually by bringing the outside community in and saying no it's not a school thing it is **the law** there was suddenly some real life implication there. I think that can be a challenge for some of our **children**, especially (BL-hand up) if it's well my mum doesn't say that, it's not the same at home, I don't get that outside (BL- shoulders shrugged) so this must be a school rule (BL- speech marks made with fingers) and not a real rule and I think that would probably be the biggest barrier for us.

Thank you.

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

(6) No. Erm. No, my, my(S) personal take on SATs, being an ex-year 6 teacher is that basically they're just for the purpose of ranking schools according to a government inspector. The secondary schools in the area don't put any value by them. They use their own CAT tests when every child gets into school and have a look at the child's needs based on their abilities of the times. So I **don't** think that whatever grading these children get in their SATs in the end of year 6 has **any (S) relevance** to their later life what so ever. I mean obviously I didn't personally undertake year 6 SATs tests (BL-hands up) so erm, so I can't speak of experience at a primary level. But I did do the year 9 ones and they had absolutely **zero impact** upon my further life. Erm, and I would very much **wish** and **hope**

and **that** same notion <u>applies to every year 6 child here. (BL-hand up)</u> I would just caveat that with the SATs tests relative matter relatively little, but I think in [county name] the 11 **plus** matters a great deal. And I think that the outcome of <u>that (S)</u> would have a **potential** impact on **any** child's future not just in terms of children who aren't expected to achieve that level. But in terms of SATS, no, I don't think it matters one jot.

My last question is . . .

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

How, how blunt can I <u>be? (L)</u>

This is anonymous so you can be as blunt as you like.

Utterly pointless. **Utterly** pointless. I wish they would do away with them like they did away with key stage one this year. And that is my gut is that they are now done with key stage one. Which is only the best for the children. **What** is the point of having these children jump through hoops that they will **never** use again and **not only that** but the data doesn't transfer appropriately to secondary schools. So none of the secondary school colleagues that I talk to, and I do have a lot good friends in local secondary schools, either **know** their children's year 6 SATs data or *care about it,* because **how** they teach and **what** they teach at secondary school is **completely** different to what we teach at primary school. So the <u>hoops (BL-hand up)</u> they get them to jump through to get them to <u>a secondary ready standard (L)</u> actually put them far in surpassment of what they need to do to achieve at the end of year 7, especially in writing.

Erm, so I do agree there is you know, a a need for a child to be ready for secondary school. But I don't agree that an **arbitrary value** that's achieved through a <u>2 hour (BL-hand up)</u> paper in the middle of May is an indication of that child's ability.

<u>Sorry. (L)</u>

Don't apologise. Thank you. All responses are really helpful to my research. I appreciate your honesty.

Ah I should have used these in my answers (looking at cards).

From a **SEN** angle (5) I would say (8) number 1 is the biggest barrier. Erm. (pointing to SATs card)

(5)

The year 6 SATs test?

Yeah, **because**, (6) (sigh) *('it's anonymous' said very quietly)* because **everybody** focusses on the kids who are going to make it.

So I think number 2 and number **12** are kind of interlinked for me, because test readiness we focus on the kids who are going to get there. We don't worry too much about the kids who aren't going to get there because they're not going to get there. (Q)

But that's not the same as being secondary ready. I **really**, I kind of have to caveat that because to be secondary ready you need to read and write, you need the 4 operations and basically you need to be able to compute them and that is not the same as jumping (BL-hands up) through hoops to get through a SATs test.

OK, so I'd say number 1 comes first for me, the greatest barrier. Then number 2 and 12. (BL-hands up) Err second.

-

Oh I would say number **9** and **10 third** – **because** if you don't have enough time to unpick necessarily (BL-hands up)– depending upon what's come to us and what we already know and what we get given we don't necessarily have the time and the money and the resources to unpick and put in place adequate support. (BL-hands up) So we all know that high needs funding you know for example takes 6 to 8 months at the moment. It's completely ridiculous. So you know if we get a child through that needs that support, and will flourish with that support, we don't have time mid-year to put that into place. So we do it with this oh well it will get them ready for secondary school hat on, but it doesn't help

them be ready for (4) I don't want to say the SATs, but the SATs basically. So it sets them up to **fail** before they even have a chance.

Erm, right behind that comes the SEN funding I think.

Erm, is this just for my particular context or is this a general thing.

However you want to take that.

OK, yes so for my context (5) I **don't** think the rest are massive barriers. Erm, but I'm being very specific to my school there because I have **fantastic** (BL-hand up) year 6 team who **don't** <u>treat any (S)</u> individual differently. And in fact if they have an ability need, SEN need, or an <u>ethnicity, identification, gender, (BL-hand up)</u> whatever type of need they have they're almost positively **affirming** rather than creating barriers there. So I can't that attitudes of adults, planning, the national curriculum or lack of identification of SEN needs **are** massive barriers with the support that these children are given. Erm, because they are given the best opportunity to work at their stage not their age no matter what that is. And all children are allowed to flourish in year 6 here erm, within the constraints of the test.

I **firmly believe** that every child leaves us secondary ready. So I actually don't think **that's** a massive barrier at all for us. <u>I would put that like **last**</u>. (BL-hand up) Erm, I **do believe** they leave us ready to go onto secondary school like <u>emotionally, socially and academically within their own remit. (BL-hand up)</u> But within the remit of the test, no. So it depends if you're coming at it a **generally** secondary ready or a **government** test based secondary ready angle there.

Erm, **nationally** I think I would rank those differently. For my school I think **that's** how I'd rank them.

Out of interest, erm, nationally which do you feel would be the biggest barrier to inclusion?

-

I **still** think the test comes <u>at the top. (BL-hand up)</u> But I would present the attitudes of adults in **some** areas **higher**, higher on my list, not as high as test readiness. So I think my top 3 would stay the same, but I would put in some areas attitudes of adults because
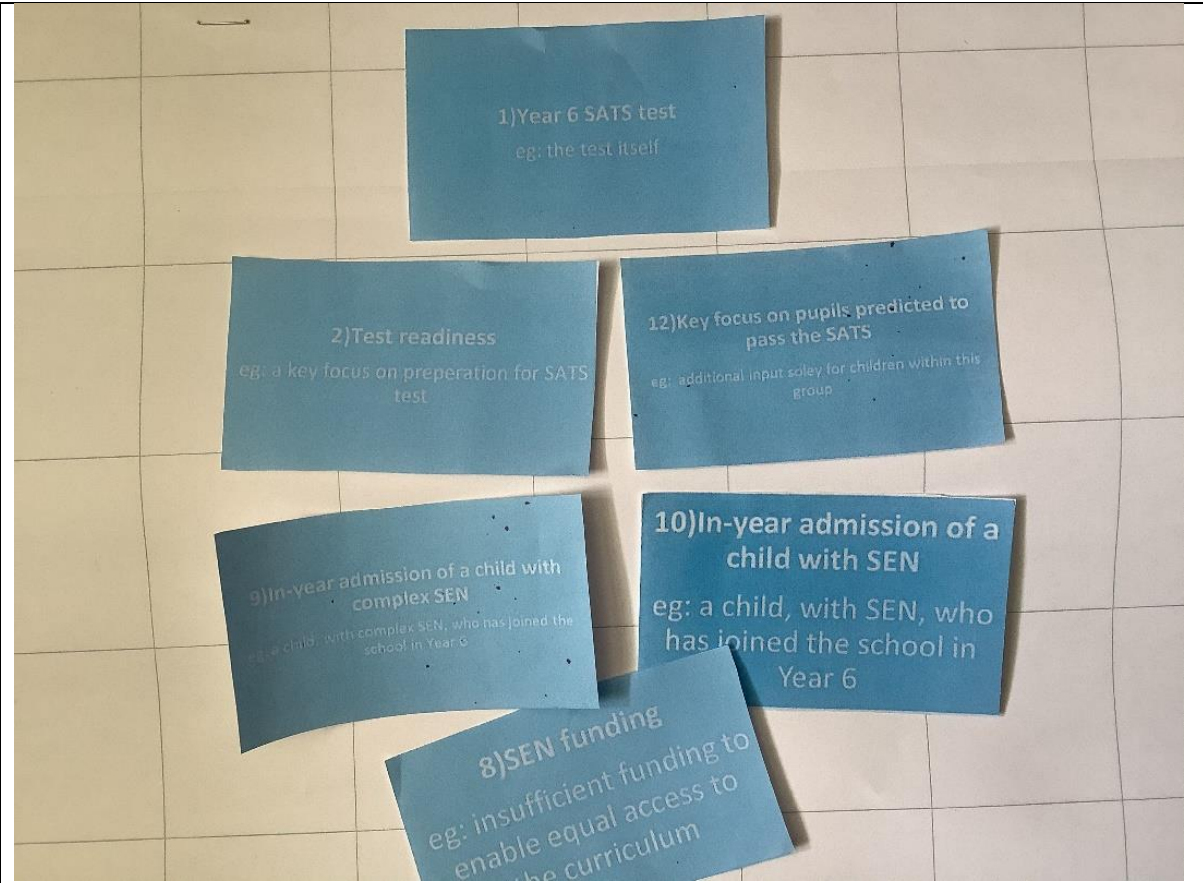
that's (BL-shoulder shrug) the like oh well they're not going to pass (BL- hands up) so we'll just leave them alone. **And** I I don't think that's right, and I actually **don't think** my team does that here.

So I think there is the differential. (BL – hand up) I obviously don't know sort have not been into every single school in the country, but nationally I think negative attitudes of adults **or** (S) you know erm, homophobic, racist attitudes of adults or singular Christian or sorry singular faith attitudes (BL-hands up) of adults will have a detrimental impact on children who do not share those identity or erm, beliefs or aspirations of the adults in the room. Erm, so yeah I don't think the national curriculum or planning constrains (S) adults or children in any way because it's a broad and balanced curriculum. So every child should be able to access **something** at their level. But erm, yeah I think the attitudes of the adults would come much higher for me. (S)

Thank you so much for your participation. Is there anything else you would like to add, or any responses you would like to revisit?

No thank you, I think I've said enough already (L).

Thank you again for taking part and supporting me with my research.

Duration: 25mins. 50secs.

Participant L			
Date:- 22.12.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** Yr6CT	**Years in Education:** 5

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Equal opportunities so all can be included. Equal opportunities not necessarily that everyone has the same, because erm, to have equal erm, opportunity some will need more erm help or support – or it might be different resources in school.

Thank you.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

The same, again erm it's about equal opportunities. Children's needs.

(5)

Do you think that happens in our society?

In some respects, yes, but not as much as it erm (S) should. Black lives matter shows that, the need for it.

(5)

Thank you. My next question is specifically about year 6 now . . .

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

At the age the children are in year 6 they have formed strong friendships usually and can have set erm opinions. So erm this can mean it can be difficult when a new child starts – we erm have to be aware erm of that – and erm make sure we support friendship groups if erm needed.

(5)

You mentioned set opinions. . .

Erm, yes, erm these might be from home and erm might not be inclusive. This has come up in the relationships aspect of PSHE – you know learning about different types of families.

Erm, mmm –

Supporting, enabling – helping the children to understand what inclusion means. How it's part of our school values – friendship, truth etc.

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a year 6 class teacher every day?

Erm, mmm - -

Well, mmm, year 6 has a big focus on SATS unfortunately. It's a fact.

(6)

You say unfortunately . . .

Yes, erm, because, erm, it erm, can mean that there's a lot of erm attention on children on the CUSP, not on those who won't make it. There is definitely a pressure - - on the children - - and the teaching team.

And as I said already a barrier can be strong opinions that erm, might not be, aren't what we erm would promote as erm a school or erm Trust.

Thank you. I have only 2 questions left .. .

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

None –

Erm (5) I say this because secondary schools re-test, they erm CAT test. So they don't use the SATS at all.

(5)

If SATS aren't used by secondary schools what is their purpose?

To judge schools! (BL-slammed table) It's all about erm league tables isn't it.

It's just a **pressure**(S) –

For the children and erm the teachers – and erm (3) TAs.

Ah, you might have guessed I don't rate them! <u>Can I be honest (L).</u>

This is anonymous, so please do feel free to be as honest as you like.

There's such a focus on passing SATS –

Getting erm the right percentages - - time could be better spent couldn't it. You **cannot** have a broad and balanced curriculum and the **pressure** on SATS.

So erm yes **of course** it is a **barrier** erm to inclusion.

There should be more **trust** for teacher assessment and ongoing formative assessment, including the use of tests, but to inform and actually have an impact on children's learning.

Thank you.

TASK

Any order?

Yes, from the greatest barrier to inclusion to the least, but feel free to display it in any order you like.

Erm, mmm, ok –

-

So in that case the year 6 SATS test, test readiness and the key focus on the pupils predicted to pass the SATS are my top, all my top 3.

Then

Then

OK, yes, erm, then (<u>3</u>) attitudes – both – these can have a huge impact on children. I'm really lucky with my erm TA.

Number 5 – because erm, if SEN needs have not been identified before, is this before year 6? Before year 6 there's no time left before secondary erm, transition. So if erm you've got an Autistic child for example, who erm, erm needs support there may not be enough time.

-

Erm, mmm, then, then in-year admission of a child with complex SEN. Again, in year 6 there's limited time if things aren't already in place.

Then I'm going to put the one for children with SEN and the funding. Funding probably won't come in time for year 6.

-

I don't think planning is a barrier because erm that's just part of the job isn't it. Time (5)

Time?

Yes, for planning, but it's just part of erm the job.

The national curriculum isn't a barrier, but as I said teaching it all with erm the erm erm focus on SATS is a challenge.

Thank you very much. Would you like to go over any of your responses, or is there anything else you would like to say.

No thank you. It's been really interesting. Thank you.

Thank you for your time and participation, much appreciated. Thank you.

1)Year 6 SATS
eg: the test itself

2)Test reading
eg: a key focus on preparing for the test

12)Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS
eg: additional input solely for children within this group

4)Attitudes of adults
eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self

11)Attitudes of adults
eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test

5)Lack of early identification of SEN needs
eg: SEN needs not identified prior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)

9)In-year admission of a child with complex SEN
eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

8)SEN funding
eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access

10)In-year admission of a child with SEN
eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in

Duration: 28mins45secs

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Participant M			
Date:- 25.9.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** Acting HT (LP)	**Years in Education:** 13 (2 as a TA)

Urm so to me it means (S) that all children urm have the same sort of level of opportunity and erm things are put in place to ensure that all children are able to be part of the the learning community.

Erm, so like in school or just in life, in life?

However, you would like to take that.

In life erm so I guess (S) it would be everybody no matter who they are, their background erm are able to have the same opportunities and are able to participate in society so you know like erm me having [area of need] that you know there's, you know there's like uni they've put things in place so that I can still access things in a level playing field along with everybody else.

Thank you.

I don't think erm I don't think completely. No I think there is still erm a glass ceiling for some people erm. (3) I think perhaps there's still some, I think sometimes (S) people's **attitudes** might erm become a barrier (BL – hand up) as well for people to become **completely**(BL – hand up) inclusive. Erm perhaps some, getting political, perhaps there might be some **cuts** (BL – hand up) and things like that that might be limiting (BL – hand up) how much everybody can actually feel part of society (BL – hands up). Erm or **fee**l like they are having things put in place to ensure they can be as included as they would like to be, so that the same, so that **everybody** gets the same opportunities (BL –hand up) to do that.

Is there that ceiling in school do you think?

(10) I I think it <u>depends on the school (L).</u> Erm, I think it it I think it can be a ceiling, I think it can depend on erm. It can depend on lots of things. It can depend on err money, erm, it can depend on the attitudes and feeling of teachers, support staff, headteachers, erm, err it can depend on, even things like err potentially parents and other children as well. Erm, so I think yes, there is.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Erm, oh <u>gosh(L)</u> I think there's a lot for year 6. I think it's a really difficult time, because it's a transition year so I think erm, I think in terms of you've got the getting ready for secondary school and you know there are you know some children who will need more support with that than perhaps I think all children need support, but there are some children that will need more support with that and again I think a good example would be [teacher's name] here who has done an awful lot with secondary schools <u>pulling out (L)</u> pulling out the children that are going to need more support as having those links with secondary school. You might have a different teacher that isn't quite as pro-active and that could erm that could definitely be limiting for them. Erm, SATs as well. I think that can be a big barrier to inclusion because I think it can become quite focussed on erm, on (L) results and that can mean that erm certain children who aren't fitting the criteria of gonna make the results end up not being included erm at all and you know there's that physically not included so you know having to go out so people can focus on these children there's also that feeling of not being included as well.

(6)

Not being included as well. . .

Erm, so I think those are 2 of the big things. I think as well that the thing in year 6 I found is that they are starting to get to that teenagy phase, so that they are starting to become very aware of themselves and they are very aware of where they are in relation to other

children. So I think it's difficult as well as they become very aware if they are different. Erm, and they become, it's an age where you actually want to be the same as everybody else as well (L). So erm I think it's a really difficult year group, there's quite a lot of barriers that can be there for inclusion.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Erm, (10) I think like before I think if teachers erm it's about teachers being really aware of the children who are going to need more support with being included. So erm I think it's if if the SATs isn't the only sort of concern, I think there are ways around doing it and making children feel successful and included. So it could be erm things like if everybody (3) is doing testing or something like that I know that some people have given something that everyone can access. So it might be a different paper or something like that, you know, so that then they can feel like they're part of things. Cos I know there's been times when certain children are sent out and erm but actually if they want to be part of it as well. Erm, I think it's that (2) like before communication with secondary schools. Getting children ready for that. Erm, (8) thinking (5) I think it's the erm, I think it's having that awareness, I think it's with the teachers if they have that awareness of what the children need to be included and feel included. So that can be erm, it can be from the kind of emotional point of view as well, or anxiety felt. So things like erm, like thinking about individual behaviour things like that. Erm, (3) yeah it's about that individuality I think. That understanding it very much comes down to the individual classes and using the kind of erm the specialist knowledge in your school I guess to support you in doing that.

But I'm not sure, I'm trying to think, I'm not sure there'd be kind of (2) a blanket thing I think it would be dependent on your class or maybe the blanket thing is the mind-set of erm having the err expertise to be able to recognise what is needed and how you can facilitate that and who you can talk to.

Yeah, definitely, I think erm (2) 1 of the challenges I find is that when I'm going to support a teacher with a class erm I I usually don't know the class and even an example would be that erm I'd sit down with a teacher and look at assessment and come up with a lesson together and I'd err talk to them about it and what the children and what might be needed for the children in that class. However, if if the teacher's assessments and understanding of the class aren't sound to start with, it can mean actually then when I'm teaching I can indirectly, but accident, not be inclusive as well. Erm, so I think there's there's definitely that side of it. Erm, I think so I think in terms of the children it can be quite tricky because erm, because I can sort of (3) and I think the amount of time as well to really get to know erm a class of children really well erm and to really understand their needs sometimes I don't have that much time with a class. So that can make it erm that can make it trickier as well. Erm, erm and I think sometimes too the in terms of working with teachers as well, you know thinking about them being included in the kind of feeling that they have erm as good as chance as possible to feel included too, is again it's time time can be an issue with that I think. It can be something that can be quite difficult. And I think the other the other thing is in terms of training and things like that so if I can do training in something to do with [subject area], erm but (3) if somebody could take that idea away and and if I'm doing some training it's quite blanket – it's quite big this is some good practice and erm if it's taken back and not erm adjusted, adapted with the children in the class in mind erm some of the erm some of the practices could be quite excluding. For example, erm [aspect of subject area], erm that could be excluding for quite a few children who don't like to err to do that sort of thing or they don't or they might be select not to speak or they might find it overwhelming having the visual and erm so I think potentially I could create some problems that way. Erm and I guess that the err err the way around that would be having

some kind of **disclaimer**. Erm throughout perhaps to remind teachers to have a look at that and err seek support depending on the children in their class.

Yeah, **definitely**. I think I think for a start I think erm not I think you've got kind of the academic side and then I think you you've got the **emotional** side as well. I think if you feel if you feel like a failure when you are that young, you take that with you erm and it and it can, can't say for everyone, create a bit of a ceiling of how you view yourself and what you can achieve. Self-esteem is so important. Erm, I think (2) definitely when not expected it depends as well erm I think when they then go to secondary school there's probably a bit of a label there as well that (3) you know I'd like to think not but err potentially there might be. Erm and there's definitely huge ramifications if they're not erm able to err to do the kind of standard of reading, writing, maths that you need to access the secondary school curriculum. I think first of all it means they're going to be behind in those things which we know impacts GCSE, A-Levels, baccalaureate and then jobs. Erm but I think it also, I know that in secondary school if they are behind in those things they have remedial sessions in them. Erm and that can pull them out of other subjects. So you could have a child who's, you know, going to be an excellent scientist(S) but they're having to be pulled out to do remedial reading, they don't have the mathematical skills(S) to be able to do the erm the graph work(S), erm so I think it can have **real implications** not only for those kind of core subjects but because of the way secondary school works, it can limit their opportunities to excel in other areas as well, or even just access they don't need to excel, they might enjoy something erm and and they don't get so I think for their wellbeing as well. So I think erm they they really do need to be able to access everything. Erm, yeah.

I personally don't like them. I think there are other ways that we can erm do what the SATs want to do (sigh). In terms of the children the reasons that are put forward for the kids is that they have them erm for secondary school, erm in secondary schools they usually do CATs testing anyway as soon as they get in so I think it's a bit **redundant**. The only reason I think erm secondary schools err would look at them is in terms of the progress markers they have to make in the same way that we do. But again (BL – hand up) I think (4) I think erm sometimes there's not enough credit it's almost like the secondary schools teachers will give up (L) because they're not they don't have that marker that they've got to make and I think there's other ways to do that. Erm I think it is I think it **narrows** the curriculum in year 6. I worry that as it's become more of a thing I worry it narrows the curriculum further down the school as well. That it's going to get to the point where we're preparing year 5s for year 6 and then we get to the point where key stage 2 is preparing for year 6 and erm it becomes very much about **testing**. And I think it I think it's almost kind of an old view of things as well that erm (3) that the reason there is it that you test, it's a very filtered down from university kind of thing, you know you know, with the point we're doing this is to get them to practice for GCSEs to practice for A-Levels so they can practice for their degree and that's rather than thinking about what's what's good for them and what's going to useful for them.

And then for the markers of across schools making sure, I know it's an accountable thing, again I think there's other ways of being able to do it. But I I just think erm I think it's very stressful (BL – hand up) for the kids. Erm erm depending again it depends on the children. Again it depends on the teacher. I think I think it's stressful whichever teacher if they're aware of it. Erm I think it can become particularly erm it's all about the SATs and really stressful and the idea that this 1 test that you get this label you're not expected of this, as adults hopefully we can look at that and know that's not the case. But I think when you're

10 years old, erm that can feel really really massive. So I think it's just an unnecessary erm I I just don't think they are necessary I think there are others ways that we could do it err that are less err (3) invasive and and

It's just about judging schools. It's an unnecessary pressure.

There are other ways.

(6)

What other ways do you think there would be?

I think so like just like kind of shooting ideas out there I think in terms of erm err checking that err that benchmarks (BL – hand up) are being made or that sort of thing I think possibly this year hopefully will show that teacher assessment can be can be quite robust. I think if there was some sort of system a bit like with the writing moderation erm, there was some sort of system like that where's it's was sort of err err a selection of work or a selection of children or pupils or erm were kind of moderated err that would make it I think better.

Erm, I think you could still use testing. It's not necessarily that I am completely anti test whatsoever. They can be useful. Erm but I think if it was not the high-stakes testing and it formed part of what erm part of what they were doing. I think it was I think with the way that Ofsted has gone I it depends on where they are saying the focus isn't so much on data I think that could be a positive thing towards that if that's true. (L) Erm I think it's still waiting to see how realistic that is. Erm but yeah I think but maybe some sort of moderation across things and also I think (3) if things become really high-stakes that does put the **pressure** on people erm (3) becoming very **focussed** on things. I think I think sometimes we need to give teachers more credit for the professionalism that erm that the children will get to where they are supposed to be because that is what we want and I think that school leaders are able to hold people to account. But maybe I've got a bit of a Pollyanna view of the world (L) erm.

That isn't really erm (2) that it has big big big wider ramifications I suppose. If if those tests aren't the results aren't what they're supposed to be. So because of league tables and things like that it's got much wider impact for the child and the school. Err whereas low stakes testing erm having a test in class that the teacher uses to support their assessment. It's not got a big ramification from it – and it has a more positive impact for the child.

Thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to add to any of your responses?

Erm, I don't think so.

TASK

It's quite topical (L).

What one's that?

The attitudes of adults (L).

Mmmm.

I do think attitudes of adults is really really important cos I think it kind of affects the rest of them. Cos I think that can be affected by that. So the national curriculum, the content of the curriculum is affected.

Mmmm that's

That's quite important as well

So it goes down like that (L)

So the biggest barrier is attitudes.

I think yeah, and then going like that way.
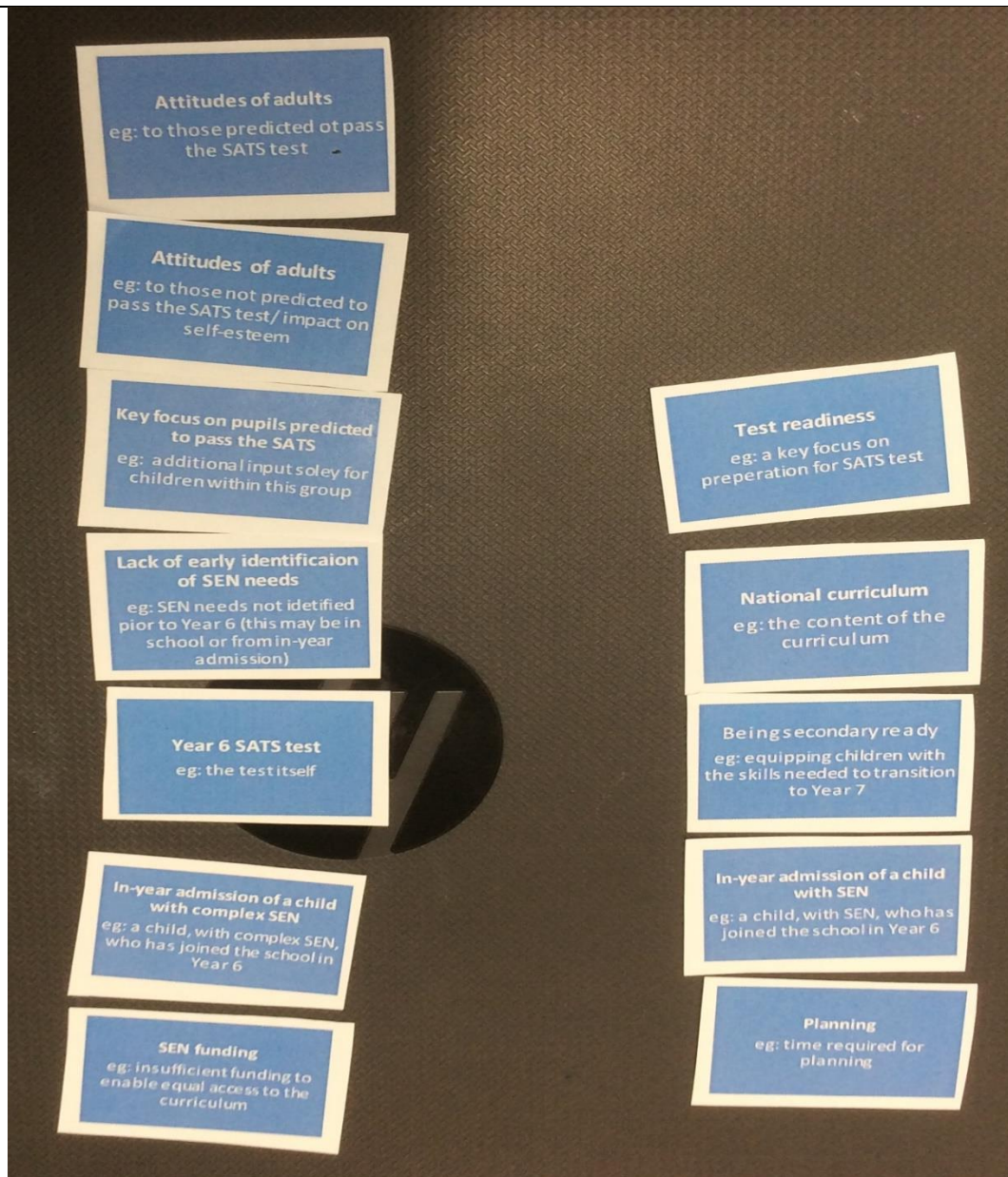
Sure.

OK.

I think

I think

So you've got 2 columns there. Does test readiness follow on from

Yes.

Thank you, would you like to add anything else or revisit any of your responses.

No, I don't think so.

Thank you very much for your time.

Participant N			
Date:- 25.9.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** AHT SENDCO Yr6CT	**Years in Education:**16
1)What does inclusion mean to you?			

What does inclusion mean to me erm.

Erm, erm, erm.

Ensuring we cater for all children, so that everybody can do their best. Erm I've been in so many schools and classes where in the past they've said 'oh well you can't expect much from them' and I think don't think you should ever … you can ever say that… because I've seen some amazing things from children who've been written off. Erm and in fact when I was at school I left school without a single exam, I didn't get a single GCSE when I left secondary school and erm my English teacher entered me into some English lesser type degree at the time and said 'well at least you'll get something out of it.' So yeah inclusion means making sure that everybody can learn.

It [name of school] was somewhere to go to meet my friends.

When you say you feel some children have been written off in the past with some people you've worked with. What do you think leads some practitioners to write children off as you say?

Erm, I think sometimes teachers look at the label rather than the child. Erm, I must admit I try not to, when I've got a class coming up I try not to look at what the last teacher says I usually put that in the cupboard until I've made my own, because you you can be swayed by the label that is put on the child. Sometimes erm I know when I went over to [name of school] before I came here, err the end of the first week I was standing there in front of the class thinking I don't know what to do here, the behaviour was just so erm and you can sometimes look at the behaviour and take that as the child rather than look at the child and realise the behaviour is their way of communicating what they're used to, what they've

got away with, whatever the reason. Erm, it can be easier to just write them off and say that's so and so, so I think that's probably why.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Erm good question.

I like, there's a cartoon I saw that has a tall child and a small child watching a football match or something over a fence and it was - tall child could see over the fence to see the football and the small child couldn't. And the next slide had them getting a box and the small child standing on the box so he could see over it. And the next slide is putting a wire fence so the child didn't have to stand up he could actually see through. So it's a case of do we provide the support to lift them up to overcome that obstacle or remove the obstacle so that everybody can access it. So it's a mixture of both isn't it. It's providing those supports so that we can get them to see, but also thinking about how we can remove that obstacle and make it so that they can access it from where they are. Erm, I think every child, person is capable of great things it's just when they are ready to access that and we need to make sure that we're teaching them as we go along, but ok if you're not ready to access it now here's the skills you'll need and you can use that and you'll be able to fly and just remember that you will that that is the case.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

This year it's going to be extremely tricky and that because of course all children are going to have the added difficulty of 2 terms away from school. I mean we have the summer dip anyway. Having this corona gap I think we're going to have to really look at what each individual child's needs are and we have the luxury of having quite a small year 6. So I have the benefit of really being able to focus on those individual children. But we're going to have to make sure that each child is ready to actually access the year 6 curriculum and make sure that we can, they're not going to get any extra time before they go to secondary school. And we need to make sure they are secure in that basic knowledge. So

inclusion for them is going to be identifying - because I think when we come back no matter what child, for emotional reasons, anxiety, for the fact that they've been away for so long, for some will have been learning at home some won't, each child more than ever before is going to have to be looked at afresh from where they are when they come back. Erm, so inclusion's going to be very different next year to how it's been before and how it probably will be in the future. Erm, luckily we've got a lot of manipulatives and resources that have come in that we can use in class. Erm, and luckily we have the benefit of having a small class which means I can really focus on individual areas that need developing. Erm, but it's going to be a tricky one next year, it really is for year 6 across the board.

If we hadn't had corona what other challenges, if there are any, do you think there might have been for year 6?

Erm, I haven't taught year 6 for a while and I wouldn't … I prefer year 3/ 4 type age groups myself. I think I don't think I don't think being year 6 there's particularly any differences to being in any year group. Inclusion's inclusion and teaching is teaching. Erm, it's gone are the days where year 6 is the panic year and year 6 is the important year when your best teacher goes on year 6 and everything is on year 6. Because you need those building blocks to get you there and each year when you start you've got to make sure you know where they are and where they're going. And we in this Trust, it's so nice to see how it is that each child is valued and each child is. We work so hard to make sure we do identify children's needs and work for the individual and not for a label or a group or a name. So I'm not sure, as I say it's been a while since I've done year 6, I'm not sure that there's anything different to any other year group because we should be doing that all the way though. It's not suddenly panic in year 6 and go we need to throw everything at - if you're throwing everything all resources at year 6 then you've missed something further down. Hopefully.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

It's going to be additional support and intervention.

(10)
5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom in your role as AHT, Yr6CT and SENDCO every day?
Erm, I think you need to make sure you think - at my at my previous school was in [name of town] and they had an err visually impaired unit and it was really interesting - I had erm every time I've moved school I've had to retrain rethink reassess my teaching style. So when I went to that school I realised that I learn by listening, so a lot of my teaching was very verbal, but of course having a blind child at the back of the class that wasn't helping them. So I really had to think about how my teaching would include them. So now my teaching style I usually have a visual and a verbal and it did make me and although we talk about and I thought I was doing it, it wasn't until that I had someone who couldn't see at all erm and likewise when I went out to [name of school], the children there, I had to teach in a completely different style. So it was working at the eye school it was just amazing and seeing how the other children as well, my children went to that school, and it made the children so aware that other children were different.   I did an after school art class one day and it was just a colouring class. One of the blind children signed up for it and came along to this art class, she couldn't see a thing and the TAs would get the pictures and they had sticky string type stuff and they could put around the edge of the pictures so that she could feel where the lines were. She didn't know what colours she was using but she loved it. She sat their diligently and she went away with more colour on her face, where she was putting her face right up to it and doing it, but it just made me she was so relaxed and so wanted to do it. It just made me erm yep. It was fascinating.
6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?
(8)   Are any factors going to affect them do you think?

Labels. People writing them off. Erm, as I say when I left secondary school I didn't have a single exam to my name. Erm, I coasted all the way through and left and luckily when I left I went to a job where the person I used to work with was an ex teacher. And she would always have these quotes as her screen saver, in the old days where you had the words going past. And she would speak with such enthusiasm and such emotion when she was talking about them and she'd tell me what it was from and I thought, well hang on a minute, some of these people they're not any cleverer than I am.

I think you can't write anybody off. If you label them and say well they've failed, then they're going to start believing it. But if you say to them these are the tools you'll need and these are the skills you'll need and when you're ready … teach them to think, teach them to be independent, teach them to read and teach them to evaluate what they're taking in and they can then when they are ready carry on going. Believe in them and they can believe in themselves. If you say, you've failed there you're a failure, that's the risk. You need to always treat the child and always make them believe that ok I didn't do it now but when I'm ready I will be able to do this. And it might be hard work, I've had to do my degree and my masters and everything part time while I'm working and have the family, but I've done it. And it's because people believed in me and people sparked that enthusiasm and people made me realise ok I've got it in me. So the the risk is that people write them off and people label them and that people say that well they're from that family or from that part of town or ... and they're never going to do well.

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

I don't see the point of it. Thank you (L).

Erm, I don't see the point in SATs. Erm, the erm secondary schools don't pay any attention to them. The [11+] test will get the children to grammar school or not.

The secondary schools disregard it and the first 2 years of secondary school they reteach everything we teach in year 5 and 6 anyway because they don't really believe we or they don't trust the assessments.

There are some schools that are factories and teach to test and churn out the children and parents know that and will send their children to those factories to get their children into the right schools. Erm, they put an awful lot of pressure on the children, **doesn't** work for those who don't pass, as I say, for no real benefit because the secondary schools don't pay attention to them.

Erm, I understand that schools need to be that needs to be a way of seeing how much the children have developed through their time there. I understand that there are some teachers and some schools that don't teach, don't have … actually it's a lot fewer nowadays I think a lot of those teachers have been … have gone out of the profession, I don't think that exists anymore. But, I find I find that it puts a lot of pressure on children for no valid reason. Erm, and apart from being a stick to beat schools with it doesn't benefit the children. Erm, as I say I know schools that teach to it and I know schools that have erm will value erm teachers who get good results. My brother in law worked for, he was the head of an international school in Hong Kong and they would only take good and outstanding teachers, from good and outstanding schools. I've worked in [name of school] and I've then, while I was doing my masters and talked to them about the sort of work we have to do over there. Most of the teachers said no I wouldn't go and work in that school because … I'm getting side tracked but I think SATS doesn't benefit the children.

What do you think the purpose if of SATS?

[sigh]

As I say I understand you need to have a - you need to be able to see where children have come from and where they've gone to. I think the main purpose is political so you can say so you can compare schools and you can say this school is better that school and this school is better than this school.

I don't know unfortunately(S) I don't know a way round it. Because as long as you're saying to a school how well have you done there is no way of judging it if it's an independent SATS. The argument could be the argument is all schools do SATS the same day the same test you can't fix it, but that's not the case, it's the factory schools will get the parents that will put all the effort in at home and will do all the work and will go along erm and teachers, a lot of teachers, want to go to those schools because they know that sort of catchment they will do well in SATS where as other schools will get other catchments and get other. I don't like them, I really don't like them, I don't like what they're for, but I understand they've got to be there.

TASK

Ok.

Oh I hate things like this.

As I say there is no right or wrong answer and there are some that you may feel aren't a barrier.

I'd say that…

Thank you. So just to confirm, the ones at the top…

Yes, that's the biggest barrier, that's the least. I'd say I'm going off of here and my experience with the Trust so far, but erm the National Curriculum, the SATs and the planning they're there but we don't we don't pigeon hole the children. We teach the individuals in the Trust and we care about the individuals, so yes we'd like them to all do really well in the SATs so the school looks good but we don't teach to the SATs so that's not as big a barrier. Attitudes of adults is a big barrier if the attitude is wrong then the child won't learn and we do in my experience, the Trust values the learning of all children.

Is there anything further you would like to add?

The attitudes of adults in the schools has been phenomenal towards all children. Erm, so that could be the biggest barrier and that could be the least barrier.

Thank you for taking part, I really appreciate your participation.

Attitudes of adults
eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem

Attitudes of adults
eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test

Lack of early identificaion of SEN needs
eg: SEN needs not idetified pior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)

In-year admission of a child with complex SEN
eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

In-year admission of a child with SEN
eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS
eg: additional input soley for children within this group

SEN funding
eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum

Test readiness
eg: a key focus on preperation for SATS test

Being secondary ready
eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7

National curriculum
eg: the content of the curriculum

Year 6 SATS test
eg: the test itself

Planning
eg: time required for planning

Duration: 25mins. 10 secs.

Participant O			
Date:- 27.9.20	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** HT	**Years in Education:10**

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Erm. Inclusion means to me (3) about making sure every child or every person, member of staff or whoever it is, all are able to access whatever we are offering whether it's education, wellbeing, erm, whatever it is and that.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Ooo, making sure that everyone can access everything they need and you would hope doesn't matter what ability, SEN, you know whatever any child or any person has they are able to access everything. (4) Might be in a different you know slightly altered way for everyone, but actually everyone deserves the best and that.

Are you saying it's for society to alter so everyone can access?

If for instance, if someone was in a wheelchair but they wanted to go to church and the church didn't have a slope in it, it only had steps. It is up to the church to allow everyone to access it. So they need to put in perhaps a lift or whatever is needed to make everyone feel that they are welcome into whatever it is and that.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Oooo, I suppose it depends on what it is. If I take an example of behaviour it could be some children are finding accessing the year 6 quite difficult, whether it's behaviour or just the ability of work. It should be differentiated for everyone. It should be able to be accessed by anyone in that year 6, but can I say it's quite challenging because it's that transition into secondary school as well so and also children at that age hormones and it's all of that change as well. But it's making sure we educate them and we change our practice to be the very best practice we can to allow everyone equality in that year group.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

I think you just have to look at the child's needs, whatever it is, and really look at how we need to change our practice or change the resources, the way they need to access it, we need to think about how, we need to think about how they access it and we need to change our practice to make sure they can you know do everything.
5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your school as HT every day?
Staff, I would have said is the first one because you can have staff with medical conditions and not find out until you've employed them and then you need to think right what do I need to change either in the school or in perhaps the processes we do in school to make sure that they can access it and feel that that isn't going to stop them whatever the medical thing. Parents, err (5) from stakeholders or parents, it could be erm you know parents I've got a grandparent at the moments that's in an electronic wheelchair so it's accessing the building when we've got plays or Christmas productions. So it's making sure that there is always access for everyone and that.
6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?
I think the biggest factor is building their **self-esteem** and confidence(S). Cos it doesn't matter, I personally think it doesn't matter where you are, whether it's year 6 or that, it's about you showing the talent and gift that you've got at whatever ability it is. Everyone has got a talent, everyone has got a skill, but it's us finding it for them and then believing in themselves that they can achieve the very best of whatever level they can achieve. Erm, so really the factor to me is building (3) their self-esteem and their confidence to believe in themselves to be you know it doesn't matter if they pass that 11+ or not, because later on in life it's making the right decisions for them and believing in themselves. They can do it.
7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

I'm very much yes teachers need erm a test or a basis to know what to plan for the next one, but doing a national test doesn't suit everyone. And I think sometimes(S) it's about league tables and what's the best school of this and actually every school is unique to their community of children.

So I do believe yes some kind of **professional** judgement, cos our teachers are very professional people they don't necessarily need a SATs test to tell them where children are. But also I do understand that the government need a national thing to measure what's happening in the country. Erm, but **personally** I think there could be other ways of doing it than children sitting down to a test that doesn't suit everyone sitting down to a test.

There could be other ways . . .

I think you've you - teachers in year 6 are professional teachers that not only get it from tests, they get it from being with those children all year, I think they could make a professional judgements with everything added to that. Mmm

TASK

Right.

Shall I talk through them then. Right so National Curriculum is like our Bible so we've got to make sure we're giving every child in year 6 the content of the curriculum.

Erm, I think more than the SATs is being secondary ready, we've got to make sure children are ready to go out into whatever school. They don't need to pass the SATs or erm not pass the SATs, I think it's important they're secondary ready. It's erm children that has passed the SATs test and gone to grammar schools haven't coped or vice versa so it's important that we give them the skills to deal with life, I think is more important.

I think planning is really important because if we don't identify the children, and this is why I put these here, if we don't identify the children much earlier on than year 6 with what they need it's harder when children get an in year admission because for the school, that teacher, or the school you've got to have real good evidence from the other school for what you need to give that child to hit the road running for them It can be down to teacher knowledge,

teacher training. Because you need to make sure that we give every child in that year 6, even if it is an in year admission, it's not the child's fault that it's an in year admission, and I actually believe that it doesn't matter if they've got complex SEN, no SEN it's about giving every child what they need.

Erm, and I do believe SEN funding is important but actually we need to find it as leaders without sometimes that funding. We need . . . be pro-active rather than reactive when it comes to inclusion. Because that funding sometimes as we know doesn't come straight away, it's about in the school, we have to think about how else can we do it to make sure every child is getting what they need. And that is tricky I would say that's the hardest thing erm identifying them. And with that planning it is making sure that children have everything to sit the test. Because they've got to sit the test at the moment.

I do know that some parents in my previous school pulled them out of the SATs you know so there is that parental choice. Erm, I think parents don't realise that they do have the choice to pull them out. Erm and that, people don't realise that, it's just that it's a national test and my child's got to sit it. But actually there's part there that if parents really feel it's not in the welfare of their child to sit that test, so there's that part of it as well.

I think attitudes of adults erm I think that's a school ethos thing as well. We have a can do doesn't matter what child comes in we do the best that we can for them. Erm and I believe it's about everyone having this positive attitude whether we've got to do something that the government say, the Trust say, whatever it is, we do it to the best of our ability.

Erm, I think the focus on the key focus predicted children passing or not passing I do know schools that do have to you know concentrate on those children just below because they want to get them up and that. But actually I think it's every child we need to move on it doesn't matter where a child is, it's about equality and allowing every child the best can do and that.

Erm, I think the early identification of SEN is so important and that's way before year 6, I think that's as soon as they come into school, whether you've got a nursery erm you know

however big your school is. Erm, you know at my school at the moment we do a lot of transition because children are coming from all over everywhere. We do an awful lot of transition before that child starts getting information so that we can put things in place much place much quicker for children and that.

Erm, have I missed any.

No I think that's everything. They're all important for inclusion.

So are you saying they all need to be in place to ensure there's inclusion for children?

Yes, all of that adds up, it's what is more important. But I also think it's the ethos of the school, you know, what you believe as a school or a Trust. Erm, must be not just in year 6 class in every class you know it's.

Thank you so much, I really appreciate your participation.

National curriculum

eg: the content of the curriculum

In-year admission of a child with complex SEN

eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

Being secondary ready

eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7

Lack of early identificaion of SEN needs

eg: SEN needs not idetified pior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)

Planning

eg: time required for planning

SEN funding

eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum

Test readiness

eg: a key focus on preperation for SATS test

In-year admission of a child with SEN

eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS

eg: additional input soley for children within this group

Attitudes of adults

eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem

Attitudes of adults

eg: to those predicted ot pass the SATS test

Year 6 SATS test

eg: the test itself

Duration: 15mins. 10secs.

Participant P			
Date:- 28.9.30	**Consent Form Signed:** Y	**Position:** LP	**Years in Education:** 13

1)What does inclusion mean to you?

Mmmm, erm it means making err in terms of education I suppose education accessible. In terms of education, yes making education accessible to all needs of people I suppose erm if I was really gonna sum it up.

2)What does inclusion look like in our society?

Mmmmmm, not just specific to education, as society as a whole?

However you'd like to take that, interpret that …

Oh Ok erm well it's an interesting one isn't it. I mean inclusion branches off in to so many other branches. That even when **we think** we are being inclusive we may not be. You know erm you take things like erm the grammar school system. You may say you're being inclusive because you're allowing people maybe erm from a certain background erm who they're erm they're brilliance of mind and their education will allow them to get into a school which nurture that. Erm and they may not have had that opportunity otherwise. Erm you know and err whether that could be one argument that the grammar system is quite inclusive thing. Erm however, we're taking inclusion to mean err enabling all needs to access education then that type of system seems to be erm excluding others from accessing that or or or if it attracts or if the success of the grammar school is because it attracts certain types of teachers you know erm then erm are those teachers err you know begin excluded from you know their impact is only impacting those who that kind of really want to learn rather than those who maybe don't want to learn. And you know they're maybe the ones that need the best teaching you know so there's lots of – I find that quite that quite interesting so where inclusion in society, where we think we may be being inclusive may not necessarily be inclusive.

Erm I think in terms of erm err inclusion that is broader than education I suppose it's making life accessible to to everyone's needs. Whether that's just going to be in the way people think about erm those those physical aspects of life whether it's like toilets or stairs. You know erm when err a building is being built are people going to be able to get to the top floor.

Erm erm and then there's inclusion in terms of err and I don't know if this is answering your question or not, but in terms of (L) people's needs when it comes to a restaurant, you know people's health needs or erm erm err allergies and those requirements and are people providing different set menus so people have those opportunities.

Inclusion of people's erm different faiths and beliefs erm er er which is a tricky one, because if you pursue err there's going to be conflict there when it comes to including all types of beliefs and ideas. Because they won't agree so it's hard to include everything you know er erm if you take if I say something like erm ere r homosexuality you could be you could be a maybe erm a particular denomination of Christianity within your church that err saying we include all people, all people are welcome to the church and then they may even take the line of it does not matter who you are or what you are, you are welcome erm. But then they make that the line of oh but if you practice certain things then that's wrong. So then you could say that is not inclusive you know with you know other people's ideas of of of what is right and wrong.

You know it's erm so err I think erm (5) it it can become quite a complicated issue when we're trying to include all aspects of people's needs because all people's needs are different. And they can er conflict with each other as well.

Err yeah I don't know if I went to broad there or … I don't know. (L)

All of my research really is about people's thoughts and opinions so there's no right or wrong way to answer the question. So thank you very much for your response.

3)I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?

Mmmmmmm, well (5) if I'm talking about inclusion as being able to access education erm meeting all children's needs. I think there are a number of issues there with erm if they've got to point in year 6 where their needs haven't really been met as maybe as well as they could have been. Then erm for whatever reason erm then err you could argue to include this child most within our school and for their access to education we need to provide quite intensive support measures. Erm however, by doing that you can then exclude that child from their full curriculum, from their social groups, erm from err learning from err err err their other peers in their class and err erm can also entrench other feelings about themselves because of you know the separation from lots of other lessons or erm that idea of I always need support so the moment that support isn't there I can't do anything kind of mentality. Erm and erm ultimately we're trying to get children to become independent, curious, err err successful learners and people. Erm and erm for that person to thrive erm you know they do need a level of support to access their learning but I suppose it's that argument to what extent is that damaging or excluding the child from meeting their other needs that are also a requirement.

Erm an other issue can be erm err (5) when you're trying to include erm a child where err again they may have a number of gaps and maybe they if the teacher take the approach to action that I'm gonna try and make the lesson work without them having to leave the room or have an extra provision outside the classroom because I'm gonna I'm gonna make my practice so it does meet the needs of all the children erm err I suppose erm with the year 6 the teachers have to come to a system where assessment becomes the focus. Erm they may be, pressure, driven very much towards getting good outcomes in terms of err sats as an outcome instead of other outcomes. You know there are other outcomes you need to look at in education. But if that becomes the focus then err err they erm may just start focussing on the wrong thing whilst trying to include that child within the lesson. Then it doesn't give that child, when I say the wrong thing I mean they just they just decide actually for that teacher they may say for this child to be successful they're gonna get

we're going aim to get this outcome within their SATs. Erm to do that they don't need to know all this stuff they just need to know this bit these bits really well so they can do those sats. Erm and erm I'm gonna incorporate that within my lessons and throughout the day and erm and it's going to target all the children's needs to know all the bits they need to know. You know I'm being an inclusive teacher (irony in voice) you know err however, they are then that child that that approach to education may happen within year 7, year 8, year 9 and by the time they've left education they haven't really got a full understanding of English. You know they've got a very narrow understanding of the English.

Are you saying there's other bits of the curriculum being left out?

Yes, that's right. Yes, yes. And I think that narrowing can happen in every type of subject. And then they never really get the **full richness** of what that subject is or they may even have the the skills to pick out certain bits of a text let's just say without actually understand the the arc of that story. There's there's they'll be lots of shallow level of understanding happening with that kind of narrowed approach let alone erm err within year 6 err the number of boosters and extra maths and English lessons that happen erm which aren't probably necessarily enriching the English or the maths err curriculum, they're probably just drilling down on those core bits they feel that child has to have erm then of course the rest of the curriculum they're being excluded from. And so the needs of the child who maybe this erm who may have a great love for the arts erm you know or for languages or for humanities or you know for whatever, erm and actually it may have been through that subject that they may have gained confidence they will have been able to do things independently. They will have able to have erm been shining throughout that lesson and had a real sense of success, independently, their needs would have been would have excelled. Or their yep they would have excelled and there may have been avenues throughout that subject where they could have practiced those err some of those others skills they were being taken out of those subjects to err learn. And I just take from my own personal perspective, you know, err err as a child erm err I didn't want to read. I remember

I was in reading interventions as a child and I didn't realise that was what it was at the time, but that's what they were. Erm and erm it's hard to pick out if that enabled me to access reading more or if it was erm a number of other things or maybe it was an accumulation you know a combination of things you know because it was aspects of I had family members who were very much into reading, even though I found it very boring and erm and didn't really see the point in reading I always continued to have good reading role models around me. Erm and erm err it was really going to drama school, that was in year 6 actually, and I was then reading scripts and suddenly reading had a whole other meaning to it, a purpose to it and I was picturing myself I was within the script, you know I was that character I was in that world I was being creative through this script. And erm I think that really, and whether it was just the right time for me or I don't know, or whether it was the build-up of those reading interventions I was having and they came together at the right time you know but I certainly associate those script reading experiences with erm err with err err becoming a better reader you know.

Erm, erm yeah. What's also interesting for the year 6 child is erm you know they're going into, it's the end of their primary school days and they're going into year 7, just how well prepared are they for that for that new way of learning that's coming up. Erm or have they been stripped back to a level of reliance on help erm and so the education which we thought was really including, helping children to access their meeting their needs err forgot the independent learning aspect of their needs and their requirements to be able to do that erm possible.

Yeah, erm I'd say those are some of the issues there.

Thank you.

4)What supports inclusion in year 6?

Oh err I think I answered that already. (L)

5)What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom as a Lead Practitioner every day?

Mmmmmmmmmm, mmmmmm erm in a sense of erm developing a teacher's understanding of it or in the sense of the impact my work has on the children or are you just keeping that question open.

Yes, however you'd like to answer.

OK, so how does my role as lead practitioner, are there barriers to inclusion. Well I suppose if you're looking at what could be barriers could be you could you could argue I suppose one barrier could be the system in which we find ourselves in terms of the education system. Erm err you could argue the curriculum could be a barrier, limits err put on due to focus on SATs. Erm, err and it could be argued that the teacher's mindset could be a barrier, or the teacher's knowledge of of teaching could be a barrier. You could argue that er parents could be a barrier. And you could argue that the err management of the school could err could be a barrier. And erm and all those different possible hurdles are defiantly as a lead practitioner I end up having to to either work within or negotiate through you know (L). Erm and make things work as best as possible. I think sometimes, one of the biggest things can be err err the err teacher's maybe understanding, confidence and their own err err perception of knowledge of their own teaching and learning. Cos sometimes I I find that with some teachers I've worked with they see the child's needs as the barrier whereas I mean I don't see the child's needs as the barrier our job is to erm to to make the room the learning the language our behaviour meet the needs of that child. There is no barrier. You know it's err, we err are the barriers. And it's interesting because, take an example err. Working with a teacher in year 1 and erm she had a child who she was really trying to include him within the lesson. He had erm err no I'm not sure if he was actually diagnosed with Autism, but certainly had very strong traits of somewhere on the Autistic spectrum. Erm erm so he had his own little table and erm, but I could see he had a very active mind when observing him. Erm so you know that's part of his needs, that needs to be addressed. So erm providing him with stimulating activities that are purposeful for him to do, it you're giving him an input and you want him to be part of it. Erm if it's a

phonics lesson provide him with the sound tiles that you're going to be using or the bits of err post its erm so with the sounds on so as you're building it at the front he's going to be building it down with you. Now you may not be able to provide that for all children that's a lot or resources to make for everyone, but for that particular child erm and it and it did work and then as a teacher erm or as a lead practitioner I could then model to erm that that management of the class cos a teacher is having to manage a class of individuals with individual needs. And erm the err within that example I was able to model I don't know building the word pig erm and then erm as I'm doing it I'm explaining, I've already pre-taught the child what's gonna happen in the lesson what he's going to need to do. He's got you know the visual task management I'm able to praise him. The rest of the class start doing something, maybe they're writing the word down at this point I can then go over and praise him that he's built the word and maybe challenge him further. Can he now write, I'm going to mix it up can he make it again you know whatever it was. Erm err or at some points recognising that at some points he wanted to get up and rearrange the word that was on my board, but that was fine for him to do that because he was participating. He was engaged. He was able to err to learn from that lesson and it wasn't having any other impact on the rest of the class. Erm it's interesting then talking about the barriers, because the teacher they had observed that, we'd unpicked that together. But erm she wasn't practiced in the erm I suppose the nuances of relationships of with the children erm or building that relationship. Maybe it was a few things of quickly enough, meaningfully enough and effectively. And so it maybe sometimes the tone of her voice was not meeting the need of that child. Or is was leaving to much of a gap of where that child needed that immediate praise erm errr where you know where it enabled that child to not want to engage anymore. It's quite a dance sometimes in the classroom and it's enabling the teacher to err to to learn I suppose that dance. They need to be making in their class. So for some teachers they can find that very hard and erm and sometimes it just takes a lot of erm practice and then we can kind of build-up that repertoire of tone and

timing and relationship building in order to meet the needs more fluently and effectively within the classroom. But yes, I think that sometimes becomes a barrier the teachers err level but I suppose that's part of my role there removing those barriers, training and supporting, so the teachers learn to meet their needs. Cos otherwise I not being an inclusive practitioner. (L)

6)What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?

Mmmm, the future aspirations. Well, (8) again I mean this really depends on so many other factors, but (5) in in some cases it could err create a perception of the ones that passed are smart and the ones haven't passed are dumb. You know in that child's mind. I'm not going to be passed or passed and I'm dumb. And erm so err erm it's easier now for me to really not push on and learn more because it's you know it's too painful I suppose to keep opening that perception of myself that I'm dumb and worthless. And erm err if I attempt to try to learn I know that I don't get it and so my barriers come up in my erm the you know I'm in danger of feeling that pain again. So the more I don't learn the more protected I am from that pain, from that feeling. Err which err could then lead to either distracting others you know in the lesson all range of tactics. Not actually engage in the lesson that can then become quite disruptive to the other children to themselves to the teacher. To their parents and in the end get to the point where they're actually even further behind and could lead to all aspect of things or seeking opportunities to feel good erm where school doesn't provide that opportunity for them. Or certainly in their mind doesn't. Erm and that maybe in the form of drugs of gangs or erm bulling of erm of later down the road as they get older in to all forms of immediate gratification and whatever avenue they

pursue that. Erm and erm yes it could actually lead to quite a very unsatisfactory life for erm for them you know in the most extreme way.

The other side could be erm err they may not be predicted to get those get those outcomes or may not get them but they may have they maybe in a school and home life where the message is very much erm err that doesn't matter. Erm not that the wrong term, err that it's not the be all and end all of life of your existence of your perception of yourself you know. Erm and we are developing a whole human being and you are amazing because of these reasons, whatever those reasons are. And that's very much the message the school gives to the parents and has been throughout their whole time in school and erm and it's that that constant idea of what we build inside the children's head of what the idea of success is err err and it's not just err these outcomes of sats paper it's all those other aspects, which are very board. More erm err you're an extremely interesting thinker, you have a powerful imagination, erm or the way you build up your friendship groups is very skilled. You know erm err the erm the way you lead your team in football is remarkable. The erm err the way you sit quietly and daydream or **absorb** an aspect of life **so** fully and **totally** you know is is these all traits that can be used as strengths within their life right now and in their future. And if children don't see that as being successful erm and that being nurtured them erm err that that's that's we're doing a disservice to those children. Erm but the erm so the child then in that situation may not be predicted to get those outcomes or may not get them errr but they maybe in the mindset of oh well that's just at the moment right now I haven't got that but that's ok. Because I'm also able to do all these other things. Or I can't do it right now but actually a teacher told me a story about how they couldn't do it right now at their age, but they could do erm a few years later. Erm because they recognised they just needed bit more practice and that's all it was, and everyone's different. Some people do need more practice. Some people get thrown into the deep end and they swim others want to start in the shallow end and want to build up their their skills in order to get into the deep end, but by the time they

are able to do that they will be able to go back and forth on those laps and no one can stop them. You know it's erm everyone is really different and learns differently and views the world differently and if we don't and that's what we've got to make sure we're teaching those children. And and erm so no matter what that outcome is within the sats they are left with a feeling of how successful they are regardless of that erm erm.

Now also when it comes to sats it's not a qualification, it's not erm letters at the end of their name which actually can propel someone's erm err err erm furture you know a little bit more, because if you've got that qualification or whatever it is, certificates, at the end of your name then that can actually open doors to many other areas. Erm, buts it's a sats paper it's actually a measure of a school's success in inverted commas. Erm it's that's not the success of the child really it's more of the school's way of being able to err, within the system which the school is in, to say hey look aren't we amazing (L).

Erm, yeah.

7)What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Um hummmmmm, oh I **love** (S) it as you can tell (L – sarcastic tone). Erm so erm I mean I do think that testing has its place in in education in err but by testing I don't necessary mean this end of year big event. More of those I suppose, little, I suppose more valuable can be those little quizzes we give children at the end of a lesson. You know to help them retain what they've learnt, or figure out aspects they maybe don't understand. So you can form err erm which will inform what happens in the next lesson. You know erm or those questions you ask at the beginning of the lesson to figure out the lesson needs to go in. Again, you're understanding what the needs are of your children so you can adapt the lesson so the children can learn independently and successfully and really access their education. Erm, so I really see the value of testing there and even within across the lesson. A teacher is is having that balance of having to be asking questions and do

activities to teach that child new things while at the same time doing an activity and asking questions to test and understand that child's understanding of the activity that they're doing so they're doing that constant assessment. You know assessment for learning is the term that gets used within schools. Erm is used throughout, those testing questions or activities are embedded, erm throughout. Also I thinks it's important err err err a test can be in the form of, it doesn't have to be writing on a piece of paper or answer, a test maybe erm er you know I want you to use your body to express the life cycle of frog. You know, you've demonstrated that understanding. Maybe this was err a few weeks, or a month after teaching those aspects and you're just trying to bring back that that arc of of remembering and learning to the point that they've nearly forgotten it and you're trying to bring it back again into their mind. Erm, and err you're also just trying to see how much of it did stick as a teacher. Erm, and I think they are all really helpful.

And sometimes as well a test just on a piece of paper can be helpful where err if the child is able to understand the questions that are being asked within that that paper. Err erm it can be revealing sometimes of what they know and what they don't know erm because often of course within a lesson we're providing so much support and the teacher is trying to err so hard to make that child independently access or succeed in that lesson that it can be sort of over taught and the child hasn't really learnt it just yet, they've just done it well because you've been helping them do it so well. Erm, and that that can be quite revealing and even give numbers at the end of that test can be helpful and think oh actually only half my class have got 5 and there were 20 questions. And I err actually thought erm they'd be able to answer those 20 questions but they can't. So why is that. What's going on there you know erm. And that can be interesting to unpick from a teacher's point of view. Just to think why isn't that at their fingertips. Or what strategies are they not using that actually they've forgotten about or I haven't taught well enough for them to actually have at their fingertips to use.

Erm, so erm testing I think is important. But the issue that we've got is we've got tests where the results are published and used as a measurement of a school's success. Which puts all strange pressures on a school, the headteacher, the teacher. Erm and it it can become all encompassing and it becomes that's what year 6 is all about. Erm, which I think is very erm err detrimental to err a child's full education. Erm, and erm and again I I was saying early sats is just one aspect of what we're doing but you're much more than that as a person, even if we are giving that message we're not necessarily practicing that message. Because of the nature of the system which they are in because it's like oh ok you're saying that but we seem to be doing an awful lot of sats practice. You know (laugh) so it must be really important right (L). Err, so it's not as important as art, because I've only done art once this term (L) or you know the rest has been practicing for my sats.

But then I see also of course the other side of just what is this sats paper assessing and how effectively is it assessing it. Err, (5) and what type of erm pressures do the children feel. You know do they care or not, are they crying in the corner rocking back and forth. Erm, err you know are they sat in that classroom or that hall just thinking this is really weird. (L). Erm, this is not a normal thing for me to be doing. But then of course some teachers say it's ok because we do it every term so it does become normal. Is that a good thing, that becomes normal. It's a question to unpick I suppose (L). And erm, and I just think as well all the time, it's interesting, all the time and expense I wonder if it wasn't spent on that, on SATs, what it could be used for instead. And would that have a greater impact on meeting those on on those children's needs. Would be another interesting avenue to explore. (L). Err, and it's interesting if compare how other countries operate. And and erm err erm and what err the err children grow up to become in those countries and contribute to err to other's lives, whether it's a very localised impact you know, on their immediate family or their community, or their country or the world. And you know it would be interesting to see was was it because of their excellent sats results that enabled them to make those contributions. You know. And if it wasn't you know you know could we be

doing better as a as a system, you know could the system be better than it is at the moment you know.

Erm, and err so (5) I suppose overall what I think about sats testing is err (5) I don't think it's doing what it needs to be doing for the child. Erm, I think it's just I think it's ultimate purpose is to help the the err erm government have a measurement of erm of of which schools are providing an education which demonstrates they're meeting the needs to the curriculum by the end of of of the end of year 6. Even though for some children err err erm they may not necessarily be ready to access that at the moment. Or the argument could be well if we're truly including children then we should be tailoring our education so that they can. So no matter who they are they walk away with that standard of understanding. Erm and it's it's a complicated issue I think. Erm, (5) but (9) I don't know if erm I think I think the balance isn't right is what I think I'm trying I'm trying ultimately to say. And that needs to be addressed I think.

Thank you. You mention the government checking the needs of the curriculum have been met by the end of year 6. With you earlier comments about the national curriculum subjects, do you think the needs of the curriculum are being met by the end of year 6?

Erm, no, not always. As I said.

TASK

OK, how fun (smiling).

There are some blank ones in case you thought of anything else I haven't covered.

OK, let's take a look. Right, now then. Well done first of all I noticed you've put it on a blue background. Which I maybe have earlins. You are being inclusive just with the resources. Attitudes of adults, those predicted not to pass, impact on self-esteem. Mmmmmmmm, interesting yeah of course because with some teachers they can be very much, and I do understand, I get it as well, but you have those conversations of who do you need to focus on. And it if if they're not likely to pass that SATs paper, and even if we're thinking, if we put all of this stuff in they're still not going to pass, then why waste the time, you know, in

(BL - inverted commas with fingers). Oh you know it's very interesting, very interesting area isn't it.

Attitudes of adults. Erm, erm mmmm (5) in year admission of a child with complex SEN. Oh yes. Now that's tricky isn't yes. Yes, erm, erm. Oh that's very hard, these are good ones. Now this is a game I enjoy.

Errr, I erm SEN funding, insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum. Mmmmm. Now although, no funding is important because. Oh this is hard because, because that that could also involve you know an extra person to help meet the needs of that child. But sometimes, well, it's complex you do need a really good teacher to be totally inclusive, there's so much they need to consider.

Erm, err year 6 SATs test, the test itself. Mmmm.

Oh that's a blank one – blankly blank.

Attitudes of adults to those predicted erm, err. To pass the sats test. Mmmm.

Lack of early identification of SEN needs. Well you know I find that a very interesting one because from my point of view as a with a teacher hat on, regardless of if a child has been identified for me, I suppose, I would be attempting to identify what those needs were just from what I'm observing you know. And then adapting and trialling things out. So regardless of if they've been identified I don't think actually erm as long as the teachers have been recognising the erm err erm however, that does become important, at the end from test points of view, from providing a child with extra time or the right erm an adult with them, they may be entitled, There's an entitlement aspect as well I suppose, when it comes to being diagnosed with something which is important. Or getting the right medication, which is important. Yeah, I I I I I've seen children transformed with the right medication, or the right counselling so you know, so that is important, very important.

Planning, time required for planning. Mmmmm. Time required for planning mmm or the time the teacher puts in I suppose.

In year admission of a child with SEN. Ah I see, compared to one who is complex.

Being secondary ready, equipping the children with the skills needed to transition to year 7. Um mm.

Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs. Erm, additional input for children solely in this group. Mmmm.

Erm, national curriculum, the content of the curriculum. Yeah, that can be yeah.

Interesting, very interesting discussion again.

Err test readiness. Key focus on preparation for SATs test. Yeah again that's really interesting one, because with that the err, with some teachers they become over focussed on this aspect, and other children might become lost, and forget that if you're actually teaching a child to be a good learner then then, when it comes to the how you do a test aspect it becomes a lot easier because you have already taught them to you know use their background knowledge, or think around a problem you know. Yes, mmmm, does the test test what it thinks it's testing. (L)

Err, right so. Erm I was putting them in order of what I feel is most a barrier to inclusion to least.

Yes.

Mmmmm. Ok.

And it's fine if you think some aren't a barrier. Don't use them.

Mmm. And does it have to be a ladder, a pyramid.

However you wish to present it.

Ok. Erm. Ok. Erm. Let's see. What I'm going to do is kind of make a start and then I can move things around. Let's take a look.

Being secondary ready. Mmmm. And again being secondary ready, equipping children with the skills needed to transition to year 7. Again what skills are needed is debatable as well isn't it. Erm. The the skill of passing your SATs paper it could be argued would not have made them secondary ready. (L). You know erm. So.

Sats test itself. Mmm, now that's interesting.

With, with planning eg: time required for planning. Is that in the sense of are we saying if a teacher's not planning enough. Mmmm. Ok. Well. Oh I mean there's never enough time is there in terms of the teacher feeling that way. Erm, the argument is well you make time, but then do you make time at the expense of your family and developing yourself and your love of life. You know. Teaching can become all encompassing. But, err, mmm.

So. Let's take a look.

(L) I end up making a circle, or just a straight line.

Erm. Mmmm. Time required.

So it all comes into attitudes. I feel like maybe grouping some of these. Erm.

Lack of early identification.

Year 6.

Mmmm. Well. It's interesting actually if a child joins with more complex needs there's normally a erm, you know, oh actually that may not be the case. Well you'd hope that erm, err there would have been things in place already from whatever context they've come from that can be brought over to that school as part of that process. Erm, but that's not always the case, so I guess it depends upon the circumstances there. Cos it could end up being err less disruptive to that child if that's handled well. Erm. Mmmm.

It's interesting because on the context of the national curriculum. Because you could say that erm, although some of the err, you could argue about the importance of a child having a real purpose and erm and wanting to pursue certain elements of their education is one of the most important aspects for them to learn well. Erm. Err. But that takes a rethinking of how you're using the curriculum that you've got to do that.

Mmmm.

So, biggest barriers.

Mmm.

Barriers to inclusion. In year 6 in particular.

Yes.

Mmm.

Skills needed.

Mmmm. Oh. Hang on let's see. How does that look.

I'm just going to talk through where I've put them at the moment. So at the moment I'm feeling, I think the attitudes of adults goes in line with how they're planning. And their knowledge, or lack of. Err, so I feel they're like together. So I feel if erm, if it isn't at a point that helps children to learning at the point of who they are then erm their skills, knowledge, understanding of the curriculum then that I feel probably is going to be the biggest barrier. Erm, because even I know teachers where they will have had erm err you know, sats, but they were able to embed lots of other things in their day. Err or across the week, so it wasn't just a sats machine classroom. Erm, err but then I suppose you could argue that if you don't have the sats tests at all then you wouldn't be having to think of all those other aspects around a test. Erm. But err. No I think that bit is the most important.

Erm, then maybe actually national curriculum and test goes together.

Being secondary ready. Maybe that comes there.

Erm.

So yeah, I am going to put lack of identification up higher actually. Erm. Because it does say SEN needs and if the teacher's recognising them or regardless of a err a trained professional them that should actually that's going to come there actually. Erm.

Key focus on pupils predicated to pass the SATs. Oh I see, so you're going to pass so we're just going to focus on you. I suppose that seems to be contented with this still. Erm. Yeah I probably feel will order it like that I think.

So just to confirm your top row there with key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATs, those 5 are the ones you feel are the greatest barriers.

Erm. Yes. Because what I think, I think is they're all a branch that just connect to itself. Because this all involves planning, assessing, identifying, how you're behaving as an adult within the classroom, adults' attitude is so important. How you're approaching your erm

your or how one is approaching their teaching and meeting the needs of the children. I think. Erm.

Thank you. Are there any responses you would like to go over or add to?

No, I think we're good thank you.

Thank you. I really appreciate your time and participation.

Duration: 1hr.5mins.

Consent had been given in line with the university ethic approval (Appendix N). Due to an interruption to my studies, consent was sought again prior to stating the research process.

Canterbury Christ Church University

2nd September 2019

Dear [ ]

As you know, I am currently a doctoral student studying at Christ Church University and undertaking research into inclusion. I am writing to you today as a researcher and not in my role as a headteacher.

I would like to request your permission to undertake my research study in [ ] To understand why I am undertaking this research and what it would involve from the Trust please take some time to read the following information carefully. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, queries or would like further information.

This research forms a significant part of the thesis I am doing toward the culmination of my Ed (D) course. My research aims to add to the current body of knowledge around inclusion in relation to the current educational climate.

I propose involving around 40 participants from the Trust from all different levels of the organisation.
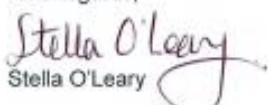
Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and would involve an informal interview and short ranking task, which would take place at a mutually convenient time. During the informal interview I will ask a few simple questions and there is a short task, it is expected that this will last no longer than 30 minutes. Interviews will be recorded to enable accurate transcription. These will be transcribed within 7 days of recording and originals then destroyed. Between the interview and transcription recordings will be kept on a password protected laptop. The conclusion of the short task will be photographed to ensure accurate representation of results. The interview transcripts and task photographs will remain anonymised.

All information gathered will remain confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. A summary of the data gathered and a transcript of the interview will be shared with the participants before final submission into my thesis. The master list identifying participants will be held on a password protected computer accessed only by myself as the researcher. The application to undertake this research has undergone a full ethic review by the education faculty of Christ Church University and been agreed.

Beyond the one off interview and task there is no other time commitment. There are no disadvantages to taking part and withdrawal at any time in the process is the participant's right (at which point any information collected from that participant would be destroyed), this would in no way be held against them.

A summary of the study will be shared with yourself and participants and a full copy will be available on request.

Kind regards,

Stella O'Leary

Stella O'Leary

s.g.oleary175@canterbury.ac.uk

Informed Consent.

I, the undersigned, confirm that: -

	Please tick here
I have read and understood the information about the research study, as provided in the letter dated 2.9.19.	✓
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions or raise any queries about the research being undertaken within ▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓	✓
I voluntarily agree for the research study to be undertaken within The ▓▓▓▓	✓
Procedures of confidentiality have been explained.	✓
I, along with the researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	✓

CEO of ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Name _____ ▓▓▓▓▓▓

Signature _____
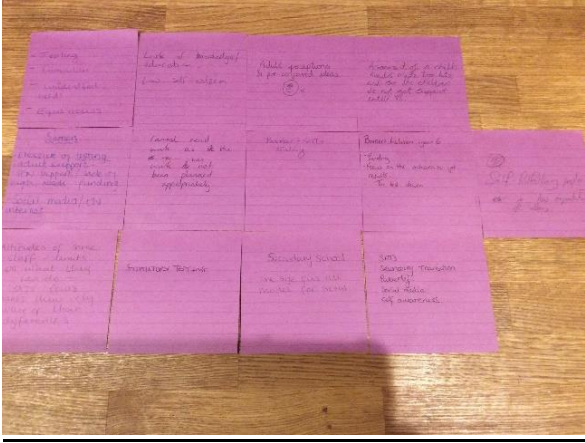
Date _____ 2.9.19
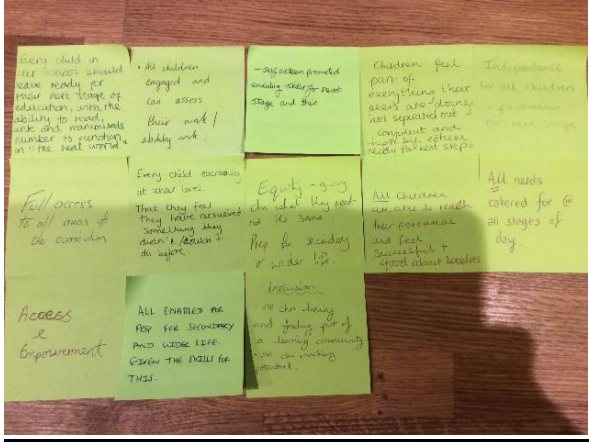
Researcher:

Name   Stella O'Leary

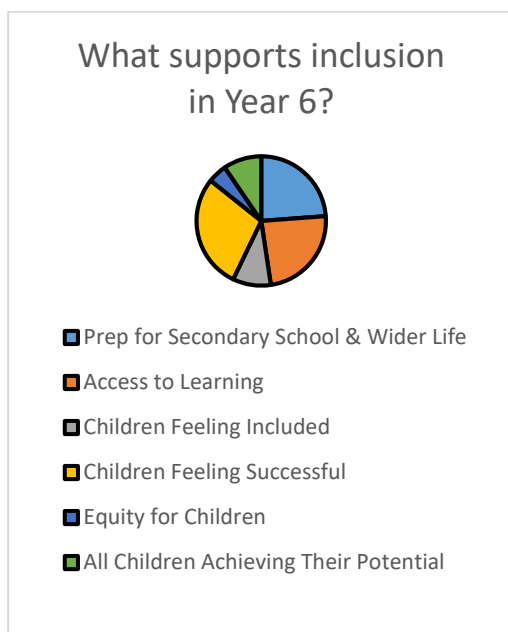Signature ___Stella O'Leary___

Date _____ 2.9.19

SLT Task
Responses to Question 1 What Supports Inclusion in Year 6?	Responses to Question 2 Are There any Barriers?

What Supports Inclusion in Year 6?	
Preparation for Secondary School & Wider Life	Every child in our school should leave ready for their next stage of education, with the ability to read, write and manipulate number to function in "the real world" ready for next step. Independence for all children – preparation for next stage. Prep for secondary & wider life. All enabled for prep for secondary and wider life. Given the skills for this.
Access to Learning	for @ all stages of day. Every child succeeding at their level. Access Full access to all areas of the curriculum. All children engaged and can assess their work/ ability work.
Children Feeling Included	Children feel part of everything their peers are doing not separated out. Inclusion - All chn being and feeling part of a learning community
Children Feeling Successful	feel successful + good about themselves. That they feel they have achieved something they didn't / couldn't do before. & empowerment.
Children's Self-Esteem	They should also have high self-esteem, confidence and resilient skills. -self esteem promoted enabling skills for next stage and this. confident and high self esteem
Equity for Children	Equity – giving chn what they need – not the same.
All Children Reaching	All children are able to reach their potential – all chn reaching potential.

Their Potential	
Are There any Barriers?	
Testing	Testing. -Focus on the achievers to get results -Too test driven. SAT's Statutory Testing Barrier-SATs testing Barriers –pressure of testing – SATS focus makes them very aware of their differences
Secondary School/ Secondary Transition	Secondary school – one size fits all model for SEMH Secondary Transition
Self Fulfilling Prophesy/ Attitude of Adults	Adult perceptions & pre-conceived ideas. Self fulfilling prophesy ie: low expectations of others adult support Attitudes of some staff – limits on what they can do.
SEN/ Vulnerable – Support	– SEN support
SEN/ Vulnerable – Assessment	Unidentified needs. Assessment of a child's needs made too late and so the children do not get support until Y6.
Curriculum/ Planning	Curriculum. Lack of knowledge/ education. Cannot read work as the work has not been planned appropriately
Children's Self Esteem	Low self-esteem. Self Awareness
Puberty	Puberty
Social Media	Social Media – social media/ the internet
Equal Access	Equal access.
Funding	Barriers Inclusion year 6 –Funding / lack of high needs funding

Results of the senior leadership team task

What supports inclusion in Year 6?

■ Prep for Secondary School & Wider Life

■ Access to Learning

■ Children Feeling Included

■ Children Feeling Successful

■ Equity for Children

■ All Children Achieving Their Potential

Are there any barriers?

■ Secondary School/ Secondary Transition

■ Self Fulfilling Prophesy/ Attitude of Adults

■ SEN/ Vulnerable

■ Curriculum / Planning

■ Children's Self Esteem

■ Funding

■ Testing

What supports inclusion in Year 6?			Are there any barriers?		
Thread	*No of participants who mentioned it*	*%*	*Thread*	*No of participants who mentioned it*	*%*
Prep for Secondary School & Wider Life	5	24	Secondary School/ Secondary Transition	2	7
Access to Learning	5	24	Self Fulfilling Prophesy/ Attitude of Adults	4	15
Children Feeling Included	2	10	SEN/ Vulnerable	3	11
Children Feeling Successful	6	29	Curriculum/ Planning	4	15
Equity for Children	1	5	Children's Self-Esteem	5	19
All Children Achieving Their Potential	2	10	Funding	2	7
			Testing	7	26

10.1.20 Feedback from pilot participants following the pilot research. Discussion amongst the 3

participants. Feedback then given anonymously as per the list of statements below.

I felt anxious and flappy at first.

I know Stella introduced herself as a researcher, but I was aware she is still our head teacher. Not

sure what else she could have done though.

If I had the questions before I would have had time to think – after reflected I thought of more;

but get it if wanted first response, I guess the questions couldn't be given beforehand. More time

to think out of school – more headspace.

The first question is really big. I felt on the spot with that question.

Yes, I still had my school head on, so it was hard to think beyond that.

Yes, I had my teacher head on. Inclusion covers a broader spectrum than I spoke about. It's good

that it didn't last too long as I was thinking about jobs I had to do.

I wondered if a written response possible?

That could be a good idea; except people might not be as honest.

That's true.

But it might give more time to think of responses and to structure answers better.

I also had my end of school day head. But then that puts me in the mind set of school and that's

how I answered the questions.

Yes, more in context in school.

(*Undertaken prior to Covid 19 lockdown and subsequent restrictions)

Researcher comments in italics.

Participant 1

8.1.20 Pilot Research with Year 5 Class Teacher

Q1

Urm inclusion means giving all the children the opportunity to participate, learning to take part, in every opportunity across the school. So not necessarily just in the classroom – other experiences that would be available within the school environment, or outside the school environment, including school trips, making sure everything is done to allow them to part to the best of their ability.

Q2

Ah, I think most people like to feel that they are inclusive and that they like the image of being inclusive, but behind closed doors maybe there's a little bit more whispering that happens and maybe being slightly more discriminatory towards people.

Urm there's lots of, I don't know if red tape is the right word, but things that you're supposed to do, you're meant to tick this box that box and sometimes that can be almost over the top and has the reverse effect of what it's supposed to do for being an inclusive environment because you're making it stand out and be even more obvious possibly than needs to be.

Q3

Urm, in terms of inclusion for children who are joining us mid-way through the year ect and when we have a high mobility in the classrooms I think it's very difficult for those children because we're having to constantly back fill gaps and plug back. So it becomes a constant rolling programme to ensure you're hitting things and progressing children forward but

then also ensuring that the children who joined you or need that additional support are being brought up along the same time.

It's very urm you don't want those children, to feel that they're standing out, you don't want them to be like that shining beacon for something that they're not able to control or that they would feel low against.

Urm and I think that inclusion within the class here is based around ensuring that there's the opportunity spread out that children are encouraged to use the manipulatives and resources so that they can access the learning and that it's tailored towards the class and often you're thinking on your feet to do that because things are going to crop up and or something you weren't expecting; you have to be adaptive. But it's quite enjoyable really.

You mention gaps …

So gaps in learning, gaps in knowledge, and sometimes, particularly for maths. I've noticed I got a young man that's joined us recently and urm and his …on paper his report comes across that he's quite high but then when you then look at the way we teach maths and the urm methods we use, he's not necessarily seen, so we're having the fill those gaps to ensure that he's got that understanding of place value or the understanding of multiplication so that he knows the vocabulary that we're using with our high drive on vocab in our school and Trust.

So that really does highlight how forward thinking I think we are compared to other schools in that they just go along the. It sounds awful, but it's as if how we were taught you just do this you just add a zero. And it's like actually no it's not just adding a zero it's breaking it down for those children and finding those gaps and filling them with the knowledge and helping the children to come up to where they should be with their peers.

Q4

I think the skill of the staff, urm they've got a good team in that classroom and you've got a good team around as well as a whole collective in the school. The teachers and other adults are willing to support each other and help each other so that then filters through into

the classroom ensuring that the children are given the opportunities if you're lacking experience. You can go and draw on someone or you've got people that are willing to go that extra mile and put in a bit of support that allow them to provide opportunities in school.

Urm, for inclusion staff are driven. Staff really want to do the best, it's a child centred environment, so with the children at the heart of it means that teachers and other adults are doing what they can to promote inclusion rather than just having that well they're not going to get there so I'm not interested. There's no brushing anyone off, no one's lost. Everyone's got the opportunity and we want them to fulfil their potential.

Q5

Urm, I think experience of staff can sometimes be a barrier, but if you're proactive in finding ways forward then that doesn't have to be a barrier. Mind-set of the children can sometimes be a barrier. Urm particularly when you have families that tell their children they're not going to achieve this or they're not able to do that that becomes a barrier because you're trying to break it down and say actually yes you can and we just need to do this that or the other to support you and we're going to learn this way.

If the children are coming in with that closed mind set of 'well I can't because…' then that has a real impact on how you can work with that child. Building that relationship takes longer sometimes because you're battling what the parents are saying and trying to boost self-esteem.

Q6

What factors affect those children. Urm outside influences from the school I'd say the parents, their own urm self-belief can impact on them and I think sometimes if they're given that label, depending upon the environment they're in they can be side lined and children are intuitive they know if you're interested and if they haven't got that relationship with you where they feel that you don't value them then they don't value themselves.

TASK.

Do you want it in a pyramid?

However, you'd like to present it.

I would add that always being grouped in ability because that can have an impact.

So ability groups can be a barrier?

Yes to inclusion, but depending on how it's done. It could also if you don't ability group you've got that flexible seating that's then going to be a positive isn't it.

OK so I think that's really important. That does have impact. The national curriculum. That comes down to how you deliver your own planning.

That's really important isn't it – in year admission of children with complex SEN – it's a barrier if you don't get to grips with it quickly if you don't have the experience, that's quite a difficult one for the teacher and for the child.

So I'm doing this in order of importance.

Yes ones which might pose the greatest barrier

OK, posing the greatest barrier to inclusion.

Test readiness – does mean if they've had the SATS, oh that's a horrible test, style questioning not necessarily being drilled.

If you want to choose whichever way you'd choose to read that.

It's really hard Stella.

So with these one am I thinking of an individual child or the class.

However you wish to take it again.

That transition for that child at that point and knowing they're going to be moving again and knowing they're going to be tested, trying to build those relationships.

So those are the ones referring to in year admission for children with SEN and complex SEN?

Yes.

I'd put those together so attitudes of adults and key focus on pupils predicated to pass the SATS. I'd put these 2 together because they kind of can be filtered and then I'd put the ability grouping we talked about if children are constantly grouped by ability then you can be holding them back in a way.

We're talking about the SATS aren't we, so secondary ready I think you can focus on that after the SATS to give them time, you can really plug that a lot more.

So you've got that quite low so you don't think that would be a barrier to inclusion as much as some of the other ones.

Mmm to inclusion in year 6. No because I think we can tackle that, so once we've dealt with SATS.

The lack of early identification of SEN, no identified in year 6, up the top because if it's not been picked up before then so much time has been wasted. They've lost, possibly lost out on so much.

These I think are barriers but good teachers good teaching can.

So that's the bottom 5 you've put there?

Yes, national curriculum, planning, so time required for planning, the SATS test itself and test readiness I think a good teacher can overcome those. That's how I would do it.

You mentioned as you were placing the cards that SATS, I think you might have said oh that's a horrible test or something like that. What did you mean by that?

Urm, I just feel it's very snapshotty it's in that moment and I think children are very aware of it and they apply pressure to themselves that I think is so sad at that age that age group.

I think that children feeling pressure at any age group for testing is difficult. But to do that and being a parent myself where I've … I know that my 3 children have gone through primary school they've completed the SATS test they've had certain scores they're first couple of weeks in secondary they're tested again and they're groupings are based on

those tests. So it's, I feel it's more government judging teachers and school than it's actually doing giving any benefit to the children.

Is there anything you'd like to add to the task or interview questions?

No, I think that's everything.

Lack of early identificaion of SEN needs
eg: SEN needs not idetified pior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)

In-year admission of a child with complex SEN
eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

In-year admission of a child with SEN
eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

SEN funding
eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum

Attitudes of adults
eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem

Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS
eg: additional input soley for children within this group

Ability Group

National curriculum
eg: the content of the curriculum

Planning
eg: time required for planning

Year 6 SATS test
eg: the test itself

Test readiness
eg: a key focus on prepe for SATS test

Being secondary ready
eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7

Participant 2

8.1.20 Pilot Research with Year 4 Class Teacher

Q1

Inclusion means to me that just making sure that urm every lesson every subject is inclusive so that every member of the class can take part in pretty much everything, there's no barriers to learning. And obviously when there are barriers that arise as they do we put in place steps and things to support the children.

Q2

Oh in society erm ok so that was an example from the classroom. Erm I'm trying to think, that's a hard one. Erm so I guess it's kind of guess any sporting activities I'd like to think that all children could be able to take part. So for example I'd say that Paralympics, so that sports are adapted for all for everyone's' needs and abilities in society and so that everyone can take part. Erm yep and I guess like erm if people for example I know the trains are a topical issue at the minute and there's lots of disabled people who can't actually access the trains by themselves if they're not with a carer so to be inclusive to helps everyone's' everyday life.

Q3

Ok so with regards to inclusion the challenges erm I think if you've got erm maybe a child within your class who's working below the curriculum that's a challenge in itself.

Erm a challenge for resources, erm so your use of your TA, cos you don't want to use it just on that individual child, you'd need to use for the other children in the class.

So making sure that child is independent as well. So yes resources is a big one for inclusion. Erm, I guess money actually to be honest, having the money in the budget so you can provide the best for everyone er that's another big barrier as well.

Q4

Erm budget definitely erm TA erm outside resources. So SENDCo if you need to go to for any help support advice, peers other members of staff because you could have tried I

don't know 5 ways and they might have something else to bring to the table. Resources, sharing of resources. Er that's another one. Erm yep.

Q5

Erm it think time is probably one of the biggest things cos it does take a lot of time. Erm to make sure you're thinking of every activity what is going to be the barrier for is there going to be any barriers what could you plan what could you put in place to stop that being a barrier. So yeah for me I'd say time can be the biggest barrier **can't it.** Erm resources, money always money cos and erm that comes with time because if you haven't got the money to buy something you've got to make it yourself. Erm resources in terms of adults if you didn't have an adult in the room, we're lucky enough to have full time TAs. They're the main boundaries.

Q6

I think actually that does make erm yep cos if the children know themselves that they're not going to pass because the parents will assume know will find out at parents evening that filters down to the child.

If they're sat there thinking they've failed or they haven't made age appropriate cos they're find out end of year they're going to know they're results it might hinder them, you like to think it won't hinder them in the future when they go to secondary school, but I think at some point you do have that anxiety you do have that it affects them psychologically and mentally and yes I think in the future that might. So when you get to GCSEs they might think well why continue. If their behaviour in maths lessons deteriorate in the future because they don't think they're any good at it so they might act up because of that. Erm I do think it would unfortunately I do think in some cases that does negatively impact some children and if you haven't got the support from the parents I think that's another boundary.

TASK

Yep do you want me to rank them.

Yes if you could rank them in a hierarchical order of your choosing that would be great.

That's a big one for me, I think it's school depending, erm from a previous school lack of early identification of SEN needs is quite a …

Depends on the intake with that in year admission because if you've got a child with complex SEN that's going to you know tip all your lesson plans and your schedules.

National curriculum I don't think so.

Being secondary ready I always think actually is the one that filters out and that's actually are they secondary ready when they go, I think they are with age but it think that's not a term 6 rush post SATS, but that's if you didn't have the SATS test itself you'd have more time personally I think to prep them. Erm I'm going to put that there because I don't know if some of the children would be.

Erm I personally do think the test itself can stress the children some of the children out some teachers as well but then raises the question if you don't have a SATS test what you're going to have to have another kind of assessment so I'm going to put that one down here because you're always going to need some kind of assessment.

Attitudes of adults actually if you're a year 6 teacher and if you've and if you've got a TA who wasn't very supportive and had a negative attitude that would really erm …

SEN funding again I think that I think that can have an input if erm depending again I think this is more like of a like failing school if the data from year 2 is amazing and they've got to year 6 I think that puts so much pressure on year 6 teachers if you think of they're a million miles away from they used to be greater depth and now what's happened and they've got to catch them up I think that is actually one of the main pressure points actually, but that's again school depending. I'm thinking of my old school as well as this school and just comparing. It is different and it was a more deprived area and I know that was a major issue was the stress of 'oh well these children have got to make it look where they were at year 2' but then obviously you've looked where they've come up in year 5 and it's the stress of they have to be the priority and I think it stresses the teachers out.

Erm, test readiness and then we've got planning. Time required for the planning. Erm, you get PPA so I think planning's not massive. Er, test readiness. I'd put that one there. So I've got erm I personally think oh I don't know if I'd switch those actually. The key focus on pupils predicted to pass I think can be stressful but then I can see why it couldn't be stressful depending on which school, because if they're going to make it then it depends, but from experience I've never taught year 6 but from experience of year 6 teachers that seems to be their main stressing point.

Again that's depends on the school, but if the early identification of SEN needs hasn't taken place then maybe the children haven't got in place what they need for that SATS test. Erm whether that be the funding or the resources needed for them to achieve. Erm then yes the SEN funding if you're teaching a class of children for SATS then you've got children in your class who haven't had any funding and you've got some extreme needs in your class that's going to be very difficult if you're trying to teach the whole class.

Attitude of adults I think that is a big one. I think actually with erm with TAs if you've not got a positive TA and you just think oh those children aren't going to I don't know how to say it nicely, but sometimes I feel like it's children can be written off. That's going to lower their self-esteem and that I think in the future when they go to secondary school and throughout their life that would stick with you. Because I can remember in primary school, I know it's changed since, but you remember I think it was shapes you knew if you were on the square table you were on the clever table and if you were on the triangles then you knew and children know when you put them in groups it doesn't they know who they're with they can work it out.

Is there anything you'd like to add to the task or interview questions?

No, thank you.

(photo not taken as participant touched the cards but did not place them in an order, just talked through them)

Participant 3

9.1.20 Pilot Research with Year 3 Class Teacher

Q1

OK erm inclusion in terms of education is education for all. It's ensuring that you're adapting practice to meet the needs of whoever is in your class, erm dependent on their needs and it means different needs but still all equally treated.

Q2

Erm of erm I suppose It's focussed more on education and I don't know whether it's as prominent in society I'm not sure everyone would have the same meaning of it in society. Erm, I think in terms of disabilities society is inclusive, I think it's becoming more inclusive. Erm, there's still a way to go. Similar with equality of gender and equality of yeah I think it's becoming more inclusive. I wouldn't say it's as inclusive as schools are endeavouring to be.

Q3

Ok ERM the yes just from my perspective in year 3 it's making sure that all needs are met even when you've got varying degrees of needs. Obviously every child works differently, they work at a different level erm they have different personalities which you'd expect and you'd hope for in a class. Erm but some need different degrees of support. Erm they might need additional resources and that can be challenging but that's obviously down to us to adapt practice. I think it's probably hardest when with bodies in the room really with resources and adult is the most valuable resource really so.

Q4

Ok so definitely adult support in the class and adults supporting that particular class all the way up to year 6 as well. So I think an inclusive mentality the whole way through the school is vital by the time they get to year 6 you know it's really important. Erm I think even the school environment, obviously it's similar for any other year group but an inclusive environment that feels welcoming for all pupils it's extremely important.

Q5

Erm, I think certainly there are barriers again it's due to the different degrees of needs. Erm and that's different with different classes. Erm I think resourcing time obviously I know time is probably brought up quite a lot as a teacher's challenge. Erm yep time and additional adults and things like that it's difficult to say what would cover everybody's needs in a school but I think yes defiantly resources time adults can be a challenge but it's how we adapt to it.

Q6

I think it's saying that if you can't pass the SATS it's going affect confidence and certainly their first step in to secondary school which is a big one. Er if they're feeling like they're not expected in the 3 things – reading writing maths – I can imagine it's quite difficult for children who are told they're not expected to then grow in confidence in those areas obviously they do and they you know they'll gain confidence in secondary school but erm it might feel like they're limited in terms of what they can choose to go into. If they feel like they're not a good reader or they're not a good writer or they're not a good mathematician it might limit them in terms of future career aspirations that they might have at that age. Erm yes it's quite a shame really it certainly narrows what they think about themselves what they think they can achieve later on.

When do you think that starts, them knowing they're not expected to pass the SATS?

I think probably earlier than we'd expect to be honest even earlier than before SATS comes into it children know when they're they know when they're not achieving as highly as their peers and I think it's almost highlighted even further in year 6 because there's kind of expected language. We obviously don't use that lower down the school, but year 6 children will be much more familiar with the terms of expected you know not quite expected. Erm so yes I think it does happen lower down but it's exasperated in year 6 I think.

TASK

Ok, so do you want me to put the ones which are the biggest barriers at the top.

Yes, if you'd like to, however you'd like.

I'm just going to read them and then put them all out first. So the biggest barriers to inclusion, which of these.

Mmm it's difficult I'm going to put them in a cluster.

Ok I think this is how I'm going to order. So this is the biggest barriers to inclusion on top. I still think these can be big barriers to inclusion in year 6.

So even the ones at the bottom?

Yes, but not so much. I think it's very context based as well. Like with the in year admissions one. Yeah I can imagine actually that would be potentially if a child joined part way through the year that could be quite educational for the children about inclusion. So it could work one of 2 ways that one, but I've put it at the bottom.

I notice you've left one out. Does that mean you don't think it's a barrier?

It's only because it's the same, oh ok it's not exactly the same, it's similar so I' would put it in a similar place to be quite honest.

Is there anything you'd like to add to the task or interview questions?

I don't think so. No.

Retainment og
teaching
staff ... is a
teacher leaves
mid year.

Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS

eg: additional input soley for children within this group

Lack of early identificaion of SEN needs

eg: SEN needs not idetified pior to Year 6 (this may be in school or from in-year admission)

SEN funding

eg: insufficient funding to enable equal access to the curriculum

National curriculum

eg: the content of the curriculum

Attitudes of adults

eg: to those not predicted to pass the SATS test/ impact on self-esteem

Test readiness

eg: a key focus on preperation for SATS test

In-year admission of a child with SEN

eg: a child, with SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

In-year admission of a child with complex SEN

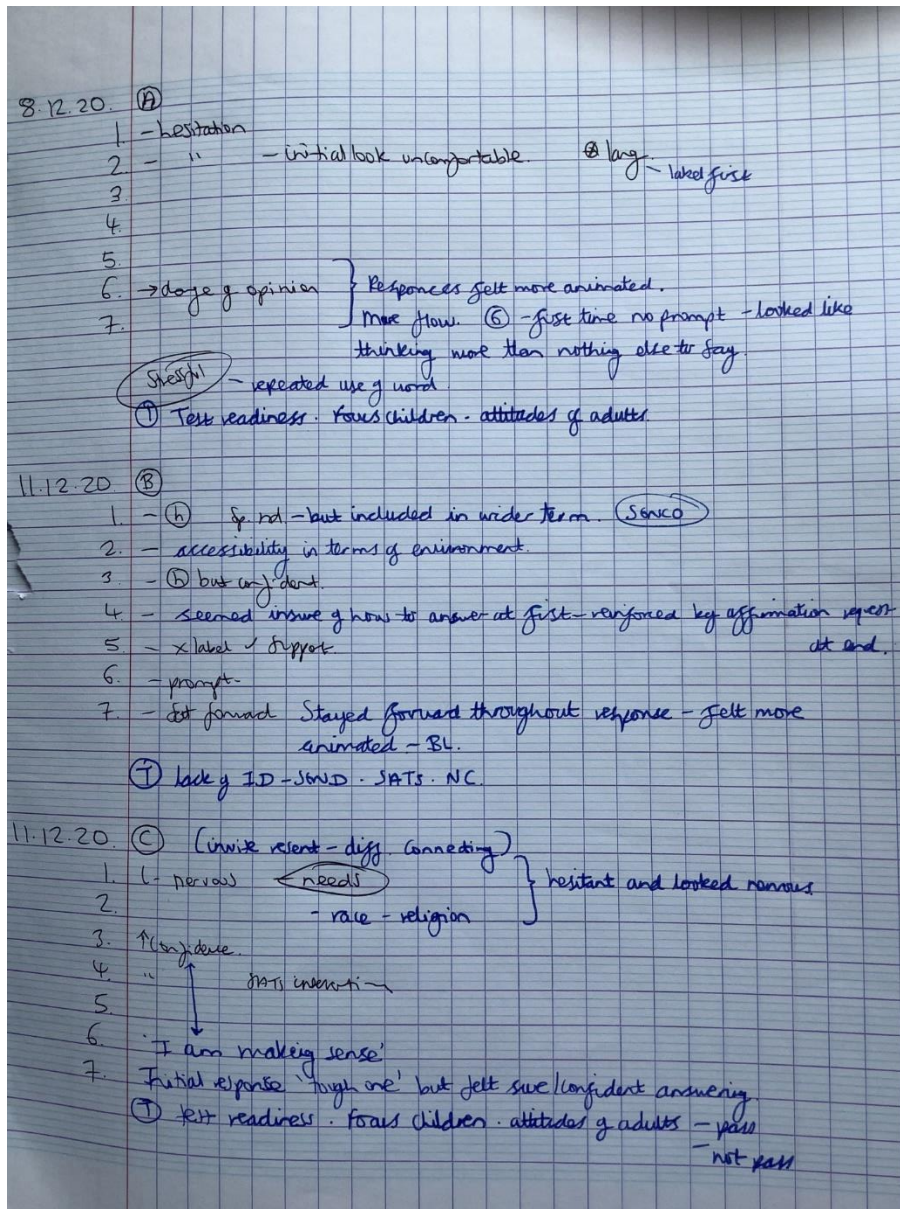eg: a child, with complex SEN, who has joined the school in Year 6

Being secondary ready

eg: equipping children with the skills needed to transition to Year 7

Planning

eg: time required for planning

Semi-Structured Interview Questions	
Introductory questions	
1	What does inclusion mean to you?
2	What does inclusion look like in our society?
Set A - open ended set questions linked specifically to Year 6	
3	I'm not a year 6 teacher what can you tell me about any challenges with regards to inclusion?
4	What supports inclusion in year 6?
5	What are the barriers of ensuring you are as inclusive as possible in your classroom (job title) everyday?
Set B - open ended set questions linked specifically to testing in Year 6	
6	What factors affect the future aspirations of Year 6 children who have been predicted not to / don't meet the SATs standard?
7	What are your thoughts on the SATs testing in Year 6? Are there any barriers to inclusion with regards to Year 6 being a statutory testing year?

Year 6 SATS test	**Test readiness**	Being secondary ready	**Attitudes of adults**
Lack of early identificaion of SEN needs	**National curriculum**	**Planning**	**SEN funding**
In-year admission of a child with complex SEN	**In-year admission of a child with SEN**	**Attitudes of adults**	**Key focus on pupils predicted to pass the SATS**

Self-reflection of this draft version identified two areas for improvement – the cards lacked detail to make an informed decision and there was no scope for further participant ideas. This was not in line with the methodological aim of fostering conversational exchange between researcher and participant.
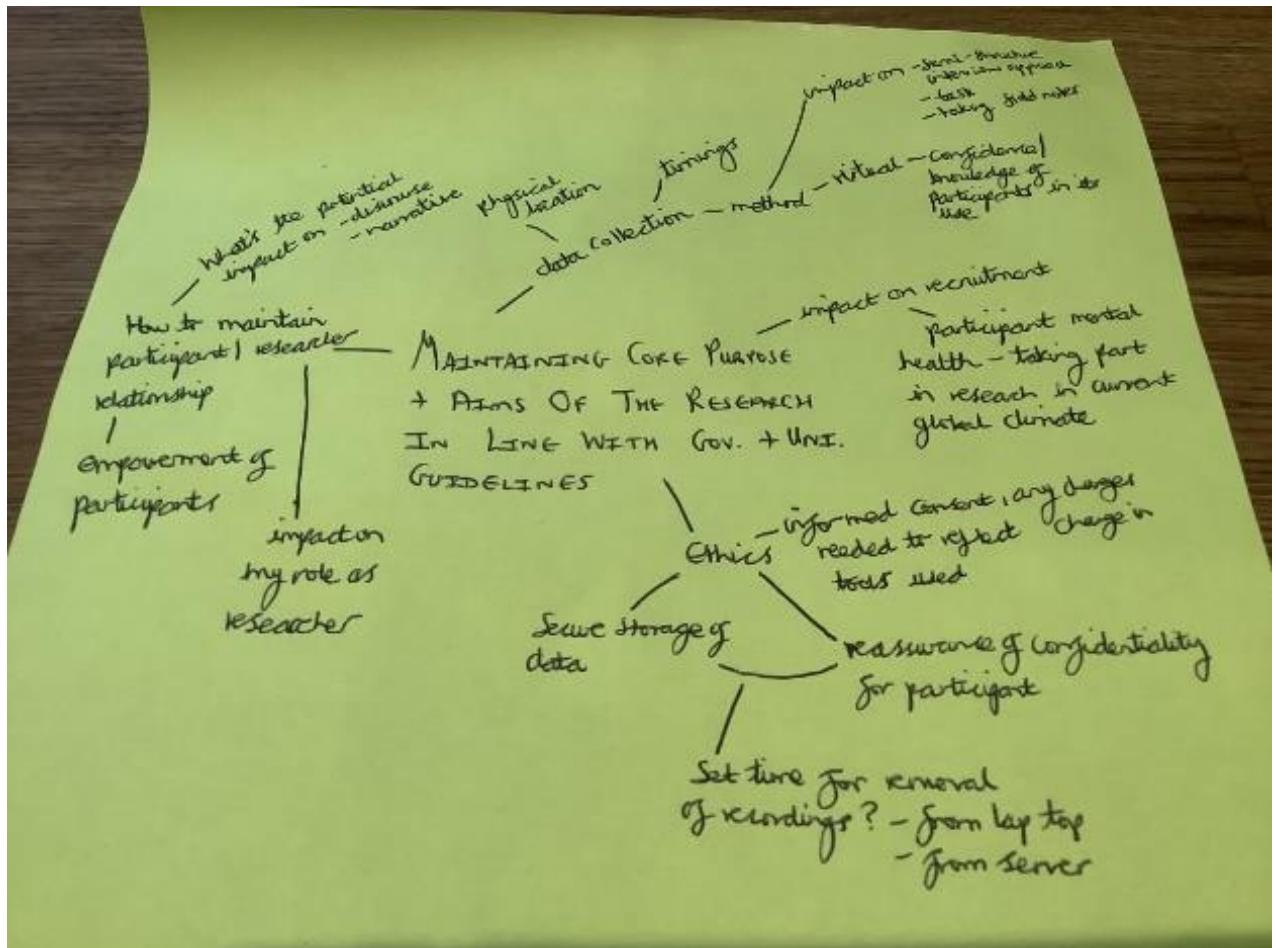
Initial mind map of points to consider.

Appendix K: Qualitative Research Framework.

Qualitative Research Framework

How to maintain purpose and design	Non-negotiables = has to be workable & feasible, qualitative in drive, must maintain ethos of participant/ researcher relationship
My role as researcher	How to maintain this via virtual means. How to maintain power balance between participant & researcher. How to build rapport.
Typology of virtual method	Must be interactive & enable **working with** participants not **doing to**.
Consideration of which tool to use	Need to review advantages & disadvantages of different virtual tools for data collection
Recruitment	Must consider mental health of participants. Reassurance – of process & in use of data collection tool.
Ethical considerations	Secure storage of data. Amendments to informed consent and participant invite letter needed. Reassurance of confidentiality.
Data collection	Timings & location – virtual means offer more participant choice in this. Plan time line for transcription as part of reassurance for participants of confidentiality.
Data analysis & reporting	Verbatim transcription remains. When consideration of which tool take account of how field notes can be taken.

Use of this framework enabled initial researcher thoughts to be refined and through this process key questions for consideration to be addressed.

<u>Appendix L: Participant Invitation Letter – Amended in Light of Covid-19.</u>

Dear XXXX,

As you may know I am currently a doctoral student studying at Christ Church University and undertaking research into inclusion. I am writing to you today as a researcher and not in my role as a head teacher. Every part of my study is undertaken as a researcher studying at Christ Church University and not as a member of staff of the Trust.

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. To understand why I am undertaking this research and what it would involve from yourself please take some time to read the following information carefully. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, queries or would like further information.

The research forms a significant part of the thesis I am doing toward the culmination of my Ed(D) course. My research aims to add to the current body of knowledge around inclusion in relation to the current educational climate, by adding new knowledge in relation to Year 6 statutory testing and pupils with special educational needs.

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary. If you are able to participate there is a consent form that I will share with you. By signing this you still have the right to withdraw at any time for which no reason needs to be given and to no detriment to yourself.

In taking part you will be invited to take part in a short informal interview with myself via Microsoft Teams©. During the informal interview I will ask you a few simple questions and there is a short task. It is expected that this will last no longer than 30 minutes. Interviews will be video recorded to enable accurate transcription. All recordings will be destroyed following this; between the interview and transcription recordings will be kept on a password protected laptop. Transcription will be undertaken within 7 days of interview; the video recording will then be destroyed. I will ask you to

photograph the conclusion of the short task and email it to me at the end, to ensure accurate representation of the results. The interview transcripts and task photographs will remain anonymised.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to either the informal interview or the short task as the primary interest of my research is on peoples' opinions. These opinions are all equally valued and will, in part, form the conclusion to my thesis.

All information gathered will remain confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. A summary of the data gathered and a transcript of the interview will be shared with you before final submission into my thesis. The master list identifying participants will be held on a password protected computer accessed only by myself as the researcher. The application to undertake this research has undergone a full ethic review by the education faculty of Christ Church University.

Beyond the one off informal interview and task there is no other time commitment. There are no disadvantages to taking part and, as stated, withdrawal at any time in the process is your right (at which point any information collected from you would be destroyed), this would in no way be held against you. Whilst participation would be very much appreciated, particularly as you are (add job role), there is absolutely no expectation that you have to participate and should you choose not to this will be accepted without question.

A summary of the study will be shared with you and a full copy will be available on request.

If you are happy to continue and be part of the research study, I would like to propose I call you to arrange a time at your convenience for the Microsoft Teams Ⓒ meeting.

Kind regards,

Stella Schâringer s.g.oleary175@canterbury.ac.uk

Tel: 07858 607054

This letter was amended to reflect the virtual approach to the research necessitated by the pandemic. The letter was emailed to participants, in line with Trust and government guidelines at the time to only physically share what was unavoidable and anything shared to be sanitised.

(the letter also reflected my new surname, changed by deed poll during this time)

Appendix M: Participant Consent Form – Amended in Light of Covid-19.

Informed Consent.

I, the undersigned, confirm that: -

	Please tick here
I have read and understood the information about the research study, as provided in the email dated XXXX.	
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions or raise any queries about the research and my participation.	
I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study.	
I understand that I can withdraw at any time for which I do not need to give a reason and that this will be of no detriment to myself.	
Procedures of confidentiality have been explained.	
I understand that the interview will be video recorded via Microsoft Teams© which will be stored on a password protected computer and that this will be destroyed following anonymised transcription. This process will be completed within 1 week of the recording.	
I understand that the outcome of the task will be photographed.	
I, along with the researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	

Participant:

Name _____

Signature_____

Date_____

Researcher:

Name _____Stella Schâringer

Signature_____

Date_____

This consent form was amended to reflect the virtual approach to the research necessitated by the pandemic.

Appendix N: Faculty of Education Research Ethic Committee Consent

12th April,2017   Ref 16/EDU/017

Dear Stella

Project title: An exploration of perceptions of inclusion within 1 multi-academy trust in relation the process of end of Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment within the current educational climate.

Thank you for responding to the conditions outlined by members of the Faculty Research Ethics committee. You have now fulfilled all the requirements for ethical approval.

I confirm that you can commence your research. Please notify me (or my replacement as Chair of the committee), of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course.
This approval is conditional on you informing me once your research has been completed.

With best wishes for a successful project,
Yours sincerely,

Dr Viv Wilson
Acting Chair, Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee.

12.11.19   Post Task Discussion:-

RESPONSE

1. — interesting   — SATs!

2. —   "

3. — it's not right — pressure linked to SATs + that's why it's imp. to prep. the ch. — so they've got the skills to sit the test — they've got to do it. Need to build confidence.

4. — our job = dev. ch. confidence in themselves. Build S-Esteem.

5. — no choice but to prep ch. — they love to do it — not prep ↓ confidence
   we   "   "   "   "

6. — ... got to be ready 4 way tes. has to be carried out. — resilience

7. — they do — but also prep. for nx. stage + that's not done at SATs
   . (several nodding and comments made affirming this stance)

8. — yes limits to right/wrong @ — input ↓ S.Esteem.

9. — — need supp. to learn from mistakes — more imp. life skill
    — our job to scaffold.

10. We're here to — encourage & facilitate — skills for life more imp.

What Supports Inclusion in Year 6?

Response i: Every child in our school should leave ready for their next stage of education, with the ability to read, write and manipulate number to function in "the real world" They should also have high self-esteem, confidence and resilient skills.

Response ii: All children engaged and can assess their work/ ability work.

Response iii: -self esteem promoted enabling skills for next stage and this.

Response iv: Children feel part of everything their peers are doing not separated out. confident and high self esteem ready for next step.

Response v: Independence for all children – preparation for next stage

Response vi: All needs catered for @ all stages of day.

Response vii: All children are able to reach their potential and feel successful + good about themselves.

Response viii: Equity – giving chn what they need – not the same. Prep for secondary & wider life.

Response ix: Inclusion - All chn being and feeling part of a learning community – all chn reaching potential.

Response x: Every child succeeding at their level. That they feel they have achieved something they didn't / couldn't do before.

Response xi: All enabled for prep for secondary and wider life. Given the skills for this.

Response xii: Full access to all areas of the curriculum.

Response xiii: Access & empowerment.

Are There any Barriers?

Response xiv: Testing. Curriculum. Unidentified needs. Equal access.

Response xv: Lack of knowledge/ education. Low self-esteem.

Response xvi: Adult perceptions & pre-conceived ideas.

Response xvii: Assessment of a child's needs made too late and so the children do not get support until Y6.

Response xviii: Self fulfilling prophesy ie: low expectations of others

Response xix: Barriers Inclusion year 6 –Funding -Focus on the achievers to get results - Too test driven.

Response xx: Secondary school – one size fits all model for SEMH

Response xxi: SAT's Secondary Transition Puberty Social Media Self Awareness

Response xxii: Statutory Testing

Response xxiii: Cannot read work as the work has not been planned appropriately
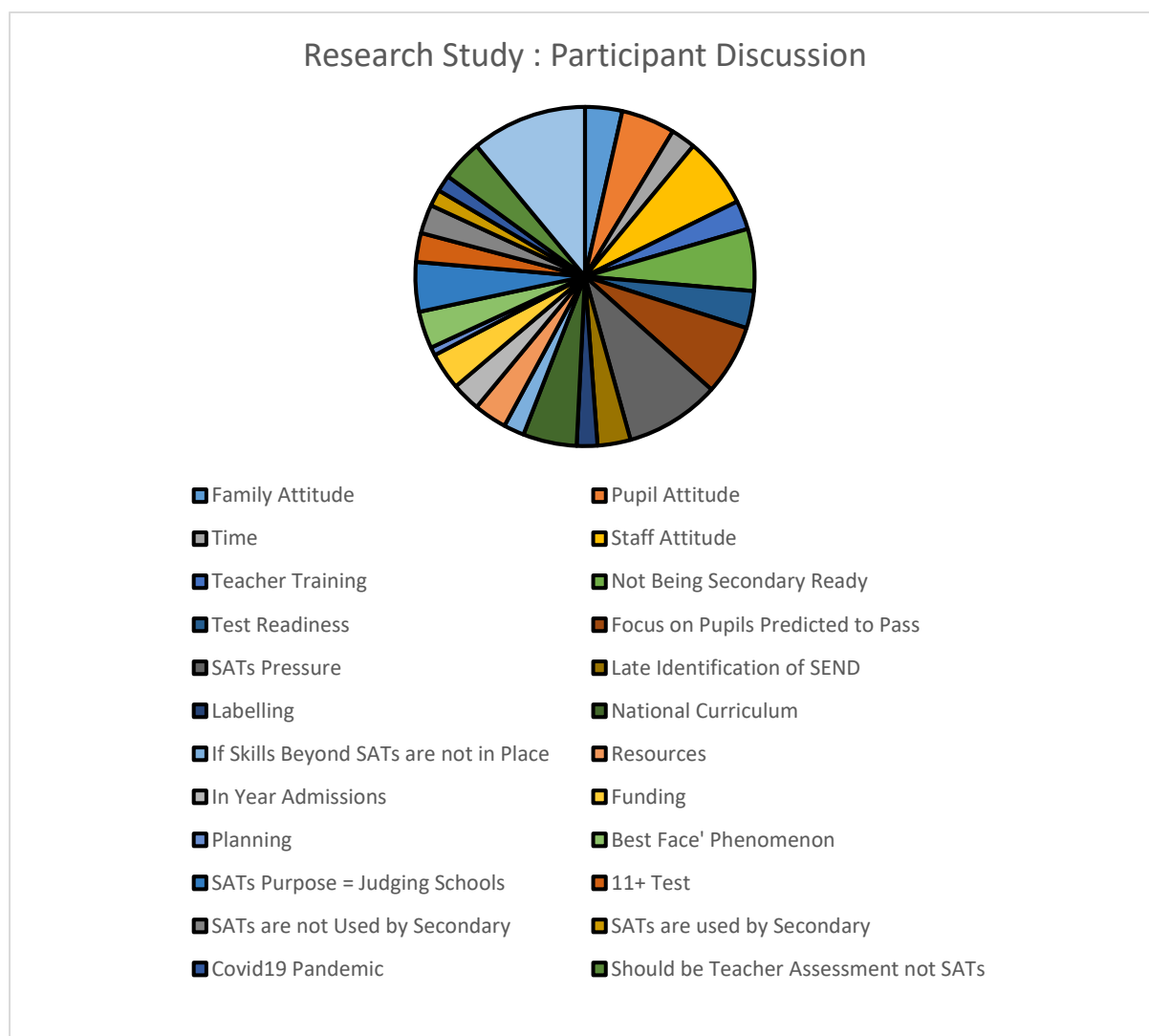
Response xxiv: Barrier-SATs testing

Response xxv: Barriers –pressure of testing –adult support – SEN support/ lack of high needs funding – social media/ the internet

Response xxvi: Attitudes of some staff – limits on what they can do. SATS focus makes them very aware of their differences

*as the task was anonymous responses have been numbered not participants.

Research Study : Participant Discussion

- ■ Family Attitude
- ■ Pupil Attitude
- ■ Time
- ■ Staff Attitude
- ■ Teacher Training
- ■ Not Being Secondary Ready
- ■ Test Readiness
- ■ Focus on Pupils Predicted to Pass
- ■ SATs Pressure
- ■ Late Identification of SEND
- ■ Labelling
- ■ National Curriculum
- ■ If Skills Beyond SATs are not in Place
- ■ Resources
- ■ In Year Admissions
- ■ Funding
- ■ Planning
- ■ Best Face' Phenomenon
- ■ SATs Purpose = Judging Schools
- ■ 11+ Test
- ■ SATs are not Used by Secondary
- ■ SATs are used by Secondary
- ■ Covid19 Pandemic
- ■ Should be Teacher Assessment not SATs

Thread	No of new sentences thread statements appear (in semi-structured interview & ranking task combined)	% of combined semi-structured interview & ranking task data for all research participants
Family Attitude	9	4
Pupil Attitude	13	5
Time	6	2
Staff Attitude	17	7
Teacher Training	7	3
Not Being Secondary Ready	15	6
Test Readiness	9	4
Focus on Pupils Predicted to Pass the SATs	17	7
SATs Pressure	23	9
Late Identification of SEND	8	3
Labelling	5	2

National Curriculum	13	5
If Skills Beyond SATs are not in Place	5	2
Resources	8	3
In Year Admissions	7	3
Funding	9	4
Planning	4	1
'Best Face' Phenomenon	9	4
SATs Purpose= Judging Schools	12	5
11+ Test	7	3
SATs are not Used by Secondary Schools	7	3
SATs are Used by Secondary Schools	4	2
Covid19 Pandemic	4	2
Should be Teacher Assessment not SATs	10	4
Inclusion for All	28	11

Appendix R: Research Study - Use of the Words 'Pressure' and 'stress' in Relation to SATs.

Pressure		Stress	
Participant	*Questions*	*Participant*	*Questions*
A	6, 7	A	6 (2 mentions), 7 (2 mentions), task (2 mentions
B	7 (4 mentions)	B	6, 7
C	7 (3 mentions)	D	7
D	6 (2 mentions)	G	7
E	4, 5	H	7, task
F	3	I	Task
G	6, 7 (4 mentions)	J	7
H	Task	K	6, 7
I	7	M	7 (3 mentions)
L	5, 6, 7	N	7
M	7	O	7
N	7 (2 mentions)		
P	3, 7 (2 mentions)		