'Exploring the Restructuring of Special Educational Needs in one Local Authority with a particular focus on the impact on School Leaders'

Janet Myles

Doctor of Education

University of Sussex

April 2012

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents: Page

List of Tables

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Janet Myles: Doctor of Education

'Exploring the Restructuring of Special Educational Needs in one Local Authority with a particular focus on the impact on School Leaders'

SUMMARY

This thesis is about change, and the impact of change on the restructuring of special educational needs provision. The impetus for my research came from my work with the National Association of Head Teachers, supporting school leaders in managing the education of a more diverse pupil population.

The research relates to the Labour Government's policy to increase the number of children with more complex needs in mainstream schools. Following Baroness Warnock's (2005) call for a review of special educational needs, the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee carried out an 'Inquiry'. Their final report (SEN: Third Report of Session 2005-06), identified high levels of dissatisfaction amongst parents and teachers, and it concluded that the Special Educational Needs framework was no longer fit for purpose. In response, the Labour Government stated that it was too early to carry out a review because their 'Every Child Matters' initiative was still developing. However, they stated that, in future, local authorities would be required to demonstrate improved special educational needs provision when restructuring their overall educational provision. This significant response prompted me to explore the implementation of the restructuring of provision as several authorities were putting forward proposals for change during 2007-08.

The research began in 2008. It is a piece of small-scale educational research which explores the perspectives of school leaders in one local authority and the local authority's documented evidence. The concepts of 'inclusion' and 'change' provided the foundation to develop my research study within a broad

'constructivist interpretative' paradigm and, the direction to review relevant literature on inclusive education and on strategies for implementing change. It discusses the qualitative methods used to investigate my overarching research question:

What is the nature and impact of change, in the restructuring of special educational needs provision?

I set out to explore two aspects of the nature of change: the first objective was to investigate the process and the second was to investigate the impact of change. My intention was to tease out whether school leaders in mainstream schools, subject to competing government policies ('inclusion' and 'market' ideologies) would choose to increase their provision and the impact of proposed change on the individuals and schools involved. My fieldwork was carried out during 2008-09, and follow-up interviews were carried out with those respondents, who were directly involved in the restructuring of provision, during 2010-11.

The findings illustrate the influence of individual values and attitudes and the importance of effective school leaders in driving forward reform. It describes the actions of the local authority during the process of implementing change and highlights the improvements that could be made during the stages of transition. Importantly, the significance is considered of internal and external influences that impact on the actions of school leaders and how they influenced the policies of the local authority. Each individual's, or body's, interaction within and between each level (i.e. national, local, school and individual levels), created an impact on the other levels, a process that was far from straightforward. A significant finding of the research was the importance of the interrelationship between these four dimensions, building on Fullan's (2003) tri-level reform.

Although the findings demonstrated that to implement progressive change requires motivated school leaders, it also depends on the collaborative effort of all stakeholders involved. However, even with a concerted effort other unexpected events may alter its course: change may be influenced but it cannot be controlled.   It is therefore important to develop and understand those

strategies and dimensions that contribute to the effective implementation of 'change' because, in the world of education, change is on going.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This doctoral thesis is located in a 'constructivist interpretative' paradigm and is about exploring the impact of restructuring Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision within a local authority. It examines how government strategies, aimed at increasing and improving SEN provision, were implemented. This introductory chapter describes the international, national and local context at the time of my exploratory study. The investigation started in 2008 and my fieldwork was carried out during 2008-09, when the Labour Government was in power. My professional background and the influences that shaped the choice of my doctoral research study are described in this chapter. The chapter explains why I decided to investigate what was happening in one particular authority, and the first section outlines the aim and the rationale of the thesis.

1.1 The Aim and the Rationale

The initial aim of the study was to investigate the implementation of the government's strategies for reform that focused on increasing and improving educational provision in mainstream and special schools for SEN children in one local authority. The rationale was to further inform our understanding of the processes of 'change', to explore the importance of the interrelationship between and across national, local authority, school and individual levels when 'change' is implemented. My objective was to explore the perceptions of school leaders, based on their experiences of the implementation of proposed change. The study also aimed to investigate whether the authority followed statutory procedures for restructuring provision, to explore if and how they carried out their statutory duties during the initial stages of implementation within, what Fullan (1993) would call a national framework for 'change'.

The rationale for my study was significant as it linked to the challenge made by Baroness Warnock (2005), in which she called for the government to set up another commission to review the situation for SEN children. According to

Warnock (2005), there was an urgent need to review the concept of 'inclusion', the process of statementing and to gain a better understanding of the link between social disadvantage and SEN, as the current system was failing too many children.

In 2005 the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee set up an Inquiry on SEN. Their findings were informed by over 230 written submissions from a wide range of stakeholders and oral evidence was taken from over 40 witnesses. Several interim reports were published during the course of the Inquiry. They also took into account the Ofsted Report (2004), which identified a considerable inequality of provision and the Audit Commission's (2002) call for a review of policy on the issue of statements. In their final report the Education and Skills Committee stated that Warnock's original (1978) SEN framework had run its course. The Committee concluded that there were significant problems with the current system of SEN provision as well as high levels of dissatisfaction amongst parents and teachers

In the government's submission to the Inquiry, Lord Adonis, the minister responsible for SEN, said that he recognised that the system was not working well and, when the Committee requested a government view of increased inclusion in mainstream schools, he stated that the government did not have a view. However, this response was challenged by the Committee, referring to their strategy on SEN, DfES (2004b). It was stated that this document clearly set out the government's vision on SEN, that government guidance to local authorities indicated that the proportion of children educated in special schools should fall and there should be fewer statements. Therefore, in summary, the Committee concluded that local authorities would assume that the government did hold a policy of increased 'inclusion' in mainstream schools (House of Commons Report: 2005-06).

This government strategy of increased inclusion is reflected in the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) Report (2010). The STRB Report (2010: 6-7) recorded that the number of statements issued had decreased and the number of children with more complex needs placed in mainstream schools had

increased: "from 14% in 2004 to 18% in 2010". This indicates that, nationally higher thresholds were introduced by local authorities, relevant to their statementing process. The STRB Report (2010: 6-7) noted a reduction in the number of maintained special schools in England: "from 1,171 in 1997 to 985 in 2009" and a decrease in the number of children in maintained special schools in England from: "95,000 in 1997 to 85,000 in 2009". The Ofsted Report (2010) also noted the changing trend during the Labour Government's administration.

My proposed exploration of one authority whilst they were implementing a restructuring of their SEN provision was timely, because like other authorities the local authority selected for investigation had determined their proposals based on the government's strategy for increased 'inclusion'. Also, the authority's proposals for restructuring would be supported by the government's finance initiative: 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) (2005-06).

My doctoral study developed from my professional role, knowledge of new government policies and the fact that a number of local authorities were raising their assessment thresholds so that fewer children were provided with statements; therefore only those with more severe and complex needs were being placed in special schools. I was aware of the tensions that the government's increased 'inclusion' policy was creating for mainstream schools and I extended my literature review to find that the issues reported supported my concerns.

As Ainscow *et al.* (2006b) noted, 'inclusion' as it relates to SEN was conflicting with the government's mandatory policy of national curriculum tests and the publication of 'league tables', which rate schools on their test results. However, as well as SEN, there are other dimensions that need to be taken into account. According to Frederickson and Cline (2002, 2009), 'inclusion' relates to broader factors. These authors and, Lindsay *et al.* (2006), refer to circumstances where SEN is compounded by socio-economic disadvantage, single parent families, and diversity as it relates to ethnicity and disability. In areas where pockets of deprivation and disadvantage exist, some schools

struggle to compete in a market place environment. Informed by this knowledge the central focus of my research study was to explore the impact of restructuring SEN provision, taking account of these additional dimensions, within one local authority during the process and stages of implementation. The next section describes my professional background.

1.2 My Professional Background

I have been employed by the National Association for Head Teachers (NAHT) for 19 years, representing them at national and local level. My remit covers a broad range of areas, but the most significant (in terms of supporting the inclusion of children in education) are admissions, exclusions, behaviour and attendance, ethnicity and special educational needs/disability. My role involves responding to 'relevant' consultations, contributing, with colleagues, to inform NAHT policy and working proactively with government administrations and others, to reflect the NAHT 'view'. As educational stakeholders representing 28,000 active school leaders, it is very important for NAHT to have a 'voice' in this arena.

Working within this association has provided experiences that have shaped my views and values. It has developed my knowledge within the field of education and provided the foundation for me to both inform and support school leaders in their management of SEN provision. However, it has also led me to question aspects of provision in relation to its impact on school leaders. During this time a major challenge to mainstream schools has been to manage the education of greater numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and more complex needs, whilst maintaining their position in government league tables through improved teaching and learning provision.

Our association operates at three levels: at national, regional and branch levels where local officials advise members and inform NAHT headquarters of any local issues. This infrastructure and network is important because it enables a constant exchange of information. For example, at national level the NAHT was aware of the government's strategy for authorities to review their

SEN provision. It was agreed by our National Executive that headquarters should be notified by branch officials when their authorities were consulting on restructuring their SEN provision. The actions of local and national government and other national bodies inform the direction of our work, which contributes to the policy decisions of our association. It was therefore decided that if authorities were considering restructuring their SEN provision, it was important to monitor their actions. The work fell within my remit, which was helpful because the monitoring exercise supported the development of my research project.

NAHT's primary aim is to support its members, who are school leaders. One of the main objectives of our organisation is to be proactive in attempting to influence local and national government initiatives and policies, through working closely with members and through lobbying various MPs in circumstances where new initiatives could impact on our members and their schools. My investigation therefore began through my professional role and my desire to explore what appeared to be quite difficult and challenging changes for school leaders caught up in the restructuring of provision, in some cases, facing traumatic change. These Influences contributed to the development of my research project to explore the nature and impact of change in the restructuring of SEN in a local authority.

The next section considers the UK legislation in order to contexualise my research and, most importantly, the legislation and statutory guidance documents introduced by the English government, which are very relevant to my study.

1.3 The National Context

Following the 1978 Warnock Report, the 1981 Education Act created the legal basis for the 'inclusion' agenda. Seventeen years ago the Conservative Government adopted the UNESCO (1994) *Salemanca World Statement and Framework for Action on SEN.* Acts, Regulations and national government

policies followed to support the government's 'inclusion' strategy. The legislation specifically relevant to schools in the UK was the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) - amended in 2005 - and the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (2001). Other specific government initiatives issued, relevant to their aim to increase and improve inclusive provision, are Inclusive Schooling (DfES, 2001c), Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004a) and Removing Barriers to Achievement (DfES, 2004b).

These documents were issued by the government to provide a framework of statutory guidance aimed at increasing and improving SEN provision in England. However, implementing the government's drive for increasing and improving SEN provision differed, as local authorities varied in their interpretation of government policy. In some areas authorities drastically reduced the number of statements issued and closed many of their special schools, whereas other authorities continued to statement children, maintaining the majority of their special schools. The House of Commons Report (2005-06) challenged the government on variable practice within the SEN framework. The government's response to this challenge was published in their report DfES (2006) in which it was reported that the responsibility for SEN provision rested with local authorities. They did, however, add that they would produce guidance for authorities proposing to change their SEN provision. The House of Commons Report (2005-06) made many recommendations, but in essence, it called for a review of the National Framework for SEN provision. However, the government's response DfES (2006) stated that they did not believe it was timely for a review of the National Framework because the 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) programme was still evolving and, although diminishing in number, special schools had an important role - to support pupils in mainstream schools.

The central message from the government to authorities and schools was to support their current policy of 'inclusion' through improved local provision. Three government policy documents are therefore particularly relevant to my thesis.

The first document builds on proposals for the reform of children's services – 'ECM' (DfES, 2004a). This 'ECM' programme of action was significant because it demonstrated that the government acknowledged the need for a broader approach beyond the sole focus of SEN in recognition that other factors existed; these factors were relevant to under-achievement, for example socio-economic status, gender, family breakdown and ethnicity. The government's 'ECM' programme provided a range of statutory guidance to underpin their objectives aiming to improve opportunities and outcomes for every child.

The second policy document 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' (DfES, 2004b) outlined the government's strategy for SEN. The third document DCSF (2007) 'Planning and Developing SEN Provision' made clear that the responsibility rested with authorities. Local authorities were expected to tailor provision to local needs evidenced by their 'Children and Young Peoples' Plan' (CYPP). This document DCSF (2007) differed from earlier directives on local provision in that it stated that local authorities **must** (a statutory requirement) demonstrate an improvement in their proposed reorganisation of SEN provision.

1.4 The local authority context

The authority selected for my study covered an area of approximately 14 square miles. The authority's website published information that described the demographics: it stated that the authority benefited from a highly diverse population, both ethnically and culturally. Around 250,000 people lived in the area; children and young people below the age of 18 made up 25 per cent of the population; 43 per cent of residents had a heritage that was of minority ethnic origin. It would seem that diversity in schools in this authority was largely related to the ethnicity, culture, faith and socio-economic status of its population. More specifically and relevant to my research study, was that SEN/disability and deprivation appeared relatively high and, according to published authority's information, household income remained below the average for that area. These diversity factors became very pertinent during my field investigation.

In the spring of 2008 I learned, through my professional role, that several authorities were proposing to restructure their SEN provision in response to the national policy directives outlined in the previous section. For the purpose of my study, I decided to focus on one particular authority. My 'pre-investigation' stage was carried out during the summer of 2008. This exercise enabled me to consider whether it was the appropriate location for my fieldwork. It seemed to fit the purpose of my doctoral studies because the authority aimed to improve their SEN provision and this topic linked to my professional role.

This authority, like other authorities, was also approaching its review of provision supported by the government's 'BSF' initiative. During 2007/08 the authority's proposals were being considered and discussed by various stakeholders involved in the process. Discussions were taking place between authority officers, trade union officials, school governors, staff and parents; even the media became involved through school and parental campaigns. Based on the concerns expressed by members at branch level, I reported what I had learned from branch officials to NAHT's National Executive Committee on SEN. It was agreed that the General Secretary should write to the Director of Children's Services.

The letter stressed that the government's statutory guidance emphasised that any proposed restructuring must demonstrate an improvement in their overall provision for SEN. Subsequently, NAHT was invited to attend a meeting at the Council Offices. I represented our association together with the branch secretary. We were joined by other Teacher Union Officials and representatives of the local Primary Head-Teachers' Forum'. The meeting took place and we were assured that the authority aimed to improve their overall SEN provision. It was arranged that, in future, copies of the minutes of internal authority meetings would be forwarded to all the unions.

It is important to add here that I was very conscious of ethical considerations, as I was now about to undertake my research study within this authority. This

awareness is discussed in Chapter 3, my methodology chapter, which looks at the ethical tensions that occurred during this initial stage of my research project. These early experiences highlighted as Drake and Heath (2008, 2010) argued that distinctions needed to be made between my professional role and my researcher role.

I emailed two of the head-teachers in the three special schools involved in the proposed restructuring. My intention was to gain further background knowledge of what was actually happening. I did point out to members in the special schools visited that the primary aim of my visit was to discuss their concerns about the restructuring proposals, as I was remitted to monitor the procedural processes and actions of the authority, but I also cautioned that NAHT could not influence the authority's final determination. The visits proposed were relevant to my professional role, but this exercise also informed my proposed investigation. One school was scheduled for closure and one for partial closure and relocation; both head teachers invited me to visit their schools.

The head teacher of the school facing partial closure arranged for me to meet with him and his deputy. At this initial meeting I informed them that I was considering exploring the restructuring of SEN provision as a topic for my doctoral research project. It was suggested that I could meet with those parent governors who were campaigning against the authority's proposals. This was arranged on my behalf by the head teacher and the meeting took place on a separate occasion. Their concerns are reflected in chapter 4.

When I visited the secondary school scheduled for total closure, the head teacher told me that the school site would be used for a new build, all age school for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). I explained that the NAHT Regional Officer would support him in his professional capacity and that my role was to monitor the local authority's restructuring proposals. When I mentioned that I was also considering developing my doctoral research project on the topic of restructuring, the head teacher suggested that he could give my contact details to a parent leading a campaign against closure of their school.

Following this parent's initial call I explained that I was considering researching the restructuring proposed in the authority and that if she agreed to 'a conversation', anonymity would be assured. This 'conversation' was scheduled for the following week during which she described her perceptions and the concerns of other parents. An extract from the text of that conversation is included in Chapter 4.

The information provided by those school leaders, parents and parent governors gave a fairly comprehensive overview of the developing situation. Also earlier difficulties had been experienced by parents struggling to get their children statemented and placed in a local special school. I was informed by the parent-governor leading a group of campaigning parents and evidenced by a copy of their portfolio, that the authority had issued a leaflet that misquoted the law on the level of need that warranted formal assessment. The authority's practice was challenged by one of these parents, with the support of the Independent Panel for Specialist Education (IPSEA). The authority was found to be failing in their duty under the SEN (Provision of Information by LEA (England) Regulations 2001 Regulation 2(d)), to provide accurate information. In summary, the DfES letter, dated 11 September 2006, stated that this leaflet was misleading and should be withdrawn.

These earlier experiences of parents struggling to get their child a placement in a local special school may well have fuelled their anxieties. According to an article published in the media, parents in the authority believed that the proposals for the closure of special schools were 'budget driven' and not based on 'improving provision' (*Mirror* January 9: 2007). A common theme, which was very evident from the majority of school leaders and parents that I spoke to at that time, was that the consultation process was a meaningless exercise because of its bias toward the authority's objectives.

1.4.1 The 'BSF' funding initiative

The authority in which the study took place was proposing to restructure its SEN provision; it was also one of the 17 authorities involved in the 'first wave' (2005-06) of the 'BSF' initiative. The government stated that under the

scheme, every child would benefit; an estimated 200 schools to share £2.1 billion capital investment in the first wave. According to Teachernet (2008) 'BSF' funding was made up of roughly a 50/50 ratio of both conventional and public finance initiative funding. The 'BSF' initiative may have been the trigger for the authority's review of its provision. It certainly appeared to be the vehicle that would enable the restructuring to be implemented. The next section looks at the proposals for restructuring provision in this authority.

1.4.2 The authority's review of their SEN provision

The authority's proposals to restructure involved the closure of two special schools designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). These schools would be replaced by one newly built all age school for ASD pupils. Another special school was to relocate at the same time changing its current provision to cater for students from 11-19 years of age with more complex needs, closing its primary phase. The authority stated in their report on restructuring that their proposals were based on a projected increase in the number of autistic children by 2015, on the lack of appropriate provision within the authority and the savings that could be made by avoiding 'out-of-authority' placements. The Audit Commission's Report (2007) on the cost of 'out-of-authority' placements would appear to support the local authority's decision to save money and its aim to place their children with more complex needs in local schools. It was proposed that this new ASD school would be built on the site of the secondary special school identified for closure. The capital costs of providing the school would be funded through the 'BSF' project. The earliest date anticipated for completion of the new school was September 2012.

Several mainstream primary and secondary schools were identified to provide additional resource bases for pupils with ASD, for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and for Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). There are differing perspectives on this type of provision: for example Taylor (1995) and Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) believe that instead of promoting integration these units fostered the marginalisation of pupils. The authority stated in their consultation document that they planned to increase the number of specialist places for children in mainstream schools by 2015-16.

The consultation referred to the Ofsted Report (2006) but, the Ofsted report did not differentiate in favour of where pupils were taught; the focus was on the quality of teaching and learning. The decision to restructure was announced during October 2008 and the authority later published (on 21 May 2009) an "Invitation to Bid" for the new school.

Table 1.1 lists the existing mainstream schools and the local authority's initial proposals to provide resource bases, published in 2007-08. The number of places, the proposed category of provision and phase of school (primary and secondary) are also included in the table. Secondary school B is not included, because this school never applied for a resource and primary school D is not included because a resource facility already exists.

Table 1.1: Mainstream Schools proposed resource bases 2007- 08

Primary Schools in my sample - Resource Bases Proposed		
School A	16 Places	For Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
School C	16 Places	For Autistic Spectrum
School E	16 Places	For Speech Language and Communication Needs
School F	16 Places	For Autistic Spectrum
Primary Schools not in my sample - Resource Bases proposed		
School 1	16 Places	For Complex and Medical Needs
School 2	16 Places	For Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
Secondary Schools not in my sample: Resource Bases Proposed		
School 3	35 Places	For Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
School 4	25 Places	For Speech Language and Communication eeds
School 5	25 Places	For Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Key: Schools in the sample are listed alphabetically.

Other schools in the authority are listed numerically.

Table 1.2 sets out the number, type and phase of the existing special schools in the authority in 2007-08; the bold type in the table shows the changes

planned for example closure/relocation and the proposed category of planned pupil placements. The authority's proposals for the new ASD school, and refurbishment of existing special schools for children identified as having more complex learning and medical needs, are also listed.

Table 1.2: Existing Special Schools 2007- 08

Schools not in my sample - no changes proposed		
School	**Placements**	**Categories of Impairment**
School 4	75 places	Severe or Profound Learning Difficulties
School 5	83 places	Severe or Profound Learning Difficulties
School 6	52 places	Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
Schools in my sample - changes proposed		
School	**Placements**	**Categories of Impairment**
School G.	70 (primary)	Established for Moderate Learning Difficulties; cohorts gradually changed; the majority have diagnosis which includes Autism. **Closure planned.**
School H	128 (4-16 years)	Predominately Communication Difficulties, with Autism or with Medical or Emotional Difficulties. **Closure planned of primary phase and relocation refurbishment**
School I	123 (secondary)	Established for Moderate Learning Difficulties; cohorts gradually changed to include some children with Autism. **Closure planned - site identified for the new-build ASD school.**

Key: Schools in the sample are listed alphabetically.

Other schools in the authority are listed numerically.

This concludes the local authority context; the next section links the local and national context to the international context.

1.5 Linking the International and National Context

It is important to consider how local, national and international treaties and policies are interrelated and linked to the wider global network. In international terms, 'inclusion' has been increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity among all learners (UNESCO, 2001). The 'Education for All' movement was co-ordinated by UNESCO (2000). Its origins developed in the 1990s around a set of international policies to do with increasing access to and participation within education for those individuals with special educational needs and disability across the world. This was given momentum by two international conferences held in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000. However, Ainscow *et al.* (2006a) argued that the setting of global targets had limited value because exclusion always occurred locally and consequently, the priorities to address were located within particular countries, regions and communities.

'Inclusive' education developed from a broad acknowledgement that every individual has a basic human right to education. The Human Rights Act (1998) Right to Education Article 2 of the first protocol, evolved in recognition that education was the foundation for a more just society and therefore education should be accessible to all. Governments have developed different notions on what is meant by the philosophy of 'inclusive' education. The different concepts of 'inclusion' have been widely debated over the years both within and between countries. The concepts and various models of inclusion are expanded further in Chapter 2.

However, the Human Rights Act (1998) is not specific about the educational environment, or where children are taught. This is left to each nation's interpretation of 'inclusion'. The drive for more inclusive education systems followed an international campaign for equality. It was recognised that inappropriate practice existed within societies, described as discrimination and oppression against disabled individuals and it was acknowledged that there was a need for legislation to ensure equal opportunities. This was apparent,

particularly in the western world, where campaigners worked for the emancipation of the disabled (e.g. Oliver, 1996, Barnes *et al.* 1999 and others).

Research evidences how nations have different perspectives on what 'inclusive education' means, as explained in Chapter 2. The United Nations inter-government process involves organisations (within their system) working together to implement the 'UN development agenda' to promote full effective participation of all persons with disabilities in society. The United Nations Convention (2008) was aimed at raising the profile of disabled people to establish more equality. Their focus was on encouraging member nations to sign up to implementing fully-inclusive education systems, re-emphasised by Article 24 Education, which stated that parties should recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. It stressed that an 'inclusive education' at all levels should exist so that individuals were not excluded from the 'general education system' of the nation on the basis of disability. This UN Convention Statement was signed by member nations, but some nations added 'reservations'. For example, provisions were made by the UK government for ratification of Article 24 Education, of the UN Convention. This was exercised by way of an interpretative declaration and reservation relevant to the UK's current range of educational provision.

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC: March 2009), challenged the government's declaration and reservation on the basis that it excluded some children from the 'general education system'. However, the government's actions were supported by other stakeholders. My employers, the NAHT and other teacher and parent/governor associations, sent the following joint statement to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State:

> *Article 24 - we strongly support the DCSF's declaration and reservation. We note that the declaration made a clear commitment to continue to develop an 'inclusive education system' and a reservation to allow for circumstances where disabled children's needs may be best met through specialist provision.*

> (NAHT, March 2009)

This section has attempted to demonstrate the link between the international and national contexts Section 1.6 returns to the focus of my research study and its overarching objectives.

1.6 The Overarching Objectives of my Research Study

The key objective of my research was to investigate the nature and impact of change in the restructuring of SEN provision. I aimed to describe what was taking place in the authority within the context of centrally driven national policies and their influence on the authority's strategy to restructure. The main aim of the research was to explore school leaders' perceptions of their experiences of the consultation, adoption and the initial implementation process. My investigation also included sifting through documented evidence of the authority's actions during these stages. My focus was to improve our understanding of the processes of 'change', to explore and link the concepts of 'inclusion' and 'change' within the context of the government's policy of increased 'inclusion', relevant to the strategies they introduced during their period of office from 1997 to 2010. The structure of my thesis was developed from these two major concepts, which seemed central to increasing and improving educational provision for SEN children.

National and local government policies, local demographics, the concerns expressed by school leaders, parents, my professional role and my own beliefs and values, all played a significant part in the development of my project based on my overarching research question: *what is the nature and impact of change, in the restructuring of special educational needs provision?* Chapter 2 locates my research study within the relevant literature on 'inclusion' and 'change'.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter engages with two central questions which have preoccupied researchers for many years. What does inclusion mean and what does change mean? Exploring these questions in my literature review offered opportunities to consider established knowledge (professional and theoretical) and contributed to my own emerging theoretical perspective through recognition of the heritage of 'inclusion and change' and their distinguishing features. Part 1 of Chapter 2 considers the centrality of the 'inclusion' journey. Part 2 considers the relevance of 'change' as it relates to improving SEN provision through various media, effective school leaders and communities of practice. It refers to research on 'change' attempting to link the concepts of 'inclusion' and 'change', to illustrate that through educational reform, improved provision can be developed founded on school leaders' values and attitudes. Various interpretations of the concepts are included in this chapter to illustrate the 'inclusion' and 'change' phenomena.

Part 1: What is meant by 'Inclusion' in relation to SEN-provision?

Attempting to define what is meant by Inclusion, opened up a challenge in itself because the term 'inclusion' means different things to different people dependent on their values and beliefs. Evolving models of 'inclusion' are reflected in changing government strategies on special educational needs and disability. Thomas's (2004) critique of the sociology divide, as it related to the social and medical models of impairment and disability, clearly demonstrates the distinctions between these models. The arguments made by Frederickson and Cline (2002), Dyson *et al.* (2004) and others, emphasise a further and important dimension of 'inclusion' related to wider diversity factors those of socio-economic status, family breakdown and ethnicity.

The focus of Part 1 of this chapter, aims to critically survey the different knowledge paradigms that have come to dominate the discourse. Various approaches are described, including one significant and more recent notion

'the capability approach'. This concept relates to the establishment of an ethical framework to develop the learning of SEN pupils. The work of Terzi (2005) and Florian (2010) reaches beyond the ideological 'inclusion' vision because it focuses on how to help practitioners engage in supporting learning. However, the research on improving inclusive practice was not the main focus of my study, but because of its significant contribution to improving educational provision it cannot be omitted and the work of these and other notable authors, is therefore briefly critiqued in Part 1. Despite their work, government policy continues to exert considerable influence on schools and authorities through its own initiatives and strategies, and external bodies, like Ofsted.

The approaches adopted in the different education systems in Europe are described and a synopsis of relevant literature on the history and barriers faced by those with impairments presented. The evidence for increasing inclusion in mainstream schools in England is included illustrating contrasting arguments, which also emphasise differing perspectives of SEN provision. Importantly, the literature conveys that 'inclusion' as it relates to educational provision is led and is dependent upon the values of school leaders and that high quality education for all pupils is located within a school reform context, as argued by Pijl *et al.* (1997). The next section illustrates that each nation's policies influence practice and, to emphasise the relevance of this, starts with the structure of our society.

2.1 The Structure of our Society: the Politics, and the Power of Nations

The structure of our society is driven by policies at all levels: national, local, and in individual schools. My study explores the relevance of the interrelationships that Barnes *et al.* (1999) noted - that we should consider the issues existing at each level in society to the subject of enquiry. The work of Foucault (1977) initially influenced my thoughts on the overarching dimensions of state power and the politics involved in controlling institutions through the 'tools of state'. This notion is significant to my project because schools in England are constrained by government directives, confined within a legislative framework. A brief history is provided on the journey of 'inclusion', related to

SEN provision, because it is important to understand the existing legacy of the international and national struggle for equality. The various influences that impact on the journey of 'inclusion' are particularly relevant to my study on exploring the nature and impact of restructuring SEN provision because the journey, as my study shows, is a continuing one.

'Inclusion' has, and continues to be, a focus of UNESCO. At the UNESCO Salamanca World Conference on SEN in 1994, 92 governments adopted a statement of principles on policy and practice and a framework for action. Since that time a major thrust by governments, particularly in the western world, developed to ensure that their education systems did not reflect inequality. The statement was informed by the principle of 'inclusion' in recognition that governments needed to work towards educational institutions that include every pupil,

Meijer *et al.* (2003) described three different educational systems in Europe: the 'one-track' approach - inclusion of all children in mainstream schools operating in Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Iceland, Norway and Cyprus; the 'multi-track' approach - offering a diverse range of services and settings, operating in Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland and the UK; lastly, the 'two-track' approach, providing separate educational provision operating in Switzerland, Germany and Belgium. Government policy therefore dictates the approach, related to the nation's capacity and education system. Within the policy constraints of each nation, researchers are left to explore how to improve inclusive practice and to influence policy.

The development of professional capacity has been central to the work of a number of researchers in England, and a particular focus has been given to improving practitioners' skills in mainstream schools. The concepts and arguments made by Terzi (2005), Florian *et al.* (2008), Florian (2010) and Sebba (2009) are critiqued later in this chapter. However, to begin the journey of inclusion, the next section looks briefly at the history and describes the various models that were adopted in England.

2.2 The journey of 'Inclusion': Educational Provision in England

2.2.1 Evolving Models

Three key models may be discerned:

a) *The 'Segregation Model'*: according to Bennett *et al.* (1998) 'segregation' was justified through medical diagnosis. Children were 'diagnosed' and, according to their assessed needs, were placed in 'separate' learning environments. This model was challenged on the basis of discriminatory practice and 'integration' followed.

b) *The 'Integration Model'*: according to Ainscow (1995) 'integration' involved the placement of some children with less complex needs in mainstream schools, but educational practice was not adapted to the pupils' needs, instead pupils were expected to fit into the school.

c) *The 'Social Model':* Booth *et al.* (2002) developed a tool for schools and early years' provision. Their guidance placed a new emphasis on the 'role of school cultures' in creating and sustaining pupils' development, but this 'social model' of inclusion was also later challenged because of its exclusive focus on the 'social'.

Understanding the emergence of these models is important because their implementation created tensions that still exist between disabled campaigners (seeking largely the 'one-track' approach), government and the various stakeholders involved, not least parents. As described, in England a 'multi-track' approach has been established. A diverse range of educational provision operates within our state system, broadly, mainstream, mainstream with resource bases, and special schools, but pupil placements are dependent on local authorities. For this reason, and because the allocation of 'appropriate placements' is an issue for schools and parents, it is important to consider the 'admission' procedure.

2.2.2 'Inclusion' as it relates to admissions in England

The School Admissions Code, DCSF (2009), continues to emphasise the importance of parental choice, but, in practice parents can only state

preferences because placements depend on the overall provision within the authority. As evidenced in the House of Commons Report (2005-06), which examined the SEN framework, parental dissatisfaction is widespread. This is mainly because of statutory assessments and the difficulties parents and their children experience during the process of assessment. According to evidence in this report it seems that parents, post the Education Act (1981), were often more restricted in their ability to make choices in educational provision if their children had SEN. The DCSF (2009) guidance states that it is the responsibility of local authorities to allocate and provide sufficient school places to educate children resident in their authority. The statutory SEN Code of Practice (2001) places a duty on authorities to assess pupils with SEN, and according to their needs, allocate 'appropriate' educational provision. These pupils are allocated placements in special or mainstream schools, but this appears to reflect the existing provision rather than a pupil's needs.

Sometimes children with impairments are placed in 'out-of-authority' establishments if no suitable provision exists within the authority. According to the House of Commons Report (2005-06), authorities followed government policy (DfES, 2004b), which called for less reliance on statements and a reduction in the number of special schools. In my experience, in practice, this has led to variable local authority provision. For example, some authorities operate with a focus on further inclusion of pupils with more complex needs. Other authorities appear to provide for more children to be statutorily assessed and in these circumstances a statement is provided prior to placement in a mainstream or special school. Ultimately, the decision to place a child in a special school is made by the authority (partly) based on parental preference.

Chapter 1, Section 1.3 described the changing expectations for increased inclusion in mainstream and the reduction in the number of special schools. However, this issue of 'assessment and placement' has been extremely contentious for many years as opposing views to what is 'appropriate' exist. Described in the next section are two very diverse perspectives which have influenced how children have been assessed in England.

2.2.3 'Inclusion': located within the 'sociology of disability'

Thomas (2004) described the noticeable divide in the UK between the two main approaches in the sociology of disability. On the one hand 'disability studies', based on the idea that disability was framed by social oppression, inequality and exclusion; on the other 'medical sociology' where special educational needs and disability were perceived to be caused by chronic illness and impairment that involved suffering and some social disadvantage. Thomas (2004) argued that these opposing positions now coexist. She reported that it has been generally acknowledged that the 'social model' of disability is basically flawed because it denied the impact of impairment. Thomas (2004) argued for a return to a 'social relational approach' whereby disability only occurs when activities are restricted, when restrictions are imposed by society. The argument that is being made is that impairments and chronic illness should be acknowledged when they directly cause some restriction to the individual's capacity to actively participate because of their impairment, or pain related to chronic illness. However, if these were socially imposed restrictions, for example denied access to participate because no wheelchair access exists, then this socially imposed action could be conceived as discriminatory. Thomas (1999) argued this was better captured by the concept of 'impairment effects' emphasising that this notion moved away from the existing 'divide'. Others have built on this 'social relational model' and developed new ideas for approaching improved educational provision. However, many different concepts are nested under the heading of 'inclusion', as the next section describes.

2.3 'Inclusion': Concepts, Approaches, Purpose and the Evidence for 'Inclusion'

As described, Warnock (2005) called for a radical review of special needs education and a substantial reconsideration of the assumptions upon which the current educational framework was based. This was because Warnock maintained that the framework was affected by the intention to treat all learners in the same way. In response Terzi (2005) and others, tackled the concerns expressed by Warnock through the notion of 'difference'; a concept

described as the 'dilemma of difference'. Terzi noted the difficulties experienced by professionals assessing children in order to provide for their needs. She argued that in so doing there was a risk of 'labelling' children, but cautioned that if 'differences' were ignored the existing educational provision might limit what was needed by those children.

The next section clarifies the meaning of special educational needs (SEN), according to the Education Act 1996 (Section 312) and the definition of Special Educational Needs according to the Code of Practice: DfES 0581 (2001) - as used in this thesis.

2.3.1 The definition of special educational needs

> Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty, which calls for special educational needs provision to be made for them
>
> .

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

1. have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
2. have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority
3. are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition of (1) and (2) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them

Special educational provision means:

a) for children of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools in the area
b) for children under two, educational provision of any kind.

(DfES 2001: 3)

The concept of special educational needs is very complex as several categories of need may overlap and contribute to pupils' learning difficulties. To understand

this notion and, its interrelationship with other dimensions that may contribute to pupils' learning difficulties, I have drawn on the work of Lindsay *et al.* (2006). Their findings were based on a 15-year literature review (1995-2005) and, a detailed analysis of the 2005 Pupil Level Annual School Census data on 6.5 million pupils in maintained schools in England. Lindsay *et al.* defined SEN, for the purposes of their report, as: pupils receiving support at School Action Plus or through a Statement of SEN. Information was also drawn from a survey of 150 authorities and, two groups focused on the London and Manchester areas. According to Lindsay *et al.,* the associations with: year group - gender and socio-economic disadvantage, need to be taken into account when examining the relationship between ethnicity and SEN. When this was addressed in 'adjusted models' significant over- and under-representation of different minority ethnic groups relative to White British pupils remained, but the associations between SEN and ethnic group were reduced. The extent of the remaining 'disproportionality' varied by minority ethnic group and by category of SEN. The findings in chapters 4 and 5 of my thesis demonstrate circumstances where those interrelationships are particularly relevant to the profile of pupils in some of my respondents' schools, in particular socio-economic disadvantage and special educational needs.

In recent years there has been a significant shift from thinking in terms of two discrete educational sectors (mainstream and special) to schools and SEN services working together to support the diversity of needs present in today's classrooms. Mainstream schools may provide resourced provision through supporting pupils within the classroom or within separate resource bases. Tutt (2007) argued special schools, in common with mainstream schools, have also faced the challenges of admitting pupils with needs that are outside their experience, adapting their provision to accommodate a changing pupil profile. The findings in chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate the changes my respondents, particularly those in special schools, made to support children with increasingly complex needs. Special schools, therefore, should not stand outside inclusion they are part of this continuum of all schools working together, the advisory and support services playing a significant role in supporting those pupils, wherever, they are being educated.

The success of addressing the wider dimensions of special educational needs, described by Lindsay *et al.* (2006) would, according to Muijs *et al* (2007), be dependent on the ethos of the school, the way that staff accommodate and value all pupils. The findings, in chapters 4 and 5, demonstrate how respondents were developing their staff and the way staff accommodated and valued their pupils. This accommodation, as Terzi (2005) argued, reflected a 'capability approach', which both supports and extends children's ability to participate as outlined in the next section.

2.3.2 The 'capability approach'

The 'capability approach' was founded on Sen's work (1985, 1990, 1999, 2002, and 2004), which initially developed from an economic perspective. Sen's (2005) argument was based on human rights as entitlements to capabilities. From this perspective capabilities relate to 'rights', to certain specific freedoms. He argued that nations' mutual obligations must safeguard and expand these freedoms. Sen linked capabilities to specific freedoms comprising of two major elements - opportunity and process. He stated that both elements contributed to human rights and stressed the importance of nations in maintaining scrutiny so that critical assessment of policies, established within nations, are viewed by others who may hold them to account.

Terzi's (2005) work develops his concepts, arguing that diversity should be considered in terms of the interrelationship between individual, social and circumstantial factors related to an individual's capability and ultimate wellbeing, maintaining that this 'capability' concept enabled those valued opportunities and freedoms. Florian *et al.'s* (2008) critique of Terzi's concept stressed the need for adequate resources. Florian *et al.* emphasised that without essential resources, such educational opportunities would be severely compromised.

It was important, therefore, to investigate whether my respondents perceived that opportunities to effect change were truly dependent on resources,

according to the dimensions identified and comprehensively interpreted by Terzi, (2005), Sen (2005) and Florian et al., (2008). The next section describes Reindal's (2010) excellent overview on the purpose of 'inclusion.

2.3.3 Why should there be different educational provision?

Reindal (2010) argued that the SEN framework required clear distinction in order to demonstrate why there should be 'different' educational provision. He pointed out that the entity of separate 'special education' appeared to be: "a necessary evil because of the inability of a nation's general education to accommodate, and include the full diversity of learners" (Reindal, 2008:136).

According to Reindal (2010) this question can be addressed by investigating how the literature on the 'capability' concept deals with the rationale for 'inclusion'. He separated the rationale for inclusion into three areas. The first he suggested relates to the ethical and socio-political, emphasising equity and rights. The second, the ontological, relates to theory, founded on arguments that question understandings of impairment and disability and the third, the epistemological, deals with origin and method of knowledge, providing a clear rationale for what he described as an 'egalitarian framework'.

Reindal (2010) supports the capability approach because, as he pointed out, it goes beyond the 'dilemma of difference', leading to an understanding of difference as a specific variable, with an objective reality. This framework, he suggests, enables individuals to be evaluated according to their needs and that through the 'capability approach' a 'specific variable' was introduced into the 'social relational model of disability'. Therefore, Terzi's (2005) concept provided the possibility to consider additional needs of pupils within an inclusive framework. According to Reindal (2010), the capability approach provides a theoretical framework, without compromising core educational values, the core values that were also strongly argued by Hegarty (2001).

The next section illustrates how Florian (2010) and Sebba (2009) further expanded upon these ideas of learning opportunities for all pupils and shows the relevance of these dimensions to my study. They proposed the notions of

an 'inclusive pedagogy' and 'personalised learning', arguing how these concepts would contribute to effective inclusive practice within the English education system.

2.3.4 'Inclusive pedagogy'

Florian (2010) was critical of government policy that required schools to be more inclusive without clear direction, leading to variability in practice; this is reflected in the Lamb Report (2009) on improving inclusive practice. However, Florian argued that the improvement of educational provision also encompassed other factors, that knowledge of difference should be recognised whether age, English as an additional language, or special educational needs. These broader diversity factors impact on educational provision and, according to Florian, all schools can accommodate differences within their learning and teaching practices. This approach, based on an 'inclusive pedagogy', could be achieved through building strategies to raise the achievement of all informed by the view that learners vary across many dimensions. As Florian, Frederickson and Cline (2002) and others noted, recognising these broader diversity issues and the complexities involved is important and very relevant to my study.

It appears that recent national policy initiatives have been focused on the development of 'personalisation' as it relates to learning. This is one of the emergent government strategies, but perhaps this government initiative goes some way to meeting the challenge made by Florian (2010) about lack of government direction to schools, which Sebba (2009) so clearly defines. Sebba provided a comprehensive explanation on the concept of 'personalisation', arguing that pupils can have their needs met whilst having greater control over their own learning. This is enabled through curricular flexibility, pupil voice, school organisation and working beyond the school. These elements broadly reflect the DCSF's (2009) guide to personalised learning, which Sebba reports were described by Ainscow (2006), as a personal process:

> Learning is personal process of meaning-making, with each participant in any activity 'constructing' their own version of that shared event… each pupil defines the meaning of what occurs in relation to their previous experience. In this way, individuals personalise the experience and, in so doing, construct forms of knowledge
>
> (Ainscow, 2006:2)

This notion of 'personalisation' appears to complement Terzi's (2005) 'capability approach', which emphasises that through participation pupils build their own definitions of their experiences and have the freedom to make the choices they value. Sebba (2009) concluded that this initiative could increase participation and that schools should be encouraged to use personalisation to underpin their policies to promote the inclusion of all pupils.

As Reindal (2010) emphasised, the 'capability approach' supplies a theoretical framework for 'inclusion' without compromising core educational values, and the focus on an 'inclusive pedagogy' and 'personalised learning', as it relates to inclusive practice, develops this further.

The concepts and approaches critiqued here relate to a reconsideration of teaching and learning through extending what is ordinarily available to all learners, taking account of the differences between them. The concepts of 'capability' and 'personalisation' would appear to fit my investigation because to embed these notions in mainstream schools would require effective school leaders, as Day *et al* (2009) and others argued. Also of importance would be whether my respondents had developed stronger relationships with pupils and their families, thus encouraging as Sebba (2009) argued, their co-investment in education where schools pupils and their families work together to support teaching and learning.

What is meant by 'inclusion', the purpose of 'inclusion' and approaches to 'inclusion', have been identified and critiqued above, so it is important to consider the evidence for 'inclusion'. The next section therefore describes and critiques some important research undertaken in England to reflect the evidence and its relation to my study.

2.3.5 Evidence for 'inclusion' and inclusive practice

A study by Alan Dyson *et al.* (2004), which considered the 'inclusion' of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools, explored the relationship between 'inclusion' and 'attainment'. All 16 case study schools were chosen as being highly inclusive in terms of their SEN populations. It was reported that there was no significant evidence to support that the level of 'inclusion' in a mainstream school improved the 'attainment' of their SEN pupils, or vice-versa, that it depressed their achievement. This evidence contrasts with the research carried out by Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) outlined below. However, Dyson *et al.* did report a positive effect on all pupils relevant to the development of their social skills and understanding, but they added that SEN might be a risk factor for isolation and for low self-esteem. Although the model of provision Dyson *et al.* described was not 'fully-inclusive' (pupils were placed in a resource base) they argued it demonstrated the commitment of the case study schools to do their best for all their pupils. Of particular significance was the statement made by Dyson *et al.* that attainment was in the main independent of levels of inclusivity in local authorities and schools.

In contrast to Dyson *et al.* (2004), Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) reported that evidence, though taken from a smaller number of case study schools, suggested that high levels of 'inclusion' in terms of diversity of student 'intake' can be compatible with high levels of student achievement, measured by a school's overall progress in national standardised tests. These contrasting reports emphasise differing opinions on the evidence for 'inclusion'. They also illustrate variations on what is deemed to be 'inclusive' education. Black-Hawkins *et al.* argued for full inclusion (pupils integrated into classes), rather than 'partial inclusion' (in a separate resource base), demonstrating the existing polarity between schools of thought. Black-Hawkins *et al.* argued against models of 'partial inclusion', stating that this concept fitted uneasily with the need to locate specialist forms of expertise and facilities. They emphasised the problematic nature of such provision described as 'internal exclusion', a perspective supported by Taylor (1995).

The issues around 'partial/full inclusion' interpreted by Dyson *et al.* (2004) and Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007), are very relevant and particularly important to my study aimed at investigating a local authority's proposals to provide more co-located resourced mainstream provision. However, whether 'full or partial inclusion', school improvement and progression are motivated by school leaders focused on the development of a culture in which all children can learn, as argued by Day *et al.* (2009) and others. What was also important to my investigation was whether my respondents perceived that developing resource bases for pupils would impact on the overall school performance, because as Ainscow *et al.* (2006b) argued, 'market' competition could create further dilemmas and tensions for schools.

Dyson *et al.* (2004) and Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) made a strong argument for the need to strengthen resources to support teaching and learning. This related to the delicate balance between the resources schools have to support teaching and the demands created by the presence of SEN children. Dyson et al. stressed that the 'ecology of the classroom' could be threatened by a lack in classroom support, a lack of teacher skills, or management planning and/or a lack of funding. Noguera (2006) also made a similar argument, but focused more on adequate funding to improve provision. Dyson *et al.* and Black-Hawkins *et al.* argued that to support both inclusion and achievement it appeared crucial to maintain a 'balanced student intake'. My investigation looked at whether school leaders in my sample were experiencing similar pressures and whether it influenced their actions.

According to Dyson *et al.* (2004), balanced intakes demand greater collaboration between groups of schools and require schools to develop a shared responsibility. However, to achieve greater collaboration between schools would appear to be difficult because government policy creates competition between schools, as Ainscow *et al.* (2006b) and others reported. Education is currently driven by a competitive approach between schools, based on published standards of pupils' attainment.

Much of the focus of this literature review has been on supporting pupils in mainstream schools, but my study investigates the overall provision in a local authority as it relates to the restructuring of SEN provision. Therefore, it is important to consider how special schools can improve their provision. This also appears to be relevant to building the capacity of those schools. The next section therefore looks at what support is available for the development of staff to support pupils in special schools.

2.4 Supporting Children with Severe and Complex Needs

What has not been included so far is a focus on the support for children with more severe and complex needs. The Salt Review (2010) stated:

> in some cases, the issues raised were common to other categories of SEN …in most cases, national and local initiatives aimed at raising awareness and the standard of teaching for the SEN population were too broad to make serious headway in meeting the needs of learners with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and their teachers.
>
> (Salt, 2010: 41).

This report is very relevant to my study because some of my respondents were school leaders in special schools catering for children with more severe and complex needs. The report recommended the development of cluster-models and it emphasised that adequate provision would require an improved local structure to ensure that standards were maintained. The suggestions made in this report are significant because they identify nationally existing inadequacies in provision, a lacking within local authorities and across local authorities. This is not only applicable to the standard of teaching pupils with more complex needs, but a lack of established facility provision within authorities. For example, often provision for children with highly complex needs is not provided because of the low-incidence of need in the immediate area. The sparsity of provision could possibly be tackled through a strategy of regional provision, with local authorities sharing facilities. Drawing on this report enabled comparisons to be made to the special schools in my research study. The views of respondents on facilities, training and availability of training are

included in my findings. The next section considers 'inclusive practice' as it relates to reform and change.

2.5 'Inclusion' Within a School Reform Context

One notable contribution to 'inclusion' linked to 'change' was the research carried out by Pijl *et al.* (1997). They provided examples of educational practice within and outside the UK, to show that provision had demonstrably changed since the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca World Statement. They argued that the provision of high quality education for all pupils was increasingly located within a school reform context. Therefore SEN pupils were encompassed within a common framework of educational action. Pijl et al.'s (1997) work was very relevant to my study because I was exploring provision within a local authority over a decade later. It was therefore important because the central focus of the authority's aim was to restructure their provision and although limited to one authority, it would be important to study how this was implemented.

2.6 Summary of Part 1 of my Literature Review

The first part of this chapter described the history and evolving journey of 'inclusion', how this concept is perceived internationally and nationally and how it relates to implementing new strategies to improve 'inclusion' locally. Given the depth, dynamism and complexity of the thinking focused on the concept of 'inclusion' revealed in Part 1, linking the two concepts of 'inclusion' and 'change' seemed very appropriate for my investigation because they are interrelated in the context of educational action and reform. 'Inclusion' as it relates to educational provision requires 'change' to be implemented. The work of Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003), a pioneer on the development of 'reform' in education systems, is considered in Part 2 of this chapter. His dynamic appreciation of how 'change' processes (forces) develop, are described because of their centrality to my investigation.

Part 2: What does 'Change' mean as it relates to increased 'Inclusion'?

The second part of this chapter considers Fullan's (1993, 1999, 2003) work as it relates to 'change' in the world of education because his trilogy on 'change forces' was particularly relevant to my study. My approach was influenced by his ideas and led me to explore the authority's restructuring of their SEN provision.

Theories on 'change' processes initially developed in the USA and Canada were then replicated in the UK and in Eastern European Countries. Part 2 of this chapter describes how 'change', aimed at improving SEN provision was interpreted in England, drawing on the work of Ainscow *et al.* (2006) and others. It also includes a body of work on effective leadership by Day et al., (2009) and others, and on collaborative practice by Bolam *et al.* (2005) and others; collaborative working has become recognised in England as essential to school improvement. Section 2.7 starts with a description of when and where these 'change' theories emerged, and then considers various critiques of Fullan's work.

2.7 'Change' and the Processes of Restructuring SEN Provision

A raft of literature appeared on the restructuring of schools in the 1990s (Elmore *et al.* 1990; Miles and Louis, 1990 and others). Rowan and Miskel (1999) critiqued Fullan's earlier work stating that 'new institutionalism' was the major theoretical thrust of Fullan's (1993) 'complexity theory'. However, both theories encompass 'change' agents. Fullan's work emphasises, like Barnes *et al.* (1999), the relevance of change at all levels and his 'theory' provides a clear 'implementation framework' to draw on, which I was able to use to structure my investigation.

Polyzoi *et al.* (2003) were critical of Fullan because they argued that it was not only a nation's influence, but a nation's 'stability', that was important. Polyzoi

et al. reported that his theoretical framework could not be transferred to educational systems in nations that lacked stability. However, in more stable environments, in the west, Fullan's ideas have been adopted, but his concepts of capacity building and sustainability did not escape further challenge, particularly in relation to schools located in areas of disadvantage.

Noguera (2006) provided a formidable critique of Fullan's seminal work (1993, 1999, and 2003). He argued that, according to Fullan's work, capacity building and sustainability were 'key' dimensions that focused on the role of school leaders, because effective leaders were required to become more adept at identifying and taking into account the context in which they worked. Noguera argued that capacity building and sustainability are almost completely irrelevant to a third of the pupil population in the USA, because they live in poverty. This charge of irrelevance rests on the fact that Fullan overlooked the problems confronting schools in disadvantaged areas. Noguera stated that the leadership challenge was not just sustainability and adaption to effective systems, but how to deal with the social context and the effect of existing poverty. He argued that Fullan's work acknowledged that disadvantage existed, but there was no suggestion of how this should be approached. Noguera (2006) therefore challenged this failure to tackle the issue described as:

> a form of de-contextualized analysis and benign neglect in scholarship and policy making that has rendered much of the educational research in the USA useless to the schools that need most help
>
> (Noguera, 2006:130)

To some extent this resonates with disadvantaged areas in England, and therefore useful to draw on because my investigation is carried out in an area of high diversity and socio-economic disadvantage. According to Noguera's (2006), such studies contributed to the narrow focus on standards that characterises many nations' education policies, This would be relevant to my study because school leaders would undoubtedly be constrained by inadequate resources and pressured by a focus on standards, a focus which it seems took insufficient account of disadvantage as it relates to SEN pupils.

However, Noguera (2006) stated that he did not aim to negate the main arguments that Fullan made on building capacity and sustainability. Nevertheless, Noguera made an important point when he emphasised that all research should take account of a nation's constraints - economic, political and institutional. In the next section, therefore, I have reflected on how the UK government addressed disadvantage, as it related to socio-economic status, within their school improvement strategies

2.7.1 Schooling in England with a focus on school improvement

Concern about the quality of schooling in disadvantaged urban areas was especially marked in England during the 1990s. There was widespread recognition of the importance of raising standards to meet the increasingly complex economic and social needs of society; this in turn led to greater accountability of schools and teachers. In addition there was increasing evidence from academics on school improvement (e.g. Reynolds 1995 and Sammons et al. 1996) and on the links between poverty, social deprivation and under-achievement.

.

However, in the 1990s schools were facing major changes in government policies - the introduction of the national curriculum and national assessments, publication of league tables and, not least, a total change in the funding system - local management of schools (LMS funding). Fortunately, the relevance of context was recognised by the government. This was reflected in their attempts to develop ways of contextualising school performance and setting results in context, to facilitate its policy of target setting and national strategies to raise standards. In England central government determines local authority funding based on the authority's location and their historical pupil/area profile. Authorities then distribute their area allocation to schools relevant to pupil numbers and to the diversity of their school population.

The next section returns to Fullan's seminal work on 'change forces' because I found his ideas thought provoking and they greatly influenced the way I approached my exploration.

2.7.2 The development of educational 'change/reform'

Recognising the centrality of Fullan's (1993, 1999, 2003) work on 'change', the knowledge conveyed and, its relationship with a wide range of domains on developing effective practice,   compelled me to incorporate and use his theoretical framework. Fullan was responsible for the introduction of a new concept of educational innovation and reform, based on what he purported to be fundamental 'moral purpose'. Fullan's concept of 'moral purpose' facilitated an important element in my study, which explored the connection between 'inclusive values' and 'change processes' in education.   My focus was to investigate whether these concepts were relevant to the actions of my respondents.

Given the government's strategies on 'inclusion' and their 'market policy', my investigation focused on revealing respondents' attitudes and values toward increased 'inclusion' and proposed 'change'. This was to demonstrate whether school leaders appeared to support the increased and further 'inclusion' of pupils with more complex SEN, which might stretch their resources and possibly affect their position in the market-place.   Because of the interrelationship between national, local and school level, the impact of proposed change would be studied at each level. Fullan's (2003) 'Tri-level Reform' framework, provided an overarching structure for me to locate my study to explore the processes of change.

Fullan built on the work of Senge (1990) on 'learning organisations' which he adapted to work in schools. He developed specific ideas for how local success could be combined with large scale reform initiatives so 'change' forces not only co-existed, but worked to promote school improvement.   Fullan's work attempted to unite ideas around political action and 'moral purpose'.   He suggested that understanding these dynamics allowed those involved to pursue new and more complex change. This was encapsulated in his statement "we cannot solve the change problem, but can learn to live with it more proactively and more productively" (Fullan, 1999: vii).   Fullan's approach to implementing reform led me to further explore the attitudes and actions of

school leaders in my investigation to establish whether they were embracing 'change' and learning to live with 'change' more proactively and productively.

However, Fullan (1993) also emphasised that what matters cannot be tightly controlled and that change was a journey for which there was no blue-print. The restructuring of provision to increase 'inclusion' within the authority in my study became that journey for those involved in the process. Fullan stressed that solving problems along the way was part of the process that developed knowledge through working individually and collectively. My study investigated these elements to reveal whether practitioners worked individually and collectively within their communities; whether change was driven by central, or local policies, or both, approached with a particular focus on the role of school leaders. Fullan (1993, 1999) argued that 'working at the edge of chaos' promoted the ability of those involved to tackle the challenges faced to aid 'reform', even under pressure. This notion became a reality as explained in my findings. The next section describes Fullan's stages of application demonstrating how 'change' progresses through three stages.

2.7.3 Stages of application

Fullan (1993, 1999 and 2003) argued that 'change' processes should be used as instruments of application. His model described the stages. Phase I, adoption; this consisted of a process that leads up to and included the decision to proceed with change. Phase II initial implementation; this involved the experience of attempting to put an idea into practice. Phase III incorporation; this related to whether it was developed and was ongoing or disappeared. Since my study would be limited due to the time constraints of my research project, only Phase I and Phase II were explored.

Fullan's approach to reform appeared to underpin research in England on improving school provision. Critiques of the work of Hopkins *et al.* (1996) and Ainscow *et al.* (2006a, 2006b) are included below because their research appeared reflective of Fullan's (1993, 1999) thinking - using 'change' productively and proactively to develop inclusive practice. Hopkins *et al.* and Ainscow *et al.* developed these dimensions linking the notions of 'inclusion'

and 'school improvement'. The first section describes the way that Hopkins *et al.* developed the use of external reform for internal purpose. These authors advocated that this strengthened the school's capacity for managing national and local government improvement initiatives.

2.8 Approaches focused on Improving SEN-provision in England

2.8.1 Using external reform for internal purpose
Hopkins *et al.* (1996) echoed Fullan's (1993) emphasis, that policy cannot mandate what matters, it is the implementation at authority and school level that dominates outcomes, policy only gives the direction for 'change' and the parameters for its implementation. This argument is supported by the DCSF (2007) guidance, relevant to the restructuring of provision investigated, because as these authors and the guidance implies, those at local level are responsible for its implementation.

Hopkins *et al.* (1996) emphasised that perhaps the most crucial challenge facing schools was how to strike an appropriate balance between 'change' and the stability of the school. Hopkins et al.'s 'Framework for School Improvement' was built on two major components: the 'capacity building dimension' and the 'strategic dimension'. The capacity building dimension related to a continuation of effort on the conditions for development, which enabled the school's ability to manage 'change' within the school's chosen priority for development. The 'strategic dimension' reflected the ability of the school to appropriately plan their chosen development and their ability to relate this to national reform. In this sense, choice represents the school's interpretation of the reform agenda, but this would only be relevant in circumstances where schools can make choices.

According to Hopkins *et al.* (1996) the final element was the school culture. A key assumption was that school improvement strategies can lead to cultural change in schools through modifications to their 'internal conditions'. It was the school's ideas, they argued, that supported the development of teaching and learning processes and the structure of the school provided the framework

to support their cultural growth. However, according to Day *et al.* (2009) and others, the culture of the school was very dependent on the school leader and the strategies selected by them to progress their schools. My intention was to explore whether respondents were attempting to modify their internal conditions through maintaining a balance between 'change' and stability. Through developing their capacity to prioritise their chosen, or imposed, developmental direction and the relevance of the school leader to their school's cultural growth.

The next section describes and critiques how Ainscow *et al.* (2006a, 2006b) used Fullan's (1999) fundamental element, that of 'moral purpose' as it relates to improving educational provision, because values are fundamental and appeared inextricably linked to the implementation of 'change' to improve provision.

2.8.2 Principles: values equate to 'moral purpose'

A decade on from the work of Hopkins *et al.* (1996), Ainscow *et al.* (2006a, 2006b) investigated the processes of developing 'change', reflecting Fullan's (1999) core essential element of 'moral purpose'. As stated, 'moral purpose' was an important focus of my investigation, my aim to explore whether 'moral purpose' would be fundamental to respondents and whether it would be a significant factor in driving forward change in the development of their schools. Ainscow *et al.* (2006) argued that education policy should be concerned with the provision of 'good' local schools that encourage the participation of *all* children and young people within their own communities. This statement supports the arguments of Fullan and Dyson *et al.* (2004).

Ainscow *et al.* (2006a, 2006b) investigated 25 schools that sought to develop aspects of their cultures, policies and practices and in the process challenged many assumptions about school improvement and educational reform. Pijl *et al.* (1997), Fullan (1999), Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) and Day *et al.* (2009), have similarly argued that school improvement through educational reform, will ultimately be determined by the attitudes of practitioners, led and motivated by the values of effective school leaders. However, as Noguera (2006) argued,

these dimensions are also encompassed within a nation's policies and how it resources improved provision in areas of disadvantage.

The main purpose of Ainscow *et al.'s* (2006a, 2006b) research was to discover how far schools in the selected authorities had set about developing 'inclusive practices', particularly in the context of a national policy environment. This, the authors suggested, was oppositional to such development, because 'inclusive practice' was situated within the existing dichotomy that schools faced of 'inclusion' and 'market driven' ideologies. What was significant was that they drew attention to the fact that progress was possible even within the context of these policy tensions and contradictions. Ainscow *et al.* demonstrated that this was achieved amidst the apparently non-inclusive aspects of 'the standards agenda'. Though the tensions were problematic, a distinguishing feature of their research was that it revealed the potential of the process - that through the implementation and adaptation of policies on 'standards' it could prompt practitioners to look more closely at groups of students who might otherwise be overlooked.

The research studies by Hopkins *et al.* (1996) and Ainscow *et al.* (2006a, 2006b) also supported Fullan's (1993, 1999, 2003) argument that what was needed to successfully implement change was a continued focus on the development of schools at national, local and school level.

2.8.3 'Inclusion' and 'Change' aimed at reform.
The research strongly emphasises that meeting the challenge of 'change' aimed at reform requires strong leadership. Described in the next section is the centrality of school leaders to improvement and progression of their schools, demonstrating their relevance to increased 'inclusion' encompassed within the processes of change. Fullan (2003) asserted that effective school leaders can be compared to leaders from successful businesses. Fullan (2003: 2-3) also included Heifetz and Linsky's (2002) description of leaders as "individuals staying alive through the dangers they encountered", demonstrating recognition of the management difficulties that they tackle. He stressed the need for strong leadership to support the process of successful reform. The

next section therefore critiques some important research carried out in England, and internationally, on effective school leaders which further emphasises their importance to the development of progressive schools.

2.9 School Leadership

A focus on school professionals encouraged a distinctive body of research on school leadership skills. At the heart of this work was the aim to place school leaders at the centre of driving school improvement. I have included several significant studies and although there is a considerable overlap in the literature, I have attempted to demonstrate the different themes within these four studies.

The first of the four studies looked at leadership training. Leithwood and Levin's (2005) focus was on training for school leaders, but they also called for comparisons to be made relevant to school leaders' characteristics, personalities and the context of their working environment. They argued it was essential to assess and evaluate training that was relevant not only to developing leadership skills, but also to training that equipped them to work in disadvantaged areas. According to Leithwood and Levin, leadership acts as a catalyst because it unleashes the potential of other factors that contribute to the improvement of pupil learning and is therefore an important dimension to support the learning of SEN children.

The second study was carried out by Ingvarson *et al.* (2006), a study based on a literature review of standards for school leadership looking at different 'forms of leadership' within the school hierarchy. They critiqued systems used in other countries. Importantly, Ingvarson *et al.* noted that where school leaders were found to make a difference was through building the capacity of their staff and through influencing the school's culture; dimensions reflected in the leadership standards of the countries investigated in Europe, USA and Australia. Importantly, this study also considered the influence of the school leadership team and their impact as it related to sustaining school improvement. This was significant to my study, because head teachers move on to other educational

institutions; sustainability is therefore a significant factor for continuity in the implementation of essential support for all pupils as the next study illustrates.

The third study carried out by Muijs *et al.* (2007) attempted to understand the importance of effective leadership in England, relevant to a significant policy initiative, to embed the 'Every Child Matters' social agenda initiative. When Muijs *et al.* investigated, they identified a number of distinctive factors related to leading social inclusion that were different from leading an effective school. These characteristics were relevant to how schools respond to the diversity of their students, connecting the school culture to pupils' own cultures. Perhaps, what was less obvious in emphasis in Muijs *et al.s'* work was the specific focus that Nogeura (2006) placed on resources to meet the needs of schools, particularly in disadvantaged areas, though context is clearly recognised and reference is made to barriers to achievement. However, the barriers noted by Muijs *et al.* appear to relate more to pupil characteristics. Their research was very significant because it described three important leadership perspectives - a focus on achievement, on barriers to achievement and on socialisation and capacities; importantly, they emphasised that school leaders played a key role in terms of which perspective predominated. The final study included relates to raising pupil attainment.

The fourth study by Day *et al.* (2009), carried out in England during 2003-05, is a very extensive piece of research on effective leadership, drawn from schools that had significantly raised pupil attainment levels. It was reported that effective schools improved pupil outcomes through staff values, dispositions and competences. However, Day *et al.* argued, although important, these factors would be insufficient without the head's diagnosis of the school's needs, their assessment of strategies required, and the influence required to improve student outcomes. This significant statement re-emphasises the importance of effective school leaders, because they have the ability, as argued by Hopkins *et al.* (1996), to use external policies to develop the needs of their schools.

These four studies demonstrate the international and national appreciation of the need for effective school leaders, which supports the work of Fullan (2003) and provides a further substantial body of research that is founded on compelling arguments for the need to turn the focus toward school leaders to bring about school improvement. Developing this wider understanding of school leadership prompted me to explore these significant factors during my investigation and to investigate whether my respondents were constrained by any of the barriers discussed.

The next section briefly considers the significance of collaborative practice, building on Fullan's (1993, 1999, 2003) strategies to develop change through learning communities. According to Fullan, reform required educational institutions not only to be focused on teaching and learning within the school community, but also to extend beyond the school to develop collaborations within and between schools, as Section 2.10 describes and critiques.

2.10 Collaborative Practice

Collaborative practice is now central to the DfES's (2004) National Standards for Head Teachers, relevant to internal and external school collaboration. This demonstrates that government's strategies undoubtedly influence policies at authority and school level. In England in 2005, when Bolam *et al.* (2005) carried out their research, the idea of a professional learning community was relatively new in this country. This notion is much more than teachers collaborating; it is relevant to communities in which all members contribute to learning. The emphasis of Fielding's (1999) 'commentary study' was relevant to establishing wider links engaging parents in the learning of their children as well as engaging children in their own learning, dimensions also strongly emphasised by Sebba (2009). The studies carried out by Bolam et al. (2005) Fielding (1999) and Sebba (2009), exemplify elements of collaborative working that would appear to contribute to improved educational provision to support all pupils. Particularly relevant to SEN pupils, because through working collaboratively within their communities improved provision becomes more

accessible and, therefore, supports the needs of more pupils. Exploring the broader dimensions of collaborative working was important and very relevant to my study, investigating whether my respondents were actively collaborating with other schools and within their communities.

2.11 Summary of Part 2 of my Literature Review

Part 2 of Chapter 2 described and critiqued research on 'change' processes. The research studied provided the foundation for me to develop my own study, to build on earlier work, alerting me to issues and providing ideas. It illustrated the broader strategies that could be used to develop 'change', to improve educational provision and provided the framework to structure my study, essential elements to support further exploration. My intention in this chapter was to illustrate the link between 'inclusion' and 'change' and to develop how these concepts were relevant to the focus of my investigation, exploring the nature and impact of change in the restructuring of special educational needs within one local authority.

One of my objectives was to explore the significance of school leaders based on their individual characteristics, their background, their attitudes and values, whether they were involved in collaborative practice both within and outside of the school community. These are all indicators, as the research evidences, of effective school leaders in meeting the challenges that 'change' would bring. Mindful as Barnes *et al.* (1999) and Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003) argued, that when investigating what happens in our communities considerations are given to the relevance of issues existing at school, local authority and national level, to the topic being studied. This argument became central to my investigation because it provided a holistic understanding of the impact of actions at each level and their interrelationships. The intention was to explore those complex and inter-related interactions that evolved during the stages of implementation.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, methods and the selected strategies that developed my research project to progress my investigation and to analyse my findings.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

This introduction to Chapter 3 is intended to provide an insight into my experiences of establishing my theoretical perspective and methodology. The chapter describes how I established a framework for my study and the strategies used to develop my inquiry. It demonstrates how I came to expand my overarching research question on the nature and impact of change describing my underlying aims. Sections are included on the design of my study and the consideration given to the methods used. Section 3.4 covers my pre-fieldwork, describing the tensions I faced during the process. It outlines the way that ethical considerations were addressed throughout the whole investigation. To provide a fully reflexive account of the various stages, the first section begins with explaining my early experiences from when I commenced my doctoral studies. As Dunne *et al.* (2005) suggest, it is the space between the 'concept' and the 'text' when essential decisions about how to proceed are made:

> The research process, virtually universally, begins with a concept and ends with a text. The space in between is normally given shape and coherence by decisions we make about how to proceed

> (Dunne *et al.* 2005:11).

How I came to make those decisions is explored in the first part of this methodology chapter, finding my way to shape and develop coherence during the various stages of the research process.

3.1 Starting my Journey: Becoming a Doctoral Research Student

I was unprepared for what was expected of a doctoral research student, I struggled in tutorials and was frequently baffled by lectures as I strived to grasp the concepts, the terminology and ideas that were new to me. I was consumed by feelings of inadequacy, but at the same time 'driven' by my aims to aspire to the expectations of the 'academic world'. I had not realised how far I had stepped into the 'unknown' and how far I needed to travel. I discovered

the route was truly individualised and that there was no one specific direction; it was dictated by my choice of topic and my theoretical position.

I started without any pre-conceived ideas on what would be the topic of my study, only that it would be relevant to 'inclusion' focused on SEN because of my work and keen interest in that area of education. Once my topic of study was decided I submitted my research proposal entitled 'Exploring the Impact of Restructuring Special Educational Needs Provision within a Local Authority'. This learning process gave my confidence a boost, but it continued to be a 'roller-coaster journey' and I tried not to lose momentum. To have got this far is due to the consistent patience and support given by my supervisor, ensuring that I kept focused, the catalyst which interacted with my eagerness to learn more.

One of the initial challenges I faced was how to locate my study. I decided to start from a basic consideration of what was meant by philosophy defined as the general principles of knowledge or existence. I spent many hours reading explanations of philosophies, theories, concepts and the links between them trying to develop my understanding and whether such notions were relevant to my assumptions and the way I intended to undertake my research project. I eventually decided to locate my study within a broad 'constructivist-interpretative' paradigm, comprehensively described by Creswell (2003).

'Constructivism' is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we each construct our own understanding of the world we live in, which we use to make sense of our experiences. A process of learning that continues as it accommodates new experiences. According to von Glaserfeld (1995) continuous learning motivates constructivists to privilege what is happening through descriptive perceptions of "knowing", informed by both the researcher's understandings and the theoretical writings of others. The principles of 'constructivism' provide an overarching philosophy of learning based on the idea that knowledge is individually constructed and as learners, we are proactive in seeking meaning. According to Bednar *et al.* (1991) it is impossible to discuss constructivism without contrasting it with its opposite, the

philosophy of objectivism. This school of thought considers knowledge to be an entity existing independent of the mind of individuals, which means the experience is the same for everyone. In this view it can be stated that things are either true or false, not a perspective that I share.

To clarify and further develop my understanding of what was meant by 'theory' in relation to methodology, I reconsidered its meaning. In the dictionary it is defined as a supposition that explains a phenomenon assumed. I looked at various theories and focused in particular on two contrasting theories: 'interpretative theory' is typically contrasted with 'structural theory' which claims to remove the subjectivity of the researcher and assumes that individuals can best be understood as determined by the pushes and pulls of structural forces. In contrast, 'interpretative theory' sees individual behaviour as the outcome of the subjective interpretation of the environment being investigated. 'Structural theory' focuses on the situation in which people act while 'interpretative theory' focuses on the actor's definition of the situation in which they act, an approach I perceived as more relevant because it seeks reciprocal inter-subjective understanding of subjects. According to Schwandt (2000) interpretative research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand the individual's definition of a situation. Therefore combining these overarching principles of 'constructivism' and 'interpretative theory' drew me towards locating my research study within a broad 'constructivist-interpretative' paradigm, because my intention was to explore, through the perspectives of my respondents, their experiences of restructuring SEN provision in their authority.

To develop my research project further, my next step was to narrow my focus within this paradigm - to establish my methodology and methods. The next section describes how I came to understand my own theoretical perspective through learning that the principles which combined my beliefs are founded on epistemological and ontological elements.

3.2 Working within a Paradigm: Incorporating a Theoretical Perspective

According to Creswell (2003) the term 'paradigm' informs the approach to research, whereas the term 'theoretical perspective' refers to the philosophical position that underpins the methodology, in other words, the foundation and structure to develop my research project.   As Denzin and Lincoln (2001) point out, designing the research involved connecting my theoretical perspective to the strategies of inquiry and translating the strategies into methods of collecting data. These processes are governed by the research questions and the ontological and epistemological position taken.

To establish my research position I reflected on my beliefs and assumptions. I discovered that these were usefully conveyed by Bateson (1972), who described how qualitative researchers are guided:

> by principles which combine beliefs about ontology and epistemology, which in turn shape how the social world is viewed and how actions are taken…The researcher is bound within a net of epistemological and .ontological premises which become partially self-validating.
>
> (Bateson, 1972:314-320)

As Bateson (1972) described, the structure used to carry out my investigation is encompassed within these elements: epistemologically an anti-positive stance bound in a subjectivist epistemology. In practice this meant that, during the investigative process, a relationship would be developed between the 'inquirer and the respondent' to expand my understandings within the context of what exists. This would be achieved by using a set of interpretative methods to gather data. Ontologically, I view the nature of things as very dependent on my understanding of what I observe, interpreted as a relativist ontology, which means a belief that there are multiple realities. The next step was to develop the strategies to be employed.

3.3 Strategies of Inquiry

To decide on my strategy meant narrowing my focus to different 'interpretative' approaches. Given my focus on the perspectives of the school leaders, careful

consideration was given to 'symbolic interactionism', a concept expanded by Blumer (1969) and others. This strategy is based on the actions of individuals, founded on their interpretations, meanings developed from social interactions, modified through interpretation of what is encountered in society. The literature suggests that it rests upon self-objectification and taking the role of others into account, emphasising that both the individual and society are inseparable units and individuals are by nature self-reflective beings. However, I concluded that the concept of 'symbolic interactionism' was not the approach I was seeking. This approach involved working in the field of inquiry, one that I was unlikely to be able to adopt.

I considered what Denzin (2000) described as 'interpretative interactionism' which is based on three major assumptions that organise its conceptual framework. The first assumption is based on reflecting a world of human experience, the second involves researchers' attempts to make their interpretations available to others and create improved understanding. The third assumption is based on all interpretations being inconclusive so others may form further interpretations. This approach seemed more relevant to what I sought than a 'positivistic sociology' because 'interpretative interactionism' rejects positivistic casual modes and methods of analysis, viewed as detrimental to understanding lived experiences. A strategy of inquiry suited to the development of my project, located within a broad 'constructivist-interpretative' paradigm.

Prior to my fieldwork I carried out a preliminary exercise that contributed to my decision to select the most appropriate context, but I experienced unexpected ethical tensions between my role as a researcher and my professional role as a union official.

3.4 Pre-fieldwork Investigation

My visits to the authority occurred during the summer of 2008; issues were raised and concerns expressed by several NAHT members about their authority's consultation on the restructuring of their SEN provision. The

authority's proposals were at that time being considered and discussed by various stakeholders involved in the process. As part of my professional role, I was tasked to monitor the restructuring process, informed of developments by NAHT branch officials. At this stage I was primarily involved in my professional capacity, but I was considering whether and if, I could use this context to explore my research idea. Two of the members in the closing special schools invited me to their schools and, subsequently, arrangements were made for me to meet, or contact, campaigning parents.

However, although keen to develop my investigation, the visits created unexpected tensions between my professional role, as a policy and advice officer and my developing researcher role. I explained to our members that I would not be involved in any trade union negotiations, that my focus was on the recent national policy directive that provided guidance for local authorities on restructuring SEN provision and my aim was to monitor the actions of the authority. However, it was evident at this juncture that my researcher role was becoming entangled with my professional role through my enthusiasm to learn about what was happening in this authority. This was because my researcher role and, my intention to develop my research project, overlapped with my monitoring task. I came to recognise during the processes of monitoring and deciding on a field in which to locate my study, that I had identified my field of inquiry and, as a professional doctoral student, I found myself somewhat compromised. According to Drake and Heath (2008) the 'insider nature' of research meant that managing the location as an 'insider' involved "changing positions along axes of research and professional practice" (2008:1). Added to this issue was a further and more difficult situation because I was given the opportunity to discuss with parents their concerns about the authority's proposals for restructuring SEN provision.

However, the opportunity did provide some interesting background and my experiences are included in my findings. I discovered that my 'insider knowledge' helped me understand the challenges that school leaders faced and, although it meant that complex positions were adopted in relation to those connected with my investigation, I felt it was important to pursue my

exploration. I therefore concluded that I needed to continually re-emphasise my aims and to explain to those involved what my professional intentions and my researcher intentions were. How I approached ethical considerations is described in Section 3.8 of this chapter and was demonstrated throughout my study.

3.5 Approaching my Research Study

My knowledge of the national and local context, combined with my literature review on 'inclusion' and 'change', led to the development and focus of my research project. This knowledge was employed to move my theoretical perspective to the field of inquiry, to put my 'interpretative' approach into practice, which was connected to relevant methods for data gathering and analysis of my findings. My aim was to implement and anchor theory into the topic of inquiry exploring the authority's restructuring of their SEN provision, focused on their proposals to increase and improve provision. My intention was to monitor the stages of implementation and, within that process, address the critical issues of ensuring authenticated representation of my respondents' views. I identified school leaders as the category for my selection criteria because my professional role is to support these members in specific areas of school management, which includes all dimensions of 'inclusion' in schools, and specifically SEN.

The process of establishing the national and local context enabled me to develop what appeared to be a current and relevant topic for my own purposes of inquiry. I submitted the proposal for my project informed by my knowledge of existing national and local tensions to increase and improve SEN provision within the context of 'market' and 'inclusion' ideologies. My own professional experience and interest in new proposals for 'change' encouraged me to also investigate whether restructuring SEN provision in one authority, with 'BSF' funding, would provide the motivator the essential resource to develop improved provision.

My research questions were gradually developed within a broad 'constructivist-interpretative framework' influenced by the knowledge gained from the literature reviewed on 'inclusion' and 'change processes', notably Ainscow *et al.* (2006a, 2006b), Hopkins *et al.* (1996), Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003) and others. The next section expands on the underlying objectives of the overarching research question.

3.6 The overarching research question

Within the context of one local authority, the project addressed the following research question:

What is the nature and impact of change, in the restructuring of special educational needs provision?

This research question set out to explore two aspects of the nature of change: the first objective was to investigate the process and the second objective was to investigate the impact of change. My intention was to tease out whether school leaders in mainstream schools, subject to competing government policies, would choose to extend their provision. What would influence their decisions in relation to proposed change? To what extent would this relate to their values and views in relation to increased inclusion? I wanted to explore the impact on those special school leaders in circumstances where 'change' was imposed by the authority and to explore how dependent the implementation of the proposed change, to increase inclusive provision, was on mainstream school leaders. To then further explore whether an interrelationship existed between the levels – at individual, school, local authority and national levels. Having established my objectives, the next step was to develop the design of my study.

3.7 The Design of my Study

The design developed from the purpose of the research and its assumed significance. The research questions were constructed to guide the research,

developed through my literature review and chosen strategies of interpretative inquiry. The study started with a questionnaire based survey, but this was problematic; it was a largely interview-based enquiry focusing on the perspectives of school leaders within one local authority and national and local documentation. The main design elements are illustrated in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Main Design Elements

Questionnaire-based Survey	Mailed to 190 school leaders in 90 schools, covering all phases and sectors. Only four completed questionnaires returned.
Interview-based study	Twelve respondents in nine schools Head Teachers (9), Deputies/ Inclusion Manager (2) SENCO (1)
Range of Documentation Analysed	Government Policies/Guidance Ofsted and Audit Commission Reports, Local Authority Reports and Minutes

3.8 Methods Considered and Adopted

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations

According to Minicheiello *et al.* (1990), before developing research questions we need to determine the areas of concern, taking into account professional standards that have been established and then the ethics of the entire research process we intend to undertake. This is because every research project is subject to the community politics within the field of study. I did anticipate and prepare as Minicheiello *et al.* emphasised, both prior to and throughout my investigation, to address ethical considerations through my approach and methods.

3.8.2 Ethical issues relevant to my respondents

As discussed in Section 3.4, I experienced the problematic nature of 'insider researcher' (e.g. Drake and Heath, 2008, 2010). I was also aware that respondents' involvement might have implications for their professional role, so

care was taken to provide anonymity for all participants. This was particularly relevant as restructuring may result in their posts being removed and/or changed. I also considered the possibility of a problematic situation occurring because of a power imbalance through my status and the status of the respondents, but I decided this was unlikely to be an issue because the level of 'power' appeared to be evenly balanced between respondent and interviewer. However, as far as interviews with school leaders in special schools (with notice to close or to relocate) I believed that a possible 'influence' could not be eliminated because of my professional role. I did emphasise that my remit was within the professional association side of NAHT, that I did not provide trade union representation with regard to their employment and that the purpose of the interview was purely relevant to my doctoral research.

Consideration was given to informed consent defined by Diener and Crandall (1978) as individuals choosing to participate when informed of the facts likely to influence their decisions. In order to clarify my intention and address any potential issues, I asked my respondents to provide written and verbal agreement through the medium of a pro forma (Appendix A). The pro forma included a paragraph that stated that my investigation adhered to the University of Sussex Ethical Guidance accessed from: www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/internal/research/ethics. I informed respondents that transcripts of interviews would be forwarded by email for respondents to validate and return.

3.8.3 Selecting the field of inquiry and selection criteria for the sample
Although I was aware that restructuring SEN provision was being considered by a number of authorities, I decided to focus on one authority for several reasons. The first was based on my decision not to compare restructuring proposals being considered by various authorities, but to carry out an in-depth investigation to explore the processes of change in one authority. The second reason was based on practicality - the authority was located fairly near so I was able to travel to the destination reasonably easily. The third reason was that my initial interest had already drawn me to explore what was happening in this authority and I was therefore influenced by my knowledge of the significant

tensions that appeared to be developing between schools and the local authority.

I planned to focus on school leaders for two main reasons. First because my association primarily represents school leaders and second as the literature argues, effective school leaders can be instrumental in leading 'change' and developing school improvement (e.g. Muijs *et al.* (2007) and Day *et al.* (2009)). I established that there were 70 primary, 12 secondary and 8 special schools, a total of 90 maintained schools in the authority. How I attempted to establish a sample is explained later, but I started with a questionnaire/survey.

3.8.4 The questionnaire

The draft questionnaire was piloted through emailing head teachers (colleagues outside of the authority); their comments were noted and, where necessary, amendments were made. The purpose of my questionnaire was to gather data on (i) the school leaders' awareness of the local authority's proposals and (ii) whether the respondent's school was directly involved in the proposed restructuring. My questionnaire contained two closed questions:

- Are you aware that your Local Authority is restructuring its Special Educational Needs Provision?
- Is your school directly involved in the proposed restructuring?

It also contained an open question which invited comments on the restructuring proposals and enquired whether respondents would be willing to be interviewed. My objective was that, through this process, a sample of self-elected respondents, willing to be interviewed, would be established (Appendix B). The next step was to mail the questionnaire. The questionnaire was circulated during October 2008, addressed to head teachers though, in some circumstances (if NAHT members), to assistant and deputy-heads too, as our membership criteria is applicable to school leaders. An introductory note explained my intention to explore the impact of the authority's decision to restructure their SEN provision; that my investigation was part of my doctoral studies, supported by my employer NAHT. I made a point of acknowledging

my appreciation of their valuable time. I also stressed that I was following the University of Sussex ethical guidelines (2008) and that confidentiality was assured. The questionnaire asked respondents to contribute further on an 'opt-in' basis either via either a telephone, or school-based interview. At that stage I had decided not to circulate the questionnaire to members in the two special schools I had previously visited.

The mailing was facilitated by the NAHT marketing department. Through their database I was able to access the contact details of members and other schools in the authority. The mailing exceeded the 90 schools identified; in total 190 school leaders were mailed, together with a prepaid envelope for their response. I anticipated receiving responses within a relatively short period. I did not anticipate the low rate of response experienced.

3.8.5 Review and reflections on the limited response

Only four responses were received from the 190 school leaders mailed and I had real concerns about being able to gather the data needed for my investigation. My original plan set aside one month for analysis of the questionnaire and to establish a sample of respondents to participate in the interview process. The resultant problem of a low response impacted on the whole process of my investigation and I had to rethink how I should handle this. Subsequent action involved the development of different approaches; initially, I decided to try emailing.

The aim was to send the questionnaire by email and, in an attempt to eliminate further delay caused through possible incorrect email addresses, I contacted a number of schools by telephone to identify the correct email addresses; most contact emails were via an administrator or personal assistant. The questionnaire was then emailed to school leaders where email addresses had been confirmed as correct. In total 50 emails were sent, but no replies were received. Identifying a sample of school leaders to interview had become my overriding aim and concern. I revised my approach, developing a 'networking strategy' to negotiate participation.

3.8.6 Networking as a means of seeking participants

I decided to use my professional role as a 'way in', attending a branch annual general meeting in the hope that I would meet more members and this would provide access to develop my 'sample'. Their meeting was held at the end of October 2008, attended by 18 members. The branch secretary provided me with an opportunity to discuss my reason for attending; I asked whether colleagues were aware of the proposed restructuring and all indicated that they were. I then explained that I was carrying out a small scale research project for my doctoral studies supported by NAHT and requested the email addresses of those present who would be interested in participating; email addresses were provided by ten people. I emailed the same questionnaire, together with the pro forma, but with a more personal introductory note and received eight completed questionnaires by email and a number of respondents (in total six) agreed to a telephone interview (Appendix C).

I decided that, as time was running out, I had to also extend my sample through known membership contacts. Although I was aware that my actions could skew my 'sample', I decided that it was essential to approach those members working in the special schools identified for closure or relocation. The two school leaders, who I had met in my pre-fieldwork, agreed to be interviewed. I also contacted the head teacher of the primary special school identified for closure and both he and his deputy agreed to be interviewed. I learned from this process and decided that the resultant design problems should be recorded as 'critical reflections' within my thesis. Establishing 'a sample' was the main criterion. How this was eventually defined is explained below.

3.8.7 Defining my sample

In view of the difficulties experienced, my final 'sample' could be identified in several ways. The 'sample' types were defined according to Cohen *et al.*'s (2007) descriptors. To some extent I used a 'purposive sample' because particular characteristics were sought (school leaders) and the sample could therefore be viewed as selective. The term 'convenience sample' was also appropriate because I used those respondents who happened to be accessible

at the time. Such a sample would not seek to generalise about the wider population because for a 'convenience sample' that is an irrelevance and this was certainly so in my experience. I also used, as described by Cohen *et al.* a 'snowballing' technique because I had identified some individuals who had the characteristics in which I was interested, but these respondents in turn also identified others within their schools to add to my final sample and as access had proven so difficult I welcomed their support. In truth, my final sample was a combination of all three techniques, but more weighted toward 'convenience sampling'. My sampling criteria and approach therefore changed. I had in effect developed a more pragmatic approach to identification of the 'sample', relieved that I had finally negotiated interviews with a number of school leaders.

The number of respondents in my sample totalled twelve: 8 of the interviewees were located in 6 mainstream schools and 4 interviewees were located in 3 special schools. The context of each school was a significant factor that influenced and contributed to respondents' actions relevant to the proposed SEN restructuring of provision. Included in the next section is a brief pen portrait of each school.

3.8.8 *Pen Portrait of the Schools in my Sample*

School A

This Victorian three-storey building had no visible trees, drab brick walling signified its boundaries, the school was totally surrounded by other buildings and pupils accessed their school through a very narrow entrance. I was told there were no lifts, each storey was accessed by steep flights of stairs, there was no disabled access or disabled toilets, and the classroom sizes were small. This community primary school admitted boys and girls from 3 -11 and over 300 pupils were on roll. The school was ethnically diverse: just 16% White British, 70% were of different black heritage, 10% Eastern European. A significant number 46%, were identified as SEN pupils, 50% were known to be eligible for free school meals; the number of pupils facing social and economic disadvantage therefore equated to over three times the national average

(15.9%). This school was identified by the authority as a proposed 16 placement resource base for children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.

School B

This secondary comprehensive girls' school, for students from 11 – 16, had 1500 pupils on roll. The buildings were cited for a possible heritage listing, teaching areas appeared bright and well equipped to support pupils' learning relevant to their Science and Mathematics Specialist Status. This school had a multi-cultural profile of students from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds; a very high proportion spoke English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals was slightly higher than the national average (15.9%) and the number of pupils with SEN was lower than the national average of (18%). The school offered provision for pupils with sensory impediments. The head teacher was keen to attract 'higher ability' students and she promoted the opportunities the school offered for pupils to participate in an extended curriculum.

School C

Prominent at the entrance to this 1953 two-storey rendered-building were trees of silver birch and the buildings were surrounded by a variety of shrubs, which defined the parameters of the school. A primary school for boys and girls from 3 -11; with 340 pupils on roll; their pupil profile comprised of 44% White British, with sizeable proportions of minority ethnic groups: African Caribbean, Black African and those pupils with dual heritage. Over 20% of children had English as an additional language, 11% were eligible for free school meals - below the national average (15.9%). The percentage of children with SEN was 20.4% - just above the national average (18%). The school served a community that was diverse both socially and through its ethnic populations. The authority's proposal was to develop a co-located 16 placement resource base for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

School D

This three-storey Victorian red brick building was surrounded by houses built in the same era. Its boundaries were defined by trees and shrubs, which softened

the austerity of the buildings and fencing. The school was well maintained and the classrooms were brightly decorated. A Children's Centre provided health services and parental support: provision for childcare 0 - 3 years and from 3 years to the end of the early years' foundation stage. The number of boys and girls on roll in the primary provision totalled 375 and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals was below the national average; a high proportion of pupils were from minority ethnic backgrounds. The predominant group from Black Caribbean heritage and a wide range of ethnic groups were represented. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties was lower than average and the number of statemented pupils was described as average. This school had piloted some six years earlier, resourced provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs and provided specialist support for children with Dyslexia.

School E

This three-storey Victorian square brick building appeared flat roofed with arched windows on the first floor, the boundaries of the buildings were framed by brick walling and black railings which extended on to a narrow pavement close to the access road. The buildings appeared well maintained, with pristine white painted windows that created a dramatic contrast to the austere roof-line. This primary community school for boys and girls catered for pupils from 3 -11 with a total of 335 pupils on roll and provided a range of extended services. A high proportion of pupils were from different minority ethnic heritages, having a home language other than English: a very high proportion of pupils from Somali, Iran and Yoruba (Nigeria or West Africa). The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties was above the national average (18%) and the school was located in an area subject to high mobility. This school was identified by the authority for a 16 place resource base for children with Speech Language and Communication needs and the school was scheduled for additional new building rather than refurbishment.

School F

This school comprised three and two-storey brick built buildings, constructed at various periods - originally built in 1890s remodelled and extended in the mid-

1980s. Brick walling surrounded the school and framed wire fencing extended the boundaries; the school reflected a rather shabby image. This primary community school catered for boys and girls from 3-11 with 458 pupils on roll. The school had provision for early years and foundation aged pupils in two nursery and two reception classes. There was a Children's Centre on the school site and the school provided after school clubs. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals was more than double the national average (15.9%), most pupils were from minority ethnic groups: the largest from Eastern European, African and Caribbean heritage. A high proportion of pupils had English as an additional language, or special educational needs. The school experienced high mobility with a quarter of their pupils joining or leaving the school annually. This school was being considered by the authority for a 16 placement resource base providing for pupils on the Autistic Spectrum. This proposal would require a co-located new- build unit, refurbishment was not considered.

School G

This community special school was built in the 1960s, comprising of one and two-storey flat roofed brick buildings, with white facia boarding under the roof line. Railings marked the boundaries of the school with shrubs and trees planted along its parameters. The school buildings were well maintained, creating a bright attractive environment. The school exuded a happy and bright atmosphere, staff and helpers working well together. The school was populated with 71 statemented pupils, the majority diagnosed as MLD and a few pupils with ASD within an age range of 4-11. More than one third of its pupils were from ethnic backgrounds other than White British: predominately Black-African heritage; half of the pupils had English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals was significantly high 63%. The school was situated in an area that was both socially and economically disadvantaged. This school was scheduled for closure.

School H

The buildings were constructed in 1968: the primary department classrooms located on the ground floor with most of the secondary accommodation located

on the first floor. The school had recent significant building improvements: a new music block, a therapy room and an art room. Pupils had access to excellent information technology facilities with most classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards and all had networked computers. The school catered for 128 pupils from 4-16, statemented with a diagnosis related to Autism, but in addition nearly all pupils had additional difficulties across a range of learning difficulties: emotional, medical or behavioural needs. Most pupils were White British although close to 50% were from other ethnic groups (the largest Black African, or Caribbean heritage). Very small proportions of pupils were in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals was slightly higher than the national average (15.9%). A significant minority arrived at the school part way through their education. This school was scheduled for relocation to a new site, not yet identified and refurbishment - not a rebuild. The authority also intended to close its primary phase

School I

The school buildings were drab and the school site was totally surrounded by shops and houses that overlooked every area of the school. This special school catered for pupils from 11 – 16 and had 123 statemented pupils on roll: 35% had Moderate Learning Difficulties, 20% had behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, 15% had speech, language and communication needs and an increasing number of pupils (nearly one-third) were on the autistic spectrum. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals was significant - well above the national average (15.9%). There were twice as many boys as girls: approximately half were from White British backgrounds and a third from Black British, African and Caribbean heritage. The remainder came from a range of different cultural heritages, reflecting the make-up of the community. This school was scheduled to close, the buildings demolished and the site used for a new-build all age school for pupils on the Autistic Spectrum

3.8.9 Keeping a research diary

The diary became a historical record, which supported my thoughts and recorded my actions, rather than a structured formal diary. There were no

regular or standardised entries, purely a system of logging events as and when they occurred that informed my thinking and research practice. Rolfe (2006) argued that all published research reports should include a reflexive research diary. My attempt was in no way produced to the specification Rolfe described; I started a research diary at the suggestion of one of the university tutors. The diary was useful, particularly at the beginning, when I carried out a preliminary exploration to decide whether the local authority I was considering would be the most appropriate location for my investigation.

3.8.10 Considering: 'observation'

In the process of selecting methods to gather data, 'observation', as described by Baszanger and Dodier (2004), was discarded for two important reasons. The first reason was because I was interested in respondents' views and this required an interactive conversational approach. Secondly, observation carried out as participant observer, though interesting particularly during the local authority meeting, ethically it was unlikely to be appropriate because on that occasion I was invited to attend as a representative of my professional association, NAHT.

3.8.11 Interview methodology, adopted techniques and processes

According to Kvale (1996) the interview method involves a challenge to the conception of knowledge in the social sciences because the process reflects alternative conceptions of what is being studied. He suggests that the majority of methodological problems do not stem from method, or insufficiently developed techniques, but from theoretical assumptions that have not been clarified. This argument was strongly made by Giorgi (1994):

> greater theoretical clarity and consistency as well as deeper reflection, or better utilisation of imaginative possibilities will seem to be called for in order to bring better theoretical conceptualization and more consistent practice to clarify research

(Giorgi, 1994:190)

Kvale (1996) explains that addressing the methodological questions of conducting an interview leads to theoretical issues. Conceptions are developed of the specific themes investigated and the nature of the social

world is explored within this process, a method that I felt would be appropriate for my research project. I therefore considered various techniques.

Ethnographic interviewing is a qualitative research technique, but this is more relevant to developing a longer term relationship with the interviewees. According to Kvale (1994), a qualitative approach was developed on the basis of attempting to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, described as a 'construction site of knowledge'. Kvale's 'miner' metaphor approach was discarded as not appropriate to the methodology being sought, because the focus is one of facts that appeared more relevant to a positivist approach, far removed from my chosen methodology. I was drawn to Kvale's 'traveller' metaphor, because it described the conversational technique I was seeking and the foundation on which to construct the knowledge sought, connecting, as Kvale described, the practical to the methodological issues that develops the nature of the interview. Section 3.2 explained how these were developed through epistemological elements. His descriptions of the interview process reflected my desired approach and my epistemological position, interviewing was the primary method for gathering information. How I developed my interview schedule is described below.

3.8.12 The development of my interview schedule
The schedule was developed to provide a framework of numbered questions to guide the interview, but it also included demographic questions to provide a profile of the respondent, their school and their pupils. The schedule developed the topic from the initial questionnaire and included questions that probed for further information, following a 'constructivist' approach. I used a technique of questioning to guide our conversation, which was semi-structured, neither an open conversation nor structured questionnaire. In practice, I opened our conversation with an introduction to the purpose of the interview to inform my study on the proposed SEN restructuring, a topic that was relevant to the interest of both the interviewer and interviewee.

It started from establishing their knowledge of the restructuring proposed, developing our interactions to explore their reflections on anticipated impact on pupils, on the school and on them. At the same time, where appropriate, it sought respondents' experiences of the stages of consultation, determination and implementation. Other sections of the schedule were designed to explore the influence of their school leadership and to investigate the culture of the school. I decided that to explore the nature and impact of change in the restructuring of SEN provision involved trying to discover the forces driving the direction individuals take, for example whether respondents were supportive of increased inclusion.

The questions were developed from my literature review and through the adopted strategy of 'interpretative-interactionism', I was able to interpret from our interactions whether respondents felt there were sufficient resources to meet their pupils' needs, whether they perceived their admission cohorts were balanced, as argued by Dyson *et al.* (2004) and Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007). Questions were also included on whether the school was involved in developing collaborative partnerships within the community, as argued by Fullan (1993, 1999), Bolam *et al.* (2005), and others.

Through our conversation I explored whether the location of their schools influenced their approach to educational provision and whether they perceived, as Ainscow *et al.* (2006b) emphasised, that accountability measures created barriers to progression. The last group of questions were relevant to staff and school leaders' professional development. My objective was to tease out information about their leadership practice (e.g. Day *et al.* (2009) and Muijs *et al.* (2007)). I was able to explore, within the processes of enquiry, whether my respondents were using reform for internal purposes to improve their schools, as argued by Fullan (1993, 1999) and Hopkins *et al.* (1996). The schedule of issues (questions) covered in the interview schedule are detailed in Appendix D.

The draft interview schedule was emailed to head teachers (colleagues outside the authority) and their comments were considered and adjustments

made where appropriate. The branch secretary agreed to a trial interview session. It was essential to trial this locally because the schedule was designed specifically to explore the process and impact of restructuring in this authority. Although, his school was not directly involved in the restructuring proposed all schools in the area would, in some way, experience the impact of change. This exercise enabled me to practise expanding and developing questions and the process provided a helpful insight.

3.8.13 Telephone interviews

Telephone interviews were used for data collection because this method was more convenient for interviewees, would save time and would also enable a wider geographical spread. Respondents agreed that I could record our conversations. As these interviews were carried out by telephone visual actions did not influence, or distract, the respondents. I let the design of the schedule guide the whole process and tried to ensure clarity of responses by seeking more information where and when appropriate.

Miller (1995) argued from two contrasting positions. For example, on the one hand, that telephone interviews were reduced to only auditory conversations which could be limiting because the interviewer misses out on non-verbal dialogue like facial and bodily expressions. On the other hand, the very fact that interviews are not face-to-face may possibly strengthen reliability and disclosure of more information. Nias (1991) supported the latter viewpoint. The argument that Harvey (1988) and Miller (1995) made was that telephone interviews tend to be shorter, more focused and useful for contacting busy people. Bearing in mind the difficulties already faced around access to the sample, this method was the most appropriate to use for busy school leaders and was the method chosen by the majority of my respondents when given the option.

Before commencing the interview, I clarified with my respondents whether they had any objection to the conversation being recorded. I also informed them when I was about to switch on the tape-recorder, the recordings were on the whole clear, although I made notes in case the recordings were faulty. I found

this to be an excellent method and during the interview felt that our interactions developed very well. The schedule supported my intention to give respondents the opportunity to answer and develop the questions very much guided by their own reflections. Some of my questions covered areas of significant interest to my respondents. This meant that I did not need to ask questions because information flowed and the schedule only guided the conversation towards its intended aim. In practice, the method facilitated the development of a good relationship with respondents. In several instances I was able to negotiate further interviews with others within the school community and an agreement to arrange follow-up interviews with some of my respondents. The same interview schedule was used for the face-to-face interviews described below.

3.8.14 Face to face interviews

In total four face-to-face interviews were arranged, the first in a mainstream school. However, I experienced a lot of interruptions; it was a matter of me adjusting to the environment. The second and third interviews were held in a special school; the second interview overran the allotted time, but I had no control over this either. It did mean, however, that the third interview was drastically reduced, although we managed to complete the schedule of questions. The fourth and final interview was held in a hotel because the respondent preferred a location outside of his school. This interview went very smoothly, apart from an unexpected problem with my tape-recorder which jammed during the interview; however my note taking compensated.

3.8.15 Follow-up interviews

In view of the evolving processes of change I decided to arrange some brief follow-up telephone calls a year or so later and, thereafter, if necessary, to arrange to contact the respondent again. I contacted the head teacher in school F because, at the time of the first interview, consideration was being given to the viability of adding a co-located resource; the head teachers of school G and I because of impending closure and the head teacher of school H because consideration was being given to relocation and closure of the

school's primary phase. My purpose was to explore whether proposed changes were carried out and if so, the impact of those changes.

3.8.16 Tape-recordings and notes

The recordings provided an excellent record of conversations and interactions; these recordings were transcribed immediately after interview when possible. On the whole the recordings were clear and, where there was noisy interference, my notes filled any obliteration on the tape. Apart from one interview during the initial round of interviews audio-tape-recordings were made of every interview and all were transcribed, emailed to and verified by the respondent. The follow-up interviews were recorded by taking verbatim notes; a recorder was not used.

3.8.17 Documented evidence and collation of documents

According to Scott (1990), documentary evidence provides an appropriate method of data collection, deemed to be an important resource and essential to the field of investigation. Scott (1990) argued, firstly, that these documents evidenced and gave authenticity to the findings emerging from the data collected. Secondly, they provide a chronological ordering of the processes involved and particularly in my study, clarity on the restructuring processes the authority followed. I gathered relevant national and local information from various sources, approached in different ways. I looked at the DCSF's, local authority's and other national bodies' websites. Through my professional capacity I developed links with authority officers that facilitated access to various documents, for example minutes of relevant authority meetings held to discuss the implementation of their restructuring proposals. This method was important as my intention was not only to analyse respondents' reflections of their experiences, but to investigate what happened at authority level, as documented in their policies and minutes of meetings; my findings convey the data gathered.

3.8.18 Methods for analysis of the data

The design of the interview schedule supported the data analysis through grouped and numbered questions. Analysis of the data gathered was achieved

through developing qualitative interpretations constructed from the transcripts and notes described by Plath (1990:374) as "file-work". This process of analysis required careful consideration of the text, approached through focused reading of the content of the transcripts. The aim of this exercise was to identify useful reference points within the texts of the interviews to tease out the information contained in the transcripts, to log important points that the data reflected and to establish content. I looked for examples of similarities and differences, what was said and what was not said. I reflected on their views and attitudes towards increased inclusion, proposed 'change' and whether respondents perceived any barriers. I then considered and compared all the school leaders' responses extracted from the recorded text.

Initially I reduced the content of the transcripts, devising tables to record the data and emerging themes. For example, to identify respondents' level of awareness about the proposed restructuring, how they interacted with proposals for 'change' and whether they supported or were opposed to 'change'. I also attempted to categorise respondents' attitudes towards 'change', whether they were reactive or proactive in their approach, whether respondents' perceived 'change' would bring about advantage or disadvantage to their schools and whether these school leaders appeared to be using reform to progress their schools. I considered grading, but my attempts to grade were both futile and irrelevant, because it provided meaningless data. However, I was able to tease out respondents' perceptions of the level of impact of proposed restructuring on their schools, on pupils and themselves and within these processes I sought to explore whether there were further, or underlying issues. I developed summarised transcripts of respondents' views to create an interpretation using the information collected and the knowledge gained. The aim was to identify both significant and more generic themes though I discovered putting themes/categories, or textual quotes into tables had unintended consequences and fragmented the dialogue.

However, through this process of analysis and classification my own interpretation was developing through exercising focused attention, drawing on respondents' views of their experiences of the process, reflecting on their

perceptions of what the proposed restructuring meant and their anticipated impact of proposals for 'change' on them as individuals, on their pupils on their schools. I then returned to the research questions to support the emerging arguments. This process was time consuming, but by delving further and further into the data I discovered some rich data which contributed to my investigation, building reliability through the consistency of the research findings to establish a body of evidence based on the views of different respondents and their perceptions of what had been experienced.

The tables were a useful analytical device developed for evaluating issues emerging from reflections of respondents relevant to the authority and the profile of pupils in different schools. As argued by Denzin and Lincoln (2001) it is an important process, when the researcher engages in what appears to be a deconstruction of the data in the text which then develops into a re-construction to convey the findings. Although it appeared a lengthy exercise, this process did provide more clarity and developed my ability to tease out emerging themes. The process enabled significant findings to emerge from the data that have been re-contextualised again and again to build and develop my argument. Denzin and Lincoln refer to this process as an art because they suggest that qualitative research is endlessly creative and interpretive. However, the process does not enable researchers to easily convey their findings and I would support their argument. My interpretations are conveyed in my findings, but as they made clear, my experience of the process is my interpretation of what exists, whereas as Denzin and Lincoln argued, others could reflect different truths, based on their own analysis of what exists.

I chose not to use a case study approach, though some consideration was given to developing Stake's (2003) case study method, because I felt this was better accomplished through a longitudinal study. For example, if I decided to investigate Fullan's (1993, 1999) Phase III to extend my investigation of whether 'change' was successfully developed in the schools identified in this authority.

3.8.19 Replacing 'validity and reliability' with 'trustworthiness'

The claim is made by Agar (1993) that, in qualitative data collection, the intensive personal involvement and in-depth responses of individuals secures sufficient 'validity and reliability'. Whereas, Hammersley (1992) and Silverman (1993) argue that these are insufficient grounds for establishing 'validity and reliability'. Guba and Lincoln (1985) provide some helpful parallels to these positivist descriptors. They argue the use of qualitative terminology, suggesting 'trustworthiness' as a 'quality criteria' in qualitative research in place of validity and reliability, which are terms more usually associated with quantitative research. They propose that 'validity' can be replaced with 'credibility', 'reliability' with 'dependability' and 'objectivity' with 'confirmability', moving away from positivistic descriptors to what they described as 'quality/qualitative criteria'. The procedures I followed in my investigation provided an audit trail of how I established 'trustworthiness', for example through sending transcripts to my respondents to check, through journal recording, relevant national and local documentation, through linking corresponding views and publications to evidence my investigation and findings.

3.8.20 Methodological implications of my dual roles as researcher and 'advisor'

The research process requires evaluative, political judgements and choices to be made at every stage. It begins with the format of questions, the data collected, recorded, interpreted and reported and the consideration given to the practical or policy implications of the work undertaken. Gewirtz and Cribb (2006) argued that what becomes open to challenge is a perceived lack of rigour. They suggest that researchers should extend their approach, through an ethically reflexive methodology, related to influences in the field and ethical and political values. Therefore, I have described the processes that I followed to avoid challenge and in writing my thesis carefully articulated what appeared to exist in the field, reflecting the perspectives of respondents, through comparisons/ similarities from the data gathered and, what was evidenced in my literature review.

In Chapters 1 and 2 my researcher identity was described: I attempted to explicate the way in which my values helped to shape fieldwork practice and

analysis. In my writing to reflect a self-conscious approach, to demonstrate the way my interests might influence the process and production of my work. I addressed the various dimensions involved: being explicit about 'value' assumptions and evaluative judgements that informed my research to provide a defence of any assumptions and to respond to the possible tensions between values embedded in my research. As argued by Gewirtz and Cribb (2006), this process provides a way to insulate my research from 'value-bias' and, at the same time, should enable a contribution to political and social change.

My focus therefore has been to clarify the way in which I undertook my investigation from the outset, taking account of existing tensions relevant to my dual roles. As this chapter illustrates, I described my methodology and the extent of the processes followed to identify my 'sample'. To avoid the rigour and, the independence of my work being undermined, this section (through a reflexive approach) identifies potential influences related to my dual role, particularly, as I gained access to my sample through NAHT. I have, therefore, scrutinised my data in an attempt to reflect the possible perceptions that respondents' held of me, to tease out where their perceptions appeared to be implicit or explicit in recorded conversations. For example the head teacher of school B told me the authority persuaded schools to keep their challenging pupils on role, this avoided recording permanent exclusions. She told me that the income the school received, through the age-weighted pupil unit, was lower than the cost of dual placements, which benefited the authority, not the school. The issue that this respondent conveyed appeared to indicate that she perceived me more as an NAHT officer than a doctoral researcher, as this particular issue was more relevant to my work for NAHT, than my researcher role and my investigation of the authority's restructuring of their provision.

I was aware that the head teacher of school E appeared somewhat guarded in his responses; it was difficult to get him to be as forthcoming as other participants. This was possibly due to my NAHT role, because he would have been aware that NAHT had challenged the authority about their proposals for SEN restructuring and, he may have wanted to 'protect' his relationship with the authority. Also this head teacher was not seeking any professional support from

the association, as it related to the restructuring, whereas other respondents may have been - as a member he may possibly have felt obligated to contribute. Several head teachers, though busy professionals, were also still prepared to respond, for example the head teachers of schools C and F, they appeared to be in a hurry during the interview and tended to anticipate my questions about the restructuring processes. They may also have felt obliged to participate, but what was significant was that school F agreed to keep me informed as the processes evolved and, I reflected, whether this respondent would have made such an offer if I was solely a researcher.

An example of the interrelated link, relevant to the trade union's role, could possibly be detected in the approach of the deputy head of school G when she expressed her anxiety about the way the local authority had treated her, following an allegation made by a pupil. An NAHT Regional Officer acted on behalf of this member post-interview, but it cannot be ignored that this issue may have influenced our relationship, because she wanted NAHT representation, relevant to the allegation and, the proposed restructuring. This may have also been foremost in her head teacher's perceptions of me because his job was threatened. Similarly, the head teacher of school H had always demonstrated a willingness to reflect his views and did so over a long period, which may have been due to the threat to his status. The impact of my professional role became very apparent throughout my interview with the head teacher of school I as he was seeking NAHT support, relevant to the impending closure of his school. Although I made it clear this was not my role, he indicated that he was opposed to the restructuring and that he would need NAHT support. To avoid potential conflicts of interest between my dual roles, I pointed out that in the first instance the branch secretary was involved in the authority's consultation process, but if their individual jobs were perceived to be under threat, then an NAHT Regional Officer would directly support them.

These are examples of the challenges that my dual roles appeared to create and, in order to mitigate these potential conflicts, I tended to remind respondents of my researcher position and the confidentiality associated with that role. I addressed this by assuring interviewees that the primary purpose of

the interview was to investigate in my capacity as a doctoral researcher. I then refocused my respondent on my need to understand what was occurring in their authority during the processes of restructuring SEN provision. However, as stated, I also reassured member respondents that NAHT regional officers were remitted to support them if restructuring issues arose that threatened their professional status.

From these diverse examples, of what appeared to be weaker or stronger associations between my researcher and my professional roles, I have attempted to attribute the possible perceptions of my respondents, relevant to methodological implications of my research. On reflection it was extremely difficult to separate my dual roles, as it related to my relationship with those respondents, particularly, those in the closing schools. The underlying influences that potentially existed between the interviewer and the interviewees, therefore, needed to be considered and addressed. In Chapter 6, the actions of the local authority were teased out and related to the positioning of my respondents. Finally, in Chapter 7, the key dimensions were drawn together focused on the perceptions of what my respondents perceived existed locally. I believe, therefore, that I have taken responsibility throughout my thesis to reflect respondents' views, their actions and the political and ethical implications of my research work.

I have attempted to address the potential of 'value biases' because in the wider research community 'values' are known to be contentious and controversial and through this process I have acknowledged that my value commitment must be carefully scrutinised and made explicit. Hammersley (2004) discussed the danger of 'self-censorship' or even the reconstruction of findings to make them more appropriate. To a limited extent when writing up my findings self-censorship was inevitable, but there was never any intention to make the findings 'appropriate'. My analysis was based on the perceptions of my respondents and through this process I learned and gained knowledge to inform my data. My aim was to import this knowledge through reflection of what existed and was conveyed in the field of inquiry from respondents' interpretations and the authority's actions - as perceived and recorded in documentation. Gerwirtz

and Cribb (2006) suggest that the researcher's value judgements must be responsive to and have an understanding of the practical dilemmas faced by those operating in the social contexts being studied. They suggest this necessitates retreating from personal ideals and taking on responsibility for the evaluative judgements made. I have attempted not to foreground any idealistic perceptions I may have developed from my literature review, nor any preconceived assumptions about the restructuring carried out in this authority, to provide a balanced reflection of what existed. The challenge Gewirtz and Cribb stress entails the researcher being ready to take responsibility for the practical import of their work, but doing so in a way that minimises the kinds of threats to rigour that Hammersley is concerned about.

My method of analysis of the data ultimately produced the text that is finally written-up in this thesis. This process, as argued by Van Maanen (1988), may assume a variety of different forms from conveying a confessional to an analytical report evidenced by theory. I did not anticipate how difficult it would be to pull all the strands together to put on record how my thesis evolved. I did not feel confident as I approached this prospect so I attended a writing course and read books about how to write a thesis. What I found significant and most appropriate to me were the comments included in the section below.

3. 9 Writing-up my thesis: Lessons Learned

According Cresswell (2003) inexperienced writers need to develop a habit of writing, because writing is thinking and conceptualising a topic. This was the way I developed my understanding; through writing up my notes on concepts and ideas, it was easier for me to reflect through transcribing to internalise my learning. According to the writing course tutor, it is important when writing a thesis to identify a style that suits the audience. The audience in my case would be scholars in the field I was investigating, tutors that would be both supportive, but challenging, as would be the examiners. There could also be a hostile audience, which meant that I needed to be careful to write to not only

engage the reader, but also to ensure that my argument was clear and evidenced, building on the community of scholarly evidence.

All this was challenging, but it would also be about developing my writing voice, through the support of an 'observer' (tutor), that would thankfully be peering over my shoulder at all times. After much consideration and deliberation, I attempted to draw my textual notes together, starting with the context, the literature reviewed, the methods and methodology followed, the findings and conclusions reached. For me this process involved a continual process of re-ordering and re-drafting chapters and a continual refinement of my argument to provide further clarity, checking and re-checking the evidence for my conclusions.

3.10 Summarising my Methodology and Methods

The process of developing a position as a doctoral research student has been an enlightening experience. Each stage of the journey has shaped my coherence and developed my wider understanding of the process, overcoming the challenges I faced along the way. This learning process enabled me to take more informed decisions about how to proceed. For example when deciding on my philosophical premise I learned that, through the process of reflecting my experiences, I would construct my own understanding to interpret my experiences. I learned that to establish my research position I needed to reflect on my own beliefs and assumptions. This process clarified my position and my understanding, which acknowledged my belief - that there are multiple realities.

My chosen strategy of inquiry meant that I intended to reflect respondents' experiences and convey their interpretations in an attempt to make their interpretations available to others to create improved understanding: others, though, may also form further interpretations. I therefore approached my research study using qualitative methodology and methods, locating my study within a broad 'constructivist-interpretative' paradigm. I described the processes and difficulties experienced in the identified field of study and the

way my 'sample' was ultimately established, but these experiences caused me to learn a great deal because I learned that sometimes factors exist that are beyond the researcher's control.

The interview methods used and the different ways interviews were approached, enabled me to make direct method comparisons, providing the opportunity to experience and take into account possible 'interviewer effects', relevant to the interviewer's background or gender. Each interview experience further developed my ability to focus on a conversational, rather than a formal, approach. At all times, because of the problematic nature of research, I tried to remain aware of ethical considerations, in particular experiencing the tensions of becoming an 'insider researcher' that related to my investigation and my professional status.

Analysis of the data gathered was a lengthy, but worthwhile, process of deconstruction to develop significant and generic themes and re-construction to interpret my findings. The process followed established the 'trustworthiness' of my qualitative approach relevant to my findings, supported by consistency and corresponding views and through recorded authority documentation.

I felt a degree of satisfaction to be at the stage of finally arriving at the position of writing up my thesis, although in my experience it necessitated reducing a lot of text, but this continual re-reading of every chapter should support my 'viva' experience. The next chapter begins the process of unfolding my findings based on respondents' reflections during the initial processes of restructuring.

Chapter 4: Phase I: Initiation/Adoption

This chapter reports on my findings following my investigation for my research study during 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11. The period 2007-08 relates to when the authority was consulting with stakeholders within the authority: families, school staff, governors and trades unions. The period 2008-09 relates to when the authority had determined their proposals for restructuring - adoption and the initial stages of implementation. My findings in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, relate to Phase I: adoption and Phase II: implementation. Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003,) encapsulates this process of restructuring within the concept of a 'Triple Phase Model' as discussed in my literature review.

Chapter 4 concerns Fullan's (1993) Phase I. The first section includes data from my pre-fieldwork because it provides relevant background and conveys the significance of changes proposed for SEN provision. Other sections reveal my findings interpreted from the perceptions of my respondents: their level of consultation awareness, perceived impact of the 'change' proposed, perceptions of the authority's approach to the restructuring of SEN provision and attitudes toward increased 'inclusion' in mainstream schools. My findings illustrate emerging and inter-related links between school leaders' attitudes, their values and the various external pressures that they perceived they faced during Phase I of the processes of 'change'.

4.1 Pre-fieldwork

To set the context I have included initial reflections from my pre-fieldwork exploration during the consultation stage.

My opportunity to have a 'conversation' with a parent came about because a special school head teacher seemed keen to demonstrate the level of parental opposition to the closure of his school. At that time I was monitoring the restructuring proposed while also considering the appropriate location for my fieldwork investigation. I was very interested to understand first-hand what was happening and believed the experience would provide a good opportunity to consider whether this was the most suitable authority for my research.

Arrangements were made to have a telephone conversation with a parent involved in the campaign against the closure of the secondary special school. I explained that I intended to use our conversation as a foundation to develop my doctoral studies, but I had not yet commenced my investigation. I assured this parent that, if I used our conversation as part of my findings, there would be complete anonymity. Below is an extract from the transcribed text of my verbatim notes of our conversation:

> *can't get a special school place because no school has been named. SEN Team at local authority supposed to help us but it's really a waste of time. My son is not coping in the mainstream school… 2000 pupils and behaviour is appalling. He has more than one need… doesn't even have an IEP... finds it hard to make friends… he is happier in a smaller class but he has only got two and half days at the special school*

When I asked about the proposed restructuring and closure of the special school her child was attending, she told me that she believed that the consultation was a "*done deal…it's about money because they actually quoted what it costs to send a child to a special school*". Her feelings were very clear and she seemed to be confident that a special school placement was right for her child. The rest of the chapter reports on the first part of the main study from the reflections of my respondents in mainstream and special schools.

4.2 Investigating the Views of Respondents in the Existing Schools

This study reports the views of twelve practitioners in nine different schools; five of these schools were mainstream primary and one a mainstream secondary comprehensive school. Two of the primary schools had established children's centres (schools D and F) and one, school D, also had an established resource base. Three special schools were included in the sample. Two were designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, one primary (school G) and one secondary (school I) and one was an all age facility that provided for pupils with mixed needs (school H).

My initial data analysis focused on the degree to which respondents appeared aware of the proposals to restructure. For example, whether their schools were directly or indirectly involved, whether they believed the authority's proposals

would affect their schools. My intention was to explore the authority's approach to implementing their proposals for change through respondents' perceptions. I also aimed to capture the respondents' views and to consider them in relation to factors such as the extent to which the authority had communicated their proposals to their schools.

My focus was to uncover my respondents' knowledge of the authority's plans to increase the numbers of SEN children in mainstream schools. Through this process I proposed to tease out from their reflections their experiences of the restructuring process. Whether they believed that the authority had worked collaboratively and in partnership with schools, or whether the authority had used a more authoritarian approach to impose their proposals for change. Most importantly, I intended to explore whether respondents in mainstream schools supported increasing the numbers of pupils with more complex needs in their school and whether they anticipated any barriers to the authority's proposals. It was also important to reveal whether school leaders in special schools perceived that these proposals would support the needs of those children.

4.3 The Differing Levels of Consultation Awareness and Anticipated Impact

There were 15 respondents; this included those who had returned the circulated questionnaire as well as those interviewed. The reported level of awareness of the consultation process varied; for example, from 15 respondents, the majority (13) said they were aware of the restructuring proposals. Of the remaining two, one indicated that they had no knowledge about the proposals and the other did not answer the question. The next stage of my analysis focused on how much they knew about the proposals for change. It appeared that their responses linked to their level of involvement in the proposed restructuring proposals and within that involvement there were further layers that needed to be teased out.

For example, respondents in those schools subject to closure or relocation seemed very aware of the proposals because they had been directly involved

during the consultation period. Analysis of what these school leaders knew seemed to have evolved from their experiences of the authority's approach and the extent to which the authority had communicated their proposals. The school leaders' awareness in special schools, subject to change, appeared high because they were in the 'frontline' of the authority's restructuring plans and the majority appeared to have reacted quite proactively, defending or protecting their existing provision. The respondents in these schools described their initial experiences in some detail. For example the head teacher of school G (a special primary school) stated that, prior to the consultation there were very early indications that change was being considered. He said:

> *it was not a shock because the authority cut the school budget first by £100K reducing the number of placements from 80 to 70*

This action by the authority had implications for this school's viability and for other schools because, as the findings later show, placements were already being made in mainstream schools. The deputy at school G told me that she had recently attended a local authority briefing for deputies on their proposals for SEN provision:

> *The local authority said schools put themselves forward for resource bases, but what I hear is that they have been approached directly. Once they find out what is involved in terms of funding and no control in terms of admissions they drop out…another two bases are being proposed*

The head teacher of School I (a special secondary school), said:

> *school governors and parents opposed closure …a letter was sent from staff, parents and governors to the local authority opposing closure…they are destroying what is working… they view us as 'Neolithic'*

This head teacher told me that his school was scheduled for closure in August 2012 and that his school's site had been identified for a new build all age ASD School. Similarly, the head teacher of school H (a special all age school) outlined how the determination of the proposed restructuring affected his school - scheduled for relocation and refurbishment. It was also planned that his primary phase would close when sufficient mainstream resource bases were operational. He told me that parents and parent governors had lobbied MPs and courted press coverage, leading campaigns to stop closure and to limit 'change'. The head teacher of school H said:

we are involved in further discussions on relocation…the local authority is going to carry out a 'feasibility study' …we want to get the best deal on the table

The respondents in all special schools said that the profile of pupils placed in their schools was already changing to include pupils with more complex needs. In general, their levels of awareness appeared to be based on their experiences of the consultation and determination process and how they perceived it had and would continue to affect their schools. Their experiences seemed to have contributed to their concerns and these issues will be further explained later in this chapter when considering their perceived impact and attitudes to proposed change.

Although the head teachers of mainstream schools A, C and E were directly involved and the level of awareness and involvement was not dissimilar from those in special schools, their experiences did not appear to create the same emotive feelings. The major difference here seemed to be the ability of those schools to choose to be directly involved or not. For example, the head teachers in schools A and C told me that they had ultimately withdrawn from the process.

The head teacher of school A (a mainstream primary school) explained that during the consultation process the authority proposals were fully discussed with governors staff and parent representatives. She described how she was not only very aware of the consultation, but had actually visited exemplar schools in different authorities together with other school leaders. The head teacher told me a resource was considered because of the high number of SEN pupils in her school. She said:

staff manage pupils fantastically well, but when the number of special needs overtakes the number of non-special needs pupils then everybody loses out. We are up to capacity… there becomes a limit… the new proposals are going to be drastic because they are going to have to place those children back in mainstream and this school always has places

The head teacher told me they decided to withdraw from the proposal to add a resource base because there was no clarity from the authority on the available funding, whereas school C was influenced by politics within the school. The

head teacher of School C described the turmoil experienced in her school, which she blamed on the authority's approach:

> *we asked for help with our existing Autistic children, but their offer of help was to nominate the school for the establishment of a resource base and this was the first most of the school community had heard of it…all hell let loose at the school - half the governors did not want it and some resigned…school staff threatened to 'down tools'*

The head teacher explained that an authority official visited the school to talk to staff and said the decision had already been made. It later emerged that this was not the case as school C ultimately chose to withdraw from the process. Schools A and C appeared to emphasise, although for different reasons, that the approach of their authority had caused the schools to withdraw through lack of communication and clarity. In contrast to the decisions taken to withdraw by schools A and C, the head teacher of school E (a mainstream primary school) stated that he was both aware and supportive of the authority's restructuring plans to the extent that he had actively promoted the school's involvement. Similarly, the head teacher of school F told me that governors and staff were fully aware of the restructuring and had elected to add an ASD resource base. The authority was to carry out a viability study.

Other head teachers - for example the respondent in school D (a mainstream school with a children's centre) told me she was aware, although like the head teachers in schools B and F, she had learned about the authority's restructuring through colleagues. This was because these school leaders had recently moved into the authority and therefore they had had no direct involvement in the consultation process. For example the head teacher of school B (a mainstream secondary comprehensive school), said the process had already begun when she came to the authority, but she was aware of what had gone on and believed that "*you could only influence around the edges …the local authority has a forceful approach to inclusion".*

The levels of awareness described appeared to correspond to respondents' levels of involvement in the restructuring. What seemed significant was whether their level of involvement had been determined through imposed or collaborative processes of 'change'. In other words, a link existed between

their awareness and their involvement and what appeared to be important was whether 'change' was imposed or sought. The circumstances in which choices could be made were also influenced by different reasons, but mainly in the case of schools A and C tensions were caused through what appeared to be a lack of communication and clarity, as the extracts illustrated.

4.4 The Impact of 'Change' from Respondents' Perceptions

4.4.1 Anticipated impact of proposed restructuring of SEN provision

From the total of 15 respondents only one anticipated no impact. Respondents' views were also mixed about the anticipated level of impact: eight appeared positive, two appeared negative and the remaining five made no clear statement.

Both the head teacher and the SENCO at school A (mainstream primary) referred to the increasing numbers of SEN children being placed in their school with what they felt to be inadequate resources to meet these needs. As argued by Dyson *et al.* (2004) and Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007), schools need sufficient resources and a balanced pupil intake to support quality teaching and learning in their classrooms. The head teacher and SENCO were very concerned about the reduction, and further proposed reduction, of the number of special school places. The SENCO of school A (a mainstream primary) said:

> *the decision to close the primary special school is a tragedy… there is a lot of expertise and we need a centre… we cannot absorb any more children*

This quote illustrates that the authority was placing more SEN pupils in mainstream, as the head teacher in special school G described. It also supports his statement that the authority had, over time, reduced placements for those pupils assessed to have less complex needs, placing them instead in mainstream.

The head teacher of school D (a mainstream primary with a children's centre and an established resource) described the way her school supported SEN children through fully integrating their pupils in classes. But the primary

concern expressed by this head teacher was the lack of provision in the authority, echoing the views of others. The head teacher of school D explained:

> *the thought of losing places for children across the spectrum when there is very little provision for really needy children is very worrying…we already see very stressed parents 'doing the rounds' to find a suitable placement for their child with little information about what resources do exist...there is not enough suitable provision even with the restructuring … There are insufficient identified resource bases for children with ASD. At the last meeting with the local authority we talked about exactly the same things as before; they do not move on at all*

Her deputy/inclusion manager also stressed the lack of adequate provision emphasising that there were more ASD children coming into the local education system than provision:

> *it is all muddled at the moment - the special schools due to close are still taking ASD pupils who are supposed to go to resource units that do not exist yet, and there are increasing numbers of children*

What the head teacher said about stressed parents made me reflect on what parents had told to me. These quotes show that both the head teacher and deputy of school D were concerned about overall provision in the area – both existing and planned. Indeed the deputy described the authority's approach to restructuring as 'chaotic'. According to Fullan (1999) it is essential during the stages of the implementation of proposed change for those involved to work in partnership, in this case at school and local authority level. It would appear from the perceptions of respondents, particularly in schools A and C, that they perceived more consideration should have been given by the authority to develop their schools' capacity through developing a skilled workforce, ensuring that there were sufficient resources within or externally accessible to their schools. It seemed from my respondents that they perceived the authority was not developing relationships with their school communities to progress their proposals. It also appeared that the authority's estimate of the number of SEN children was wrong and needed to be reviewed.

My respondents' perspectives in mainstream schools A and D varied on the anticipated impact of change. For example, the SENCO in school A told me she believed that there was a limit to the number of SEN children that the

school could cope with because high numbers of SEN pupils affected the learning of all pupils. Whereas, the deputy in school D, with an established resource, perceived that it was the level of complexity of need, not the number of pupils, which impacted on pupils' ability to cope in a mainstream school. The deputy described her "can do" attitude to support SEN children. She explained that pupils were taught in classes not in a separate unit, therefore careful consideration was given to their learning needs to ensure that they could participate. This supports the argument made by Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) who advocated full inclusion rather than unit provision and Terzi (2005), Florian *et al.* (2008) and Florian (2009), who advocated the 'capability' approach. Although both the head and deputy of school D supported inclusion, they (like school A) expressed concern about the local authority's approach. It appeared from the perceptions of the majority of practitioners - six out of nine schools (Schools A, C, D, G, H, and I), that the authority had under-estimated the numbers of SEN pupils and had not addressed the issues school leaders raised.

This authority's vision and reasons for restructuring were published at the commencement of the consultation process. However, it seemed that the authority was not providing assurances that there would be an appropriate infrastructure to support change. There was a lack of communication and clarity between the authority and schools during the early stages, which had, in effect, created further and on-going misunderstandings.

Chapter 6 describes my parallel investigation of what was occurring at local authority level. However, the authority's approach during the early stages of implementation seemed, from the respondents' perceptions, detrimental to their vision of improved provision.

My analysis of the data therefore revealed links between the levels of awareness and respondents' involvement and the anticipated impact on their schools. The next section develops respondents' attitudes to proposed change, at the same time describing other influences that appeared to play a part in the processes of 'change' specifically at the individual level.

4.5 Attitudes towards Proposed 'Change'

Respondents' attitudes toward the authority's decision to restructure portray a range of feelings, some emotive and some angry, possibly a negative and more reactive attitude to change, whereas others reflected a more positive and proactive approach. There was also a difference in that some perspectives seemed to reflect the difficulties already experienced which appeared to contribute to their attitudes. Others were based on their perceptions of what was anticipated, but their attitudes appeared relevant to whether the restructuring process was perceived as threatening and would bring disadvantage, or perceived as advantageous and progressive: for all it seemed the process would be challenging.

The level of perceived impact appeared to link to how relevant the restructuring was perceived to be to the respondents' schools. Here again there were varying degrees within advantage and disadvantage. It was not clear cut because it was more nuanced than that. Some practitioners reacted negatively to the restructuring proposals. They appeared to be influenced by other factors related to internal influences. This was possibly due, as my respondent in school C described, to politics within their institutions, where tensions arose between staff and governors because no discussions had taken place about the possibility of adding a resource base. In others, as argued by Dyson *et al.* (2004) and Florian (2008), it appeared to relate to inadequate resources to support increased inclusion. From the perspective of my respondents, this was relevant to whether they perceived sufficient funding would be available, whether there would be support to access appropriate training to develop the skills of their staff, factors which they believed were essential to support the process of increased inclusion. The next section describes what appeared to be positive perceptions.

4.5.1 Attitudes: positive perceptions towards proposed 'changes'

The head teacher of school E (a mainstream primary school) seemed enthusiastic about the proposed changes. He appeared to be driving the school's involvement forward, supported by a small pot of development funds provided by the authority, to establish a resource for pupils with speech language and communication needs (SLCN). This was scheduled to open in September 2009. The head teacher of school E described how he had undertaken a lot of research and added:

> *I have already appointed a teacher to be in charge of the resource base… currently undertaking a Masters' degree at Birmingham University*

The head teacher of school E appeared to have worked with the authority and had negotiated what was appropriate for his school. It seemed that he had taken the lead and managed to obtain some funds to progress plans for his SLCN resource and was leading other interested schools. A similar proactive approach to school E, seemed to be underway with the respondent of school F (a mainstream primary school with a children's centre). The head teacher seemed positively proactive, though cautious, about the addition of a co-located resource base. He said:

> *I am at the 'shopper end'… the school needs something because there is nothing to support those children that need additional help already in this school. I look at this resource base as another 'outpost' for the empire*

The head teacher of school F emphasised that the authority had failed to engage other schools. He described this as more of "an arbitrary exercise" and referred to other schools that had followed the same route but had changed their minds, which he said, was probably due to local politics, possibly parental pressure. He indicated that his resource should be opening sometime during the period 2010-11, but he said:

> *this will not happen unless they get their finger out…no funding has been discussed yet and in my view this will need to be extensive. There is no space here for installing portable cabins on site. We need Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding possibly to the tune of half a million and this may be the reason why no one went with the authority before*

The information and quote above provides further evidence to support what the head teachers in schools A and C said about the authority's lack of clarity. Their schools withdrew from proposals to add a resource base. In the case of school C it was perceived to be politics within the school community and in the case of school A it seemed that clarity was lacking about appropriate resources. The head teacher of school A made this point when she observed that the resource bases in other authorities were properly funded:

> *those authorities had a clear view on funding, the funding they gave per capita was huge and in this authority they would not even talk about money. So basically you were going to be dumped on with yet more special needs children with no real support or expertise. They were not even offering to train staff, never mind offering you specialist staff*

Emerging from these quotes are reflections of respondents' perceptions that construct a picture of their attitudes which also appeared to reflect their values. In some cases either driving them forward to meet the challenges of change and in others, the 'circumstances' of their experiences had ultimately influenced their decision to withdraw. My findings from interpreting the views of my respondents about increasing the number of SEN pupils in their schools seemed to demonstrate that it was primarily based on their own values. It also appeared to be influenced by their reflections of their experiences of the process followed by the authority in their attempts to implement their proposals. These two factors seem of central importance when 'change' is proposed, those individuals who appear to have the essential value of 'moral purpose' and the way that their values are influenced by those implementing change. But, other pressures emerged in the data which also added to their deliberations and interacted with their values: 'external' influences, those dictated by local and national government policies and some examples are reflected below.

4.6 Emerging Links between Values, Attitudes and 'External Pressures'

4.6.1 Respondents in mainstream schools

The majority of my respondents reported being very 'inclusive' in their attitudes towards SEN children; quotes from their perceptions are considered below:

Head teacher school A (primary) said:

> *we bend over backwards to be an inclusive school we are all passionate about that …you wouldn't work in this school if you were not, but **there is a limit***

By this does she mean they believe in being 'inclusive' only to a point? If so, what determines the limitations of inclusion?

Head teacher school B (secondary) said:

> *we take pupils with visual and hearing impediments and try to support 'troubled looked after pupils' and **we cope** with some children with more challenging behaviour*

Does she mean 'coping' with 'some' children, but not others?

Deputy/Inclusion Manager School D (primary with a resource facility)

> *we are committed to inclusion but **sometimes mainstream does not suit the social needs of children** and they do not benefit – so it's not fair on those children. In contrast others benefit and are happy here*

Does this mean that there are 'some' children that cannot be included?

Head teacher of School F (primary with children's centre)

> *It is the **will** of governors, staff and the whole school to be inclusive*

Does this imply that, in practice, maybe sometimes the school is not 'inclusive'?

What they reported appears to be how they felt in terms of their school's limitations to cope with increased numbers of SEN children with higher level needs. It is complex to interpret because they appear to perceive they are 'inclusive', but these quotes show that, in practice, they appear to question the authority's proposals for further inclusion. The quotes also illustrate the differing perspectives on the concept of 'inclusion'.

According to Fullan (1999) innovation and reform should be based on a fundamental element of 'moral purpose'. My investigation was aimed at

revealing those respondents that demonstrated that they possessed this essential element. The intention was to reflect their values and attitudes toward increased inclusion. These quotes would appear to support my argument that school leaders in this authority believed in 'inclusion', but 'moral purpose' it seems was not enough because they also showed that they had reservations about increased 'inclusion'. These schools seemed to be struggling with proposals for 'change' because, according to reported respondents' perceptions, there was no clarity from their authority on resources - the availability of funding, or appropriate training to develop their staff. These were essential resources which they perceived would develop their school's overall capacity.

The findings demonstrated that the dichotomy described by Ainscow *et al.* (2006b), still exists in mainstream schools between government policies – those of 'market ideologies' and 'inclusion'. Although not always explicitly stated in the reflections of some respondents, it is implied in the transcripts of my data. For example some heads referred to being situated in low socio-economic areas where their schools were struggling to meet the 'standards agenda', whereas other schools in the authority were viewed to be in a better position because their schools were located in areas that had more of a middle class element. This was particularly relevant to the head teacher in school A, but similar points were also made by others:

> *it is going to be impossible because we can never pull up. We have already got 46% of our children on the SEN register and not with minimal needs, we are talking severe need in many cases… some children just cannot express themselves because that is the whole pattern of low socio-economic single parent families there are no role models, they sit their children in front of the television. The other factor being refugee pupils - new arrivals*

Dyson *et al.* (2004), Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) Lindsay *et al.* (2006\0 and others, emphasised that important diversity factors exist at the population level, such as socio- economic status, gender, ethnicity and mother tongue. Dyson *et al.* argued the importance of balanced cohorts to ensure the ecology of the classroom does not impact on the teaching and learning of its pupils. They suggested that policy and practice would benefit if more focus was given to monitor the effects of the nationally driven policy of 'inclusion'. These

arguments are supported by Muijs *et al.* (2007) who stressed that the pressures on schools were relevant not only to pupils with SEN, but to broader societal issues at the forefront of effective education. The reports of respondents' perceptions illustrate that mainstream schools A, C, D, E and F were trying to manage a wide range of diversity factors relevant to their pupils and their local communities.

The perception of the meaning of 'inclusion' varied, as did their priorities. The head of a large comprehensive (school B), like school A, was focused on maintaining a balanced pupil intake to avoid dropping their position in the published league tables on the schools' exam results. For example she said:

> *If the new arrangements alter the balance we could struggle to get a comprehensive intake which would affect the school's standing… we need a balanced intake of pupils, and closure of the special schools means we would take more special needs pupils*

In contrast, the head teacher of school F, who equally recognised the tensions that existed, and the pressures this would place on his school, said:

> *40% of our pupils are eligible for free school meals; 7 or 8 are clearly Autistic; we have a lot of immigrants and there is a considerable amount of mobility in this area. There will be a win and lose situation …the pupils will benefit, but on the issue of standards those kids in the new resource base will be part of the school's results. It is a political issue for head teachers because there is a worry in the back of your mind…Officers are only interested in results, so it creates tensions between the local authority and schools*

These few quotes reflect the 'external influences' described by Ainscow *et al.* (2006b), influences that might alter the actions and decisions taken by respondents. But it appeared that primarily the attitudes, values and integrity of some of the respondents were supporting the teaching and learning of a diverse pupil population and driving forward the implementation of 'change' to improve their provision. However, 'external' pressures that influenced attitudes and ultimately the actions taken during the processes of change cannot be ignored. According to Ainscow *et al.* the government's policy on inclusion was ambiguous and lacking in strength compared to the requirement for schools to improve standards. These tensions were both implicitly and explicitly conveyed in the data. The next section looks at the implications for special schools subject to 'different' external pressures.

4.6.2 Respondents in special schools

As discussed in Section 4.5, there are different scenarios relevant to 'change', particularly the imposition of change, experienced by those respondents in special schools. It appears that within these different scenarios there are further layers to reveal, particularly those relevant to the values school leaders hold. However, their actions appeared to emerge from their experiences of the process followed by the authority. The head teacher of school G (a special primary school) stated that he was not against the review of provision and recognised the need to provide for ASD children. He described the way that he perceived the authority had approached their proposals for restructuring provision:

> *a vision with no thought of implementation …it was too hit and miss for such a major change… the local authority did not make sure that all schools in the area were involved, or invited to participate, or given the opportunity to consider adding a resource base… there was not enough communication …so some schools did not take their proposals on board*

These perceptions are clearly critical of the authority's processes of implementation, which he believed were essential to gaining sufficient numbers of schools interested in increasing their provision. This head teacher perceived that there was a lacking in their processes and a lacking in communication to draw in all schools in the area. He emphasised his own feelings:

> *my aim is to make sure our children get the best and I will fight for no reduction in provision...every child must have the best*

My interview with his deputy, further demonstrated the existing feelings, particularly when she described her level of cynicism toward the local authority, indeed she stated that the whole consultation process was a complete 'farce':

> *I have huge doubts about the local authority… those consultants appointed were linked to the BSF Programme… they were not 'independent' ... the authority just wants to tap into 'BSF' money... it's really not about meeting the needs of pupils. Mainstream schools are struggling to cope with the numbers now... it would be cheaper in the longer run to get it right*

It seems she perceived that the authority was not approaching the restructuring to meet the needs of the pupils involved. She told me that her head teacher had worked with others to put forward a sensible proposal to improve provision - to set up an early years school/assessment centre for pupils with more complex problems, so that their needs could be supported earlier. This deputy's frustration is mirrored in the discussion held with the head teacher of School I, the secondary special school due to close in 2012. During my interview with this respondent, there were similar reflections of frustration, resentment and anger, but he added that he felt threatened by the local authority. His comment encapsulates this:

> *we sent a letter endorsed by parents and governors in response to the consultation, but we tried not to expose ourselves*

The head teachers of schools G and H also said that staff felt threatened by the local authority's proposals for major 'change'. They explained that jobs would not be ring-fenced, but there would be some opportunities for redeployment and redundancy, it appeared that these school leaders faced an uncertain future. 'Change' was perceived as threatening, particularly for those respondents under threat of closure or relocation, but it was also it seemed a motivator, because some respondents appeared very proactive. The next section describes their actions - their attempts to influence the proposed change.

Although not facing total closure, the head teacher of school H (an all age special school) was facing a number of problems - the closure of the primary phase and the relocation of his school. He described how he and his governors were working with the local authority to look at relocation options. He said:

> *I am supportive of the local authority's overarching vision …it is admirable, but there is a danger that the authority has put the establishment of the specialist provision before putting the infrastructure in place*

The respondent is referring here to the proposed new build ASD school and the planned resource bases. This head teacher appeared to be indicating that the implementation of the restructuring had not been fully considered by the authority. He also believed that the numbers projected were incorrect. The

head teacher of school H then told me that the earliest possible time anticipated by the authority for the relocation of his school was September 2010 and he described his overriding concerns:

> *a major problem is the proposed closure of our primary phase and the imposed restriction on admissions - other primary special schools are jammed and bursting at the seams and I know there are a significant number of pre-school children who should have started, who need a place but no places are available in special schools*

This respondent described how the lead officer at the authority would not agree to his proposal for an additional temporary classroom during this interim period. He told me that there was a lot of uncertainty over the shift of emphasis by the authority from special schools to mainstream placements. He said:

> *It's still bits and pieces…. There are pupils where a primary school with a resource base is not enough to meet need. Also the special school numbers have started to unravel especially around ASD. It has been a difficult two years… hard to hang on to primary staff because they have felt threatened by proposals for major change… to phase out our primary provision. Personally it preys on my mind, I cannot let this wash over ….it is about the future of the school and the future of the staff and pupils, it is very personal and appropriate provision is a huge responsibility. I am determined not to let them down*

This respondent's perceptions reflect his concerns about the planned overall provision. Firstly, he indicates that he has huge concerns about the authority's estimate of the number of SEN pupils. Secondly, that the placement numbers in the planned new ASD school were insufficient to cope with the numbers of pupils with complex ASD in the authority. Thirdly that resource bases cannot always meet pupils' needs. He said he supported the vision but the infrastructure to support the authority's proposals was not in place. With regard to the proposals for relocation he told me that it was an on-going process. Apparently the authority was carrying out a feasibility study and he and his governors were negotiating, trying to get the best possible option. The intention was to compare the current school and the proposed relocation site. It was not a complete new build but a proposed refurbishment. He said:

> *I want to see planned expenditure on either site because we have only got one go at this legacy and I'm seeking the best possible provision for the children now and in the future*

Despite his concerns, this head teacher appeared to be attempting to make alternative suggestions to the authority, demonstrating as Fullan (1999) argued "we cannot solve the change problem, but can learn to live with it more proactively and more productively" (Fullan, 1999: vii). It appeared, amidst the conflict that change brought, that this school leader was trying to work with authority officers to get what he described as the best option in the longer term for his pupils. The attitude of this head teacher appeared to be influenced by his values - a practitioner trying to manage change with the interests of his school, staff and pupils at the heart of it. This seemed to demonstrate how the inter-relationship between experiences, external pressures and values influenced his attitude, but these factors appeared to have contributed to the development of a proactive approach to progress and worked towards meeting the challenge of change.

The external pressures of restructuring that the practitioners in special schools are subject to are not necessarily the same as those conveyed by mainstream colleagues. This is because those colleagues work within a more pressured environment of 'market' and 'inclusion' ideologies, because pupil numbers in mainstream are usually dependent on the schools' results in the league tables. In special schools, however, placements are made according to a child's assessed needs. Nevertheless, 'external pressures' exist around accountability - those 'expected' levels of progress as measured in Ofsted inspections. However, within these transcripts are reflections of their concerns for the future, the impact of change on their school, the staff and pupils. The quotes illustrate their feelings and, although the head teachers of school G and H supported the vision, there appeared to be some scepticism about its successful implementation. There was also anger and frustration in the words of the deputy of school G and both head teacher and deputy of school G conveyed significant criticisms of the local authority's handling of the processes of 'change'.

Their views appear to support the perceptions of respondents in mainstream schools. There was also deep concern about getting it right for those vulnerable pupils caught up in the restructuring proposals. Section 4.6

attempted to reflect the links between values, attitudes and external pressures. In the following section, the intention is to re-emphasise how these factors appear to successfully combine to develop a positive approach to the challenges of change.

4.7 Emerging Themes

This section draws out the emerging themes relating to the question of how school leaders construct and address the dilemmas and opportunities of the restructuring process: their positioning, moral values and the constraints or opportunities influencing their actions. I have selected various concepts that my analysis of the data revealed which appeared significant and related to their actions: commitment to inclusion, moral values, tenacity and resilience

4.7.1 *Commitment and Moral Values*

All respondents appeared committed to inclusion, but to varying degrees as section 4.6.1 indicated. The significance of their commitment to inclusion appeared to be associated to their moral purpose, as it related to the authority's restructuring proposals for increased SEN provision, so it was therefore important to analyse my data further.

The head teacher of school A: emphasised that she believed it was morally wrong for her school to have such a high percentage of disadvantaged pupils: 50% on free school meals and 46% had special educational needs. Although she stressed that they managed fantastically well, this situation created impossible demands on the school and its staff. Her commitment to inclusion was evident in the way she continually addressed her dilemma by seeking out government initiatives to support her struggling pupils. Those opportunities which she perceived were relevant to improving pupil attainment and achievements, but it seemed that she did not believe the authority's proposals would provide opportunities for her school. In fact, it appeared that she believed that increased provision would only exacerbate her dilemma.

The head teacher of school B was also clearly concerned about the proposed restructuring proposals. It seemed she perceived that mainstream schools like hers would be pressured to have students with more significant needs. This head teacher was committed to her existing pupils, she emphasised that there were 1500 students in the school who deserved a good education and too many SEN pupils would have an adverse impact. The head teacher appeared to construct her approach toward improving her current pupils' attainment and, toward recruiting gifted and talented pupils, with a focus on raising her school's status in the league tables - the restructuring process it seemed would be detrimental to those aims.

According to the head teacher of school C the overriding ethos was to address their pupils' diversity and to be a consistently inclusive school. Apparently she had worked with another colleague (in school E) to find out more about the restructuring proposals. Like school B this head teacher was committed to address the needs of her existing ASD pupils and appeared to construct her approach to benefit those pupils - not an increased number of pupils with more complex needs. The resource facility proposed by the authority was for 'higher level needs' ASD pupils, from her perspective it seemed that the restructuring proposals would not provide the opportunities she sought for her pupils.

The school leaders in school D said their school was committed to inclusion; this mainstream school had an existing resource and practised full integration: pupils with special educational needs learned alongside their peers. However, they appeared to construct their approach to the restructuring of SEN provision, with a focus on emphasising that the authority's proposals were inadequate to meet the increasing number of pupils with more complex needs. This was possibly because they perceived special school closures and increasing numbers of needy pupils would also have a further impact on their school.

In contrast to schools A, B and C, the head teacher of school F appeared to construct his approach to address his dilemma of increasing numbers of disadvantaged pupils by seeking the opportunity to add a resource base to

improve his school and, he seemed committed to this aim, to support not only existing but future pupils. He emphasised that the school was not really coping with their existing ASD pupils. It seemed that children, who should be in his reception year, were only coming into the school on a part-time basis (1.5 hours per day). This respondent said that a separate resource base for pupils on the autistic spectrum would be appropriate for some of his children. His positioning seemed supportive of the authority's proposals for restructuring their SEN provision.

These dimensions: of commitment and moral purpose, however, also appeared to be influenced by other personal characteristics, particularly, the concepts of resilience and tenacity, to either continue in post, or to proceed with the proposed restructuring of provision, as the next section describes.

4.7.2 *Resilience and Tenacity*

The ability of school leaders to cope with the restructuring process also, it seemed, required two additional characteristics: those of resilience and tenacity. For example the ability of the head teacher of school A – to meet the ongoing challenges relevant to context of her school although committed to inclusion said – "*there was a limit*". This limitation it seemed related to the government's focus on increasing pupil attainment and school standards. Several factors affected the school's ability to meet those requirements, particularly the significant number of pupils (50%) known to be on free school meals: the number of those pupils on roll equated to over three times the national average (15.9%). The report by Lindsay *et al.* (2006) emphasised that Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties and Moderate Learning Difficulties were strongly associated with socio-economic disadvantage. As 50% of her pupils were on free school meals and, 46% of her pupils were SEN pupils, this report appeared to support her concerns. She perceived that her pupil cohort impacted on the school's ability to improve their status in the league tables and, it seemed, she thought these factors were insurmountable. It appeared that she did not possess the resilience and tenacity to involve her school in the authority's proposed restructuring of provision – she decided to move on.

The need for resilience and tenacity also appeared to emerge in the case of the head teacher of school C, although, the diversity of her pupil cohort did not compare to school A, the school did have a sizeable proportion of minority ethic pupils; 11% of her pupils were eligible for free school meals and 20% were identified with special educational needs. This head teacher demonstrated that she was committed to an inclusive approach, but what was also significant was that she appeared stressed from the friction caused by the way proposals to add a resource base were handled by the authority. It seemed that when faced with these dilemmas the head teacher did not have the tenacity and resilience to continue, to withstand the tensions created between staff and governors, nor to challenge the authority's approach - the school withdrew from the proposal to add a resource base.

These respondents addressed their dilemmas in different ways: the respondent from school A relating to her pupil cohort and standards, the respondent from school C relating to tensions between staff, governors and the authority. However, their decision to withdraw was taken at the initial stages of the restructuring process. In sections 4.6 and 4.7, I have attempted to reflect the emerging themes: the concepts of commitment, moral values, resilience and tenacity, developing the characteristics of school leaders that appeared to influence the way they addressed the local restructuring of provision. The following section illustrates how these factors appeared to successfully combine to develop a positive approach to the challenges of change.

4.8. Summarising my Findings: Phase I

The findings reported here in the concluding section attempt to re-emphasise how two respondents in mainstream schools appeared to be using proposed reform to internal advantage, which seemed to demonstrate their productive and progressive attitudes towards 'change'. My investigation showed how the head teachers in schools E and F were proposing to add resources to further improve their schools. They appeared to be attracted, as the findings reported, because restructuring of provision was supported by finance allocated through

'BSF' funding. They were negotiating funds or agreeing to a viability study. Their intention to develop their schools appeared to be aimed at improving their inclusive practice through supporting the vision of the authority.

My exploration therefore discovered some examples of schools using change for internal purpose, for which a comprehensive argument was made by Hopkins *et al*. (1996). These school leaders were facing the same problems as others within the community, but did this mean that they were more 'effective school leaders' as described by Day *et al*. (2009) and others. Were they looking for the benefits that it could bring to their schools as Hopkins *et al*. (1996) argued, or were they just tackling the challenge of change differently?

My findings showed a direct comparison to these school leaders' approach, the head teachers in schools A and C, who did not believe that adding a resource would benefit their schools. They recognised it might support SEN pupils, but they considered that the authority's proposals lacked provision for essential resources, relevant to funding and training, to support their strategic vision. It could be said that their actions were relevant to the arguments made by Ainscow *et al*. (2006) (relevant to accountability issues), by Dyson *et al*. (2004) and Black-Hawkins *et al*. (2007) (who perceived that adequate resources were essential) and Terzi (2005) and others, in order to provide the freedom for pupils to participate, to underpin 'inclusion' in mainstream schools.

All my respondents reported that they were subjected to external pressures - the difficulties experienced through the processes of restructuring relevant to the authority's actions. In this phase of the findings I have attempted to unfold the reflections revealed by my respondents, from the overarching research question: what is the nature and impact of change, in the restructuring of special educational needs provision?

This key research question set out to explore two aspects of the nature of change, the first objective to investigate the process and the second objective to investigate the impact of change through interpreting school leaders' perceptions of the processes of change. My study only investigated nine schools in one authority and this chapter was focused on my initial findings

located within Fullan's (1993) Phase I of the stages of change: initiation and adoption. To further interpret the on-going processes of change, the focus goes deeper in the next chapter, interpreting the practice of school leaders in supporting the diversity of pupils within their schools. Chapter 5 further develops the emerging themes, identified in 4.6 and 4.7, during Phase II of the implementation process – the first 2-3 years

Chapter 5: Phase II, the early stages on the journey of 'change'

This chapter describes the evolving processes of 'change', developed from Fullan's (1993) Triple Phase Model. This part of my interpretation reflects respondents' experiences of putting proposals and ideas for improved provision into practice – Fullan's Phase II implementation – during the first two/three years of the restructuring process. The chapter develops the arguments of Pijl *et al.* (1997) on educational action within a reform context and of Day *et al.* (2009) and others, on effective leadership, because, like Fullan (2003), they argued that schools could improve their educational provision with the support of strong leadership. It also illustrates that respondents were developing collaborative practices to support pupils, staff and families, a concept so strongly advocated by Bolam *et al.* (2005) and others.

The findings reflect my respondents' approach to the increasing pupil diversity within their schools. Through the process of my inquiry I was able to reflect respondents' attitudes, values and their influence on the school's culture. My continued focus was to explore whether the local authority's proposals for 'change' could be a driving force for improved provision, whether respondents were using proposed 'change' to improve their schools. I explored whether any tensions were evident and, if so, whether they created barriers that would impact on the authority's proposals for 'change'. According to Hopkins *et al.* (1996) it was also important to consider whether respondents were managing to maintain the stability of their schools during the processes of change.

Table 5.1 provides the date of the interview, the status of respondents and an outline of proposed change: those changes planned, those discarded, the school leaders' aims for themselves and/or their schools and what changes further occurred during 2011.

Table 5.1: Respondents in Mainstream Schools

Date of Initial and Follow-up Interview	Status of Respondent	Changes Planned/Discarded School Leaders' Aims/Concerns for themselves and/or their schools and latest update on situation
School A February 09 April 09	Head Teacher SENCO	School considered a resource base, but decided against; respondent decided to apply for a headship elsewhere. SENCO concerned about how a change in leadership would impact on her school.
School B October 2008	Head Teacher	Wanted to raise the profile of school: marketing her school to recruit more pupils – looking at extended curriculum for 'gifted and talented pupils'. School in line for rebuild through BSF funding.
School C September 2008	Head Teacher	School considered Resource Base but withdrew from negotiations
School D December 2008 March 2009	Head Teacher Deputy	Established Resource, working with LA to develop further support for staff and children in the area, developing expertise so the school could provide further support for pupils with more complex needs, provide training for colleagues in the area. Was involved in piloting the school's established resource. Inclusion Manager developed her own skills through training as specialist teacher in Dyslexia and ASD, already supporting pupils with Global Delay SLCN.
School E December 2008 December 2010	Head Teacher	Working with the LA, developing new build facility for a co-located resource base - speech, language communication needs. Opened Resource Base.
School F June 2009 June 2011	Head Teacher	Working with the LA to develop a new build resource base for supporting pupils on the Autistic Spectrum. Authority have since decided this school is not viable for co-located resource base.

5.1 Comparing: Mainstream School Respondents

In this section I have selected one mainstream school with an established resource (school D), one school proposing to add a resource (school F) and

one school that had withdrawn from the process (school A). These schools were selected to demonstrate how respondents in those schools supported the diversity of their pupils during the implementation of 'change', whether they were able to maintain stability and if barriers existed to their progression.

5.1.1 School A (a mainstream primary): head teacher and SENCO

This school chose not to proceed, due to the authority's lack of clarity on funding and training, but the head teacher appeared very proactive in supporting the existing diversity in her school. She explained:

> *in a school like ours we are actually teaching parents to communicate more with their children, to watch television together, to maybe buy a book – heaven forbid! We are starting at very low ebb here… we are trying to involve parents in their children's education, but there is quite a bit of resistance. They reward their children by giving them a day off school.*

This extract demonstrates a school leader's attempts to engage their community, and supports the argument made by Leithwood and Levin (2005) that the location and the communities a school works within, influenced the school leader's approach to their educational provision. It also resonates with what Muijs *et al.* (2007) described on the importance of responding to students from diverse backgrounds to support their learning, through connecting the school culture to their pupils' own cultures, promoting pupils' personal and social development. Muijs *et al.*'s argument was particularly relevant to schools, like school A, which had a pupil profile of 84% non-white pupils: her staff coped with a school community speaking 28 different languages, and coped with a high level of SEN pupils. This diversity of pupil intake would seem to have an impact on a school's capacity to cope with teaching and learning, and might benefit from the 'inclusive pedagogy' that Florian (2010) advocated, when so many diversity factors were apparent.

When I asked about developing partnerships with other schools she described the benefits of using the expertise of other people, or offering other schools their expertise:

> *sometimes a 'lead' teacher in the area will come here and will work with our literacy group, equally we have sent support staff to other schools to show them how to manage work-stations for Autistic children…one of our higher level teaching assistants spoke in another school on how we do induction here*

This head teacher also explained how her school had developed partnership working – this was extended to exchanging ideas and working with other institutions, or local businesses. According to Bolam *et al.* (2005) and others, internal and external collaborative practices were 'key' strategies for achieving improved educational provision. This head teacher appeared very proactive in getting the best from what was available locally and nationally for the school, pupils and staff. However, underlying this was her overriding perception that the location of her school was detrimental to achieving required standards and targets. Change of leadership could have negative consequences for the school, staff and pupils, because as Muijs *et al.* (2009) and others argued, leadership clearly plays a 'key' role in terms of the predominating perspective. My investigation, however, demonstrated that it was equally important to reflect the views of others on the school leadership team.

The SENCO at school A described how she was involved in staff training and how her school was also developing more collaborative partnerships – working with other schools in the area to set up extended school provision:

> *I organise inset for all staff, I provide information on how to support children and provide training for support staff; we exchange ideas and I listen to their views and concerns about the pupils they support*

When I referred to parental contributions (to the work of the school), she supported what her head teacher had described earlier:

> *it's more us supporting parents… we set up a seven week course to help parents socialise … really a family 'SEAL' – a further development from social and emotional aspects of learning. It is supported by local authority funding…it is only a pilot project for one year, but it is so successful we will need to carry this on somehow, perhaps organised through the school fund*

This appeared to be important work and, particularly relevant to the ideas of Fielding (1999) and Sebba (2009) working beyond the school, activities that were extended to families to support their wider community. It could also be said that this SENCO, as a member of the senior leadership team, played a significant role in sustaining effective leadership through dedicated and supportive practice focused on 'inclusion', maintaining sustainability as Hopkins *et al.* (1996) emphasised. But the SENCO did express concerns:

It is wrong when there are too many needy children ultimately affecting the learning of other pupils in the school

She described the school's 'uphill' struggle to improve standards. It seemed, as the head teacher had described, that this school did not benefit from a 'balanced student intake', nor was it perceived that the school benefitted from sufficient resources to support their learning, which Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007), Dyson *et al.* (2004) and others, argued was crucial to effective teaching and learning for all pupils**.** But, a very important dimension appeared to be the 'moral values' and attitudes of the school leader and the SENCO, resources of a different kind.

5.1.2 Barriers identified by school leaders in school A

My interactions with these respondents seemed to imply additional barriers, those relevant to 'external influences' – influences of accountability and meeting ever higher standards. As argued by Ainscow *et al.* (2006), such elements create tensions for schools. 'Change' was described by Fullan (1993) as a journey and the problems encountered during the initial stages have, in the case of the head teacher of school A, combined with her experiences and external pressures, influenced her attitude and ultimately her decision to move on – a barrier mainly relevant to increased inclusion and the standards agenda. According to Bolam *et al.* (2005), a 'change' in leadership could be detrimental to a school, although, as Ingvarson *et al.* (2006) emphasised, distributed leadership may help to compensate. In this school the SENCO still seemed very focused on 'narrowing the attainment gap' for her pupils.

The next section draws on the views of respondents in school D, chosen because this school had an established 'inclusion' resource. They described their school as practising 'full inclusion' because SEN pupils were integrated into mainstream classes, supporting the argument made by Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007), for practising 'full' rather than 'partial inclusion'. The head teacher and her deputy were aware of the difficulties involved in relation to increasing the numbers of pupils with more complex needs in their school. This was particularly relevant to the experiences of the deputy because she told me that their resource was piloted for the authority six years ago.

5.1.3 School D: the deputy

Like school A, there were similar issues of disadvantage within the pupil profile and wider community. The deputy described how the school worked with families and children with complex needs. She spoke of the school's good relationship with other agencies and their ability to refer families for external support from a wide range of outside agencies. Her views on working collaboratively within the community demonstrated that the school was also fairly proactive through their adopted practice of exchanging staff. It seemed that the special schools in the area provided outreach support and worked with some of their more needy children. She described the school's approach "*we have a can do attitude, we think about it and then exchange ideas, but this does need and does take more time*".

Norwich (1993), like Terzi (2005), argued that practitioners should accommodate individuals within their organisations, linking their individuality and needs to social, institutional and environmental factors. It appeared from the perceptions of the deputy that very similar 'inclusive practice' was implemented in their school.

She described their staff training:

> *As far as individual support for staff goes the teacher meets with a learning support assistant once a week for their development and they are given an opportunity to put forward their own ideas and both the teacher and assistant talk through their view points……we do not like to see hierarchy here*

As Bolam *et al.* (2005) argued, support staff have a crucial role in developing effective internal and external collaborations. The deputy similarly stated that support staff had an important role to play in supporting the needs of SEN pupils. With regard to training she told me that her school had to be proactive in picking out its own developmental needs, but it seemed that training was mainly facilitated through the skills of their own practitioners.

> *we have occupational therapists and our physiotherapist has an MA in psychology and is trained in drama. We are also looking at ways of providing services for other schools in the area. Our approach is really a collaborative one*

This extract demonstrates that the school was not only working collaboratively internally, but also externally with other schools to provide training. She told me it was about 'attitudes' and further explained:

> *We have built up our own expertise; we are all getting on with having to educate and teach our pupils. The driving force for us is not to move our children out to another school; it is about what we believe 'inclusion' really means*

The deputy told me that the authority was not fully promoting the use of the 'expert' practitioners in their school. This issue is discussed in Chapter 6, linked to the development of better partnerships between schools and the authority (the use of practitioners to improve 'inclusive practice' and the progression of schools during the processes of 'change').

5.1.4 Barriers identified by school leaders in school D

As the data implied, there was some frustration about what appeared to be the authority's lack of support and direction because the authority did not promote their expertise to other schools. It was also said that the authority was not listening to their views. These factors appeared to influence the attitudes of my respondents which created a further barrier.

Hopkins *et al*. (1996) argued that manageability and coherence needed to be addressed to ease the implementation of proposed change, which appeared pertinent to the way the authority seemed to have approached their restructuring of provision. Another barrier mentioned was 'time' (sufficient time to support pupils). However, what was most significant was that the head teacher and deputy in school D, perceived that the authority was not changing sufficiently to meet the challenges of 'change' during the process of implementation. It was emphasised by Fullan (1993), Barnes *et al*. (1999) and others that strategies for 'change' must be operating within, between and across each level, at local and individual school level and within their communities and this equally relates to the national level. However, the stages of implementation, relevant to each school, are also significant during the journey of 'change', as is their relevance to the overall progression of 'change' within the authority.

School D was at a further stage in the restructuring process, school A had withdrawn, whereas school F was proposing to add a resource base and was at the beginning of the journey of 'change'. However, the head teacher at school F had a very similar pupil profile to respondents in schools D and A, but unlike school A, was actively pursuing the addition of a resource base. It seemed that this head teacher was equally aware of barriers the school would face, relevant to market tensions and available resources to support provision, as the next section describes.

5.1.5 School F (mainstream primary with a children's centre)

The head teacher of school F said governors and staff were enthusiastic and keen to promote an 'inclusive' ethos. His school, like school E, wished to develop a new co-located facility (a separate ASD resource base) offering 'partial inclusion', not 'full inclusion'. He explained that his children's centre was fairly new and the school was only just beginning to see the benefits the centre provided for the community and the school. He gave his opinion on developing partnerships:

> *We have enough links through the Children's Centre and those connected with the centre can provide services at other levels….it is more about working with those personalities who are currently providers of services, developing those relationships so you really get to know them*

This school, he told me, was providing a range of services to families, it was not just 'a children's centre' it was also extending its facilities to the wider community.

5.1.6 Barriers identified by the head teacher in school F

This respondent had considered the financial cost of providing a new resource for pupils with ASD and was very aware of the tensions described by Ainscow *et al.* (2006b). He said that head teachers had to make political decisions, clarifying this point by explaining that authority officers do not take account of the profile of your pupils when the school's targets are not met. His views, like the head teacher of school E, are included because he was very proactive in using proposals for 'change' to improve his school.

The pressure on school leaders relevant to inclusion and the standards agenda is developed further in the next section, which shows how developing a school's capacity can support their overall provision. It provides comparisons between the leadership practice and actions of my respondents in schools A, D and F.

5.2 Comparing the Practice and Actions of Respondents in Mainstream Schools: A, D and F

The sections above describe and discuss examples of school leadership to demonstrate how schools A and D appeared to be collaborating both internally within their schools and externally to improve educational provision and support families. According to Fullan (1993, 1999), Bolam *et al.* (2005) and Sebba (2009), developing internal collaborations and external collaborative communities should be pursued as a means of promoting school and system-wide capacity, building for improvement and pupil learning.

In comparison, it would appear that the respondent in school F, although supporting the wider community, limited his school's focus primarily toward the children's centre. This clearly demonstrates, as Leithwood and Levin (2005) argued that the head teacher makes a diagnosis of what were perceived to be essential strategies to benefit the school. This would appear to be particularly relevant to varied actions of mainstream respondents. As Muijs *et al.* (2007) described, in school D both the head teacher and deputy, like the school leaders in schools A and F, were very proactive and progressive in the way they supported their pupils. This was reflected in the way they approached meeting the needs of the changing profiles of pupils and their families, succinctly described by the deputy of school D as a "can do attitude" and an "inclusive attitude". Although this school was further along in the journey, it appeared that the processes of change were still evolving to support their pupils. Schools A and D were more focused on developing the skills of their own staff and staff in other schools, than school F because they seemed to believe that a collaborative approach was essential to improve provision, as argued by Fullan (1993) and others.

What was significant, particularly in schools A and D, was their ethos which demonstrated a regard and respect for the ideas of all those involved in supporting pupils' learning. It was stressed by the deputy that there was no hierarchy in their practice, that they listen to all staff, including those teaching assistants directly supporting pupils and teachers. Bolam *et al.* (2005) recognised the importance of teaching assistants in effective collaborations. When the term 'professionals' was defined in their study it was assessed not on qualifications but on experience of working with pupils.

As Hopkins *et al.* (1996), Dyson *et al.* (2004), and Ainscow *et al.* (2006) noted, when led by effective leaders, school strategies can lead to a cultural change. This is achieved through internal modifications to support the process of improved teaching and learning for their pupils. My respondents appeared to demonstrate that this was the case in their schools. In schools A and D the sustainment of professional learning and improvement appeared to be directed at pupils' learning, although it was possibly dependent on the continuity of their senior key staff. As Ingvarson *et al.* (2006), suggested, it is important to ensure a school's sustainability through providing opportunities to distribute leadership skills, to develop an effective leadership team and sustain an effective school. The head teachers in schools D and F had recently changed and in school A the governors needed to appoint a new head teacher so the statement made by Ingvarson *et al.* on the element of ensuring sustainability would appear particularly relevant to those schools.

These extracts demonstrate that respondents in schools A, D, and F seemed to have a very proactive approach in the way they engaged with the parents of their pupils. As Fielding (1999) emphasised, they were demonstrating a 'collegiality' between their school, their pupils and their families. They had developed a structure similar to that which Sebba (2009) described that appeared to extend beyond the school, linking families and schools to progress their pupils' development through emphasising the value of education. These schools were central to the community in the services they provided, a positive dimension noted by Fullan (1993).

It also appeared to be recognised by these practitioners that a progressive school cannot stand still. This was demonstrated in their approach to staff in supporting their continuing professional development, particularly in schools A and D. The examples of partnership working in schools A and D demonstrated their perceived potential for exchanging ideas and good practice. This was further emphasised through extending the school's external links with colleges and local businesses. Much of the school's practice demonstrated the effective leadership models described in the literature (e.g. Fullan, 2003; Leithwood and Levin, 2005; Muijs *et al*., 2007; and Day *et al*., 2009) as crucial to success.

Fullan (1993) referred to a new concept of educational 'change' which he described as moving towards educational innovation and reform, based on 'moral purpose'. This 'moral purpose' facilitates the link that is being made here in this thesis between the processes of 'change' to what are perceived as 'inclusive values' in education. Fullan also believed education to be the only institution that, potentially, had the promise of contributing to society through improving opportunities for all children regardless of their background. However, he also recognised the argument made by Ainscow *et al.* (2006b) that the global market place raised the stakes, as it relates to increasingly higher standards. This was implicit in much of the data and was explicitly described by respondents A and F relevant to the barriers they perceived would impact on proposals for reform. Both respondents indicated that head teachers would need to make 'political' decisions. It was explicitly stated by the respondent in school F that authority officers did not take into account the impact of children with learning difficulties on the school's overall attainment targets.

Although the head of school F was less outward looking than schools A and D, unlike the head teacher of school A, he seemed proactive and progressive in his approach to addressing the challenge of proposed change. He appeared, like school E, to be consciously ignoring the impact that increased inclusion would have as it relates to accountability. Hopkins *et al.* (1996) made the point that to continue on the journey of 'change' a principle element is required that of 'consonance'. This is described as the extent that a school's identified

priorities coincide with external pressures for reform: one that considers whether change provides opportunities, not problems, possibly makes a school better able to respond to external demands. Respondents in schools D and F would appear to reflect this description.

However, the head teacher of school F told me during the summer of 2010, that following a feasibility study, the authority decided that his school would not be a viable proposition for a co-located resource and the authority was continuing to look for alternatives. Also, in autumn 2010, the coalition government closed down the 'BSF' programme. It may be that the 'BSF funding' is still available for schools in the area, but as Fullan (1993) argued, unexpected events can thwart and alter the processes of change.

5.3 The relationship between Attitudes/Values, Aspirations and Experiences

Black-Hawkins *et al.* (2007) argued, as my findings appeared to show, that an important 'resource' was the aspirations developed by some of those practitioners in schools. These aspirations seem to emerge through their experiences and attitudes, but they are also primarily linked to their values. It is these attitudes that Fullan (1993, 1999) suggests make individuals proactive agents for change and in that process they address the tensions, the conflicts and the challenges before them. It is worth re-emphasising here that the interpretations above were developed from the perspectives of practitioners in mainstream schools – those that could make choices. However, when investigating the perspectives of school leaders in special schools some very innovative ideas and practices also emerged in circumstances where fundamental choices could not be made, as the next section describes. Table 5.2 provides the date of the interview, the status of respondents and an outline of proposed change: those changes planned, those discarded, the school leaders' aims for themselves and/or their schools, and what further changes occurred during 2011.

Table: 5.2 Respondents in Special Schools

Date of Initial and follow-up Interview	Status	Those Identified for Closure/Relocation/Refurbishment School Leaders' Aims for themselves and/or their schools
School G March 2009	Head Teacher	School identified for closure, but trying to persuade the authority to change proposals to establish an early intervention centre.
March 2011		Authority offered extended contract for head to manage new centre.
March 2009	Deputy	School being closed seeking alternative re-deployment.
March 2011		Moved out of the area.
School H June 2009	Head	Primary phase identified for closure, proposed relocation and school refurbishment, looking at ways of establishing a Foundation Trust of Special Schools. Governors put forward proposal.
June 2011		Head moved to another special school in different authority.
School I July 2009	Head	Designated for closure.
July 2011		Changed career: Education Consultant

5.4 Comparing School Leaders in Special Schools

The head teacher and deputy of primary school G, a school designated for closure, are included because it appeared that they could not alter the authority's decision and could not make choices. The authority was taking the decision to either close, change and/or relocate, several special schools, but as the perceptions of school leaders showed in mainstream schools, the support and expertise provided by these special schools was important to support those SEN pupils in their schools.

5.4.1 School G (primary special school): head teacher and deputy

The head teacher of school G told me that the school was already part of a collaboration of five primary schools brokered by the authority. He described this as:

a vehicle to drive money to address children's needs and to reduce the number of statements issued, but it does not work as it should. It is difficult to employ a therapist when uncertain of the level of funding available.

This respondent told me that participating schools sent their children for half day sessions to facilitate cognitive assessments. This work is significant because it would seem very important for all schools to monitor the progress of the most vulnerable pupils, looking at data to support their pupils' progression. Ndaji and Tymms (2009) have been very proactive in promoting the development of this practice.

The head teacher's statement supports what the SENCO in mainstream school A described as the valuable contribution that this special school was making to support needy children in the authority and confirms the views expressed by other respondents in Chapter 4. However, the head teacher of school G explained that there was no accessible professional training to support special school staff in the authority, but he described how they provided training for college students. This head teacher also told me that they had put a proposal to the authority about establishing an early assessment/intervention centre to improve local provision for SEN children.

The deputy of school G gave me her view of 'partnership working', which she described as the school providing training for nursery staff and teachers. The deputy added that she also supported colleagues in other schools, working within their special needs collaborative support framework.

5.4.2 Barriers identified by school leaders in Special School G

As argued in the Salt Review (2010), there was a lack of training and a lack of courses available to the profession to support pupils with more complex needs. When reference was made to the professional development of his staff the head teacher told me no relevant training existed. However, the major barrier this school faced appeared to be influences external to the school, the authority's decision to close their school. Although the future for the school appeared bleak when the initial interviews were held, I learned (through a follow-up telephone interview in spring 2011) that the authority had decided to open a new early years school/assessment centre for ASD pupils, scheduled for September 2012. This would appear to have been influenced by the head

teacher of school G, the identified need to increase the number of placements in the authority, particularly, for those children with ASD, The journey is on-going, but events have occurred that would appear to impact on the outcome for this school, its staff and its pupils.

The next section describes the experiences of the head teacher in special school H. This head teacher is included because, despite the impending closure of his primary phase and proposed re-location, he was proactively seeking to negotiate with the authority to develop the best option for his school, his staff, existing and future pupils.

5.4.3 School H (all age special school): head teacher

Like school G, the head teacher of school H, was providing support and expertise for staff and schools in the area. He told me how well and closely the special schools in the area had worked together over the previous 18 months and that through developing alliances, putting forward proposals for change, the idea of a Foundation Trust had been conceived. The respondent described the support provided by his school for mainstream colleagues, how working visits had been developed for teachers and support staff. The head teacher of school H then described how he had taken a 'step further' working with institutions other than schools:

> *we developed a partnership with a local college for teacher training, I delivered my first lecture for PGCE students on SEN pupils and this was very well received. We also train teachers to support pupils with more complex needs to provide them with a set of skills*

What this head teacher appeared to be describing could be developed on a wider scale. For example special schools becoming 'teaching schools'. Their expertise could also be used to support the development of teachers' skills in those schools in the area nominated for resources. There appeared to be a lack of effective communication by the authority; respondents in school A perceived that the local authority was not offering training for staff in the proposed resource base, whereas, according to respondents in special schools G and H and mainstream school D, there was some local expertise that could be used to support mainstream schools. This was a significant issue

because to ensure successful 'inclusion' staff need to develop the necessary skills to support SEN pupils.

The head teacher of school H told me how he was trying to progress the idea of a Special Schools' Foundation Trust and that he had 'courted' a couple of sponsors to try to develop his idea, which comprised of a federation of special schools to strengthen the overall provision in the authority. These schools would be able to assess children and decide on which special school, or resource, would provide an appropriate placement for the pupil. This would facilitate pupils being moved between schools in the authority according to their needs.

When referring to his staff he stated that he tried to encourage staff to develop their subject expertise through attendance at what he described as 'subject network meetings'. He also stressed that he felt it was important that the school was represented on the interagency forum particularly relevant to the Primary Care Trust support services, but he said "*there is no real local authority input around decisions on the focus of professional development at individual level*".

5.4.4 Barriers identified by head teacher in school H

The major problem, as outlined in Section 4.7, was the proposed closure of the primary phase of school H. He was concerned because the number of children with complex needs was increasing and the authority appeared to have miscalculated their projections of placement numbers for SEN pupils and particularly those with ASD. He was very proactive in looking for ways to develop his school and appeared to believe that their future may lie in the formation of 'a Special Schools' Foundation Trust', a family of schools providing a wide range of provision. He seemed to be trying to use proposed change to further develop his school, as Fullan (1993) argued, working on the 'edge of chaos' turning 'change' to advantage.

5.4.5 The head teacher, secondary special school I

The respondent in this school is included because a direct comparison can be made with the head teacher of school G as both schools faced closure.

However, each head teacher's attitudes and actions were different, and ultimately each were subjected to different experiences, as the implementation of 'change' further unravelled. The head teacher of school I listed his reasons for concern about the transition process:

> *I have already attended three Transition Group Meetings. I expected by now that there would be some 'nitty gritty' fine tuning about the decanting of pupils and more information about temporary arrangements, but we have only spoken so far about the numbers of children involved. It is bizarre the numbers of children are increasing, no work is being carried out at the decant school meant to receive us*

5.4.6 Barriers identified by the head teacher in special school I

The change imposed affected his status and job security. He believed that there were no evident strategies in place for a smooth transition of his pupils when the school closed. Primarily, a strong resentment seemed to surface, because the school would cease to exist and his perception was that his school was successful. However, the decision was made, and the priority appeared to be continuity for those pupils in the closing school, because smooth transition would be crucial for them. There was a need to ensure that the receiving school was equipped to support those children by 2012.

5.5 Interpreting the Findings Relevant to Special Schools

The head teachers in all three special schools were facing 'external pressures' from the local authority relevant to determined 'change'. Schools G and I were both facing closure in 2012, but their approaches seemed very different. The head teacher of school G put forward alternatives to maintain support for his SEN pupils and those anticipated ASD children. On the other hand, the head teacher of school I appeared to be more consumed by the authority's imposition of change than proactively working towards how he might influence the restructuring processes. During the early stages of implementation the head teacher of school H was very proactive in looking for ways to develop his school.

The school leaders in schools G and H demonstrated that they were proactive in developing partnerships with parents, schools and colleges, to extend their

pupils' learning. This practice seemed to demonstrate progressive ways of developing what their schools could provide for their communities. In contrast, school I appeared introspective; the head teacher's perspective seemed to be drawn to what the school had achieved. He did not appear to be focused on what more could be offered to support his pupils and the wider community during the early stages of implementation of proposed 'change'.

5.6 Emerging Themes

This section draws out further the emerging themes discussed in Chapter 4, relating to school leaders' positioning, the constraints and opportunities they appeared to perceive in the context of the restructuring process. It continues to develop the significant concepts identified in Chapter 4 that seemed related to respondents' individual characteristics: commitment, moral values, tenacity and resilience.

5.6.1 Commitment and Moral Values

As reflected in Chapter 4 all respondents appeared committed to inclusion and demonstrated moral purpose. This section illustrates those school leaders, in mainstream and special schools, who appeared to progress their schools, as it related to the proposed restructuring of provision - during the early stages of the journey of change

For example the head teacher of mainstream school E appeared committed and exhibited moral purpose. He seemed to grasp the opportunity to restructure and to raise the profile of his school. The school was populated with high proportions of pupils of different minority ethnic heritages; the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties was just above the national average (18%). He constructed his school's involvement as something he could control by using the changes proposed within the restructuring of special educational needs provision to the benefit of his school and he seemed committed to ensuring that his pupils aspired. Ofsted graded his school as outstanding in their overall

effectiveness: the report stated that pupils started with below average skills and achieved exceptionally well by year 6. This head teacher appeared to position himself to take advantage of the available opportunities relevant to the authority's proposed restructuring.

The head teacher of special school G seemed dedicated to his pupils, committed to their education and the development of their social skills. He also appeared to have high moral purpose - as it related to his attitude and the way he addressed impending dilemmas. This special school was classified for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and the head teacher described how he had coped with the changing pupil profile, particularly the increasing numbers of pupils coming into his school with a diagnosis of ASD. The school provided support, primarily through development of their pupils' ability to communicate and, helping those children to cope with the situations they found difficult to manage. The school was judged by Ofsted as effective, pupils achieved high standards (as it related to their SEN) by the time that they left the school. There was a large proportion of good teaching and very good teaching, which had a positive and direct impact on their pupils' rate of progress. This school was scheduled to close in July 2012, but this school leader attempted to approach his dilemma by putting forward alternative proposals to the planned restructuring. As my data reflected earlier his status was threatened by the proposal to close his school and he was fully aware of the impact closure would have on him, on pupils and on staff, but he attempted to address this situation. He was not just conforming to normal expectations, but instead he seemed to position himself to be proactive in driving forward his vision to ensure the best opportunities for his pupils and the increasing number of pupils with complex needs existing within the authority.

Like school G, the head teacher of special school H was proactive in driving forward his vision and ideas. He told me how the profile of his pupil population had changed significantly and he described the difference: Key Stage 4 students had coped with a reasonable mainstream curriculum, some gained 5 GCSEs, now it seemed that the intake at reception included children with very high levels of need. He described the way that the local authority had raised the

school's entry threshold level; the consequence for his school was a reduced school budget. According to Ofsted, the school's overall effectiveness was good: all pupils made good and excellent progress. This head teacher appeared to address the dilemma he was facing by working with the authority, attempting to influence the authority's SEN restructuring proposals, like school G, by constructing alternative proposals. He told me that he was advocating with others the development of a Foundation Trust: a collective of special schools working together.

5.6.2 *Resilience and Tenacity*

During the early stages of the journey of change, the resilience and tenacity of head teachers became increasingly varied. For instance, although the head teacher of school E seemed to have the tenacity, as it related to determination and persistence, the need for resilience as it related to adversity did not emerge in this respondent's case. He was working with the authority and it appeared that no significant challenges to that process were encountered.

The tenacity of the head teacher in school G related to the way he held-fast, unyielding, determined and persistent to make his ideas become a reality. It seemed that he was proactive in arguing for increased provision for the children in the authority. Importantly, the findings reflected that he had resilience even when faced with adversity: he challenged the authority and ultimately he persuaded the authority to re-consider their proposals in the interests of future pupil cohorts. In direct contrast, the head teacher of school H seemed to lack the tenacity to hold on, to stay the course. Importantly, change demands the resilience to bounce back and continue on the journey like the head teacher of school G.

5.7 Summarising my Findings: Phase II

In this chapter I described my analysis of the data in relation to the early stages of the journey of change, focused on Phase II of Fullan's (1993) Triple Phase Model. Phase II of the journey involved practitioners' experiences of putting new ideas into practice. Fullan's (1999) core element of 'moral purpose'

appeared to be particularly evident in Schools A, D, E, F, G and H. My intention was to investigate whether the processes of change were driving all the schools in my sample forward to meet the new challenges. In some circumstances practitioners were using proposed 'change' to develop their schools, specifically mainstream schools E and F. Special schools G and H appeared to be proactive in attempting to meet the challenges of 'change' and influence outcomes, which seemed to demonstrate that school leaders can attempt to influence the process, but not always the outcome. 'Change', as my investigation has demonstrated, is fluid and 'events' can also significantly alter its course.

Chapter 6 provides an account of what was happening at local authority level during the period 2007-2009. The findings reported describe the roles and relationships between the authority, schools, trade unions and their external partners during Phase I and II of Fullan's (1993) implementation framework for change.

Chapter 6: Investigating the Actions of the Local Authority

This chapter describes the process, actions and discussions that took place at local authority level. It looks at the role of the authority as it related to the implementation of their decision to restructure SEN provision. This was achieved by monitoring the procedure they followed, looking at their website and policy documents, by attendance at meetings and through recorded minutes of their internal meetings. As argued by Scott (1990) assessing documentary sources in social research provides authenticity and creditability. This last chapter on my findings is based on the data extracted by these methods. Its purpose is to show what was happening during the adoption and early implementation stages at authority level (Phases I and II). My objective was to explore whether the perceptions of my respondents accurately reflected the way restructuring had been approached and implemented by the authority. The initial sections commence with the process of adoption – monitoring the processes the authority followed during the stages of consultation, publication and determination. My focus was to monitor whether the authority followed the correct procedures as set out in the statutory guidance on restructuring their SEN provision.

The authority indicated in their public documents that their decision was influenced by various external reports. These included the Audit Commission's Report (2007) on the unnecessary additional cost of out-of-authority pupil placements and the Ofsted Report (2006), based on their evidence of inspections of standards of teaching and learning in mainstream, mainstream with resource bases and special schools. The authority's Joint Area Review (JAR) (2007) Report is included because it was also used to support their decision to restructure provision. The JAR is part of an integrated inspection framework of children's services and examines how services are contributing to the well-being of children and young people. This system wide inspection covers all publicly-funded services for children and young people, those managed or commissioned by the authority, as well as services provided by health and youth justice services. Well-being is defined in terms of the five

outcomes described in Every Child Matters: Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Well-Being.

6.1 The Process of Consultation for SEN Restructuring Initiation/Adoption

In October 2007, the authority announced that it had published proposals to restructure SEN provision. My investigation demonstrated that the publication of their proposals followed the government's statutory guidance to authorities DCSF (2007) on planning and developing SEN provision. The authority also announced that the funding for proposed school building improvements would be resourced through the government's 'BSF project'. My respondents believed this was the vehicle that had driven the authority's proposals for change. The first section considers the government's statutory guidance on planning and developing SEN provision.

6.1.1 DCSF (2007):

This guidance stated that authorities should increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils, improve the physical school environment and ensure equality of opportunity. However, the overriding requirement was that:

> New provision **must be** an improvement on existing provision. Any proposal for SEN reorganisation should fit within a clear strategic framework set by the local authority for meeting the full range of SEN based on priorities identified in their local authority's Children's and Young People Plan (CYPP)

> DCSF (2007)

In other words, their patterns of provision should be informed by local needs and circumstances. The authority reported that their strategy was decided following a review of provision. It stated in its 'Determination Report' that their CYPP formed the basis of their aims and their foremost objective was to achieve the five outcomes in the 'ECM' programme.

The DCSF (2007) guidance specified that it was essential for any authority undertaking a review to carry out an impact assessment on their restructuring proposals. In practice this meant that the authority should make an assessment of the impact on their community, provide a statement, together with supporting

evidence, to include measures proposed to mitigate any envisaged adverse impact. The guidance stated that the authority would also have to consider and demonstrate whether, overall, the proposed changes to provision would boost standards and opportunities. The authority's documentation made it clear that proposed restructuring would improve their current provision. The guidance also stipulated that there should be an avoidance of 'blanket' assumptions, in other words that proposals should be considered entirely on their individual merits. This would include the impact on individual schools, pupils and families. It may be that challenges could be made, but this area would be difficult to explore because it would ultimately be evidenced by the future outcomes of pupils. On the other hand, challenges could be made on the requirement in the guidance to match the supply of school places to meet pupils' needs and parental preferences.

This requirement was significant and important to those schools and families involved, because if not met, the local authority could be challenged. The number of school places in specialist provision was an area of contention as my findings demonstrated. The consultation processes that did take place were based on projected placement figures. This chapter reports later on the authority's actions, relevant to their projected figures and the changes that evolved indicating that there was a need for further consideration to be given to additional places in specialist provision, particularly for pupils with ASD. The process of consultation, determination and initial implementation had created serious tensions between the stakeholders and the authority. To address this issue the local authority decided to appoint 'independent' consultants to provide a report on their consultation process to placate opposing voices.

6.1.2 'Independent' consultant group's SEN consultation report
Following determination of their decision to restructure, the authority appointed an 'independent consultant group' to gather the views of stakeholders, carried out by way of an analysis of the authority's consultation process, evidenced through reflecting stakeholders' views. This was achieved via written responses following a survey and through organised events to provide opportunities for discussion about the authority's consultation process. The consultant's key

findings were published on the authority's website. The report acknowledged the anxiety, frustration and mistrust amongst school governors, staff and families. It stated that participants were critical of the language of the initial consultation paper and the timing of the authority's stakeholders' focus group sessions.

These comments are significant because they support my findings on the perspectives of school leaders. The report stated that the authority's restructuring principles were generally seen as positive, but the authority's openness to interpretation drew some strong views from those stakeholders closely involved. What was significant was that many respondents chose not to provide 'yes' or 'no' answers, but instead gave a series of conditions under which the principles would be acceptable to implement. This appeared to indicate that the consultation questionnaire was framed in such a way that it limited their responses.

The independent consultants referred to two major issues, which, it was said, dominated their open debating sessions and their survey responses. The first demonstrated that a significant number of stakeholders saw special schools as a positive choice for many young people with SEN. This statement was relevant to my pre-investigation, when a parent told me she was struggling to get her child into a special school because it clearly referred to the ability for parents to make 'real' choices. The second referred to the way that statutory assessments were carried out, relevant to the authority's raised threshold for pupils to be assessed, statements also link to a pupil's resource entitlement. It seemed that sufficient resources were an issue, particularly, for parents and schools in this authority. However, the report emphasised that there was no clear consensus on the proposals for re-organisation, that respondents and participants alike frequently articulated the conditions under which proposals could be successfully implemented, but there was a degree of scepticism about whether adequate resources were available (Place-Group, 2007).

Their report provided an insight into the perspectives of a broad community of stakeholders. This was helpful to my investigation because it re-emphasised the context that I reflected earlier about both parental and school concerns. Also

explicit was that the format of the authority's consultation questionnaire was limited by 'yes or no' answers. Therefore it appeared that respondents were not really able to express alternatives, or express any reservations, although some respondents added caveats. Most of my respondents perceived that it was a foregone conclusion, that the consultation process was merely an 'exercise'. However, what was even more significant about this further consultation exercise was that this supposedly 'independent consultant group' was appointed through the BSF Partnership for Schools National Framework. This fact was revealed and confirmed by the information displayed on the consultant's website. The scepticism my respondents displayed was, it seemed, very relevant to their experiences of both the first, and the second, consultation procedures and processes. Some of those respondents involved in the consultant's facilitated exercise also checked the credibility of the 'independent' consultant group. This was apparent from a comment made by the deputy of school G, she said: *"It's a 'farce' they are not independent because this group is linked to the BSF Programme"*.

However, it would seem that the authority did follow procedure because it carried out its consultation, determination and publication of their restructuring within the requirements laid down and according to their statutory duties. To conclude my investigation of the local authority procedure, I discovered that the DCSF agreed the new build school and the proposed closure of the two special schools. The Schools' Adjudicator was also satisfied and agreed the documentation for closure of the identified schools. This was determined on 15 January 2009 under the relevant powers of the Education and Inspections Act (2006). Alterations for such proposals must be published and are laid down in statutory instruments (Statutory Instrument: 1999 No.1780).

To further support their decision, the authority emphasised that their recent Joint Area Review Report, carried out by Ofsted, supported their proposed SEN restructuring. The JAR Report is therefore included and described in the next section.

6.2 The Ofsted (JAR) Report

The main findings of the JAR Report are described below from the section of the report relevant to children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It seemed that access to services for those children and young people with an established diagnosis was good and timely, but for those without, or those that did not meet the threshold of complex needs, there could be a long wait. The report was also critical of the waiting list for speech and language therapy services. The statements in the JAR Report also reflected the concerns of my respondents.

The report also stated that the authority spent well above the national average on special educational needs. This could also be related to the above average numbers in the authority of SEN pupils. Mention was also made about the below average number of pupils with statements in mainstream schools, but it could be assumed that this related to the authority's decision to raise their statementing threshold, as described by the SENCO in school A. In addition, it reported that there were above average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities placed in schools outside the authority. This was the issue the authority was attempting to redress in their decision to build a new ASD School.

These statements in the JAR Report appeared to support the decision of the authority to restructure their provision. The report emphasised that the authority's 'emerging' SEN strategy was securely 'on track' following a thorough consultation. The report also stressed that the authority's aim was to ensure that the maximum number of children with SEN/disability receive education in a mainstream school with specialist support from a skilled workforce. These statements were very relevant to my exploration because it did appear that my respondents were supportive of inclusive practice in mainstream schools, but they also expressed reservations. They were concerned for several reasons that included the government's 'standards agenda', but importantly the need for sufficient resources: they did not view that the authority was sufficiently supporting the schools involved in the process of developing the skills of their staff. Particularly, as argued by school D, the authority was not promoting their

expertise to support colleagues in other schools in the area. Also, respondents in mainstream schools A, C, and D were actively seeking to develop their own staff and perceived that very little training was available. It did appear, however, that special schools G and H were providing outreach support and training for colleagues in the authority: perhaps the problem around sufficient training was more related to inadequate communication.

The JAR Report emphasised that the authority proposed to make greater provision for ASD children because their numbers were increasing and the intention was to provide for their needs in specialist school settings within the authority. This meant that the authority proposed to avoid out-of-authority placements through the development of the new ASD School and ASD resources bases. The report seemed fully supportive of the authority's determination to implement their restructuring proposals.

However, the initial stages of implementation appeared to demonstrate that, in practice, this was not straightforward. The authority needed to ensure that their provision would not only improve, but that planned provision would match identified local needs. In other words, that there was appropriate and sufficient SEN provision. The next section looks at the emerging issues.

6.3 Emerging Issues from the Authority's Proposals to restructure their SEN Provision: Phase I

The majority of my respondents appeared to support the authority's vision to restructure provision but, as emerged in my findings, they also expressed significant concerns. In addition, as evidenced in this chapter, similar issues were raised by the wider community in the feedback and analysis report published by the 'independent' consultants.

The most significant concerns expressed seemed to be insufficient planned provision and the lack of infrastructure to support the implementation process. This was clearly conveyed in the statement by the head teacher of school D:

> apart from existing special schools there is no provision for children with ASD …it is slow in coming and this is a problem because there is not enough

suitable provision even with the restructuring … the numbers still do not add up. There are also insufficient identified resource bases for children with ASD

As described earlier, emotive feelings were expressed by staff in those schools subject to closure, but what also appeared to be of particular importance to the staff in the special schools was for the authority to ensure that those pupils in the closing schools would have a smooth transition to their new placements. This was strongly emphasised by the head teachers of schools H and I. They believed that the authority should ensure that even temporary provision for pupils was tailored, as far as practicable, to meet their needs, and that those children would be supported by professionals that understood their needs. As Fullan (1999) argued, a smooth implementation process involved many factors including developing local capacity, engaging practitioners, enabling those in the field to contribute, to give a sense of ownership during the processes of implementation. According to Fullan, although conflict could initiate reform, it was important to develop partnerships with those involved.

6.4 Capacity Building

The capacity building dimension, as it related to my investigation, involved developing skills, specialist support and funding to support proposals for change. The majority of my respondents indicated that the authority should re-review the estimated number of SEN pupils, particularly in relation to ASD children. This would appear to indicate that the authority should reconsider whether their overall capacity had been, or would be developed, to facilitate sufficient provision in the area.

In particular, as the head teacher of school G stressed, more schools should be encouraged to add co-located resource bases and, as the school leaders in schools A and D had stated, that appropriate training was available to develop the skills of staff working in these resources. The JAR Report referred to a skilled workforce and specialist resource provision. However, concerns were expressed about the authority's lack of support not only in those resource bases being proposed, but also within the pre-existing resource – school D. For

example the deputy in school D stated that their school had to "*get on with educating their own children*" and this necessitated seeking their own professional development. A number of respondents also indicated that the authority did not listen when practitioners raised issues, or when ideas were put forward to progress 'inclusive practice'.

The next section looks at Phase II, exploring the actions of the authority during the initial implementation stage. It also provides some background information on the processes the authority followed relevant to their awareness of existing and planned capacity.

6.5 What was happening at Local Authority Level?

Various meetings were held between authority officers, head teachers and trade union officials. Of the two that I attended, one was held on 7 December 2008 to clarify issues that had been raised by NAHT members. Several questions were raised: the first was about the authority's process of selection of the mainstream schools identified and nominated for resource bases. It became apparent that voluntary aided schools in the authority were not aware of the authority's plans at that stage in the process. This supports the comments made by the head teacher in school G, that there was little communication between the authority and schools about the proposed resource bases, because at this meeting it was apparent that some sectors were obviously unaware and those representatives attending the meeting showed concern about not being included in the process. The response from the authority officer was that the mainstream schools had offered themselves, there was no selection process. Only one school had been selected by the authority and since 'determination' two further schools had been approached by the authority in an attempt to increase the number of resources in mainstream schools. However, regardless of this officer's response, the comments made by a number of head teachers attending the meeting and, my respondents' perceptions, demonstrated that there would appear to be a serious lack of communication between the authority and their maintained schools.

The second question related to funding; it was confirmed by the authority officers that the rebuilds and refurbishment of the special schools and resource bases would be funded through BSF 'Funding'. We were informed that the authority had a 'strategic partner' leading this process. However, several of my respondents, schools A and F in particular, stressed that there was no real clarity on what funding would be available to develop the proposed resource bases. Also, at this meeting, no indication was given of what overall funding, or pupil funding, would actually be available to support their schools.

The third question was about the authority's arrangements for existing pupils in the special schools scheduled for closure. In response, the authority officer advised that interim arrangements would be made for those children in the closing schools to move to temporary facilities, but there was no clarification of what the temporary facilities might be. It appeared there was no clear plan or time schedule in place for the 'decant' process, as the head teacher in school I stated. Also the authority officer said that they were still considering potential numbers of SEN pupils. This statement was made despite their published projected figures in the restructuring proposals. It would appear that the authority was mindful of the issue of increasing numbers, in excess of what had originally been anticipated. Although they were not moving forward as quickly as my respondents had expected, it was clear that the projected figures were under review. However this had not been communicated to schools and was clearly creating tensions between schools and the authority. It seemed the initial lack of communication was further compounded by an on-going lack of communication.

The authority officers confirmed that there would be job opportunities for staff from the closing schools in the new resource bases. In response to a question on training existing staff in mainstream schools, we were told that the authority would arrange for external accreditation for the new roles and training would be provided via special schools' outreach services. It appeared that no arrangements had been made for charging for training, or how this would be further developed. However, respondents in special schools G and H had described their development of outreach services and the training already

provided for mainstream colleagues, which supported the local authority's statement on training

During the meeting discussions took place on the procedure for adding a resource base and several mainstream head teacher representatives took the opportunity to raise the issue of tensions for schools around 'inclusion and attainment targets'. This concern appeared to be brushed aside by the authority officer, who described it as an issue that would be considered separately within the authority's primary review. It was made clear that this was not part of the discussions on SEN restructuring.

This again demonstrated head teachers' concerns about increasing the number of SEN pupils in their schools, which related to their overall pupil attainment targets. It may be that school leaders' questions on this matter were sidelined because the targets agenda was a government imperative 'enforced' by local authorities through their school improvement officers. The authority officers may have been fully aware of the tensions this could create for schools. Perhaps, such an important issue should be further considered by government and those authorities proposing to increase inclusion in mainstream schools. If addressed, this may encourage schools to become more inclusive in their approach to SEN pupils

Following this meeting, it was agreed by authority officers to forward future minutes of their internal meetings on restructuring provision to keep trades unions informed of the work that the authority was doing to support implementation.

The next section gives some further insight into authority procedures. A monitoring board had been established to consider strengthening specialist provision and periodic meetings were scheduled to address relevant issues. This documentation was considered relevant because their content described the discussions that took place at authority level during Phase II, providing direct comparisons to the data and my interpreted findings.

6.6 Recorded Notes from Local Authority Documents

6.6.1 Strengthening Specialist Provision Board (SSPB)

6.6.1.1 Minutes – 26 January 2009

The minutes record the work of the authority prior to January 2009. The authority was developing links with their Primary Care Trust. It seemed that a presentation was made about ASD services with a view to developing a partnership with the trust to move this forward. Plans were in place for authority officers to visit other authorities to carry out further research. It was recorded that the new build ASD School would go ahead and that this had already been incorporated into the BSF calendar – planned for September 2012. It was also noted that informal consultation was underway for the proposed relocation and refurbishment of one special school, as described by the respondent in special school H. The document also stated that plans for resource bases were being progressed: five schools were nominated, but funding issues were unresolved in two of those schools. This statement further supports the concerns reflected by my respondents in mainstream schools A and F.

6.6.1.2 Minutes – 20 July 2009

The minutes record the work of the local authority between January and July 2009: a report was provided by their commissioning team on *A Review of Therapy Services*. It was emphasised that there was a need to inject fresh impetus into the process; the document built on the service-line reviews from the PCT. There was an acknowledgement of the need to gain a better understanding of what services were needed for resource bases, special schools, mainstream schools and the early years' sector. The intention was to link the therapy review with the visioning process for the new build ASD School. It was also reported that there was a need to think about the role of 'mental health' providers in developing the whole programme. All these actions demonstrated what was anticipated by the authority and what action was being taken to progress the development of proposed restructured SEN provision.

What was described as the 'risk register' was apparently circulated to the Board and the issue of the increase in numbers in primary school rolls was highlighted

in the 'risk register'. This would have, it suggested, a knock-on effect on the need for more SEN placements. There was an obvious link here to their planned placement numbers because it seems that more children were being identified through the 'risk register'. This identified increase supported the views expressed by practitioners in mainstream schools A and D, and special schools G and H. The minutes concluded that further discussion was needed, and this would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

The question of developing a 'service specification' for outreach services was also raised. It appeared to be agreed that this would be a valuable tool, to establish a 'holistic context', as the implementation process developed. This development seemed to be an important step forward to provide further support for those pupils in mainstream schools. Again, however, the progression of the proposed 'service specification' was deferred to the next meeting.

It appeared from this documented record that the authority was attempting to assess what would be needed, but making fairly slow progress when compared to the published timelines for anticipated closures, relocation and proposed resource bases. As argued by those school leaders involved and particularly stressed by respondents in schools D, G, H and I, arrangements would need to be in place to facilitate the essential infrastructure to support their restructured SEN provision.

These minutes appear to evidence that pupil numbers were still being discussed during the initial stages of implementation (Phase II), the period from January to July 2009, which supports the statements of the majority of respondents interviewed. Change was, as argued by Fullan (1999, 2003), an evolving complex process that would be subject to unanticipated problems. Whether the problem of increasing numbers was due to lack of foresight, as my respondents indicated, is a separate issue but it was an issue that could not truly be addressed in my investigation.

6.7. Emerging issues: conveyed in the authority's documentation: Phase II

Section 6.4 highlighted the need for the authority to review their estimated number of SEN pupils, particularly, as it related to ASD children and, their primary mainstream and special school capacity. According to documentation the authority's awareness of the need for increased primary placements became very apparent in May 2009. The increasing numbers also impacted on their planned SEN restructuring of provision. They discovered that the assessments made in 2009 were substantially higher than those predicted in their 2007 report. It appeared that an additional 220 places would be required by 2015, in addition to figures identified in 2007. The evidence of need was so greatly changed it would have an impact on their further consultation (planned for June 2009), but they could not develop the proposed consultation without sufficient clarity on the numbers of children involved so the intended consultation was postponed.

Criteria questions for pupil placements in resource bases were also discussed, an important issue was whether those children placed should have a statement, or not. Concerns were raised about how this decision related to their policy of 'inclusion', which sought to ensure that their service followed need, rather than a statement. 'Service level agreements' were also considered and it was agreed that this matter would be explored with those schools wishing to host resource bases. There were also issues relevant to the authority's support services, particularly, in relation to referrals to their communication clinic. It seemed that delays were experienced which in turn would impact on the number of SEN statements issued. However, officers agreed: that they would continue to set the figures in line with the council's policy of reducing statements. An area of concern was that although the level of maintained statements was reducing, there were increasing requests for pupil assessments from nursery and pre-schools and, therefore, the number of new statements was increasing – not reducing. It was decided that further data analysis was needed to identify trends. It was agreed to co-ordinate the work of their Early Intervention Team, in terms of referring children for assessment because increased need would place

pressure on their SEN restructuring programme budget and this would have significant implications.

This summary of the text extracted from documented minutes and reports, clearly demonstrated the issues the authority was facing relevant to the implementation of their proposals for increased SEN provision. The next section attempts to link the actions of the authority to the emerging themes discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, which illustrated how my respondents appeared to construct their approach and how they positioned themselves. The data evidenced their commitment to inclusion and their moral values, the identified constraints and opportunities that appeared to influence their actions as they related to the local restructuring process.

6.7.1 *Commitment to Inclusion: Moral Values related to school leaders' perceived constraints*

The head teacher of school A stated that the authority's placement practice across the area was not equitable, but as the school had an inherent poor reputation, this may not have been solely due to the authority - parental preference can influence placement trends. This respondent was involved in the early stages of discussions (on proposals for resource bases) and she had, along with others, visited exemplar authorities. The head teacher was also on the Primary Heads' Forum and attended the meeting held at the Council Offices on 7 December 2008. She was one of the head teachers that raised the issue about 'attainment targets and inclusion' and what this would mean for those schools that considered adding a resource base. However, as indicated in Chapter 4, this head teacher was opposed to increasing the number of special needs pupils in her school. This appeared to link to her dilemma of addressing the tensions between standards and inclusion.

The head teacher of school B, also appeared concerned that the new proposals could alter the balance of her pupil cohort and, if that occurred, her school might struggle to get a comprehensive intake. The head teacher explained that there was an expectation by the authority that the average teacher could cope with those pupils that the authority believed would benefit from a mainstream

education. This appeared contrary to her perspective: she said for those children with mental health issues, mainstream school presented serious challenges and, instead of opportunities for her school, only constraints were perceived. She told me that what tended to happen in practice was that when serious behaviour problems occurred and, the school sought to exclude, the authority then pressured the school to allocate the students to off-site provision for the rest of their compulsory education. Moral purpose, in the case of school B, appeared constrained by her own objectives to raise the profile of her school and her pupils' attainment levels as well as the actions of the local authority.

The head teacher of school F, as indicated in Chapter 4, appeared to be a committed individual with strong moral purpose. However, the findings reflected that he was also realistic about the funding that would be needed to develop the proposed resource base on his school site. The authority's documentation recorded that feasibility studies were carried out on several proposed resource bases. Following a viability study, the authority decided not to proceed with the development of a resource base at school F, the proposal to develop his school was therefore constrained by the authority's decision - not his.

It was also recorded in the documentation that the authority's priorities had changed, particularly, as it related to the relocation of school H. Of primary concern to this head teacher was the number of younger pupils requiring a placement in a special school. This school leader had worked with the authority and eventually persuaded them to allocate 10 additional pupil placements in his school - in temporary accommodation. He told me, he believed this would help to secure the longer-term future of his primary phase. He also seemed pleased to tell me that his staff skills were now recognised as 'high on the value-stock'; the authority appreciated the professionalism of his staff and their contribution to training mainstream staff. It appeared that this school leader and, his staff, had high moral values and were committed to improving special educational needs provision within their authority. However, the proposals for his school's relocation were constrained by the authority's immediate priorities – relevant to the additional and recently projected increasing numbers of primary school places needed in mainstream and in special schools.

The authority's documentation clearly illustrated their proposals were on course for the closure of school I, the secondary special school. The temporary reallocation of its pupils was also under consideration and plans for the new school were underway. This head teacher appeared to have moral purpose when he was not facing an impending impact on his own career, but he was constrained by the authority's planned closure of his school and as the closure date drew closer, he directed his energies elsewhere.

The concepts of commitment and moral purpose appeared essential in promoting increased inclusion. However, emerging from this section are examples of constraints on respondents' schools, but not necessarily relevant to their own actions: only two head teachers were constrained by their own actions, the remaining three respondents were constrained by measures taken by their authority.

6.7.2 Resilience and Tenacity

The head teacher of school F appeared to have the tenacity and resilience to develop his school. His pupil profile, as it related to socio-economic disadvantage was double the national average, but not as high as school A. According to Lindsay *et al.* (2006) this might be a significant factor as it related to pupil under-achievement. Ofsted graded his school's overall effectiveness as good: pupils achieved both academically and personally. He sought to develop provision for those existing pupils in his school, anxious to be part of the programme. Those characteristics of tenacity and resilience, however, did not influence the decision of the authority as it related to the required funding to develop his school.

In facing the dilemma of his closing school, the head teacher of school I appeared to be moving to position himself to gain a lump sum settlement. This school leader demonstrated the tenacity and resilience to achieve his aim and he was persistent to this end. His experiences: the threatened loss of status and uncertain future seemed to lead this head teacher to address his dilemma by choosing to leave the profession and to change his career.

The next section looks at the significance of external partners in the 'change' process and summarises my findings in this chapter.

6.8 Summarising my Findings Relevant to the Local Authority

This chapter sought to reflect on the characteristics of the nature and impact of change linked to internal and external partners, and has also attempted to demonstrate that the authority was equally subject to 'external influences'. As the authority reported, the government initiative DCSF (2007), the Ofsted Report (2006) and the review of practice carried out by the Audit Commission (2007) were contributory factors to proposals for change.

To further interpret this evolving process and the impact it had on those involved, I reflected on earlier studies. Particularly relevant was the work of Fullan (2003), which described the arena that schools worked within, developed by politics and potential partners, those existing at each level at national, local government and within communities. To illustrate his argument on the complexities of change, Fullan (1999) referred to the unfolding of the 1988 Education Reform Act and the development of the national curriculum when a situation existed that was full of unpredictability and fragmented by new ideas. It was a time, he noted, when careful and thorough planning was affected by unexpected events and difficult situations, when ambiguity existed that neither guided nor supported its implementation. These experiences, to some extent, can be identified in the reflections of respondents and in the authority's actions. According to Fullan (2003) there would be difficult periods in the processes of 'change' for those directly involved. These processes of 'change' also mean coming to terms with the fact that you cannot always move forward, that external events can thwart imposed initiatives that can have the effect of altering the pace of change. Fullan argued that those individuals and organisations that are most effective do not experience fewer problems or less stressful situations, but rather they approach 'problems' in a different way.

Fullan (2003) suggested that the key was to develop a 'sense of purpose'. Those that succeed, he reported, are those individuals focused on progression because that was the only way to survive and prosper in complex societies. His overview on how this should be approached was through developing partnerships, networks and alliances, which, he stressed, were essential to development because many of the issues are too difficult to solve in isolation. To liken this to my study, a variety of stakeholders insisted on having a voice, parents, school governors, staff and trade unions, all were proactive at local level working together to influence local policies. This 'sense of purpose' was very relevant to those who made choices at an individual level to meet the challenges of change. This was particularly evident in mainstream schools A, D, E and F, and although constrained by the imposition of 'change', in special schools G and H. The head teachers in schools G and H developed their ideas through engaging in joint initiatives and through developing alliances to bring about transformative change. Chapter 7 further considers those inter-relationships between the levels and the significance of school leaders' characteristics and their individual and collective approach to the processes of restructuring local provision.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the importance of the inter-relationships between national, local, school and individual levels relevant to the processes of, and impact on, the nature of change. Consideration is given to the significance of school leaders to the implementation of change and their influence on the evolving processes during the initial stages. The key messages are developed and their contribution to knowledge evidenced by my findings and the literature. This chapter begins with my reflections on how I also embarked on a parallel journey.

7.1 Reflections on the Journey of Becoming a Doctoral Research Student

In presenting this thesis for my professional doctorate it portrays my interpretations of the reflections of participants whilst also showing how I have come to understand, to develop my learning during the journey. It describes the challenges faced in my struggle to position myself to establish my methodology and strategies of inquiry. It reflects on my approach to the field of inquiry and the extent to which I identified my sample of respondents. It shows the way I posed the questions which guided the research and my interpretation – my influence was therefore central to the research undertaken. In this last stage of taking on yet another role – that of author – I am responsible for conveying what emerged as a result of what I found to be a very complex process. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasised:

> locating things in time is the way to think about them. When we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment but as an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, present as it appears to us, and an implied future.
>
> (2000:29)

Now looking back I can see that whilst I have been exploring the nature of 'change', the processes and impact on my respondents, there has been a parallel process of 'change' evolving, one that I have been experiencing personally. Whether respondent or researcher, it appears that we have all learned that our futures can not be truly controlled, we can only choose to set a direction. My choice was to become a doctoral research student, and although sometimes constrained, my respondents also made choices. Each of us

embarked on a journey of 'change', each of us facing challenges. At the start of my doctoral studies I felt very challenged by what I was about to undertake, but as the years have gone on I have felt that my experiences of studying at such depth have been reflected in my work as I have been able to use my evidenced-based research to advantage in my professional capacity, assured by knowledgeable others.

In writing my thesis I have learned to position myself because I came to realise that my voice impacts on how I present the perceptions and experiences of my respondents. The challenges that I faced, as an 'insider' researcher along the way, resonated with the challenges described by Drake and Heath (2008, 2010). The findings are now interpreted and presented for others to read and critique. To try to avoid ethical challenges, my respondents' perceptions have been carefully presented. Their contributions have developed my understanding of the nature of 'change' within the context of their location. My contribution is intended to provide an authentic reflection of their experiences of the processes and the impact of 'change' in the restructuring of SEN provision in their authority.

This final chapter is therefore intended to explicitly state the argument of my thesis, founded on evidence from my data and the literature. In addition, it conveys the key messages that emerged during my research study, its contribution to knowledge, and the implications of my research. My aim in Chapter 7 is to provide a reflexive account of my study, starting with what was central to my investigation – the overarching research question that I posed:

> What is the nature and impact of change, in the restructuring of special educational needs provision?

I set out to explore two aspects of the nature of change: first, the process and second, the impact of change. I discovered from the perceptions of school leaders that they perceived that the processes of 'change' had influenced their decisions in relation to proposed change. I considered the extent that their actions related to their perceptions and, importantly, to their values and attitudes, specifically, as they related to increased 'inclusion' of SEN pupils. The next section discusses the themes and dimensions that emerged from the data.

7.2 Discussion of my Key Findings

7.2.1 Mainstream Schools: the emerging standards and inclusion debate at local level

This section discusses the position and commitment of head teachers in relation to the restructuring of special educational needs provision in their authority. The data reflected much good practice in mainstream schools A, B, C, D, E and F: all these schools were increasing their pupils' social skills and attainment levels. However, those respondents involved in making choices, as chapters 4, 5 and 6 illustrated, approached proposals for increased inclusion in very different ways. The following sections summarise what emerged from the findings: the characteristics that, in some circumstances, appeared to support school leaders to address the challenges of increased inclusion within a school system of increased accountability. The findings also demonstrated circumstances where some school leaders appeared to use those same characteristics to bring about a different outcome, based on their perception of what existed and often in relation to their careers.

The positioning of the head teacher of school A appeared to relate to her perceptions of the tensions between standards and inclusion, those influences that challenge every school, but particularly those that are constrained by their pupil cohorts and the context of their location as Chapter 4 reflected. Noguera (2006) argued that research studies which fail to take account of social disadvantage contribute to the narrow focus of many nations' education policies and as Lindsay *et al.* (2006) and others evidenced, interrelationships exist between disadvantage, special educational needs and ethnicity. According to the data the head teacher of school A had moral purpose, a strong belief in inclusion and appeared to have the strategic vision. She demonstrated both effective and efficient leadership qualities, a commitment toward her pupils and the enthusiasm to develop the school further. All these factors were significant aspects as my literature review recorded (e.g. Leithwood and Levin (2005), Muijs *et al.* (2007), *Day et al.* (2009)). However, the data showed that these factors were not sufficient for this head teacher to engage and to implement the authority's proposals for placing children with more complex needs in her

mainstream school. My findings showed how those interrelationships, identified by Lindsay *et al.* (2006) appeared to influence this school leaders' decision. It seemed she did not have the tenacity to hold-fast, nor the resilience to rebound and to continue to cope with the increasing tensions she perceived: the increasing numbers of struggling pupils and an increasingly accountable standards agenda, the tensions recognised by Ainscow *et al.* (2006).

Other school leaders, like the head teachers of school B and C, also approached the proposals for restructuring in very different ways. Although, as evidence by their Ofsted inspections, they possessed the attributes of committed and effective school leaders, the authority's proposals and actions in relation to increased inclusion did not engage them. The findings seemed to show, particularly in the case of school B, that her moral purpose was somewhat 'limited'. Increased inclusion appeared dependent on avoiding disruption to the learning of the majority of her pupils and she positioned herself so that the school could demonstrate higher standards of attainment through extending their curriculum to attract more able pupils and through improved marketing of her school. It seemed that her tenacity and resilience was focused on achieving an alternative trajectory to increased inclusion. However, it could be argued, as Day *et al.* (2009) stated a school's overall improvement is dependent on effective school leaders that accurately diagnose their school's needs and according to a recent Ofsted inspection this head teacher had improved her school's standards and status.

In the case of school C, the findings showed the attainment of this school leader's existing pupils was related to the way that the school responded to the diversity of its pupils, demonstrating, as argued by Muijs *et al.* (2007), that successful schools develop the school's culture to their pupils' cultures. What emerged from the data was that this school leader decided that the proposed resource base would not support her existing ASD pupils because the threshold set by the authority for pupil placements was too high. What seemed significant

was that the findings demonstrated that the way the authority approached their proposals for a resource base in her school created tensions within her school community. It would appear that this respondent did not have those dimensions of tenacity and resilience to withstand the challenges she perceived in relation to tensions that proposals for change would bring.

However, in contrast to schools A, B and C, the head teachers of schools E and F were keen to have a co-located resource base. According to their Ofsted inspection reports, these heads were also efficient and effective school leaders. The findings showed that both head teachers positioned themselves to take advantage of perceived opportunities by using the proposals for change to develop and to raise the profile of their schools. What emerged from the data demonstrated that both leaders prioritised their chosen directional development and were able to make use of the local authority proposals to do so.

The head teacher of School E appeared to maintain a balance between change for his school and stability for his pupils: as Hopkins *et al.* (1996) argued – such a balance is crucial to ensure school progression. The findings showed that school leaders E and F appeared to be committed to inclusion and to have moral purpose, using opportunities to the benefit of not only existing, but future pupils - those opportunities that related to the authority's proposals for increased inclusion. Hopkins *et al.* (1996) and Day *et al.* (2009) purported that the culture of the school depends on the school leader and the strategies chosen for progression. These head teachers were proactive and motivated, anxious to be part of the authority's SEN Restructuring Programme. However, the adversity school F faced was in relation to the authority's financial constraints and although the findings identified two factors that appeared to support some school leaders in challenging circumstances, those of tenacity and resilience, these dimensions would not have influenced the decision taken by the authority - not to proceed with a co-located resource base at his school. On the other hand, these dimensions might potentially have been contributory factors to the positioning and actions of school leader E.

My findings showed these school leader characteristics appeared important and influenced the choices they made. Tensions between inclusion and standards seemed detrimental to increased inclusion in mainstream schools; the data showed that the authority's approach was another significant factor, as were viability and financial constraints. In summary all these influences had significant implications for the proposed restructuring of special educational needs provision in this authority.

7.2.2 *Special Schools: the emerging standards and inclusion debate at local level*

The commitment of the school leaders in special schools G, H and I, to support pupils with more severe and complex needs appeared particularly outstanding. It seemed from the data that there was much good practice and additional support for both staff and pupils, which reflected that these schools were not only continually developing their pupils' social skills and attainment levels, but also helping mainstream schools to support their pupils. As argued by Terzi (2005) and others, these school leaders, particularly schools G and H, were improving local provision, matching the curriculum to pupils' needs to develop their teaching and learning. However, like their mainstream colleagues, they approached proposals for change in very different ways as chapters 4, 5 and 6 illustrated, but in contrast to mainstream *schools,* special school leaders experienced imposed change.

The findings demonstrated that the head teacher of special school G appeared to have moral purpose and was committed to improving the amount of available provision within the authority. The data reflected that his tenacity related to the way he approached change - determined and persistent to make his ideas become a reality. He appeared to have foresight and was proactive in arguing for increased facilities for the children in the authority. His challenge to the authority fortunately coincided with the authority's recognition of the increasing need for primary placements. Importantly, the findings showed that this head teacher had resilience, he was able to rebound from impending misfortune (the

closure of his school) and he influenced the authority to open an early years' intervention centre. Also, through working with colleagues, he persuaded the authority to review their planned provision in the interests of future pupil cohorts.

What emerged from the findings demonstrated that the head teacher of special school H also possessed vision. Particularly, as it related to supporting the diversity of special educational needs pupils not only in his school, but in mainstream schools. As Pijl *et al.* (1997) and Day *et al.* (2009) argued, school improvement and educational reform are led by motivated school leaders. The data showed that this head teacher was engaged in discussion with two universities about sponsorship and, he also developed links with their Primary Care Trust to support the commissioning of services in a more effective way. The school's Ofsted report, as illustrated in the data chapter, demonstrated he was efficient and effective, but although the head teacher of school H was committed to increased inclusion and demonstrated strong moral purpose, he seemed to lack those dimensions of tenacity and resilience. The budgetary issues and, pressures of maintaining staff morale over such a long period, appeared to have contributed to his ultimate decision to move on to another school in another authority, unlike the head teacher of School G, who managed to continue on the journey.

In total contrast, the findings showed that the head teacher of school I seemed to perceive the threat to his status and future career as an 'all consuming' dimension. He constructed an adverse stance to the proposals for restructuring provision and appeared not to attempt to counter the authority's proposed restructuring. According to Ofsted, prior to the proposed restructuring of the authority's SEN provision, good standards of attainment were achieved by his pupils. However, the process of restructuring, as experienced by this school leader, appeared to provide no opportunities for his future. As the planned closure drew closer he directed his energies to achieve an agreed redundancy, positioning himself to gain a settlement. The threatened loss of status and an

uncertain future seemed to lead this head teacher to address his dilemma by choosing to leave the profession and to change his career.

Heifetz and Linksy (2002) recognised and acknowledged the difficulties school leaders addressed in navigating their way through proposed restructuring. They stressed the need for strong leadership to support the processes of successful reform, but it would seem from my findings that more than strong leadership was needed. The concepts of resilience and tenacity cannot necessarily alter the direction of restructuring, but these concepts would appear to provide important additional dimensions that could support a chosen focus as my findings demonstrated.

These sections discussed the findings in relation to my respondents. It showed how the individual characteristics of school leaders in mainstream and special schools appeared to influence their actions and their positioning in circumstances where choices could be made and in circumstances where change was imposed. The next section continues this theme but relates those characteristics to the wider dimensions involved relevant to the process of change and the impact of change. Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 focused on the characteristics of school leaders that appeared to influence the implementation of change, the next sections 7.2.3 and 7.2.4 emphasise the significance of the actions of the authority on the processes and impact of change.

7.2.3 *The actions of the local authority in relation to the process of change*
My data analysis revealed that the initial process of consultation created serious tensions: between stakeholders and the authority. Those external stakeholders and/or potential partners included parents, school governors and staff, teacher unions and voluntary agencies. The concerns they raised caused the authority to implement a further consultation process – a supposedly 'independent' consultation. However, this further consultation process also showed, as my

respondents had reflected, that some significant concerns existed within the wider community about the accuracy of the authority's projected figures. Ultimately, the parental campaigns and challenges made by school governors, school staff and trade unions, led the authority to reconsider whether their proposals, in relation to their projected figures, were sufficient to meet local need.

The findings from the authority's documentation, in Chapter 6, recorded that, post-consultation (i.e., during the processes of implementation), the authority was continuing to re-appraise their plans, influenced by the actions of stakeholders. The authority was attempting to gain a better understanding of the number of SEN children involved and what services were needed to support the changes that were being implemented. The authority's communications showed that they were increasingly proactive in their attempts to influence their school communities, particularly their school leaders. However, as discussed, these interrelated interactions were clearly not one way – there was more complexity to the process of change.

The findings also demonstrated how the actions of school leaders related to their historical perceptions of the authority and their experiences during the initial stages. Their experiences of the procedures that the authority followed also appeared to influence whether school leaders were proactive or reactive to what was being proposed. To reveal what had influenced their reactions during the process, I considered what seemed to have engaged school leaders during the consultation and early stages of the implementation process, for example was the incentive offered by the authority - 'BSF Funding' to improve their school SEN provision - sufficient? Or had the disincentive of accountability militated against increased inclusion? It seemed that both dimensions, relevant to incentive and disincentive, were partly dependent on how the authority had engaged their schools. In particular how the authority approached their school leaders during the initial stages of proposed change, relevant to clarity on

available resources and assurances relevant to their professional status - as Chapters 4, 5 and 6 described, their actions also influenced whether school leaders felt motivated or threatened by proposals for reform,

The need to develop partnerships with those involved would seem to play an important part toward building essential capacity within the schools and within the authority. According to Fullan (1993, 1996, 2003) although conflict could initiate reform, in order to implement change it was important to develop partnerships with those involved. He argued that a smooth implementation process was essential to progressing change; a process involving many factors, including developing capacity. Hopkins *et al.* (1996) described this as 'change' for school improvement, but specifically in my study it relates to developing a skilled workforce and funding to support the implementation of 'change', as Noguera (2006) and others argued. Successful implementation also meant, according to Fullan, enabling those in the field to contribute during the processes of change. My findings showed that the process of implementing change in this authority was far from smooth and this overlaps with the perceived impact of change. The next section therefore considers the actions of the authority in relation to the impact of change.

7.2.4 The actions of the local authority in relation to the impact of 'change'
As indicated, the processes the authority initially followed seemed to have an adverse impact on their own proposals for restructuring. Analysis of the respondents' perceptions showed that the authority's approach, during the initial stages, did appear to impact on their schools and on them as individuals. Their major concerns were related to the perceived inaccuracy of the envisaged numbers of SEN pupils, the proposed timescale for the implementation of 'change', the timescale for transition, and the authority's proposals for temporary provision for closing schools and their pupils.

As the data reflected in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, some school leaders anticipated an impact on their attainment targets, but this was dismissed by the authority

This tension was significant because the findings appear to suggest that the dimensions Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003) described of manageability and coherence, particularly in the initial stages of the implementation process, needed to be addressed by the authority to ease the implementation of proposed 'change' and its perceived impact. My findings showed that respondents' perceptions reflected that they recognised the need to develop and strengthen the infrastructure within the authority because if the overall capacity (workforce skills and funding) was lacking it would impact on all the pupils in all the schools in the authority. However, as the documented evidence reflected, the authority eventually acknowledged the need to tackle these emerging issues and concerns.

These findings showed the importance of individual and collective influences of school leaders and the significance of the impact of the authority on the processes of restructuring in my study. The next section summarises the main findings in relation to the significance of the issues and the importance of the characteristics of school leaders that, potentially, could contribute to the wider dimensions of improving educational provision within our school system – locally and nationally.

7.3 The Characteristics of School Leaders committed to Inclusive Values

My findings demonstrated the influence of my respondents working in the authority within the existing school system. Through my data and the literature reviewed, I have attempted to define the significant characteristics of those school leaders committed to inclusive values, evidenced by their approach and the actions they took during the implementation of the authority's special educational needs restructuring proposals.

As developed in section 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 the majority of my respondents were committed to inclusion in terms of their own distinction between pupil rights and, less equitable practice – whether they were conforming to, or regulated by what is in statute. Importantly, to progress change in difficult circumstances, it became apparent that other characteristics were significant. For example:

tenacity was also needed as it related to determination and persistence to continue their involvement in the restructuring process and importantly resilience: the ability to recover from misfortune/adversity. It required individuals who were able to rebound from difficult situations to demonstrate flexibility to deal with perceived dilemmas, or the opportunities they faced, as it related to their schools, their pupils and their staff. However, it became apparent from the data that these characteristics were inextricably intertwined with their own perceptions of what exists within their immediate locality. Therefore, my findings are further developed in the following sections of my thesis relevant to the broader focus of 'inclusion' to provide insights into how all parties are situated – government, local authority, schools and school leaders – to show the themes that emerged in my investigation can be related to dimensions recorded in my literature review.

My study revealed that some respondents appeared to have the capacity to: address the dynamics and complexities of change, despite in some circumstances facing adversity. The adversity Fullan (2003:100-101) described was "marginalization, diversion, or attack". This appeared particularly relevant to the respondent in school I. However, some respondents, those in schools E, F, G and H, as my findings conveyed, showed an ability to take the 'risk'. Did this mean that these respondents were looking even further at the bigger picture, demonstrating their capacity to do something different, or were they just "on the balcony" as the authors Heifetz and Linsky (2002:203) argued "focused on staying alive?"

My analysis of the findings also showed that, in special schools G and H, the school leaders demonstrated through their actions what could be achieved by individuals engaging in joint initiatives. They showed that forming alliances can support the development of provision within the authority, for example their ideas and concepts of developing an early intervention centre and the special schools' foundation trust were now becoming a reality. According to Fullan (2003), specific partnerships, networks and alliances were essential to development. Fullan argued that within the processes of change many of the issues which impact on communities are too difficult to solve in isolation, but

they can be addressed through individuals joining forces and my data showed this appeared to be happening.

7.3.1 The significance of school leaders

Muijs *et al.* (2007) and Day *et al.* (2009), among others, stressed the crucial dimension of effective school leaders and, as I delved deeper, the significance of my respondents' level of influence both internally and externally became very apparent to the progression of their schools. The findings showed that some heads particularly respondents in schools A, D, E, F, G and H appeared very proactive and effective in getting the best from what was available locally and nationally for the school, staff, pupils and their families. Bolam *et al.* (2005), Sebba (2009), and others, emphasised that working in partnership with pupils and their families was linked to building the capacity of the school workforce. My findings revealed that respondents, particularly in schools A, D, G and H, were working with parents, other schools, colleges and businesses, working beyond the school extending their collaborative activities to their communities to further support their pupils' development.

According to Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003) the key to transformative and progressive change was the choice that school leaders made: whether their decision was founded on a 'sense of purpose' or 'moral purpose', however founded, choice was dependent on school leaders. My findings showed that the perceptions my respondents reflected were linked to 'inclusive values', but reservations also surfaced which related to the problems they perceived. As Ainscow *et al.* (2006b) argued and my findings revealed there was a significant underlying tension of accountability that predominated over 'moral purpose', as it related to the school leaders in schools A and B. These schools were very concerned about achieving attainment targets, ensuring that their performance in the league tables was not affected by increasing the numbers of SEN pupils. However, schools E and F, by electing to add a resource base to support those pupils already in their schools and those eventually to be placed in their schools, appeared to be consciously ignoring any anticipated 'impact' that increased inclusion would have. Hopkins *et al.* (1996) made the point that to continue on the journey of change, a further principle element is required, that

of 'consonance'. This is described as the extent to which a school's priorities correspond with external reform. One that considers whether change provides opportunities, not problems, possibly makes a school leader better able to respond as the head teachers in schools E and F appeared to demonstrate.

7.4 Reflections on my Methodology and Methods

This research study emerged from my professional role, and a wish to understand and explore whether proposals for change, i.e. restructuring SEN provision would improve 'inclusion'. My aim was to build on what existed in the literature reviewed on 'inclusion' and 'change', approached through engagement with two central questions – what does 'inclusion' mean, and what does 'change' mean? My research of the literature further developed my understanding of these two concepts, their heritage and distinctiveness. The literature evidenced that inclusive educational provision could be improved through various mediums – effective school leaders and collaborative practice.

The processes involved in undertaking my doctorate equipped me to make informed decisions, to take a more philosophical stance, to construct and generate my own rules and understanding to interpret my experiences. Through my reading and reflecting on my beliefs and assumptions, I found that I leant toward an anti-positivist approach and that my understanding of what exists would be developed through my relationships with respondents – a subjectivist epistemology. My views would be dependent on what I perceived, recognising that multiple realities exist – a relativist ontology. The adopted strategy of inquiry was 'interpretative interactionism' enabling me to reflect my respondents' perceptions of their experiences, my study was therefore located within a broad constructivist-interpretative' paradigm.

However, to establish the path I would follow was far from easy. Looking back now, I realise how fundamental this learning process was to the whole research study. My account in Chapter 3 demonstrated the processes I followed. In this chapter, I have mainly drawn upon the more problematic nature of what I

encountered from my approach to the investigation and the difficulties experienced in the field of study.

I selected one authority to carry out an in depth study. My initial thought was that it would be very appropriate if the schools were located in an authority with a highly diverse population which linked to a major role responsibility of my work-remit 'inclusion'. The interrelationship between diversity factors was, I considered, significant. However, I had not anticipated the complexity that it added to my study. For example, I had to expand my literature review, broaden my exploration of restructuring relevant to wider diversity factors and widen my interpretation of my findings because, as the literature reported, these diversity factors were interlinked (e.g. Frederickson and Cline (2002), Lindsay *et al.* (2006), Florian (2010), Dyson *et al.* (2004) and Muijs *et al.* (2007)).

I decided that proximity of the field of inquiry was important, but in practice, because mainly telephone interviews were chosen, it did not have any effect on my investigation. I was also aware of tensions at local level between schools and their authority. However, I was unprepared for the initial ethical and role-conflict tensions experienced. This occurred because I was primarily visiting the authority in my professional role, but also considering whether and if, I could use this context for my fieldwork. I found that I was torn between my professional role and my researcher role. The 'insider researcher', so aptly described by Drake and Heath (2008), meant that I had to immediately change my approach, which, as they argued, called for called for "a repositioning along axes of research and professional practice" (2008:1).

In hindsight I learned that my questionnaire/survey was not an effective method, particularly so with school leaders, who must prioritise their time. The low response rate caused me to learn a great deal, importantly, the need for more careful work prior to fieldwork, because these school leaders had been subjected to two earlier surveys and understandably would not be receptive to further surveys. I learned the only effective route, as it relates to my experience, was through networking. The establishment of a sample, however defined, became my main objective. Although I identified school leaders (a 'purposive' sample) it was achieved in various ways, but weighted towards a 'convenience'

sampling method and therefore no generalisation would be sought in the final analysis.

The questions for my interview schedule were gradually developed within a broad 'constructivist-interpretative framework', influenced by the knowledge gained from the literature reviewed on 'inclusion' and 'change', notably Ainscow *et al.* (2006a, 2006b), Hopkins *et al.* (1996), Fullan (1993,1999, 2003). To investigate the effectiveness of school leaders I developed questions relevant to practice drawn from a body of research, notably Day *et al.* (2009) and others, and on school collaborations, Bolam *et al.* (2005) and others. In practice it was my respondents who took over our dialogue; the schedule was merely a guide, a prompt to aid the process.

Although I was never a totally 'blank slate', because to some extent I anticipated respondents' responses, during our interactions I became very aware of the danger of 'understanding too quickly', that I needed to listen carefully to my respondents. I came to recognise the problematic nature of the process in which I was engaging, wary that I was possibly susceptible to pre-empting respondents' answers, a danger inherent in situations where we assume we all know what we are talking about in professional contexts. As Kvale (1994) and others suggest, the interviewing process highlighted the fact that knowing something involves more than interviewer perceptions, it requires interviewer and respondent to discuss their perceptions, that knowledge develops through these combined influences. The interview method provided the rich data that I was seeking to inform my study. It became clear during the interview process that my respondents informed and influenced my thinking as well as knowledgeable others in the literature reviewed. As Kvale emphasised, the constructive nature of knowledge is created through the process of our interactions which develops a relationship.

The telephone interviews worked well, a method supported by Nias (1991) and others. I found that telephone interviews enabled me to control the time, tended to be shorter, more focused and useful for contacting busy people as Harvey (1988) and others argued. The experience of face-to-face interviews enabled

me to make direct method comparisons and to take into account possible 'interviewer effects'. However, my experience was problematic, unexpected dimensions occurred relevant to noise, interruptions and lack of control over the time spent with respondents. On reflection telephone interviewing proved to be the better method for my study.

I found that the follow-up telephone interviews a year or so further on, were extremely important because of their relevance to the evolving processes of 'change'. The interviews provided important data reflecting that unexpected events occur during the processes of change, and change cannot really be controlled. The further up-dates introduced new dimensions relevant to my respondents and to my study. My initial interviews were carried out during Phase I (adoption), and Phase II (the early stages of implementation). Events as Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003), argued, may occur which alter proposed 'change' during the processes of implementing 'change' and this was very evident in my findings.

I found, as Scott (1990) argued, that documentary evidence provided authenticity to the data collected throughout the stages of restructuring. Collating documentary evidence, as it related to national and authority levels, provided the clarity and 'trustworthiness' I was seeking. It clearly showed the procedure the authority was following, recorded in their policies and in minutes of meetings, but it also demonstrated that their actions were not necessarily communicated to schools. This method enabled me to make direct comparisons with the perceptions of my respondents, which I discovered were sometimes misguided, but sometimes very significant to what was actually happening to them and their schools.

My research diary, as argued by Rolfe (2006), provided a reflexive account of my experiences that would not be recorded through any other method used. Importantly, I was able to record my own thoughts and observations about various meetings and events, a method particularly important to my pre-fieldwork investigation.

My data analysis involved using tables as an analytical device, populated with qualitative interpretations derived from the transcripts and notes, described by Plath (1990:374) as "file-work". This process identified some important issues and underlying themes, but when I attempted to take the process a step further to not just categorise but to grade the data, I discovered my respondents' reflections were more nuanced than that and could not be usefully divided. This was because my actions derided what existed in the data and grading provided no useful purpose. However, summarised brief transcripts of respondents' views proved helpful because I could evaluate both significant and more generic themes, but there was a danger of fragmentation. Teasing out key issues from the findings was a lengthy process, which involved a deconstruction to develop significant and generic themes, followed by a lengthy re-construction to convey key messages from the data. The whole process enabled significant findings to emerge from the data to build and develop my argument. Denzin and Lincoln (2007) refer to this process as developing a creative ability of interpretation and evaluation: although worthwhile, it is not an easy process.

A major criticism of my methodology would be the way I identified my 'sample'. I did not give sufficient consideration to how difficult it would be to engage respondents; I was, on reflection, extremely naïve in my expectations. Also, as my sample ultimately evolved, those school leaders in the closing schools were possibly, because of their situation, more 'willing' than others to participate: an obvious danger that their perceptions may have skewed the 'sample' towards more negative perceptions of the processes of 'change'.

I recognise the limitations of my research project because the examples provided in my investigation of leadership experiences during the processes of 'change', have only provided a small insight into what was occurring in one authority. Also, as my study was only drawn from a small sample of school leaders, it cannot be generalised in the wider world of research. However, the ongoing processes of implementing the proposed reform would be an interesting project for future research because the authority's vision to implement change and achieve their aims will only be known in the longer term.

Fullan (1993) called this Phase III – to investigate whether change evolves and progresses, whether it continues, or disappears.

Overall, my approach to selecting the methodology and methods used has been a huge developmental process that I have travelled and hopefully will be one that 'produces the fruits of my endeavours'.

7.5 Key Claims to Knowledge

In reflecting on the ways that my respondents constructed and addressed the dilemmas and opportunities of the restructuring process, I described how school leaders position themselves in relation to perceived constraints or opportunities within their authority's planned restructuring of special educational needs provision. Comparisons and contrasts, relevant to emerging standards and the inclusion debate at local level, threw into sharp relief the characteristics of my respondents, working within our school system. My research study showed the importance of factors that include not only effective and efficient school leaders, with commitment and moral purpose, but those who have the tenacity and resilience to continue to influence change to improve their local provision.

My investigative study, on exploring the nature and impact of change, has enabled me to gain a holistic understanding of the significance of the complex dimensions involved, in relation to the wider aims of inclusion and the local restructuring process. In particular, the characteristics of school leaders that influenced through alliances with other stakeholders, the strategies of this authority. However, it seemed that each entity's interaction within and between each level created an impact on the others. It was ironic that I started with an investigation to explore the processes of change, triggered by the authority's commitment to improve their SEN provision founded on national initiatives. As the implementation of change evolved, it became apparent that successful implementation was dependant on many factors, not least school leaders. However, what I found demonstrated the importance and relevance of effective school leaders to implementing change and, in giving my respondents a voice through interpreting their perceptions, my study illustrated how key some of

those school leaders were to the process. My findings also demonstrated that influences and power cannot be solely attributed to any one entity. Yes, it requires the motivation of effective school leaders, but also the collaborative effort of all those involved. The evidence demonstrated that 'change' demands careful planning and preparation to avoid unnecessary challenges, it requires a clear strategy of communication, clarity on issues and a framework to address concerns, essentially a partnership approach. However, even with a concerted effort of those involved in the implementation of 'change', other unexpected events may interrupt the changes proposed.

7.6. Concluding my Thesis

My study has continually re-emphasised that government reform has implications for managing 'change' at every level. The educational transformation that Fullan (2003) described as 'tri-level reform' related to the school, local authority and national government. According to Muijs *et al.* (2007), effective school leaders are the 'key' to progressive schools and, according to my findings, key to contributing to the process and implementation of successful change in one authority. Fullan's 'tri-level' argument includes school leaders and their influence within schools, whereas my findings emphasise how crucial school leaders are, not only 'implementing' change, but in 'influencing' change. The processes of change would benefit from recognition of school leaders' contribution and their ability to influence, as well as implement, successful reform/change. This requires a 'fourth' dimension to be added to Fullan's tri-level reform: effective school leaders that possess the characteristics of commitment, moral purpose, tenacity and resilience. School leaders are an essential capital resource that should be cultivated and utilised at every level to achieve the nations' aims and objectives for improving 'inclusive education'. However, we also need to be mindful that the nature and impact of 'change' is multi-dimensional and complex - 'change' is a continuous phenomenon and, as my thesis clearly demonstrates, 'change' becomes an ongoing journey that affects us all.

References:

Agar, M. (1993): 'Speaking of Ethnography', in Silverman, D. (2000) *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, London: Sage

Ainscow, M. (1995): 'Special needs through school improvement: school improvement through special needs', in Clark, C.; Dyson, A. and Millward, A. (eds) (1995): *Towards Inclusive Schools*, London, David Fulton.

Ainscow, M (2006): Personalisation, Individualisation & Inclusion Ch. 2: pg 8: cited in Sebba, J. (2009) in *Personalisation and special educational needs*, Policy Paper 5: 6th Series available from: http://ww.nasen.org.uk/uploads/publications/14.doc (accessed: May 2011)

Ainscow, M.; Booth, T. and Dyson, A. (2006a): *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion* London: Routledge.

Ainscow, M.; Booth, T. and Dyson, A, (2006b): 'Inclusion and the Standards Agenda: negotiating policy pressures in England, *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* Vol.10, No.4-5: pp295-308

Audit Commission (2007): *Out of Authority Placements for Special Educational Needs-a*vailable-from http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfieles/RR637.pdf (accessed: February 12, 2008)

Bailey, K.D. (1996): *Methods of Social Researc*h Basingstoke: Collier-Macmillan

Barnes, C.; Mercer, G. and Shakespeare, T. (1999): *Exploring Disability A Sociological Introduction,* Oxford: Polity Press

Baszanger, I. and Dodier, N. (2004): 'Observation', Ch. 2 in Silverman, D. (2004): *Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, pp.9-31

Bateson, B. (1972): 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research' Ch. 1 in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2005): *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn, London: Sage, pp22-36

Bednar, A.K.; Cunningham, D.; Duffy, T.M. and Perry, J.D. (1991): 'Theory into Practice: How do we link?' in Anglin, G.L (eds): *Instructional technology: past, present and future*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited. Pp.88-101

Bennett, J.; Gash, H. and O'Reilly, M. (1998): 'Ireland: Integration as appropriate Segregation where necessary', in Booth, T. and Ainscow, M. (eds) (1998) *From Them to Us*: London: Routledge

Black-Hawkins, K.;Florian, L. and Rouse, M. (2007): *Achievement and Inclusion In Schools*, London: Routledge

Blumer, H. (1969): 'Symbolic Interactionism: 'Perspective and Method' in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage

Bolam, R.; McMahon, A.; Stoll, L.; Thomas, S.; Wallace, M.; Greenwood, A.H.; Hawkey, K.; Ingram, M.; Atkinson, A. and Smith, M. (2005): *Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities*, University of Bristol, Bath, and London Institute of Education U.K.

Booth, T. and Ainscow, M. (2002): *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and participation in Schools*, Bristol: CISE

Building Schools for the Future Available from: www.bsf.gov.uk (accessed 30.11.2007).

Building Schools for the Future Available from: www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page 5801.asp (accessed 24.11.08)

Building Schools for the Future Available from: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management (accessed 30.11.07)

Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M. (2000): *Narrative Inquiry Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Cohen, L. (2000): 'Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis', Ch. 22 in Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007): *Research Methods in Education*, 6th edn, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Cohen, L.; Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007): 'Sampling', Ch. 4 in Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*, 6th edn, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, pp.114-116

Cresswell, J.W. (2003): 'Framework for Design', Ch.1: *Research Design*, 2nd edn, London; Sage

Cresswell, J.W. (2007): *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches*, 2nd edn, London: Sage

Day, C.; Sammons, P.; Hopkins, D.; Harris, A.; Leithwood, K.; Brown, E.; Ahtaridou, E.; Kingdom, A. and Gu, Q. (2009): *School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes*, Final Report DCSF (2009) RR108 University of Nottingham.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln Y.S. (2003) 'Strategies of Inquiry', Ch. 6: *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks:Sage

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2000) 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research', Ch. 1: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2001): 'Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research', Ch. 1 in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2003): *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* (eds), London: Sage.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2003) 'Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry', in Denzin, N.K and Lincoln, Y.S. (2003): *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, *Theories and Issues*, Thousand Oaks:Sage

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) (2006): *Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, January,* House of Commons

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) (2007): *Planning and Developing Special Educational Provision: a Guide for Local Authorities and Other Proposers*, *a*vailable from: https://www.dcsf.gov.uk.schoolorg (accessed May 2008)

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) (2009): Pupil Characteristics, HC 2009 Third Report, Vol. 1

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) (2009): School Admissions Code, Norwich:

Department for Education (DfE) (2010): *The Importance of Teaching*, Schools White Paper

Department for Education (DfE) (2011): *Support and Aspiration a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability*, SEN Green Paper

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (1994a): *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*, London: HMSO

Department for Education and Science (DfES) (1978): *Special Educational Needs Report of the* Committee (Warnock), London: HMSO

Department for Education and Science (DfES) (1988): *Education Reform Act,* London: HMSO

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2001): *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*, Nottingham: DFES Publications

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2003b): *Every Child Matters*, London: HMSO

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004): *National Standards for Head teachers*, DfES/0083/04 Nottingham: DfES Publications

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004a): *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools,* Nottingham: DfES Publications

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004b): *Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN,* Nottingham: DfES Publications

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2006): *Government's Response to Education and Skills Committee Report Special Educational Needs*, Norwich: TSO

Diener, E. and Crandall, R. (1978): 'The Ethics of Educational and Social Research', Ch. 2 in Cohen, L.; Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007): *Research Methods in Education*, 6th edn, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, pp.51-77

Disability Discrimination Act (1995): Amended DDA (2005)

Disability Discrimination Act (2005): Act to Amend DDA (1995)

Drake, P. (2010): 'Grasping at methodological understanding: a cautionary tale from insider research', *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp.85-99.

Drake, P. and Heath, L. (2008): 'Insider Researchers in Schools and Universities: the case of the professional doctorate', in Sikes, P. and Potts, A. (eds) (2008): *Researching Education from the Inside: investigating Institutions from within London*: Routledge, pp.127-143

Dunne, M.; Pryor, J. and Yates, P. (2005): *Becoming a Researcher,* Maidenhead: Open University Press, pg 11.

Dyson, A.; Farrell, P.; Polat, F.; Hutcheson, G. and Gallannaugh, F. (2004): *Inclusion and Pupil Achievement*, DfES RR No.578, University of Newcastle

Education Act (1981)

Education Reform Act (1988)

Education Act (1996)

Elmore, R. and Burney, D. (1990): cited in Fullan, M. (1993): *Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*, London: Falmer Press

Equalities Human Rights Commission (March 2008)

Fielding, M. (1999): 'Radical Collegiality: Affirming Teaching as an Inclusive Professional Practice, *Australian Educational Researcher* 26 (2), pp.1-34

Florian, L. (2010): 'The concept of inclusive pedagogy', in Hallett, F. and Hallett, G. (eds) (2010): *Transforming the role of the SENCO*, Buckingham: Open University Press

Florian, L.; Devecchi, C. and Dee, L. (2008): 'How can the capability approach contribute to understanding provision for people with learning difficulties?', *Prosperio,* 14 (1), pp.24-33.

Foucault, M. (1977): *Discipline and Punish,* Translation in Sheridan, A. London: Penguin.

Frederickson. N. and Cline, T (2002): *Special Educational Needs: Inclusion and Diversity.* Buckingham: Open University Press

Fullan, M. (1993): *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*, London: Falmer Press

Fullan, M. (1999): *Change Forces: The Sequel,* London: Falmer pg:vii.

Fullan, M. (2003): *Change Forces with a Vengeance*, London: Routledge Falmer

Gewirtz, S. and Cribb, A. (2006): What to do about values in social research: the case for ethical reflexivity in the sociology of education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* Vol. 27 (pp. 141-155)

Giorgi, A. (1994): 'A Phenomenological Perspective on Certain Qualitative Research Methods', *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 25(2) pp.190-220. Available from: http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/brill/ (accessed May 2008)

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1985): 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research', Ch. 6 in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2005): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn, London: Sage, pp.105-117.

Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (1997): 'Analyzing Interpretive Practice', Ch. 7 in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2003): *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2nd edn, London: Sage, pp.214-215

Harvey, C.D.H. (1988): 'Telephone survey techniques', *Canadian Home Economics Journal,* 38 (1), pp.30-5.

Hegarty, S. (2001), cited in Reindal, S.M. (2010): What is the Purpose? Reflections on Inclusion and Special Education from a Capability Perspective*, European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 25-1, pp.1-14. Available from:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/section?content=a919013317
(accessed 13 April 2011)

Heifetz, R.H. and Linsky, M. (2002), cited in Fullan, M. (2003): *Change Forces with a Vengeance*, London: Routledge Falmer, pp 2-3

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (1994): 'Interpretive Practice and Social Action' Ch. 19 in Denzin, N.K and Lincoln, Y.S (eds) (1994): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, pp.483-502

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (1995): 'Active Interview', Ch. 8 in Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (2001): *Handbook of Interview Research Context & Method*, Thousand Oaks: Sage

Hopkins, D.; West, M. and Ainscow, M. (1996): *Improving Quality Education for All*, London: Fulton

House of Commons DCSF Ninth Report of Session (2009-10) London: Stationery Office Ltd.

House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2005-06): Special Educational Needs Third Report of Session 2005-06, Vol.1 London: Stationery Office Ltd. Report: HC478-1:
http://www.auditcomission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONALREPORT.asp?
Category ID (accessed April 2008)

Huberman, M. and Miles, B. (1984): 'Innovation up Close' in Fullan, M. (1991): *The Meaning of Educational Change*, New York Cassell

Huberman, M. and Miles, B. (1994): 'Data Management and Analysis Methods', in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks*:* CA Sage, pp.428-445

Human Rights Act (1998): The Right to an Education (Article 2 of the First Protocol)

Independent Panel for Special Educational Advice (IPSEA) in IPSEA Complaint (2006): *Misleading the Parents* http://www.ipsea.org.uk/complaint (accessed 22.11.2007)

Ingvarson, L.; Elliott, A.; Kleinhenz, E. and McKenzie, P. (2006): *Standards for School Leadership: A critical Review of Literature*, Teaching Australia. Available from: www.teachingaustralia.edu.au (accessed May 2011).

Johnson, C. (2007), '*Parents and Politicians Clash over future of SEN education'* Newsdesk: special report, January 17

Kvale, S. (1996): *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, London, Sage.

Kvale, S. (ed.) (1994): ('Ten Standard Objections to Qualitative Research Interviews', *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 25, 147-173, pp.1-16

Lamb Inquiry on Special Educational Needs and Parental Confidence DCSF (2009): Learning 21: A New Joint Venture Between VT Group plc and Costain Group plc. Available from: /Http://www.learning21com. templates./vtschools/adult_home.asp (accessed May 2008)

Leithwood, K. and Levin, B. (2005): *Assessing School Leader and Leadership Programme Effects on Pupil Learning,:* DfES (2005) RR662

Lewis, J. (2007): *'Ruth Kelly has proved we were right all along'* South London Press, January 16, p.14

Lindsay, G. Pather, S. and Strand, S. (2006) '*Special Educational Needs and Ethnicity: Issues of Over- and Under-Representation'* DfES (2006) RR757, Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research: Institute of Education, University of Warwick

Maslowski, R. (2001): *School Culture and School Performance an Explorative Study Organisational Culture Secondary Schools and their Effects*, Twente University Press available from: www.tuputwenten1/UK/catelogue/eduationalschoolculture (accessed May 2008)

Meijer, J.W. (2003): *Special Needs Education in Europe: Inclusive Policies and Practices*, Article 56/60 accessed from: http://www.inklusion-online.net/index.php/inklusion/article/view (accessed April 2009)

Miles, K.S and Louis, M.B. (1990): cited in Fullan, M. (1993): *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*, Falmer Press: London

Miller, P.V. (1995): 'Validity and Reliability in Interviews', Ch. 6 in Cohen, L.; Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007): *Research Methods in Education*, 6th edn, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, pp.153-154

Minichiello, V.; Aroni, R.; Timewell, E. and Alexander, L. (1990): *In-depth Interviewing: Researching People,* Melbourne Longman Cheshire, pp.245-60

Morrison, K.R.B. (1993): 'Sampling and Access', in Cohen, L.; Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007): *Research Methods in Education*, 6th edn, London: Routledge, pp112-117

Muijs, D. and Harris, A. (2007): 'Teacher Leadership in Action three Case Studies of Contrasting Schools', *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* Sage Journals online, Jan 2011 39: pp.122-145

Ndaji, J. and Tymms, P. (2009): *The P Scales Assessing the Progress of Children with Special Educational Needs,* University of Durham, UK.

Nias,J. (1991): 'Validity and Reliability in Interviews', Ch. 6 in Cohen, L.; Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007): *Research Methods in Education*, 6th edn, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, pp.153-154

Noguera, P.A. (2006): 'A critical response to Michael Fullan's "The Future of Educational Change: system thinkers in action"', *Journal of Educational Change*, Vol.7: pp.129-132

Norwich, B. (1993): 'Dilemmas of inclusion and the future of education', Ch. 8 in Cigman, R. (ed.) (2007): *Included or Excluded*, London: Routledge

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2006): *Inclusion: Does it Matter where Pupils are Taught? Provision and Outcomes for Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities*, Available from: www.Ofsted.gov.uk/portal/site/Internet/menuitem.e11147abaed5f711828 ((accessed: 23.10.2007)

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2007): Joint Area Review: Ref 209

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2010): *The Special Educational Needs and Disability Review*, Reference No: 090221 Available from: www.ofsted.gov.uk (accessed September 2010)

Oliver, M. (1996): *Understanding Disability: From Theory to Practice*, London: Macmillan

Pijl, S.J.; Meijer, C.J.W and Hegarty, S. (eds) (1997): *Inclusive Education: A Global Agenda* London: Routledge

Place Group Ltd available from: http://www.place-group.com/services Accessed 2008

Plath, D.W. (1990): 'Field-notes, filed-notes and the conferring of the note', in Sanjek, R. (ed.): *Field-notes: The makings of anthropology*, Ithaca, NY:Cornell University Press, pp.371-384

Polyzoi, E, and Cerna, M. Selected Case Studies: Russia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania Ch. 2 in Fullan, M. Polyzoi, E. Anchan J.P. (ed.) (2003), *Change Forces in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: Education in Transition,* Routledge Falmer

Reindal, S.M. (2010): 'What is the Purpose? Reflections on Inclusion and Special Education from a Capability Perspective'*, European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 25 (1), pp.1-14 http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/section?content=a919013317 (accessed 13 April 2011)

Reynolds, D. (1995): 'Using school effectiveness knowledge for children with special needs – the problems and possibilities', in Clark, C.; Dyson, A. and Millward, A. (eds) (1995): *Towards Inclusive Schools?* London David Fulton http://www.tandfonlinecom/doi/abs/10.180/09500799509533374

Rolfe, G. (2006): 'Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: qualitative research', *Journal of Advance Nursing,* (2006) Vol. 53 (3), pp.304-310. Available from: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03727.x/full (accessed July 2007)

Rowan, B. and Miskel, C.G. (1999): cited in Fullan, M. (2001): *Leading in a Culture of Change*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Salt Review (2010): *Supply of teachers for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties*, Final DfE Report February 2010.

Sammons, P.; Mortimore, P. and Hillman, J. (1996): *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: response to Peddling feel-good fictions*, Forum 33: pp.88-90

School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) (2010) DCSF (2009): *Schools Pupils and Their characteristics*, HC (2009) Third Report Vol. 1.

Schwandt, T.A. (2000): 'Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutic and Social Constructionism', in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2000): *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.189-213

Scott, J. (1990): *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research*, Cambridge Polity Press

Sebba, J. (2009): *Personalisation and special educational needs*, Policy Paper 5 6th Series available from:
http://ww.nasen.org.uk/uploads/publications/14.doc
(accessed May 2011)

SEN (Provision of Information by LEA (England) Regulations 2001 Regulation 2(d)

Sen, A. (1985, 1990, 2002, 2004) in A Sen (2005) Human Rights and Capabilities *Journal of Human Rights and Capabilities,* Vol.6, pp.151-166

Sen, A. (2005): 'Human Rights and Capabilities', *Journal of Human Rights and Capabilities*, Vol.6, pp.151-166

Senge, P. (1990): cited in Fullan, M. (1991): *Meaning of Educational Change*, 3rd edn, London: Falmer: Press

Silverman, D. (1993): 'Methods for Analysing Talk Text and Interaction', *Interpreting Qualitative Data,* London: Sage.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001):

Stake, R.E. (2003): 'Case Studies', Ch. 5 in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2003): *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Taylor, S.A. (1995): 'Less Better than the Rest: perceptions of integration in a Multi-ethnic special needs unit'. *Educational Review*, 47 (3), pp.263-74

Teachernet, BSF Projects (2008): [Online] Available from: http:// www.teachernet.gov.uk/management (accessed Sept 2008)

Terzi, L. (2005): 'Beyond the Dilemma of Difference: The Capability Approach to Disability and Special Educational Needs', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 39, pp.443-459

Thomas, C. (1999): cited in Thomas, C. (2004): *Disability and Society*, Vol.19, issue 6 October 2004, pp.569-583

Tutt, R. (2007) *'Every Child Included'* London: Sage: Chapman Publishing

UNESCO (1994): *Final Report: World Conference on Special needs Education: Access and Quality*, Paris UNESCO

UNESCO (2001): The Education for All movement.

University of Sussex Ethical Guidance Handbook (2007/08): Annex 3, available from: http://www.sussx.ac.uk/si/1-7-6-2.html (accessed 3.12.2008)
URL:http//dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649880500120491 (accessed: 19 March 2011)

Van Maanen, J. (1988): *Tales of the Field on writing ethnography*, Chicago University of Chicago Press

Von Glaserfeld, E. (1995): cited in Hardy, M. (1995): *Radical Constructivist Critical Review*, University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf coast, Available from: http://resources.metapress (accessed July 2008)

Ward, V. (2007): 'Governor: She's made mockery of the system', *Daily Mirror*, 9 January, p.5.

Warnock, M. (1978): *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People,* London: HMSO

Warnock, M. (2005): *Special Educational Needs: A New Look:* No: 11 Series of policy discussions UK: Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain

Appendix A: Ethical Considerations

I agree to proposed interview / conversation on restructuring special educational needs provision in this authority.

School leader respondent

Name…………………………………

Date……………………………………..

To be arranged at an agreed date and time by:

Telephone…………………School Based…………………………………

Transcripts will be forwarded by email for your comments, validation and return.

My doctorate is partly funded by my employer – the National Association of Head Teaches; however the research will be conducted entirely independently. I am following Sussex University's ethical guidelines, www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/internal/research/ethics **your response will therefore be confidential.**

Jan Myles Doctoral Research Student

APPENDIX B

October 2008

To: The head teacher

"Exploring the Impact of SEN restructuring within a London Local Authority"

This questionnaire is being circulated to all schools in your Local Authority. I hope that you will be able to devote a little of your time.

My inquiry is significant because your local authority is one of 17 authorities involved in the very 'first-wave' of the government's finance initiative *"Building Schools for the Future"*. It is also important because Government Statistics (2007) indicate that 19% of primary pupils and 18% of all secondary pupils were categorised as having some sort of special educational need. I am hoping that the findings will feedback into policy development.   My intention is to explore the impact of the local authority's decision to restructure special educational needs provision - on schools, pupils and parents.

My doctorate is partly funded by my employer - the National Association of Head Teachers; however the research will be conducted entirely independently. I am following Sussex University's ethical guidelines; your <u>response will therefore be confidential.</u>

The views of head teachers are extremely important to this project and a pre-paid envelope is enclosed for the return of the completed questionnaire. May I also take this opportunity to thank you for your time and your contribution to this investigation?

Jan Myles
Ed Doc Student Sussex University

Questionnaire

"Exploring the Impact of SEN restructuring within a London Local Authority"

In response to this survey - please tick either yes or no, providing a fuller response where indicated

1. Are you aware that your Local Authority is restructuring its Special Educational Needs Provision?
     Yes   No

(i)   If yes, how did you find out?

2. Is your school directly involved in the proposed restructuring?   **Yes   No**

(i)   If yes, please indicate what changes are proposed:

(ii)   If no, do you think the changes will indirectly affect your school? **Yes   No**

(iii)   If yes, how will restructuring proposals affect your school?

3. Please insert here any additional comments you may wish to make.

Questionnaire: "Exploring the Impact of SEN restructuring within a London Local Authority"

4. I would like the opportunity to talk to a few Head Teachers

(i) If you are willing to contribute further by way of a telephone interview please provide below email and telephone contact details.

(ii) If you prefer to contribute further by way of a school based interview please provide below email and telephone contact details.

Thank you for completing the question and please return your response to Jan Myles in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope marked private and confidential.

APPENDIX C

Text from email circulated together with questionnaire prior to interview (more personal introductory note).

"Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed, I am attaching letter and questionnaire circulated to schools in your authority. It would be helpful if you could return this schedule, prior to interview, by email.

Please let me know whether you prefer that I visit your school, or whether it would be more convenient to have a telephone interview, we can then arrange a date and time to suit. I hope that you will agree to our conversation being recorded, but do let me know if there are any problems with this suggestion.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Jan Myles"

APPENDIX D

Note: All interviewees were asked to complete the questionnaire prior to Interview

Interview Schedule / Guide

Section 1:
  (i)   How long in your professional role?
  (ii)   In this School?

Section 2:
  (i)   How would you describe your pupil profile?
  (ii)   Has your pupil profile changed?
  (iii)   Would you say that you have balanced pupil intake e.g. diversity of pupils?
  (iv)   How does the LA go about admission / placements?
  (v)   Are admissions exceeded / over planned admission number or over placement numbers?
  (vi)   Are those Officers making the placements fully aware of what the school provides?
  (vii)   Are out of county placements reducing?

Section 3:
  (i)   Do you support the aims' of the local authority's restructuring proposals?
  (ii)   What is your view on the proposals for increasing SEN provision?

Section 4:
  (i)   Do you encourage parents to contribute to the work of the school in supporting their children?
  (ii)   Do you provide any support / services for parents?
  (iii)   Do you encourage outside collaborations / partnerships e.g. schools, colleges, businesses?
  (iv)   Do staff work collaboratively with staff in other schools?
  (v)   Do staff exchange / disseminate their knowledge and skills to others in the school?
  (vi)   Within and outside in the wider community?
  (vii)   Are there sufficient resources and if so are they accessible to the school to support needs of pupils and staff?
  (viii) What more do you think could be done to progress / improve special educational needs provision?

Section 5:
  (i)   Would you say the local authority is leading professional development for your staff, the school, or both?
  (ii)   What opportunities are available for your own professional development?