



A whole school approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A case study

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not submitted it previously, in its entirety or part, at this or any other university for a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.ueli'.

Signature

Date: April 2019

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I thank you all and may God bless you

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved family:

- ❖ My husband, my pillar of strength and my best friend, who made it all possible and always makes my life complete.
- ❖ My daughters, Takudzwa and Isabel, who are my love and joy.
- ❖ My parents who are my backbone, true inspiration for hard work and achievement.
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ABSTRACT

This descriptive, exploratory and interpretive ethnographic case study explored the extent to which the ‘whole school approach’ could be utilised in implementing inclusive education at one selected special school in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. The ‘whole school approach’ is used in this study as a systems-based and ecosystemic concept of viewing a school. In a school system, this philosophy enhances school personnel to share responsibilities in looking after learners’ individual differences and special needs. The school was purposefully sampled. This study utilised the Whole School Approach (WSA) as a conceptual framework. This WSA model entails three inter-connected dimensions of a school namely school policies, culture and practices. An ethnographic case study design was employed. One head of school, fifteen teachers and two caregivers were purposively selected and participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and analysis of instructional material were used to collect data. In addition, document analysis and field notes were also used. Data were analysed using a combination of analytic induction and interpretive analysis. Regarding inclusive culture, the study found that the school has a relaxed atmosphere, with no adapted facilities as it was originally designed and constructed with one type of disability in mind, which is hearing impairment. On the theme of inclusive practices, findings showed that the school does not have a special type of curriculum as advocated by inclusive education requirements except that teachers chose what to teach and what not to teach from the normal curriculum. Minimal curriculum and assessment accommodation were found to be major factors possibly responsible for weakening the inclusive education programme. Pertaining to school policies, findings revealed that re-visitation of current school policies might be a priority if inclusive education is to be a complete success at the school. The current policies are mainly applicable to learners with hearing impairment only and rarely include learners without disability. Overall, findings from the study revealed that implementation of inclusive education at the school is done at a moderate level. Informed by the results, the researcher coined a new concept *reverse inclusion*, which is a new form of inclusion in its infancy where the so-called ‘normal learners’ or ‘learners without diverse needs’ are included into the formerly entitled special schools which is the exact opposite of the placement of learners with a disability or difficulty into an ordinary school environment and regular curriculum. The study recommends that the school should revisit its school vision and mission statement. The two should address both groups of learners (with or without disabilities)

instead of one. Further studies on the same phenomenon could be researched in secondary schools as well, to establish if the age of learners contributes to different cultures and practices.

Key Words:

inclusive education, inclusive culture, inclusive practice, integration, reverse inclusion, Whole School Approach, index of inclusion

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLaration	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiii
List of TABLES	xv
List of FIGURES	xvi
List of acronyms	xvii
CHAPTER 1	1
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction and background to the study	1
1.2 The Zimbabwean Context of Inclusive Education	5
1.3 Problem statement	8
1.3.1 Aim of Research	10
1.3.2 Research Questions	10
1.4 Conceptual framework	10
1.5 Researcher positionality	11
1.6 Delimitations	12
1.7 The structure of the thesis	13
1.8 Chapter summary	15
2.1 Introduction	16
2.2 Operationalisation of terms	16
2.3 Special Needs Education	18
2.4 Historical Review of Special Needs Education	19
2.5 What is inclusive education?	20
2.6 International success stories on the implementation of inclusive education	26
2.6.1 The context of Hong Kong	27
2.6.2 Romanian context for inclusion	29
2.6.3 Sub - Saharan Africa success case on the implementation of inclusive education	32
Ghana's context for inclusion	32
2.6.4 Lessons from the three success cases	34

2.7 Literature Review	35
2.7.1 Shaping the theoretical Framework: The Whole School Approach	35
2.7.2 Dimensions of Whole School Approach (WSA) as lenses for data analysis	37
2.8 Conceptual Framework: Characteristics of the Whole School Approach.....	49
2.8.1 Whole School consensus	49
2.8.2 Curriculum accommodation	50
2.8.3 Differentiated teaching	51
2.8.4 Peer support and peer tutoring.....	53
2.8.5 Teacher collaboration	54
2.8.6 Classroom support	56
2.8.7 Assessment accommodation.....	56
2.9 Models of disability.....	58
2.9.1 The Medical Model thinking	58
2.9.2 The Social Model thinking	60
2.10 Summary	62
CHAPTER 3	63
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	63
3.1 Introduction	63
3.2 Philosophical underpinning.....	63
3.3 A review of the methodological approaches and instruments used to study whole school approach in implementing inclusive education	65
3.3.1 Quantitative approaches	65
3.3.2 Qualitative approaches	66
3.4 Design.....	67
3.5 Methodology	69
3.5.1 Site selection.....	69
3.5.2 Population.....	71
3.5.3 Sampling and participant selection.....	71
3.6 Data Collection Strategies	75
3.6.1 Interviews	76
3.6.2 Researcher's field notes.....	78
3.6.3 Classroom Observation.....	79
3.6.4 Document analysis.....	82

3.7 Validation of instruments	82
3.7.1 Pilot Study	84
3.8 Data Analysis	85
3.8.1 Analysis of interviews and researcher's field notes	86
3.8.2 Analysis of Classroom Observation	88
3.8.3 Document analysis.....	89
3.9 Trustworthiness and rigour in the research	89
3.10 Researcher's role	91
3.11 Ethical Considerations.....	92
3.12 Summary	93
CHAPTER 4	94
RESULTS FOR HEAD OF SCHOOL'S CONCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	94
4.1 Introduction	94
4.2 Problems encountered with the coding process	94
4.3 The nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school (Addressing sub- research question 1).....	95
4.3.1 Inclusive cultures	97
4.3.2 Teachers' fears and apprehension.....	98
4.3.3. Belief in inclusion.....	98
4.3.4 School welcoming climate.....	99
4.3.5 Respect and support of stakeholders and community involvement (Addressing research question 2)	100
4.3.6 Resources.....	102
4.3.7 Teacher expertise (Addressing research question 2)	103
In responding to an interview question the school head said:	103
4.4 Inclusive policies.....	103
4.4.1 Inclusive induction policies	104
4.4.2 Open door policies.....	105
4.4.3 Partnership with parents (Addressing research question 2).....	106
4.4.4 Support behaviour policies.	107
4.4.5 Leadership role of school head	108
4.4.6 Teachers' responsibilities	108

4.5 Inclusive practices	109
4.5.1 Curriculum modification	110
4.5.2 Parental involvement (Addressing research question 2)	111
4.5.3 Whole school consensus (Addressing research question 4)	112
4.5.4 Curriculum accommodation	113
4.5.5 Differentiated teaching	113
4.5.6 Peer tutoring	114
4.5.7 Peer Support	115
4.5.8 Teacher collaboration (Addressing research question 4)	115
4.5.9 Assessment accommodation	116
4.6 Challenges experienced when utilising the Whole School Approach in the implementation of inclusive education (Addressing sub-research question 3)	117
4.7 Discussion	117
4.7.1 Inclusive Culture	118
4.7.2 Inclusive policies	121
4.7.3 Inclusive Practices	122
4.8 Summary	125
CHAPTER 5	127
RESULTS ON TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	127
5.1 Introduction	127
5.2 Results from classroom observation	127
5.2.1 Inclusive culture	128
5.2.2 Inclusive policies	131
5.2.3 Inclusive practices	132
5.2.4 Average total scores for each dimension for the three teachers to determine level of implementation of inclusive education	134
5.3 Results from field notes and document analysis	136
5.4 Results from interviews	136
5.4.1 Inclusive culture	138
5.4.2 Inclusive policies	146
5.5 Discussion	162
5.5.1 Inclusive culture	163
5.5.2 Inclusive policies	166

5.5.3 Inclusive practices	168
5.5.4 Challenges experienced when utilising the whole school approach.....	171
5.5.5 Summary.....	172
CHAPTER 6	173
CAREGIVERS' RESULTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.....	173
6.1 Introduction	173
6.2 The results from caregivers' interviews	173
6.2.1 Period of service at the school and understanding of learners with diverse needs.....	174
6.2.2 Caregivers' responsibilities	175
6.2.3 Challenges experienced by caregivers and solutions to overcome the challenges.....	176
6.3 Collaboration with teachers and learner views	177
6.4 Discussion	178
6.5 Summary	180
CHAPTER 7	181
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.....	181
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	181
7.1 Introduction	181
7.2 Summary	181
7.3 The nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school (sub-research question i)	183
7.4 Determining what stakeholders (head of school, teachers and caregivers) understand inclusive education to be (sub-research question ii)	185
7.5 Challenges, if any, experienced when using the Whole School Approach in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school (sub-research question iii).....	188
7.6 Establishing how best the 'whole school approach' could help in the learning of children with diverse needs in the context of the selected school (sub-research question iv)	190
7.7 Establishing the extent to which the 'whole school approach' can be utilised in implementing inclusive education at a selected school in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe (aim of the study)	192
7.8 Recommendations	193
7.8.1 Recommendations for future study.....	196
7.8.2 Limitations of the study.....	196
7.9 Conclusion.....	196
REFERENCES	199

APPENDICES	231
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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	231
HEAD OF SCHOOL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	231
APPENDIX B	232
TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ECD AND GRADES 1 AND 2 TEACHERS ...	232
APPENDIX C	233
CAREGIVER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.....	233
APPENDIX D	234
FOCUS GROUP TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 TEACHERS.....	234
APPENDIX E	235
OBSERVATION SCHEDULE	235
APPENDIX F	238
INTER-RATER RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS.....	238
APPENDIX G	240
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	240
APPENDIX H	241
ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ZIMBABWE.....	242
APPENDIX I	244
LETTERS AND CONSENT FORMS.....	244
CONSENT FORM	250
HEAD OF SCHOOL	250
CONSENT FORM	251
TEACHER	251

CONSENT FORM	252
CAREGIVER.....	252
CONSENT FORM	253
PARENT/GUARDIAN.....	253
APPENDIX J	254
LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE.....	254

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Summary of definitions of inclusive education by various authors	23
Table 3.1: Summary of demographic variables for the nine interviewed and observed teachers.	74
Table 3.2: Summary of demographic variables for the two interviewed caregivers	75
Table 3.3: Observed lesson related-sessions shown by title of content.....	81
Table 4.1: Inclusive themes and their categories	96
Table 5.1: Inclusive themes and their categories	137

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Sample of participants from the Special school	73
Figure 4.1: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive culture	97
Figure 4.2: Tree diagram showing a network of the themes under the inclusive policies theme	104
Figure 4.3: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive practices ...	110
Figure 5.1: Graph showing how the 3 teachers implemented WSA inclusive culture aspects...	129
Figure 5.2: Graph showing how the 3 teachers implemented WSA inclusive policies aspects .	132
Figure 5.3: Graph showing how the 3 teachers implemented WSA inclusive practices aspects	133
Figure 5.4: Graph showing average total score for each theme for each of the three teachers ..	135
Figure 5.5: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive culture	138
Figure 5.6: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive policies theme.	146
Figure 5.7: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive practices theme.....	153
Figure 7.1: Interactions among inclusive practices, culture and policies	191

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ECD	-	Early Childhood Education
IE	-	Inclusive Education
IEP	-	Individualised Educational Programme
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
MoPSE	-	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
NCSE	-	National Council for Special Education
NCRPD	-	Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
NEA	-	National Education for All
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PWD	-	People with Disabilities
SNE	-	Special Needs Education
SE	-	Special Education
UNESCO	-	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children's Fund
ZSPS	-	Zimbabwe School Psychological Services
WHO	-	World Health Organisation
WSA	-	Whole School Approach

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children (B. Lindqvist, UN-Rapporteur, 1994).

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

This study sought to establish the extent to which the ‘whole school approach’ could be utilised in implementing inclusive education at one special school in one province in Zimbabwe. Placement of learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools rather than in segregated special schools and special classes has been referred to variously as *integration*, *mainstreaming*, and more recently, *inclusion* (Page, Boyle, McKay & Mavropoulou, 2018; Yuen & Westwood, 2001). On one hand, the terms *integration* and *mainstreaming* have virtually been used synonymously, referring to the placement of a learner with a disability or difficulty into an ordinary school environment and regular curriculum, but usually without that curriculum being modified to any great extent (Sermier-Dessementet & Bless, 2013). The term *inclusion*, on the other hand, refers to a much more radical model. It implies that the regular school curriculum, teaching methods, organisation, and resources need to be adapted quite significantly to ensure that all learners, regardless of disability, can participate successfully in the mainstream education (Kassah, Kassah & Phillips, 2018; Mittler, 2012; Sermier-Dessementet & Bless, 2013, Ruijs, Van der Veen & Peetsma, 2010). This thesis advances the proposition that rather than moving the child to the support services, inclusion refers to the bringing of these services to the child and requires that the child shall benefit from being in the class as opposed to keeping up with the other learners. This thesis employs the term inclusion to tease out the tensions and ramifications of such an orientation in this field.

Having defined and operationalised the term inclusion, it is logical to go further and define *inclusive education*. This thesis adopts Sebba and Sachdev's (1997) definition of inclusive education, who argue that *[Inclusive education is] a process involving changes in the way schools are organised, in the curriculum and in teaching strategies, to accommodate the range of needs and abilities among pupils. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils* (Sebba & Sachdev, 1997:2). This definition introduces certain features pertaining to the whole school approach which need to be employed for inclusive education to be realised. A whole school approach involves members of the school community, school staff, parents and caregivers, learners and the broader community that is building and refining a thriving positive culture where everyone feels a sense of belonging (Kwan & Cheung, 2016). In this thesis, a whole school approach is a systems-based and ecosystemic concept and way of viewing a school.

During the last three-and-half decades, the special needs education community has established a research agenda calling for more studies focused on inclusive education (Robinson & Goodey, 2018; Chatman, 2017; Clough & Corbett, 2000; Sermier-Dessemontet, Bless, & Morin, 2012; Sermier-Dessemontet & Bless, 2013; Hoppey, & McLeskey, 2010; Ruijs, Van der Veen, & Peetsma, 2010; Slee, 1998; Soder, 1989; Ruijs, Van der Veen, & Peetsma, 2010; Makhmudayeva, 2016; Ferrante, 2017). Subsequently, curriculum policy reform documents (e.g. Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education, agreed upon by representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations in June 1994) also advocate the restructuring of culture, policies and practices to promote a different approach to education of learners with special needs, including enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special education needs in mainstream classrooms. These studies have been done both in developed and developing countries outside Africa, and this study argues that not much research has been done to explore and validate such a culture, policies and practices in inclusive education in Africa, specifically in Zimbabwe, hence this exploration. For example, the organisation Save the Children UK (2000, 2002) conducted studies on the implementation of inclusive education in developing countries such as Somalia, Mongolia, Peru, Brazil and Vietnam (Samkange, 2013) but Southern Africa was excluded. There is justification therefore for such a study in this geographical location.

Focusing only on the ‘whole school approach’ in integrating children with special needs, this study builds off the work by Yuen and Westwood (2001) using a descriptive and interpretive approach to initiate conversations of the premise that including learners in the mainstream enables learners with disabilities to benefit from the stimulation of mixing with relatively more able learners. Earlier studies also suggest that there is no clear advantage in segregated special education for learners with mild forms of disability, and that they progressed as well (and sometimes better) socially and academically in regular classrooms (e.g. Dunn, 1968; Wang & Baker, 1986). The basic premise of the inclusion movement is that principles of anti-discrimination, equity, social justice, and basic human rights make it imperative that learners with disabilities and special needs should enjoy the same access as all other learners to a regular school environment and to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum (Knight, 1999; OECD, 1999; UNESCO, 1994). Such an argument locates the discussion in a social-ethical discourse which is strongly focused on values (see Salamanca Declaration: UNESCO, 1994). Of interest is the fact that in this thesis, learners without disabilities are the ones enrolling in a special school, making this study a logical extension of the work initiated by Yuen and Westwood (2001).

Furthermore, this study is to unravel how the implemented provisions of the ‘whole school approach’ initiative have helped the case school move towards achieving more inclusive cultures, through the development of inclusive policies and practices.

As a result this will lead to much needed identification of positive system characteristics that should be supported and encouraged, while recognising areas of concern and gaps in practice that need to be addressed in future development plans at both school and Ministry levels.

The study will also elicit much needed information about the views of the stakeholders following the implementation of the inclusive initiative ‘whole school approach’.

Therefore, this study is worth tiling as it will contribute to the, currently, limited body of knowledge available on whole school approach in Zimbabwe and aims at producing recommendations that can inform future policy and practice. The study may also play a significant role in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG4 that speaks to inclusive and quality education for all.

In addition, there is also little on studies of special schools enrolling learners without disabilities, it is always the reverse. Hence, this study fills an important niche. Research has produced contradicting findings regarding the implementation of inclusive education regarding teachers’s attitudes, parents’ attitudes and the community at large, therefore the study being reported here may contribute towards clarity in implementation of inclusive education.

Still on the same subject, Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) asserts that research should focus on ways that provide guidance on inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices to enable the whole school approach in including children with special needs achieve its goals. Angura (2015), citing the World Bank Report (2002), defines the ‘whole school approach’ as a slant for developing a durable and active relationship between each school and the community, and actively involving teachers in changing their pupils’ learning environment. To other scholars, a ‘whole school approach’ is cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed to improve the inter-connectedness of three dimensions of that school, namely school policies, school culture and school practices (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2010; Hegarty & Alur, 2002; Poon-McBrayer & Lian, 2002). Policy, in this case, deals with the learning and teaching achievement, attitudes and wellbeing of every young person in a school; culture relates to establishing inclusive values in the school which is the key to success; and practices relate to flexible deployment of various resources and co-ordination of conditions that support quality teaching, additional support and intensive individualised support. The stance taken here is that such propositions have not paid much attention to the potential influence of schools implementing the ‘whole school approach’ in including children with special needs (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2010; Hegarty & Alur, 2002; Poon-McBrayer & Lian, 2002). Given that there is little on studies focusing on the *whole school approach* in including children with and without special needs (Callan, 2013; MacBeath, Galton, Steward, MacBeath & Page, 2006; Tsang, 2011), this current study fills this significant gap

There is probably no issue other than inclusion that causes such widespread controversy in special education among teachers, administrators, and parents (Berg, 2004). Today the trend in special education is toward inclusive practices with the best interests of each individual learner in mind (Friend & Bursuck, 2012). Some work has been done in Southern Africa, but one area has been glossed over and given a superficial examination: the whole school approach in including children with special needs. This current study recognises that not much research has been done in the area of inclusive education using the whole school approach. As the Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) proposes, research should focus on ways that provide guidance on inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices to enable the achievement of the whole school approach’s goals in including children with and without special needs.

1.2 The Zimbabwean Context of Inclusive Education

Zimbabwe is located in the south central region of Africa and its economy is mostly rural agricultural, although mining has taken significant presence. The country has a population of approximately 16.91 million of which about 67.72 percent is rural, black African. Most Zimbabweans, about 70%, are Shona speaking. Minority cultural groups include the Ndebele, Venda, Tonga and a few whites. According to UNICEF (2006), the Zimbabwean literacy rate of 90 percent remains one of the highest in the world. Recent statistics according to UNESCO (2015) indicate that Zimbabwe's literacy rate has gone down and now stands at 86.5%. Compared to other African and European countries, this percentage is still high. In Zimbabwe, about three million children (90 percent) of the total school age population attend school (Education Management Information Systems, 2004). Of these, 14 115 learners with mental retardation, 50 000 learners with learning difficulties, 1 634 learners with hearing impairment, and 2 635 learners with blindness or visual impairment attended school in Zimbabwe in 2004 (Education Management Information Systems, 2004; Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe & Kasayira, 2007). After a focused literature review of recent studies, no current statistics have been identified nor published. According to Ncube and Hlatshwayo (2014), a rapid assessment of primary and secondary schools conducted by the National Education Advisory Board, Chakanyuka, Chung and Stevenson (2009) estimated that in Zimbabwe, as many as 469 000 children may have required special needs education. It is worth noting that these figures might have changed since this submission and observation. The World Health organisation (WHO) estimates that 10 percent of children worldwide have a disability (WHO, 2004), and if this has to be applied to Zimbabwe, it paints a gloomy picture that about 300 000 school-age children have some form of disability (Mutepfa, Mpofu & Chataika, 2007). On paper, the needs of these children with disability once in the schools have to be supported by the Zimbabwe School Psychological Services and Special Education (SPS & SE) department whose primary responsibility is to support schools in their inclusive education practices and endeavours (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe & Kasayira, 2007). The SPS & SE Department also provides in-service training and support in the application of applied behaviour analysis and teaching to learners with disabilities, in addition to a wide range of counselling services (Mpofu & Nyanungo, 1998).

According to Mpofu (2004), there is no specific legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe. There are only policy circulars issued by the Ministry of Education. This is

despite Zimbabwe being a signatory to the Salamanca Statement and Framework as one of the 92 countries mentioned earlier for action on special needs education (UNESCO, 1994) and other several inclusive education related international charters and conventions (Hlatywayo & Muranda, 2014:124; Musengi, Mudyahoto, Chireshe, 2010; Chireshe, 2011). However, Zimbabwe does have a number of government policy statements which are consistent with the intent of inclusive education. For example, the Zimbabwe Education Act (Education Act, 1996), the Disabled Persons Act (Disabled Persons Act, 1996), and various Ministry of Education circulars (Education Secretary's Policy Circular No P36. 1990) require all learners, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed and disability, to have access to basic or primary education (up to grade 7). Interestingly, there is a mismatch in legislature documents because the Disabled Persons Act (1996) does not commit the government to providing inclusive education in any way; in fact, it specifically prevents citizens from suing the Zimbabwean government regarding government facility access concerns that could impair their community participation (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe & Kasayira, 2006). Given this background, Mutepfa et al (2007) pose a question which needs serious consideration: In the absence of any mandatory order stipulating the services to be provided, and by whom, how, when and where, could it be that there are no meaningful educational services for learners with disabilities in Zimbabwe?

This situation persists despite Zimbabwe having signed, ratified, adopted and acceded to several declarations, conventions and protocols, for example UNESCO's Salamanca Statement and Framework for action on special needs education. In terms of Article 3 of the UNESCO Salamanca Framework of Action, an education system as a whole 'should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions.' In addition to that, the UNESCO Dakar Framework of Action (2000) noted that "in order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly...Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners" (para. 4). Zimbabwe, as a signatory to several inclusive education-related international charters and conventions is mandated to initiate and support inclusive programmes for people with disabilities (PWD). Efforts have been made through drafting legislation, which was not comprehensive and specific on the inclusion of PWD. The efforts of the Government of Zimbabwe apparently end at integration through resource units and special classes (Hlatshwayo & Muranda, 2014; Samkange, 2013; Mafa,

2012). This was also confirmed by the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training in Zimbabwe in 1999 which observed that inclusive education proclaimed by the government was largely theoretical (Chireshe, 2011). The Commission recommended that real and serious inclusive education needed to be adopted at all levels of the education system. This came against a background of practices of integration, mainstreaming or social and community rehabilitation (Hlatshwayo & Nleya, 2014). Following recommendations from the commission report, this study interrogates the adoption and implementation of these recommendations, if any.

Another point of concern is that any school in Zimbabwe that refuses to enrol a child on the grounds of disability is in violation of the Disabled Persons Act (1996) and faces disciplinary action from any of Zimbabwe's 73 Education District Offices. This is in line with the Secretary for Education directive for inclusive education which requires schools to provide equal access to education for learners with disabilities, routinely screen for any form of disability, and admit any school age child, regardless of dis/ability. Interestingly, this requirement for open access to education does not extend to high school, perhaps because the government considers literacy as achievable by Grade 7 and high school education as a privilege rather than a right (Mutepfa et al, 2007). This could be the focus of another argument in another study; however, this thesis focuses on schools at primary level and is not entangled in this other debate.

In Zimbabwe there have been some projects designed for people with disabilities. Samkange, (2013) says these projects collapsed due to lack of support and resources. Of late, there have been attempts towards inclusive education in a number of schools in Zimbabwe. For example, some of the inclusion programmes which were initiated in both rural and urban areas collapsed at the commencement of economic hardships and restrictions in Zimbabwe (Hlatshwayo & Muranda, 2014:125; Samkange, 2013; Mafa, 2012:16). Presently, the School Psychological Services (SPS) and Special Needs Education (SNE) face challenges in implementing their awareness and advocacy programmes on inclusive education in all the 73 districts across Zimbabwe because of lack of financial, human and material resources (Hlatshwayo & Muranda, 2014:125; Samkange, 2013). Cash flow from the government continues to be a challenge and with no money it has been difficult for the SPS and SNE to implement inclusive education. This has also confined people with disabilities to institutions

where they face stigmatisation and continue to be excluded from mainstream educational and socio-economic activities.

It was against this background that a number of questions emerged. For example: Are teachers committed to supporting children with special needs? Do learners accept each other's uniqueness and individual differences? Do staff members share the concept of the *whole school approach* and support each other in implementing the process as a way of enhancing inclusive education? Are learning activities arranged in accordance with learner's abilities? Are school resources pooled and deployed flexibly to provide appropriate support to learners? Has the school improved accessibility of premises and distributed assistive technology to cater for learners with different needs? Are diverse teaching strategies (such as collaborative teaching and co-operative learning) used to facilitate learning? It is clear that one study may not adequately address all these questions. The major focus of this study therefore is to answer some of these questions. The pertinent investigation chosen for this study is the exploration of a 'whole school approach' in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe.

1.3 Problem statement

As mentioned earlier, Berg (2004) notes with concern that there is no issue that causes more controversy in special education among teachers, administrators, and parents than inclusion. According to Lipsky and Gartner, (1997:73), "special education, in general, began in the United States in 1823." The period of the 1960s and onwards was marked by a virtual explosion of research into inclusion and integration with scholars exploring the subject from different angles, for example, some questioning the benefit of special classes for children with mental retardation. In the 1990s, school personnel began to understand the philosophy of inclusion; its implementation became widespread globally and into the new millennium (Berg, 2004; Sermier- Dessemontet & Bless, 2013; Rujis, Van der Veen & Peetsma, 2010). Today the trend in special education is toward inclusive practices with the best interests of each individual learner in mind (Friend & Bursuck, 2012). As mentioned earlier, some work has been done in Southern Africa, but one area has been glossed over or given a superficial examination: the whole school approach in including children with special needs. Concerns are that in a country where the Disabled Persons Act (1996) does not commit the government

to providing inclusive education in any way, and where the absence of any mandatory order stipulating the services to be provided; could it be that there is no meaningful implementation of inclusive education for learners in Zimbabwe?

Another notion giving credence to undertaking this study is that there is an underlying assumption that inclusive education addresses and responds to the diverse needs of all children by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education (Nguyet & Ha, 2010; Page, Boyle, McKay & Mavropoulou, 2018). This has connotations of a change from the separate special education system which used to discriminate and segregate learners with special educational needs to an inclusive education system. The shift from the separate special education to inclusive education according to Landsberg (2005) signals a dramatic philosophical change. While history and experience have perfected a philosophical and paradigm shift from a discriminatory and segregatory separate special education system to an inclusive education system, not much research has been done to explore and validate such assumption paradigmatic shift. Very little was identified in the literature on the question of the creation of classes composed of learners having different abilities, rates of learning and understanding of concepts, learners' styles, motivational levels, special education needs and socio-economic backgrounds (Mafa, 2012). As spelt out earlier, of interest is the fact that in this thesis, learners without disabilities are the ones enrolling in a special school.

Since, 'inclusion' has become a subject of debate internationally (Dyson et al., 2002), the concept has acquired what has been referred to as 'jet lag' (Slee, 2004). That is to say, the phrase has lost its clarity, meaning different things to different people. Given that efforts to mainstream children with disabilities in Zimbabwe have been met with various challenges and inclusive education programmes have never reached fruition, a myriad of questions can be posed: to what extent does the whole school approach in including children with and without special needs resuscitate the inclusion concept in a country where the Government is not compelled by policy to provide inclusive education in any concrete way? What do personnel and stakeholders at the research sites of this study understand inclusion to be? What kind of challenges assail the personnel as they attempt to implement the whole school approach? How best could the stakeholders help in the learning of children with and without special needs?

The study explores and answers these questions among others. Specifically, the focus of this study is to explore a whole school approach in implementing inclusive education at one school in Zimbabwe so as to identify insights, patterns, describe local relationships (formal and informal), as well as understandings and meanings (tacit and explicit) on the whole school approach

1.3.1 Aim of Research

The empirical research investigation was carried out with the following primary aim:

To establish the extent to which the whole school approach could be utilised in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The main question which this study sought to answer was:

To what extent can the 'whole school approach' be utilised in implementing inclusive education in a selected school in Zimbabwe?

The following sub-questions were formulated:

- (i) What is the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school?
- (ii) What do the stakeholders (head of school, teachers, and caregivers) understand inclusive education to be?
- (iii) What challenges, if any, are experienced in implementing inclusive education using the whole school approach at the selected school?
- (iv) How best can the whole school approach help in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school?

1.4 Conceptual framework

This thesis is guided by the 'Whole School Approach' conceptual framework which was adapted from the Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010). A 'Whole School Approach' is a way of thinking about schools and a process for managing change (Hearne, Geary & Martin,

2017). The WSA model entails three interconnected dimensions of a school, namely, school policies, school culture and school practices (Education Bureau, 2010). The ‘Whole School Approach’ conceptual framework was preferred in this study to other frameworks such as Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical framework because of its similarities with the index of inclusion an instrument that supports schools to develop as inclusive schools and inclusive teachers. The whole school approach promotes consensus among stakeholders, emphasising curriculum accommodation inclusive of support and assessment, gives prominence to differentiation of teaching methods, advocates for peer support and teacher collaboration. Bronfenbrenner’s theory was not used in this study because it focuses strongly on the family, unlike this study which was undertaken at a special boarding school where parents or extended families were sparingly involved. The ‘Whole School Approach’ conceptual framework is elaborated and pertinent literature related to it is critically reviewed in Chapter 2.

1.5 Researcher positionality

The research methodology used in this study is qualitative as fully described in Chapter 3. Qualitative researchers such as Tobin (2000) and Henning (2004), advocate that the researcher “provide an account of who he or she is, and how he or she has influenced the results by engaging in the research process.” The term positionality describes an individual’s world view and the position they have chosen to adopt in relation to a specific research task (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Below, I provide a description of myself as a researcher and reflect on how my positionality might have interacted with the research conducted. I am a black female born in a typical black African family in Zimbabwe. I spent a large part of my young age, and all the schooling years, growing under the household of my brother in one of the cities in Zimbabwe. Professionally, my brother was a teacher at a Girls’ High School. That context influenced his behaviour as he was tough on me with regards to school work. He privileged education. This forced me to work hard. Education and Christian life were the dominant moralities in the family. After proceeding through High School level, I trained as a teacher. I then went for specialisation training in Hearing Impairment. I obtained a Diploma in Special Needs from a primary teacher’s college in Bulawayo which specialises in such training.

After my special educational needs training, I joined a special school as a specialist teacher. After teaching learners with hearing impairment at the special school for four years, I developed a passion towards learners with diverse needs. I thought of furthering my pedagogic and content knowledge in special needs education and enrolled for my first degree (Bachelor's degree in Special Needs Education) at Great Zimbabwe University. The passion for this specialisation spurred me to further my studies by enrolling for a Master's degree in Special Needs Education. However, at this time the challenges were stacked against me. It meant struggling with understanding of the content taught. I had many-a-sleepless night as I tore into volumes of literature and research into this specialisation. I assume it is because of this experience that my present research work has turned into this study. I am determined to succeed. Having taught and worked at a special school and still working with learners with special educational needs, it is also feasible that I may have pointed at evidence of positive growth in an overstated manner in my wish for such accomplishment. It is with this understanding that I have employed various ways for collecting data on the same challenge, creating multiple sources for triangulation and inviting professionals in the field to confirm evidence.

I usually do this when analysing data and ensuring that the processes are reliable to produce valid data. As Lindqvist (1994) puts it: 'All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children.' I believe it is the duty of all teachers, especially those working with learners with diverse needs, to assist as much as they can in the implementation of inclusive education. I hold anti-positivistic views which include interpreting the specific as opposed to generalising from the specific. My focus is on micro-concepts, the individual, personal constructs, negotiated meanings, naturalistic as opposed to experimental approaches and non-statistical analysis as opposed to statistical analysis among others. It is therefore, from this understanding that I undertook research for this study.

1.6 Delimitations

The study is aimed at highlighting a 'whole school approach' in implementing inclusive education. There is only one special school in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe where

normal learners or learners without disability are enrolled into the special school. The study is delimited to this specific school.

The other delimitation in this thesis is the use of the phrases *whole school approach* and ‘Whole School Approach.’ The former is used in this study as a systems-based and ecosystemic concept of viewing a school. Its characteristics in a school system are that WSA enhances team spirit among teachers, and encourages other school personnel to share responsibilities in looking after learners’ individual differences and special needs; provides learning opportunities for learners in all aspects of their school life; and the acceptance and concern from the school and their peers, and the support from other parents, learners with special needs having a stronger sense of belonging and a better environment for effective learning (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2013). The latter is used in this thesis as a set of interrelated concepts which guide the study. Accordingly, the ‘Whole School Approach’ is adopted as the conceptual framework of this study. In adopting the whole school approach, schools can cater for learners with diverse needs in a more comprehensive manner (Education Bureau, 2010; Callingham, 2017). This WSA model entails three inter-connected dimensions of a school namely school policies, school culture and school practices (Forlin, 2007).

1.7 The structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 - Orientation of the study: This chapter serves as an orientation to the research problem of the study. It contains the introduction and background to the study, the Zimbabwean context of inclusive education, statement of the problem, aim of the research, research questions, and objectives of the study, conceptual framework, researcher’s positionality, delimitations and concluding remarks for the chapter presented as a chapter summary.

Chapter 2 - Conceptual framework and Literature Review: This chapter focuses on review of related and recent literature. There is a section on international success stories on the implementation of inclusive education. This was considered necessary so as to identify the expected norm of what inclusive education entails. A literature survey was conducted on the Whole School Approach’s three inter-connected dimensions of a school, namely policies, culture and practices. Characteristics of the Whole School Approach are also reviewed.

Furthermore, models of inclusion (disability) such as the social model are reviewed. All this was done to highlight grey areas in the ‘whole school approach’ in including children with special needs.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology: This chapter focuses on the methodology. Key constructs of the methodology used are discussed: research design, research site (school profile), population and sample, instruments for data collection, reliability and validity of research instruments, data collection and data analysis. The chapter ends with a summary.

Chapter 4 - Head of School’s results on implementation of Inclusive education: This chapter presents findings from analysis of data from the head of this special school through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field notes. This was done in relation to the analytic framework to answer the research questions that focused on the prescribed duties of the head of school in a ‘whole school approach’ model.

Chapter 5 - Teachers’ results on implementation of Inclusive education: This chapter presents findings from analysis of data obtained through classroom observations, semi-structured and focus group interviews, field notes and analysis of learning materials. This was done in relation to the analytic framework to answer the research questions that focused on the prescribed duties of teachers in a ‘whole school approach’ model.

Chapter 6 - Caregivers’ results on implementation of Inclusive education: This chapter presents findings from analysis of data from interviews and field notes. This is done in relation to the analytic framework to answer the research questions focusing on the prescribed roles of caregivers in a ‘whole school approach’ model.

Chapter 7 - Putting it altogether: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter identifies and explores intersections among the head of school, teachers and caregivers views on their implementation of inclusive education. Interactions and intersections are also viewed within the three themes namely inclusive culture, policies and practices. In this concluding chapter, major findings, conclusions, implications and recommendations of the study are presented. Limitations of the study are also highlighted.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the problem that motivated this research and its context. In addition, it contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions and aims of the study. A brief presentation of the conceptual framework was highlighted. The chapter also sketched the researcher's positionality. This was done to reveal any bias in the study if ever there was any. Furthermore, this chapter stated the delimitations of the study. Most importantly, the two phrases, *school whole approach* and 'Whole School Approach' are operationalised as developed and deployed in this thesis. Finally, the chapter provided an outline of the structure of the study. The next chapter provides an in-depth review of literature and presents a conceptual framework relevant to this study.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review a range of literature related to Inclusive Education (IE) in general, and the Whole School Approach concept in particular. The exploration engages with the contemporary concept usage in inclusive education. Logically, this examination of concepts culminates in the terms being operationalised. This exploration is permeated by historical, philosophical and practical analyses. I pay particular attention to literature on the Whole School Approach framework's three inter-connected dimensions of a school, namely policies, culture and practices as this constitutes the theoretical framework. It is logical that in giving meaning to the concept of the 'Whole School Approach' I provide a description of its characteristics namely, whole school consensus, curriculum accommodation, differentiated teaching, peer support, teacher collaboration, classroom support and assessment accommodation. These are constructs of the study which constitute the conceptual framework. In light of this review, I interrogate the index of inclusion as well as models of inclusion such as the medical and social models. All this is done to highlight grey areas in the 'whole school approach' in including children with special needs.

2.2 Operationalisation of terms

The starting point of this study acknowledges Lindqvist's (1994) declaration that:

All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children.

Alluding to the old adage which has withstood the test of time, 'it is easier said than done', adjusting any school system to meet the needs of all children on a daily basis presents mammoth challenges for individual teachers, learners, parents, principals, schools and the system as a whole (Kwan & Cheung, 2017; National Council for Special Education, 2010). This does not mean that it is impossible. In fact, there is considerable debate about whether or not it is achievable, and how it could be achieved (Farrell & Ainscow, 2002; Szumski,

Smogorzewska & Karwowski, 2017). One of the ways for a school system to meet the needs of all learners calls for the adoption of a Whole School Approach framework. Be this as it may, it raises debate on “what must be moved forward to consider the characteristics of classroom practice that could address the needs of all, regardless of dis/ability, which entails including those identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN)” (Winter & O’Raw, 2010:1). In this literature review chapter, I build on this debate on the characteristics of classroom practices that could address the needs for all learners. I further unpack and build on the task of defining best practice of including all learners, which is no simple task (Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel, Koskela & Okkoline, 2017; Slee, 2001).

In acknowledgement of the above, and of the general consensus among scholars to consider the practice of including all learners in the learning process as *inclusion*, I join a plethora of commentators in the review, for example, Pijl et al. (1997) and Ainscow et al. (2006:22) who have described inclusive education as a *global agenda*, a “principled approach to education and society.” I agree with previous authors and present reasons why, despite legislative and policy trends of the past 30 years or so where a clear shift away from the acceptance of the orthodoxy of segregated education for children with special educational needs is seen (Winter & O’Raw, 2010), there is still no single definition universally accepted for inclusion. There have been many definitions put forward in multiple contexts (Ainscow et al., 2006). Hence some scholars (Ainscow, 1999; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Szumski et al., 2017) have perceived inclusion as an elusive concept. I look at various definitions of inclusive education and then extend these into findings from previous research studies regarding special needs education, including what it entails. I use the above notions of inclusive education and special needs education to frame a case for the practical application of the Whole School Approach framework (Alborno & Gaad, 2014) in including all children with or without special educational needs in a school. Lastly, I look at models of inclusion and illustrate how some of them, such as the medical model of disability, historically perpetuated segregation as opposed to inclusion. As advocated by Thomas et al. (1998:4), I then extend the view that inclusion is ‘an appropriate philosophy and a relevant framework for restructuring education’ through the literature review. I finally relate how reverse inclusion, an unusual concept coined in this study, might be of benefit to the school used in this study.

2.3 Special Needs Education

The term *inclusive education* is frequently used to discuss *special education* and this creates confusion in understanding these terms (Albert, 2004; Zhu et al, 2017). Special education has been influenced by the medical model of disability. According to Carrington (2000), this medical model emphasises inability and deficit thereby contributing to a dependency model of disability. Labels such as “invalid”, “handicapped”, and “slow learner” have authorised and sanctioned individual medical and negative views of disability. These labels are also in themselves problematic in that these terms, once seen as progressive, come to be interpreted as discriminatory and often derogatory (Hastings et al., 1993; Lambe & Bones 2008). Some recommend the rejection of ‘labels’ (e.g. Laughlin & Boyle, 2007) but this approach has been criticised on the basis that it amounts to a denial of all differences (Norwich, 2013). Jones describes the dilemma in these terms. On the one hand, we are encouraged to work towards ‘inclusion’; on the other, the language of SEN, rooted in the medical model of disability, legitimises the idea that some children are ‘normal’ while others are ‘special.’ As a consequence, groups and individual children are assigned specific labels, often leading to special and segregated provision’ (Jones, 2004:11).

While the language of special educational needs appears to run counter to the notion of inclusion, the reality is that systems for securing resources and extra provision are still largely tied to such labels and categories of need. More so, there continues to be a tendency to reinforce an individual deficit view of special educational needs and disability in education today. Regardless of the controversies outlined here, the term *special needs education* has been used synonymously with *inclusive education* (Carrington, 2000; Sindelar, McCray & Brownell (2014). Currently, debate rages on whether or not the two terms mean different things and which of them the broader and more encompassing term is. This debate is generally unproductive and specifically irrelevant to the present thesis. Trying to explicate each one of them might cause undesirable digression. This thesis suggests that the terms be used synonymously, bearing in mind that each one might take an idiosyncratic distinction depending on context.

2.4 Historical Review of Special Needs Education

The field of special education and disability is far from new. Reynolds and Ainscow (1994) indicate that during the 19th century, pioneers of special education argued for and helped develop provision for children and young people who were excluded from education. Governments assumed responsibility for such provision much later. Winter and O’Raw (2010) note that the twentieth century saw the emergence and development of the field of special education and special schools became very much the norm for pupils with disabilities. Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998) also highlight that, because they were deemed to be incapable of benefiting from ordinary methods of instruction, the segregation education of children according to their difficulties was seen as essential. Historically, the medical model of disability, which views barriers to learning as being within the child, supported segregated special education. Advances in psychometrics also bolstered segregated special education (National Council for Special Education [NCSE], 2010).

Both of these models facilitated categorisation and separate educational provision according to the learner’s disability. This segregated approach largely went unchallenged for many years. Pijl and Meijer (1994) emphasise that, for meeting the needs of a minority of children while safeguarding the efficient education of the majority, it became the received and unquestioned wisdom that separate provision was the most appropriate and most effective option as the field of special education expanded.

According to Winter and O’Raw (2010), the system of parallel provision began to be questioned only with the rise of the world-wide Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. People with disabilities challenged the stigmatising and limiting nature of segregated education. As they gave voice to their anger and dissatisfaction, issues of equality of access and educational opportunity gained impetus and integration took centre stage (NCSE, 2010). Society’s entrenched values were challenged and changed due to political pressure from disability and parental advocacy groups and this ultimately brought legislative reforms to education. Previously segregated groups received increasing support from educators who explored ways of supporting the segregated groups so that they could find space in mainstream schools. At the same time, Mauerberg-DeCastro et al (2013) states that the efficacy and outcomes of segregated education came under scrutiny. According to Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998), during this time, specifically, evidence about the lack of success of segregated provision

began to accumulate with such consistency that it could no longer be ignored. The fact that the special school system selected children disproportionately from racial minorities and socially disadvantaged groups began to be highlighted by researchers (see Dunn, 1968; Mercer, 1970; Tomlinson, 1981). Thomas et al. (1998:4) further mention that by the end of the twentieth century there was a growing consensus, resulting from moral imperatives and empirical evidence, that inclusion was “an appropriate philosophy and a relevant framework for restructuring education.”

To the NCSE (2010), the current emphasis on inclusive education can be seen as another step along this historical road. Ainscow (1999) recognises that it is, however, a radical step, in that it aims to transform the mainstream in ways that increase its capacity for responding to all learners. Thus, the shift towards inclusive education is not simply a technical or organisational change but also a movement with a clear philosophy which is rooted in the ideology of human rights.

This view implies that progress is more likely if we recognise that difficulties experienced by learners result from the ways in which schools are currently organised around rigid teaching methods. It has been argued that schools need to be reformed in as much as pedagogy needs to be improved in ways that would lead them to respond positively to learner diversity - seeing individual differences not as a problem to be fixed, but as opportunities for enriching learning (UNESCO, 2005:9). The definition by UNESCO implies that a shift towards inclusive education is a radical movement based on a paradigm shift (i.e., from segregation to inclusion) whose focus is about supporting all learners, educators and the school system as a whole so that a full range of learning needs are met. Having alluded to the fact that this study recognises the synonymy in the terms inclusive education and special needs education, the subsequent section focuses on the operationalisation of ‘inclusive education’.

2.5 What is inclusive education?

It is logical to first define inclusion in answering the question, what is inclusive education? Careful analysis of some of the literature on inclusive education and special needs education (Ainscow, Dyson & Weiner, 2014; Mittler, 2012; Narang & Agarwal, 2011; Ruijs, Van der Veen & Peetsma, 2010; Sermier-Desseumontet & Bless, 2013; Yuen & Westwood, 2001:70;

Tod & Ellis, 2014; Webster & Blatchford, 2014, Ferrante, 2017) reveals that *inclusion* has been associated with integration and mainstreaming. The concept of inclusion replaced the earlier term ‘integration’, which was used in the 1980s to refer to the placement of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, *integration* has been used synonymously with *inclusion*, referring to the placement of a learner with a disability or difficulty into an ordinary school environment and regular curriculum, but usually without that curriculum being modified to any great extent (Sermier-Dessemontet & Bless, 2013). The problem with defining integration solely in terms of placement, as Farrell and Ainscow (2002) point out, is that it tells us little about the quality of education received in that context. The assimilation model was the basis for the integration movement (Webster & Blatchford, 2014) where concern was with providing support to individual learners to enable them to ‘fit in’ to the mainstream programme without any changes being made to that programme.

It is logical that in attempting to give meaning to the concept of “inclusive education” a description be given of the term inclusion. As opposed to integration, the British Psychological Society (2002) professed that inclusion is about the learner’s right to participate fully in school life and the school’s duty to welcome and accept them. Unlike integration, which does not specify what should be done, the British Psychological Society’s definition of inclusion is centred on the following concepts:

- rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason,
- maximising the participation of all learners in the community schools of their choice,
- making learning more meaningful and relevant for all, particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary pressure, and
- re-thinking and restructuring policies, curricula, culture and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs (British Psychological Society, 2002:2).

Another description of inclusion is given by the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization [UNESCO, 2005] which states:

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. ... [As such,] it involves a range of

changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2005:13).

Inclusion has been defined in a variety of ways, and according to Ainscow et al. (2006:14), in many publications, an explicit definition is omitted and the reader is left “to infer the meanings it is being given for themselves.” In this thesis, the term inclusion is used to express a commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom attended by both typical and atypical peers. Thus the study advances the proposition that rather than moving the child to the services, inclusion refers to bringing such support services to the child and requires only that the child benefits from being in the class as opposed to keeping up with the other learners. Thus in this study, the term inclusion shifts focus from the child to the school. In so doing, this thesis describes inclusion as the extent to which a child, with or without special educational needs, is involved as a full member of the school community with full access to and participation in all aspects of education.

Having defined and operationalised the term inclusion, it is logical to go further and define the phrase *inclusive education*. The concept inclusive education is in itself elusive. Furthermore, as suggested earlier, inclusive education can be defined in many different ways and indeed a useful summary of a range of definitions of inclusive education and their various sources is provided by Florian (2005) as outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Summary of definitions of inclusive education by various authors

Definition	Source
Being with one another, how we deal with adversity, how we deal with difference	Forest and Pearpoint, 1992
A set of principles which ensures that the student with a disability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the school community in every respect	Uditsky, 1993
A move towards extending the scope of 'ordinary' schools so they can include a greater diversity of children	Clark et al, 1995
Schools that deliver a curriculum to students through organisational arrangements that are different from those used in schools that exclude some students from their regular classrooms	Ballard, 1995
Schools that are diverse problem-solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students	Rouse and Florian, 1996
Full membership of an age-appropriate class in your local school doing the same lessons as the other pupils and it mattering if you are not there. Plus you have friends who spend time with you outside of school	Hall, 1996
The process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering its curricula organisation and provision	Sebba, 1996
Schools that are accepting of all children	Thomas, 1997

Adopted from Florian (2005:31)

As shown in Table 2.1, inclusive education has been defined in a variety of ways and some of these definitions have been advanced and presented here. Though the sources are outdated, the spirit of the content is not. More recent definitions include Mahlo (2016) in Makoelle (2016) who views inclusive education as a pedagogy that affords everyone in society the chance to actively participate in education. The many ways in which inclusive education is described characterises intense battles in the academy that challenge who has the authority to speak. The schism stems from academics who apparently do no more than debate the social

model of disability [e where disability is viewed as the disadvantage that comes from society's response, or lack of response, to a person's impairment] and by a sense that any move towards inclusive education may be exceeded by an exponential rise in special education (Allan, 2014). As Florian (2005) puts it, the meaning of inclusive education may be contextual as a result of the variations in definition and interpretation, and this may suggest that it takes different forms depending on the situation.

Rix, Sheehy, Fletcher-Campbell, Crisp and Harper (2013) allude to the fact that because nations are developing their own inclusive education practices at classroom level, inclusive pedagogies are likely to be constructed differently in different societies and cultures. At a general level, inclusive pedagogy could be conceptualised as “how to extend what is ordinarily available in the community of the classroom as a way of reducing the need to mark some learners as different, [an approach] providing rich learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available for everyone, so that all learners are able to participate in classroom life” (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011:14). In turn, this means a whole school endeavour which aims to accommodate the learning needs of all learners should be implemented where inclusive practice requires significant changes to be made to the content, delivery and organisation of mainstream programmes.

This thesis adopts Sebba and Sachdev's (1997) definition of inclusive education:

[Inclusive education is] a process involving changes in the way schools are organised, in the curriculum and in teaching strategies, to accommodate the range of needs and abilities among pupils. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils (Sebba & Sachdev, 1997).

The above definition introduces certain features pertaining to the whole school approach which need to be employed for the actualisation of inclusive education. The definition is informed by a social model of disability which acknowledges that disability and difference are socially constructed and influenced by cultural values (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2010). Some of these common features have been identified in schools where inclusion is practised, including collaborative teamwork, clear role relationships among professionals, effective use of support staff and meaningful Individual Education Plans (IEPs) among others as reported by Giangreco (1997). Most of these features are constructs which

form the conceptual framework for this study. In sum, inclusive education challenges all policies and practices that serve to exclude some children from their right to education. As this study proposes, the ideal is that all children have the right to be educated together regardless of any special need or disability. The ensuing section focuses on success cases where inclusive education has been implemented.

How do we know that inclusive education is successful?

According to Schuelka (2018) there are five main components of successful inclusive education implementation and these are:

- i. inclusive policies that promote high outcomes for all students;
- ii. flexible and accommodative curriculum;
- iii. strong and supportive school leadership;
- iv. equitable distribution of resources; and
- v. teachers who are trained in inclusive pedagogy and view it as their role to teach all learners in a diverse classroom.

Furthermore, Schuelka (2018) came up with the following key elements of successful implementation of inclusive education:

- ☐ a clear concept and definition of inclusive education;
- ☐ concrete inclusive education targets, indicators, measures, and outcomes;
- ☐ an understanding of existing structural, educational, and cultural challenges to successful implement;
- ☐ a well-designed implementation strategy that includes a clear plan, evaluation, and school review process;
- ☐ providing inclusive education training, sustained support, and resources for *all* teachers and school leaders; and
- ☐ national leadership on inclusive education policy, education management information systems, curricular-reform, and coordinating social systems such as inclusive education and inclusive employment.

Basing on the above mentioned indicators of a successful inclusive implementation, the current study will look on to international success stories on the implementation of inclusive education.

2.6 International success stories on the implementation of inclusive education

An old adage states:

We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours.

Though credited to Isaac Newton in a letter to his rival Robert Hooke, in 1676, the 12th century theologian and author John of Salisbury used a version of this phrase in a treatise on logic called *Metalogicon*, written in Latin in 1159. This adage becomes relevant in this section by noting that reference has to be made to success cases further abroad (internationally) and nearby (in Africa) where inclusion has been actively implemented. As countries move to embrace inclusion, increased attention has been paid to the attitudes of those directly involved in facilitating authentic inclusive practices (Cross, Traub, Hutter-Pishgahi & Shelton, 2004; Wong & Cumming, 2010). To this end, questions pertaining to why, who, where, when, what and how these countries managed to actively implement inclusive education are addressed. A few countries namely, Hong Kong, Romania and Ghana are chosen because they have managed to implement inclusive education successfully. South Africa could have been part of this section but, as Donohue and Bornman (2014) lament, two main factors hinder implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. The two most significant constraints are the lack of clarity on policy, that is ambiguity about the goals for inclusion and the means through which they can be achieved. Secondly, there are various issues surrounding the poor implementation of the policy (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). This is despite the push for the educational inclusion of learners with disabilities over sixteen years ago by the South African policy document, the Education White Paper 6. Ghana surpasses South Africa regarding inclusive education implementation hence the citation of Ghana in this thesis. The first success story is that of Hong Kong.

2.6.1 The context of Hong Kong

Among Asia Pacific regions, Hong Kong is one of those that promote inclusion (Lee, Yeung, Tracey & Barker, 2015). Like much of the developed world, Hong Kong has also embraced inclusive education on the grounds of both social justice and human rights (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2012; Forlin & Lian, 2008). Focusing on Hong Kong as an Asian example, Forlin (2010) contends that it is possible to review some of the tensions that have emerged as a Confucian society aims to reform its education system for students with special educational needs (SEN) to become less exclusive. Prior to the 1960s, education for children with SEN (i.e., those identified with a specific disability) was mainly offered by missionaries, with many private and philanthropic groups providing a central focus on medical intervention and daily care (Forlin & Lian, 2008). In the 1960s, the main expansion of special education began with the intervention of the government to support this (Forlin, 2010). This was directed through a change towards a welfare and care perspective. Free and compulsory education was first introduced for primary-aged students in 1971 and for secondary-aged students in 1978. The 1970s thus saw an expansion of special schools and resource classes in regular schools to cater for learners identified with SEN (special schools) or learning difficulties (resource classes) who were now able to access education. Forlin (2010) further demonstrates that in the 1980s, as more special school places became available and resource classes were reviewed, these began to be phased out.

The 1990s saw the commencement of an intensive remedial teaching programme which still operates today (Forlin, 2013). This programme provided a small amount of additional funding to regular schools to support learners with learning difficulties (those learners who are within the normal ability range, do not have a disability, but are not achieving to the expected grade level). School-based remedial support programmes were introduced, and in 1997, the first pilot integrated education programme for learners commenced with seven primary and two secondary schools admitting five to eight learners each with mild SEN (Poon-McBrayer 1999, 2000). In the past decade, education reform has seen the gradual implementation of a whole school approach (WSA) towards education being encouraged by the Hong Kong government and adopted to varying degrees by regular schools (Forlin, 2010). Not surprisingly, the government in Hong Kong has mandated that all schools should

start accepting children with special educational needs by employing a whole school approach.

A number of milestones have supported these changes to the education of learners with SEN in Hong Kong (Education Bureau, 2010). Regarding special education policy development, a key document was the first White Paper (Government of Hong Kong, 1977) that advocated the inclusion of learners with disabilities (mainly physical disabilities) in ordinary schools. The White Paper recommended that all special schools should be put under the control of the education department, and thus, there was an increase in the number of schools catering specifically for learners with SEN (Forlin, 2010). Forlin further states that the introduction of the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan first published in 1980 and revised biannually was the second important step. This was a comprehensive plan for government and non-government organisations on prevention, identification and assessment of pre-school, school and post-school services for learners with SEN. A third key strategy was the second White Paper (Hong Kong Working Party on Rehabilitation Policies and Services, 1995), which promoted equal opportunities and full participation for all people. In this second White Paper, special education was considered to be 'education' rather than its hitherto focus on 'rehabilitation', and integration was seen as a right for learners and a responsibility for all teachers (Education Bureau, 2010; Forlin, 2010).

Special school placement was to be on a needs basis, and higher education was to be available for students with SEN who were academically qualified. These government policies were further supported in 1995 when the *Disability Discrimination Ordinance* (DDO) was enacted (Forlin, 2010). This came about following the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s Salamanca Statement as an attempt to eliminate and prevent discrimination and provide equal educational opportunities for all people. The *Code of Practice in Education* within the DDO was enacted in 2001 to assist education establishments in developing policies and procedures against discrimination by providing practical guidance and enabling persons with SEN, and their parents and associates to understand their rights and responsibilities (Forlin & Lian, 2008).

According to Poon-McBrayer (2014), the period from 2000 to 2003 is considered as a transitional period from integration to inclusion. Regardless of the severe criticism that the government continued to come under, for inadequate preparation and ineffective

implementation of integration, after the pilot scheme in 1999, the government introduced a number of policies to strengthen the practices. After decades of implementation, integration has witnessed numerous struggles among stakeholders such as policymakers, general education personnel, special school personnel, parents, teacher educators, and advocates. This attests to the fact that progress has been made irrespective of the struggles. Poon-McBrayer (2014) states that after consultations with various stakeholders, the government put in place three key policies that moved Hong Kong from practising integration to inclusion towards the end of 2003. These policies were parental choice of schools, participation of all schools, and adoption of indicators for inclusion. The government also offered a great deal of financial incentives to new and existing support measures to further improve school practices in addition to the three policies. The most important of all was the introduction of a new funding scheme for integration participation in 2003. This scheme was first piloted in 25 elementary schools (Education Bureau 2008a). The above attributes mark the milestones Hong Kong has erected in trying to implement inclusion. Even though integration remains the official rhetoric and current practices still require further improvement, I concur with Poon-McBrayer (2014) and argue that Hong Kong has begun to practise inclusion. The successful implementation of this process could be attributed to the principal component of a government being able to introduce and enact policy. The next section focuses on Romania and its bid to implement inclusion.

2.6.2 Romanian context for inclusion

A literal examination of research literature on inclusive education indicates that Romania's concerns and interests in the educational and socio-professional integration of people with disabilities or learning problems have resulted in practical success stories. As Ghergut (2012) puts it, some of the practical measures were applied long before launching the concept of inclusive education in the literature. Ghergut (2012) further goes on to say one argument for this is the Education Law of 1924, which provides for the establishment, in regular school, of classes for children with mental disabilities and for children with health and sensorial problems (blind, deaf and dumb). This was recorded as the first entry in an official document concerning the organisation of school structure (classes) differential mass schools, for children with various types of problems, or rather, integrated forms of education (which at that time did not wear that name). According to Vrasmas and Vrasmas (2007), Romania has

been a kind of laboratory for introducing and experimenting with various systems and strategies to deal with children in schools and other learning environments after 1989 with the help of UNESCO and UNICEF which have contributed to these pilot and experimental activities. Vrasmas and Vrasmas further state that a special education sector is mainly responsible for the adoption of the inclusive education principle in Romania, with integration having been practised for some years. It is surprising that special classes have been operating within mainstream schools, and were even provided for in the 1924 Education Law, before 1989.

Very little was known about education for all and inclusive education in Romania until 1994. Two pilot projects were initiated in two towns in a co-operation agreement between the Ministry of Education and International bodies, UNICEF and UNESCO, in 1993. Integrated education and normalisation of the education for children with disabilities were made possible in Romania, as in the majority of other countries which have embarked on these undertakings since late 1960 and early 1970. The main aim of the two projects was to demonstrate this possibility. Since then, Romania has not looked back. The social and educational services for people with special needs in Romania have undergone a series of transformations after the communist regime change. Ghergut (2006) lists some of the milestones. The onset of non-governmental organisations in education and social welfare services for people with special requirements and the opening in 1990 of the UNICEF representation in Romania, in Bucharest, were absolute firsts for social services.

Since the autumn of 1993, the first pilot projects for integration were carried out up to 1997, which proposed, on the one hand, the promotion of school and social integration of children with disabilities and, on the other hand, demonstrated the successful implementation of strategies generalizing such practices at the national level. In 1995, an Education Law was passed, allowing for the inclusion of special education as part and parcel of the national education system and the connection to international trends and developments. After 1997, the development of partnerships between schools, national and relevant international organisations (UNICEF, UNESCO, RENINCO) in the field was extended, developing training programmes for teachers in regular schools and special schools as partnerships for professionals and volunteers. In the period June 2002-December 2003, *A school for all*, in partnership with UNICEF Romania, National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption (NACP), and the Association RENINCO Romania, was developed. This programme aimed at

informing the population about the advantages of schools integrating children with special needs, increasing awareness and preparing the school and the community to integrate children and youth with special educational needs. In 2011 a new *Law of Education* was adopted, which included a special chapter on the education of children with special needs and ways to ensure equal opportunities to education through the development of inclusive school programmes.

Looking at the legislative, administrative and general aspects, in 1990 the Romanian Parliament ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The non-discrimination principle was connected with the right to education of all children. A similar provision is found in the Romanian Constitution. The Education Law of 1995 had an implicit inclusive approach - all Romanian citizens have an equal right to education, at all levels and in all forms, regardless of gender, race, nationality, religious, or political affiliation and social or economic status. Vrasmas and Vrasmas (2007) highlight that Romania's legislative and administrative measures fostering inclusion in education include free services, studies, assistance and use of logistical structures such as free state education, free school books for primary and lower secondary education, free medical and psychological aid for children in kindergartens and free snack during school time for preschool and school age children.

Romania has educational support for children in disadvantaged areas and such support includes school units with a reduced number of learners in isolated zones and areas with low population levels and those with difficult access, school buses for the above mentioned, salary benefits for teaching staff working in isolated areas, free school materials (notebooks and pencils, among others) for poor children. Support is rendered for minority learners (OECD, 2006). These are some of the ways in which Romania has been moving from integration to inclusion.

The Romanian government effected a shift towards the inclusive approach to education from integration by effecting change in terms of attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment so as to meet the needs of all learners (Ghergut 2010). This is supported by research. In an analysis of inclusive education in Romania by Ghergut (2010), results from a survey conducted among teachers indicated that there is an overall favourable attitude among the staff on the promotion and support of inclusive education and over 50.5% of 544 teachers who took part in the survey fully support the programme of inclusion in their

schools. This includes specific targets, mechanisms and criteria for making this fundamental shift in the approach to learning.

In the same study by Ghergut (2010), a number of strands in the improvement and development of educational services in the education system have been noted. Romania is currently working on these in their inclusive education plan. These include: (1) change optics in approach - the child with special needs focusing on individualisation, flexibility and diversity activities, (2) diversification of educational services that allow access to school for children with disabilities without separating them from their families, and (3) expansion of programmes for training of teachers. Advocates of inclusion believe that learners should not be removed from mainstream classrooms to receive assistance because doing so highlights their disabilities, disrupts their education and violates their rights (Putnam, 1998). Romania has taken heed of Putnam's advocacy, hence its success story.

2.6.3 Sub-Saharan Africa success case on the implementation of inclusive education

Ghana's context for inclusion

Ghana is a country on the west coast of Africa. It is a typical developing Sub-Saharan country despite its remarkable progress in human wellbeing over the last two decades (UNDP, 2013). Ghana is an example of heartening progress in terms of human well-being among developing countries, but the fact that it is a typical Sub-Saharan country makes the introspection of its special and inclusive education a revelatory or heuristic case for Sub-Saharan Africa (Eckstein, 2000). Prior to Ghana's independence of 1957, the first special schools for children with disabilities focusing on blindness and then on deaf students were established by missionaries (Avoke, 2000). The government of Ghana took over the responsibility of catering for the educational needs of children with disabilities after its independence. Full responsibility began after passing the Educational Act of 1961. According to Anthony and Kwadade (2006), this was after the Ministry of Education (MoE) only took over the affairs of special education from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in the late 1960s. Anson-Yevu (1988) notes that in 1970, the Special Education Unit, currently known as the Special Education Division [SED], assumed full responsibility for special schools.

The education system of Ghana met some criticism about the alienation of special schools learners from their communities in the 1980s (Ametepe & Anastasiou, 2015). In spite of the severe criticisms, the government continued to work towards inclusive education. As a result, it came up with an integrated system that was to supplement traditional special education (Vislie, 2003). An integrative innovation of that time was two unit schools for learners with intellectual disabilities. Unit schools are two to three classrooms attached to regular schools where small groups of learners with disabilities receive special education (Ghana Education Service [GES], 2008). Anson-Yevu (1988) elaborates that in addition to the integration context, special schools for the deaf and blind learners followed ordinary curricula, however, with some modifications.

After the Salamanca call to give priority to inclusive education, the country's current special education policies were massively influenced by the big inter-governmental organisations. A number of policies were introduced to strengthen the practice. This came about after Salamanca Statement of 1994 which advocated equal educational opportunities for all children (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca statement enjoins Ghana to design and implement educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs. It also ensures that persons with special educational needs have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs. Regarding legislative, administrative and general aspects, Anastasia and Keller (2011) list some of the policies:

- The New Constitution of Ghana, introduced in 1992 emphasised the provision of free and compulsory universal basic education for all
- The Children's Act was introduced in 1998
- The Disability Act was introduced in 2006
- The Education Act was introduced in 2008

The Education Strategic Plan 2010-2020 was introduced, stipulating that the Ministry of Education shall provide education for those with physical challenges, mental retardation, orphans and those slow and fast learners by including them wherever possible within the mainstream formal system.

Ghana recently ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on July 31, 2012 (Ametepe & Anastasiou, 2015). According to CRPD

(2006) Article 24, which focuses on education, Ghana prioritises '*individualized support measures...provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.*' The unfortunate part is that the CRPD provides no time frame, just like the Salamanca Statement. Instead, the Dakar Framework (2000) underlined that countries should prepare comprehensive National Education for All (EFA) plans by 2002 (p. 10). Since then, the key document directing the provision of special needs has been Ghana's ESP 2003–2015 (Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015). Findings from a study by Opoku-Agyeman (2013), indicate that the government offers a great deal of financial incentives in addition to new and existing policies to further improve its inclusive education system. Different initiatives such as Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education, capitation grant, the school feeding and free school uniforms were designed to encourage school enrolment, retention and completion rate. All these efforts are enacted with the involvement of parents. Ghana has successfully implemented a series of policies as outlined by Anastasia and Keller (2011) hence results of its success as reported by Opoku-Agyeman (2013).

2.6.4 Lessons from the three success cases

In all of the three success stories, three broad groups of factors can be singled out in implementing inclusive education. The three include: (1) external factors such as legislation/policy, regulations and funding, (2) the school itself relating to issues of structure for providing special services in schools, the role of special education, the support system, decentralisation and cooperation between schools, and (3) teacher involvement regarding teacher attitude, available instruction time, knowledge and skills of the teacher and teaching methods. Similar findings were noted from Pijl and Meijer's (1997) study. Other factors which can be singled out for the success implementation of inclusive education include partnerships between special schools and regular schools as found in a study by Rose and Coles (2002), the role of inclusive pedagogies as found in a study by Florian and Linklater (2010), and teacher training as found by Norwich and Nash (2011). Parental involvement was also seen as a crucial aspect in successfully implementing inclusive education as established in Hong Kong and Romania. Other studies (Alborno & Gaad, 2014; Alur, 2010; Chan & Yuen, 2015) have also found this to be true.

The preceding section looked at few individual countries and how they managed to successfully implement inclusive education as opposed to focusing on international comparative studies. According to Buttner and Hasselhorn (2011), international comparative studies of inclusion outcomes are difficult to interpret as there are variations in the conceptualisation of the term *learning disability* both from an academic and disability perspective. In an Irish study, Desforges and Lindsay (2010) conducted a study across eight countries (Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America) and concluded that outcome inconsistencies were due to variations across countries with respect to variations in international classification systems, in policies and practices, in the range of assessments used and professionals involved; inconsistent approaches in assessing special education needs (SEN) (i.e., not all countries required a diagnosis of a disability); and terminology and categorisation of disability. The next focus is now on the theoretical framework of the study.

2.7 Literature Review

This section reviews literature on the theoretical framework of the Whole School Approach. The index of inclusion is also to be reviewed in relation to whole school approach, however, not in detail.

2.7.1 Shaping the theoretical Framework: The Whole School Approach

According to Hearne, Geary and Martin (2017), a *whole school approach* is a way of thinking about schools and a process for managing change. The concept of whole school has been proposed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in Zimbabwe as a process for planning generally in secondary schools for some time (DES, 2005). A whole school approach involves the members of the school community, the school staff, parents and students and the broader community that is building and refining a thriving positive culture where everyone feels a sense of belonging (Kwan & Cheung, 2016). From the definitions above it can be concluded that by whole school approach it means that all school personnel, including the school head, teachers, learners, guidance and counselling officer, non-teaching staff and parents, should be willing to accept learners with special needs and collaborate as a team. Hence, a harmonious environment with a caring, supportive and inclusive school

culture can be established. Implicit in the whole school approach are feelings of shared commitment, responsibility and accountability for outcomes. Thus a ‘whole school approach’ is a systems-based and ecosystemic way of viewing a school. These views are similar to Bronfenbrenner’s framework and those of index of inclusion. Bronfenbrenner’s framework has five dimensions namely Micro-system, Meso-system, Exo-system and Macro-system and Chrono system. The index of inclusion has three dimensions and sections which are similar to that of whole school approach. The three dimensions and sections which are creating inclusive cultures producing inclusive policies and evolving inclusive practices (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

However, the Whole School Approach framework with some adopted elements of index of inclusion was preferred to Bronfenbrenner’s theory because of its advantages. The Whole School Approach promotes consensus among every stakeholder, curriculum accommodation including support and assessment, differentiation of teaching methods, peer support and teacher collaboration. Bronfenbrenner’s theory was not used in this study because it emphasises more on the family given that this study was undertaken at a boarding school where the parents or extended families were sparingly involved.

Several studies in the field of education have utilised this approach. For example, from discrete intervention studies where marginalised students are engaged in a whole-school initiative (Callingham (2017), *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 21(2) 131-145, 2017); to implementation of graphic symbols as a whole school approach (Pampoulou, *Technology and Disability* 28(2) 31-45, 2016; through using the whole school responsibility in guidance counselling in Irish post primary sector (Hearne, Geary & Martin, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 45 (2) 138-152, 2017; as well as social work initiatives for the inclusion of students with special educational needs (Kwan & Cheung, *Social Work in Action*, 29(2) 107-119, 2016); including a whole school approach to professional development for teachers of English (Shea, Sandholtz & Shanahan, *Professional Development in Education* 1-19, 2017); and development of a theoretically driven whole school approach in schools to help reduce the harm associated with teenage substance use (Markham, Bonell, Fletcher & Aveyard, *Drugs and alcohol Today* 17(1) 1-11, 2017). This shows the versatility of how this approach can be utilised as a theoretical framework to unpack and contribute towards solutions to a particular problem.

From an inclusive education approach, the *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership* (2013) has provided a rationale for implementing the whole school approach. The paraphrased elements of the rationale among others include:

- students with special educational needs should also have equal opportunities to participate actively in school, to learn in collaboration with their peers, and to look for further improvement;
- enhancement of team spirit among teachers, and encourage other school personnel to share;
- with the acceptance and concern from the school and their peers, and the support from other parents, students with special needs will have a stronger sense of belonging and a better environment for effective learning;
- the whole school approach enhances team spirit among teachers, and encourage other school personnel to share responsibilities in looking after students' individual differences and special needs;
- providing learning opportunities for students in every aspect of their school life (Australian Institute for Teaching & School Leadership, 2013).

Building on the elements enumerated above, this current study sought to establish the extent to which the 'whole school approach' is utilised in implementing inclusive education in one primary school in Zimbabwe. Furthermore this study sought to establish how best the 'whole school approach' can help in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school.

2.7.2 Dimensions of Whole School Approach (WSA) as lenses for data analysis

All learners have individual difference needs including those children with disabilities. Through adopting the Whole School Approach, schools can cater for learners with diverse needs in a more comprehensive manner (Education Bureau, 2010; Callingham, 2017). This WSA model entails three inter-connected but interrelated dimensions of a school namely school policies, culture and practices (Forlin, 2007). In order to develop an inclusive school, school development planning needs to pay attention to three dimensions namely policy, culture and practices (Alborno & Gaad, 2014). The three dimensions are explored in detail below beginning with school policies.

2.7.2.1 School policies

Friendly (2014:1) notes that “schools with clear and consistent policy and procedures send a strong message to the whole school community about the school’s beliefs and actions to support a safe and supportive environment.” The written policy is not sufficient without an agreed commitment to putting the components into practice. Policies provide the school with a frame work to guide school action. The Office for Standard in Education (OFSTED) (2000) describes an educationally inclusive school policy as one in which the learning and teaching achievement, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. This shows, not only in the schools’ performance, but also in their ethos and their willingness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. Implementing a whole school approach model is an “open ended, restless endeavour, involvement which places staff under continual pressure to learn and to grow” (Nias *et al*, 1992:196).

In pursuing the same issue of implementation of inclusive education Alborno and Gaad (2014) explored the nature of inclusive education in three government primary schools in the United Arab of Emirates. They used the qualitative research approach using a multiple case study methodology, which seeks to interpret how the various participants understand and practice the implementation of the new inclusive provisions. The researcher believes that this was a worthwhile methodology as it sought to establish how participants understand and practice implementation of new inclusive provisions across the three cases which are the units of analysis. Such an approach allows for the investigation of real-life events in the school’s daily programme, with respect to classroom activities, teaching styles, placements and evaluation. However, the current study only reports of a single case in Zimbabwe which by default is the only unit of analysis. The current study also investigated real-life events in the school’s daily programme, with respect to classroom activities, teaching styles, placements and evaluation. Furthermore, the researcher believes using the same methodological approach in the current study provided a rich and contextualised picture of implementation from the perspectives of the various stakeholders. Data in the study by Alborno and Gaad (2014) was collected using semi-structured interviews and participatory and non-participatory observations. These data collection tools were also utilised in the current study in addition to others such as document analysis, open-ended questionnaires and researcher journal entries because the study specifically follows a descriptive ethnographic case study approach. This enabled me (researcher) to understand people’s thoughts and experiences which was influential in disentangling the implementation of inclusive education in this one school in Zimbabwe.

Out of their study, Alborno and Gaad (2014) had five themes which emerged regarding inclusive school policy namely: (1) inclusive induction policies; (2) open door policies; (3) the leadership role of head teachers; (4) supportive behaviour policies; and (5) vaguely defined teachers' responsibilities. Their study revealed that all schools have welcoming induction programmes for all learners regardless of their status as well as their parents. In the same line was Madan and Sharma's (2013) study who noted that all the children of the school must be sensitised about the purpose of the programme and the children attending to it that the sensitisation process is not a onetime affair but constant reinforcement is necessary for children to truly appreciate and respect diverse needs of children with different abilities.

The results from Alborno and Gaad study also indicated that all schools follow an open door policy with teachers, parents and learners. However, the leadership role of head teachers emerged in two schools only through their management of the budget to provide additional inclusive provisions, encouragement of innovation with respect to inclusive teaching strategies and school activities. The current study was yet to establish the status quo regarding the leadership role of the chosen school. They recommended teaching strategies and required inclusive practices; as suggested by Stein and Nelson (2003) 'principals must be able to know strong instruction when they see it, and to encourage it when they do not'. However the research indicates that other aspects of effective leadership for inclusion were still absent. These are aspects such as developing the vision that all students could achieve, encouraging collaborative teaching and co-teaching in inclusive education.

Regarding behavioural policies, Alborno and Gaad (2014) found that if a learner's behaviour becomes intolerable in a certain school the learner was supposed to be transferred to another school. I the researcher is of the opinion that instead of changing the environment for the learner, different behaviour modifications are supposed to be implemented. Furthermore, they found that not all participants contributed in equal measure, for example, the input of learner voice was limited to observing the actions and interactions of learners and teachers. Arguably, the I the researcher suggests that learner's voice was expected to be heard most since he/she is the most affected among the participants. From the study by Alborno and Gaad (2014), few lessons regarding school policies are learned, namely: (1) best practices regarding implementation of inclusive education in a school is characterised by respective roles of teachers being well-defined; (2) all staff should work together closely, reflecting on

their work and supporting each other and solving problems; (3) there must be a clear pattern with partnership of parents with all learners including those with special needs: including regular meetings respecting knowledge parents have about their children and their contribution to the inclusive education programme.

2.7.2.2 School Culture

The development of school cultures is necessary for the successful implementation of inclusive school policy (Alborno & Gaad, 2014; Thorpe and Azam, 2010). Inclusive culture refers to establishing inclusive values in the school which is the key to success (Education Bureau, 2010; Pless & Maak, 2004). In agreement, Booth and Ainscow (2011:18) define school cultures as ‘reflecting relationships and deeply held values and beliefs’. The relationships, held values and beliefs are key in the sense that, firstly, everyone in the school is valued and learners’ understanding of and respect for individual differences are promoted through various programmes. Second, teaching staff appreciate learners’ capabilities from different perspectives and do not expect all learners to follow one single learning style or to attain the same academic level. Teaching staff harbour the belief that every learner has unique potentials and the school should provide room for the learner to fully develop his/her multiple intelligences. In this study, school culture is taken to refer generally to perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, relationships as well as rules (written and unwritten) that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions. Issues relating to emotional and physical safety of the learners, or the degree to which a school embraces ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity and the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces are encapsulated in this definition.

In the same study reported in the preceding section, in relation to school culture, Alborno and Gaad (2014) also used document analysis on artefacts related to the context of the three schools in addition to other tools described earlier. The participants included the head of the special education department and four education zone officers representing the policy level, while at the implementation level, participants in each school included the head teacher, two subject teachers and two learners with disabilities and their parents

Alborno and Gaad (2014) came up with four main themes in their findings regarding school culture which are: (1) conditional belief in inclusion; (2) teachers’ fears and apprehensions;

(3) a welcoming school climate; and (4) respect and support among stakeholders. On the issue of conditional beliefs in inclusion the results showed that stakeholders agreed that inclusion could be successful provided that challenges from the lack of adequate services, limited teaching expertise and the shortage of teaching resources are resolved. This was supported by Makhmudayeva (2016) whose results showed that teachers were in support of inclusive education since it makes learners with disabilities not excluded from the society, make them feel that they also have opportunities. The second theme that emerged was that of teachers' fears and apprehensions. This was met with limited success since teachers showed fear of the unknown due to lack of previous training in the transferable skills needed to support the inclusion of learners with disabilities as well as fear of inadequacy and failure which might affect their image. What can be inferred from this finding is that educators' beliefs seemed to vary based on their years of experience, age and professional knowledge about inclusion, as well as the type and severity of disabilities of their learners. However, in a study carried by Makhmudayeva (2016) educators were confident with teaching children with special education needs, even though there was a lack of teacher training and in-service training which would play an important role for the successful implementation of inclusion in a school. Some encouraging results were from Greene (2017). Greene found out that educators with more advanced higher education degrees had more positive views of inclusive education.

In a different study on policies, practices, and attitudes toward inclusive education in Greece Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018) came up with different findings. As unlike in most researches these three found that teachers who have been exposed to people with disabilities (i.e., friend or family member) are more open to inclusion whereas other studies do not report any influence of prior exposure to disability. In line with other studies Pappas et al (2018) discovered that lack of qualified educational staff, overcrowding of children in classrooms, and incomplete funding are the main barriers to the implementation of inclusive education in Greece, according to teachers' beliefs.

On the theme of *a welcoming school climate*, Greene's results showed that the school environment was clean, tidy and welcoming, with colourful walls and posters depicting learners' work as well as school celebrations, which included learners with disabilities. The atmosphere was relaxed indicating the benefit from supportive relationships between stakeholders. However, this is to be expected in such schools where the teachers, learners and

all stakeholders work together as a team. Arguably, the researcher believes that the number of participants could have been added if more days could have been spent at each school for data collection. A period of 5-days per each schools seems short to grapple with issues pertaining to school culture as this is not long enough a period. The sample of two participants per group especially on the part of the learners was too small for the researchers to come up with in-depth descriptions pertaining to school culture. However, this is in contrast with Udoba's (2014) findings which revealed that special needs teachers had a very minimal relationship with regular teachers and could coordinate on very few issues, for example, when attending a staff meeting called by the headmaster.

In another study Zoller, Ramanathan and Moonset Yu (1999) investigated how an inclusive school culture supports inclusive education. They used formal and non-formal interviews with teachers focusing on issues such as collaborative teaching, leadership and community involvement. They also asked questions to parents on issues of leadership of the principal and community involvement. The results revealed three underlying characteristics of the school's culture to be related to the success of its inclusion programme namely, an inclusive leader, a broad vision of school community and shared language and values. Zoller, Ramanathan and Moonset Yu's (1999) study is different from the current study in the sense that they did not include learners in their study while the current study interviewed learners. It can also be argued that since data emerged from one school culture, there may be other features of school culture that have equally powerful influence on successful inclusion.

Different findings are reported in a review study closer home by Donohue and Bornman (2014), who investigated the challenges of realising inclusive education in South Africa. In the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, Donohue and Bornman (2014) reported that ostracism of learners with disabilities was perceived as a barrier by all participant groups. Teachers blamed negative societal attitudes toward disability for the stigmatisation of learners with disabilities within ordinary schools and considered this a justification for maintaining separate schools. Parents and children in this same study stated that learners may be safer in special schools for children with disabilities due to the intolerant attitudes of other children and school staff. It can thus be inferred that a collaborative school culture plays an important role in the implementation of inclusive education.

Consistent with Donohue and Bornman (2014), Nishan (2018) carried out a study on Challenges of regular teachers in implementing inclusive education in schools Maldives and came up with these results. Lack of resources such as teaching materials (curriculum) for diverse learners limits teachers' instruction and this was found to be limiting effective learning. From the findings, the main challenges of regular teachers were found to be lack of resources. Teachers in this study stated that lack of teaching-learning materials not only hinder the teaching process, it also prevents the student who needs individual attention from engaging in learning. Teachers further explained that it is important to realise that lack of resources such as teaching materials (curriculum) for diverse learners limits teachers' instruction and as a result, effective learning cannot take place.

been made on creating an inclusive environment for the learners by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bandura (1994). A proper learning environment should be created for inclusion so that all children can learn well and achieve their potential (UNESCO, 2009). Physical resources such as more classrooms, accessibility and technical items should be in schools for full inclusion to occur. Also, schools should focus providing learner-centred teaching methods and develop learning materials (OECD, 2003), to cater to the needs of all children. Consequently, for effective inclusion, these resources should be maintained in regular schools where students with disabilities are enrolled (OECD, 2003). However, lack of funding and budget constraints, administrative and policy level support pose challenges that can slow down this progress (CRS Vietnam, 2010). Another challenge in inclusive education is lack of trained teachers.

Lack of trained teachers has a huge impact on both SEN units and mainstream classes. Hettiarachchi and Das (2014), suggested that an evolving concept needs to be addressed in pre-service and in-service teacher training and also provide training for special education teachers at special units and mainstream teachers, and strengthen the curricula for teacher training programs in higher education institutions. Hence, teacher training courses need to include modules and training for inclusive education to prepare teachers well ahead of entering the teaching field. Pre-service preparation is a crucial factor in guiding teachers to form positive beliefs about inclusive education (McMillan, 2008). Teachers equipped with the knowledge and skills to cater to diverse students help students to adapt to their environment and student performance (Maheshwari & Shapurkar, 2015), leading to successful inclusion. Preparing the teachers with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to ensure a challenging learning and motivating classroom environment (Blanton, Pugach, & Florian, 2011), should be a commitment of all accountable parties (CRS Vietnam, 2010). To be an effective teacher in an inclusive classroom, teachers need to be up-to-date with the type of disabilities, methodologies, and policy (Maheshwari & Shapurkar, 2015). Additionally, Sharma et al., (2017) recommended teachers with prior experience of inclusive teaching to be included in pre-service and in-service teacher training programs so that their experiences with students with SEN could be shared with novice teachers. As a result, positivity towards disabilities could be built. Further, it was suggested to provide opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers to observe classrooms where actual inclusive education occurs as pre-service training will equip teachers with practical experiences.

Moreover, prospective teachers need current skills and knowledge (Torombe, 2013), to cater to diverse learners. It is suggested that teacher education programmes should make an attempt to evaluate the impact of the training, make clear emphasis on knowledge, skills and practice in order to result in a significant shift in new graduates' thinking about inclusion (Sharma & Das, 2015; Sharma, 2012; Sharma et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is a need to make changes to the current policy of allocating teachers to the number of students in the Maldives. Policymakers should consider the severity and type of disability of students when allocating teachers for schools. As found in this study, lack of teacher assistants in the class to support the regular teacher was very challenging. Therefore, a teacher assistant should be available in all schools to assist in the mainstream class. In making schools inclusive, it is a common pattern for an assistant to work in the class with students with SEN, within the general curriculum (OECD, 2003).

A common concern of teachers is managing students with disruptive behaviour in the class (Willis, 2007), and teachers have reported feeling frustrated and guilt when the time is taken away from the majority of students when having to accommodate students with SEN in the

class (Cassaday, 2011). The routine work of lesson planning, teaching, other extra and co-curricular activities and attending meetings consumes teachers daily hours. Additional time for regular teachers to complete paperwork and collaborate with SEN teachers is seen as unfair in comparison to time devoted to other students in the class (Cassaday, 2011). However, establishing a good support system within the school and education system, the issue with time can be resolved. Strategic training, specialist support team and a teacher assistant in class are found to be the most beneficial support system for teachers to successfully implement inclusive education (Willis, 2007).

Another challenge many teachers implementing inclusive education faced was a large class size. A large class size can overload teachers and pose difficulties for them to attend to individual children's needs (Torombe, 2013). Studies show that this can contribute to teachers developing negative feelings and even being annoyed to have students with special needs in class (Torombe, 2013). Also, a large class size is seen as a barrier to successful inclusion (Save the Children, 2002). While a large class can create many issues for a teacher, a small class can, on the other hand, have benefits. For example, a smaller class is always desired by many teachers and show a higher level of engagement and individualization (Zarghami & Schnellert, 2004). However, a small class has not shown to be a significant factor in successful inclusion (Save the Children, 2002). Although a large class in inclusive education may seem to be problematic for teachers, there is no evidence from research that a small class has any benefits on achievements of students with SEN (Zarghami & Schnellert, 2004). Hence, a large class may pose the issue of more work for the regular teacher, but if assistant teachers or teaching-learning resources are available, then the regular teachers could manage their time better.

Additionally, lack of teacher collaboration between regular teachers and special education teachers could undermine the whole inclusion process of the school. Hence, there are many important reasons to encourage teacher collaboration. It is found that teacher collaboration enhances learning outcomes (CRS Vietnam, 2010) and collaboration among whole staff contributes to successful inclusion as inclusion cannot happen in isolation (Maheshwari & Shapurkar, 2015). Also, high level of collaboration contributes to building a conducive

2.7.2.3 School Practices

School practices are simply ‘about what is learnt and taught and how it is learnt and taught’ (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Looking at the three dimensions school policy, school culture and school practices holistically, it can be inferred that school practices provide evidence for the implemented policies and reflect school cultures. School practices refer to the flexible deployment of various resources (Education Bureau, 2010). At disposal for schools are both internal and community resource which include the teaching staff, parents, other professionals, volunteers, facilities and community services. These can be made use of if schools are to successfully implement inclusive education. In their study which has been referred to in the preceding two sections entitled ‘Index for Inclusion’: a framework for school review in the United Arab Emirates, Alborn and Gaad (2014) worked with a variety of participants such as administrators, teachers, learners with disabilities and parents of learners from the three schools. Partly, the study sought to interpret how the various participants understand and practice the implementation of the inclusive provisions. From their study, Alborn and Gaad (2014) came up with six themes namely: (1) minimal curriculum modification and adaptation; (2) varied adaptation of teaching strategies; (3) basic utilisation of learning tools and equipment; (4) limited teacher collaboration; (5) limited student access and participation; and (6) emerging parent and community involvement.

Regarding curriculum modification and adaptation, Alborn and Gaad (2014) found that this is carried out through the deletion of difficult concepts by the special educational needs committee, together with the subject teachers, depending on the type of disability. The shortfalls picked here by the researcher were that the choice of deletions were not scientifically based, given that teachers were not experienced in identifying the particular needs and abilities of learners with differing disabilities. Other results from the reported study showed that although teachers used a variety of teaching strategies the main barrier was the lack of lesson planning to suit the needs of the learners with disabilities.

Teacher collaboration in all of the schools was limited to the preparation of Inclusive Education Plans (IEPs), differentiated worksheets and examination papers. Support issues among teachers emerged as a common theme, however, it fell short of developing into an effective collaboration, due to a lack of planning time, and a lack of experience in running a collaborative classroom. Similar challenges of collaboration were readily identified in two studies by Mulholland and Una O’Connor (2016) and Sawhney (2016) which were broadly encapsulated as a significant time issue. In addition, Alborn and Gaad’s (2014) study

reiterated the need for parents to be appreciated for their efforts, and the need to feel that the teachers fully accept their children in their classrooms; this will in turn help them to accept the disability themselves. Only then is a collaborative relationship possible.

In another study by Cate (2016) on the importance of parental involvement to meet the special needs of their children with disabilities in regular schools, the study discovered that if parents participate regularly in school they would gain a better understanding of school's aim, methods and will feel more closely involved. However, after interviewing parents 53.13% of parents stated that although the school encourages parental involvement nevertheless the desired level was not achieved in practice. 31.25% said the school had neither policies nor practices to involve parents, only 15.63% feel more involved in school to contribute to their children education. The results also indicated that regarding composing IEP, 78.13% of 32 parents always attend the meetings for their children, 7 of the parents had never been part of IEP meetings but only 31.25% of parents indicated they were treated as equal.

Another interesting finding from Alborn and Gaad's (2014) study is that as part of school practices, sometimes personal assistances were provided to assist teachers in classes with learners with disabilities to act as shadow teachers. However, I argues that having an assistant teacher who is not trained to be a facilitator of learners might result in the stigmatisation and labelling of learners, which will then lead to social isolation and even behaviour problems. This happens as a result of teachers' inexperience and a lack of support services, rather than discriminatory treatment by teachers. Contrary to the findings of Alborn and Gaad (2014), White (2012) identified that paraprofessionals (caregivers in this study) must work under the directive of teachers when giving instructions to learners. The teachers were to prepare lesson plans and instructions to be used by paraprofessionals and would also evaluate the learners' achievement with whom the paraprofessional is working with. Another finding from the study of Alborn and Gaad (2014) is that learners were observed to be disengaged, especially when lessons were not differentiated to suit their learning needs. Consequently, learners experiencing these difficulties tended to become sources of distraction for their peers and for the lesson in general. The lesson here is that for inclusive education to be successful, differentiated lessons should be delivered. Similar findings are reported by Zhu, Li and Hsieh (2017) in their study on implementing inclusive education in an early childhood setting in Hong Kong. Differentiated teaching was further categorised as individualised teaching and

training. The current study was set to establish the school practices which were employed at the participating school in Zimbabwe.

2.8 Conceptual Framework: Characteristics of the Whole School Approach

This section presents the conceptual framework of the study. Constructs which characterise the whole school approach are presented. A brief definition of the construct is initially given after which critical analysis of literature of the aforementioned construct is presented. The constructs are: whole school consensus, curriculum accommodation, differentiated teaching, peer support and peer tutoring, teacher collaboration, classroom support and assessment accommodation. Whole school consensus is presented first.

2.8.1 Whole School consensus

Whole school consensus is described by the Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) as the process where all staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students. When schools become open to change and plan for it so that change can be reflected in individual practice, then implementation of the whole school approach essentially can be entertained. Whole school consensus is one of the several factors leading to the success of the implementation of the whole school approach. Chatman (2017) noted that there is widespread evidence that inclusive practices are most likely to emerge from collaborative action, reflection and enquiry. In this thesis, whole school consensus refers to the process where staff and other stakeholders place a high value upon a sense of interdependence and teamwork and are predisposed to deal openly, with their personal and professional differences and disagreements, but with respect, for one another's need for security. Staff should show consideration, sensitivity, kindness and be supportiveness to each other.

An analytic tool proposed by Nias *et al.* (1995) can be used to measure the whole school consensus construct and consists of a few elements, namely: (i) effective leadership from the principal or school head. The school head needs to be committed to meeting the needs of all learners. (ii) optimism that all learners can succeed should permeate through the school; (iii) staff should be confident that they can deal with learners' individual needs; (iv) arrangements for supporting individual members of staff need to be put in place; (v) there should be a

commitment to providing a broad and balanced range of curriculum opportunities for all children; and (vi) there should be systematic procedures for monitoring and reviewing progress. The current study will adopt this analytical tool as a lens to investigate the construct of the whole school consensus at the target school.

A study by Mulholland and O'Connor (2016) on the perceptions and experiences of collaborative practice between primary classroom teachers, resource teachers and learning support teachers in a cohort of primary schools in the West of Ireland attempts to demonstrate the construct of whole school consensus. This tripartite of teaching expertise represents an opportunity for whole-school and classroom-based approaches to move towards successful collaborative, inclusive practice. Using a mixed methods approach, the study sought to establish the nature and extent of collaboration amongst these teachers and to identify the benefits and barriers to implementation. Findings from Mulholland and O'Connor's (2016) study suggest that whilst teachers are increasingly aware of the value of collaboration, its implementation is largely aspirational, with a series of challenges relating to time constraints, ad hoc planning and limited professional development opportunities most commonly identified as constraints to a consistent approach. The article considers the consequences of this shortfall and options for improved engagement between teachers. The nature of collaboration and its implementation was to be established in the current study so as to draft options for improved engagement to assist in the implementation of inclusive education at the target school in the Zimbabwe

2.8.2 Curriculum accommodation

According to Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010), curriculum accommodation refers to the process where the school curriculum can be adapted and/or expanded to cater for different needs. In agreement De Luis (2016) in his review paper entitled: *Inclusive education in Spain: promoting advocacy by legislation* describes curriculum accommodation as involving the modification of some elements of the curriculum with a distinction made based on the level of alteration. Significant adaptation in Spain implies a complete redesign of learning objectives since the content and assessment criteria for the learner are far removed from what are appropriate for their chronological age (ibid). This is not regarded as a significant issue when the learner is achieving at an approximately age-appropriate level. However, the current

study was yet to establish if practices regarding curriculum accommodation for the target school go to the extent of redesigning learning objectives as done in Spain.

In a study carried by Chan and Yuen (2015) on current policy, practices and problems concerning inclusion in one international secondary school in Hong Kong, they found that in some cases, learners with special needs did not require any modification to the mainstream curriculum in any subject, but benefited instead from extra in-class support. From this finding, one can infer that modification of the curriculum does not always lead to the desired result when compared to other constructs such as in-class support. Peer assistance was found to be very helpful in this respect. Classroom observation in Chan and Yuen's (2015) study indicated that differentiated curriculum and support could take various forms. The most common was modification to mainstream content by reduction or simplification. In one example, a learner with poor literacy skills was provided with simpler tasks and different learning materials. Classroom observations and the shadowing of two learners also revealed that the availability of differentiated curricula to suit SEN learners plays a very important part in achieving inclusive education in the school. Chan and Yuen (2015) found that every SEN learner was provided with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), based on learning needs, interests and strengths. IEPs were reviewed annually in consultation with learner and parents. What can be learned from this finding is that the aspect of curriculum accommodation when twinned with other constructs like peer support and parental involvement can produce desired results on the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

2.8.3 Differentiated teaching

Implementation of inclusive practices in mainstream classrooms has always been full of challenges and obstacles for teachers (Lacey & Scull, 2015; Shah et al., 2016). Other scholars believe if inclusion is to work, the ways in which instruction is delivered in the regular classroom need to be flexible enough to meet the diverse requirements of all learners (NCSE, 2010). One of the most demanding missions is to employ differentiated teaching. Differentiated teaching is viewed as diversified teaching techniques employing assistive equipment to cater for learners' diverse learning needs (Education Bureau, 2010). Although individual learners will require varying degrees of accommodation, all learners can benefit from the strategies used in differentiation. Westwood (2013) notes that teachers of learners

with special educational needs (SEN) in inclusive settings are required to juggle numerous difficult tasks in their daily practice.

Lai et al. (2016) conducted a study where they wanted to identify a sequence of inclusive teaching tasks along the continuum of teachers' efficacy, recommending those requiring the highest level of efficacy. Differentiated teaching was viewed as inclusive teaching efficacy. In this current study inclusive teaching efficacy is defined as the judgement of one's capability to implement the required teaching practices in an inclusive education setting (Gibb et al., 2007) Lai et al.'s (2016) study adopted Bandura's conceptual framework on self-efficacy to guide their reasoning on inclusive teaching efficacy. Using the same line of thinking, the current study adopts Lai et al.'s (2016) reasoning of investigating differentiated teaching as one of the issues given special attention during lesson observations. This is in support with (NCSE, 2010) which says teachers should use a variety of teaching strategies. It further states that the way instruction is delivered in the mainstream classroom needs to be flexible enough to meet the diverse requirements of all learners.

Stavroula, Leonidas and Mary (2011) carried out a research on investigating the impact of differentiated instruction in mixed ability classrooms in Cyprus. Convenience sampling was used to select 24 elementary classes that participated in the study. Two groups were used in this study. The study followed the quasi-experimental design approach. The first group was of learners who received differentiated instruction from teachers. Teachers in this group had seminars on how to implement differentiation in their everyday teaching practice. The control group did not receive any training or support on differentiation throughout the research and did not differentiate their instruction in any way. The results showed that scores for learners who received differentiated instruction were higher than those who did not receive. This indicates the effectiveness of differentiation of teaching instruction. The study provides evidence about the effect that systematic differentiated instruction in mixed ability classes has on learners' achievement. Lately, several researches (Alborno & Gaad, 2014; Chan & Yuen, 2015; Zhu et al., 2017) are a few researches among many which have investigated differentiated teaching as one of the constructs. Differentiated teaching is very important in mixed-ability classes. However, several studies have also concluded that teachers do not find it easy to adapt their style of teaching in mixed-ability and inclusive classrooms (e.g., Chan, Chang, Westwood & Yuen, 2002; Janney & Snell, 2004; Vogt & Rogalla, 2009; Yuen, Westwood & Wong, 2005). For this reason, differentiated teaching is one construct which

was explored in the current study to see how teachers cope with it during implementation of inclusive education.

2.8.4 Peer support and peer tutoring

Peer-tutoring is a variant of co-operative learning (Mulholland & Una O'Connor, 2017). It is the process whereby a learner, with guidance from a teacher, helps one or more other learners to learn a skill or concept. Peer-tutoring, like co-operative learning, is effective in cognitive and affective areas of students' learning and development. Learners who help each other, especially within a system of flexible and well-considered student grouping, benefit from learning together. Peer support comes in so many ways. Support can come in the form of supporting teachers in: the classroom, managing the class, differentiating materials, managing resources and/or record-keeping (Lorenz, 1998). Peer tutoring can be in-class collaborative models in action, namely: co-teaching model, one teacher one support teacher, parallel teaching design, station teaching, alternative teaching design, supportive learning, and consultative model (Lerner, 1997). All these are models which help the learners to gain understanding in an inclusive setting. Peer tutoring can also be seen from the learners' perspective and not only teachers. For example, peer tutoring is an effective method of providing one-to-one instruction in mainstream classrooms. The emphasis is on two children working together rather than on teachers and children working together in this system. The tutor is the child-teacher and the tutee is the learner. Peer tutoring is based on the belief that the target learner is able to learn more effectively from a fellow learner and that the tutor benefits because the best way to learn something is to teach it (Wood and Tanner, 2012). The peer tutor helps the tutee learn, practice or review an academic skill. The reverse is also true for teachers.

Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015) conducted a study to explore what a group of South African teachers do in their classrooms to make meaning of inclusive education, against the background of the development and implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. In their study 49 teachers (four to seven teachers per school) were purposefully selected based on their prior participation in Phase one of their longitudinal study. Semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted. Engelbrecht et al (2015) focused on collaboration strategies as one of the issues which they concentrated on during the study. They found that peer collaboration is one of the strategies used to provide support in regular

classroom participation among learners with and without disabilities. Engelbrecht et al (2015) believe that it promotes interdependence and interpersonal skills within heterogeneous groups. Reservations can be held against the successfulness of the strategy if the teachers attribute internal and fixed characteristics to learners in their classrooms that, in most cases are beyond their own expertise but demands medical care. In their study, Chan and Yuen (2015) found that the teachers at the school they did their research relied heavily on the support of dedicated education assistants to achieve inclusion in the mainstream schools. The roles of the education assistants focused on support for individual learners, including ensuring their safety, giving encouragement, providing clarification of instructions, and interpreting course content. Education assistants also encouraged social interaction between Learning Support Centre (LSC) learners and others; and their importance was widely recognized by the mainstream teachers—a finding typical also in overseas studies (e.g., Blatchford, Bassett, Brown, & Webster, 2009). In their study Zhu et al. (2017) found that the interactions between the two targeted children with SEN and their typically developing peers were quite good. They reported two cases which show how typically developing children helped their peers with SEN and how teachers used peer support to improve the effectiveness of individual training in practice. The suggestion is that roles of support structures such as education assistants should be clearly defined, and there must be guidelines on how efficient cooperation can be facilitated with mainstream teachers. The current study investigated how support structures were utilised regarding peer support and peer tutoring in the target school.

2.8.5 Teacher collaboration

Inclusive education always requires collaborative effort in order to succeed (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Ferrante, 2017; Friend & Cook, 2004). A number of terms - including ‘co-operative teaching’, ‘co teaching’, ‘collaborative teaching’, and ‘team teaching’- are used in the literature to describe the arrangements and strategies that together are referred to here under the construct teacher collaboration. Teacher collaboration occurs when two or more teachers provide instruction to a group of learners with diverse learning needs. According to research, teacher collaboration can bring about benefits for learners, such as among others: (i) enhancement of learning for the learner through two adults being in the classroom, and (ii) the grouping of ‘target’ learners to enable them to work together on appropriate learning assignments and to make greater progress. According to Lerner (1997), in-class collaborative models in action, include: co-teaching model, one teacher one support teacher, parallel

teaching design, station teaching, alternative teaching design, supportive learning, and the consultative model. This improves two kind of competencies for the learning support teachers (1) competencies in professional knowledge and skills (having the information and proficiencies for teaching and testing) and (2) competencies in human relationship (the art of working with people) (ibid).

In her study Robinson (2017) identified the principles and practices underpinning effective inclusive teacher education for special educational needs in ordinary schools through an inclusive action research project. Robinson (2017) reviewed the importance of collaboration. Amongst her findings are that there is widespread evidence that inclusive practices are most likely to emerge from collaborative action, reflection and enquiry. A similar finding was reported by Sin and Law (2012) and Waitoller and Artiles (2013). In another in-depth study of four schools, Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) made a powerful case for the importance of collaboration between practitioners for inclusion. They described inclusive cultures as those in which collective action is embedded. In another study Goodman and Burton (2010) presented some findings of a small scale study conducted with a sample of mainstream secondary teachers across the UK. Semi-structured interviews were used to investigate their experiences and approaches to including learners with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in mainstream education. The results were consistent with those from the study by Black-Hawkins et al (2007). Several teachers reported on the benefits of implementing peer programmes where teachers would see how other teachers managed their classes and how they responded to learner behaviour. Few teachers were in favour of co-teaching which they commended as having benefits of allowing one teacher to lead the class while another give extra support.

Goodman and Burton (2010) in their study remark that even though some teachers showed appreciation of co-teaching, there were some teachers who thought it was a complete waste of time so they just sat in the lesson and walked off and that was it for them. This research is different from the current study in the sense that Goodman and Burton (2010) used secondary school teachers and one primary school teacher while the current study used primary school teachers. Although I the researcher appreciates the benefits of co-teaching, I however, strongly believes that the programmes would be of beneficial only if the teachers saw the method as worthwhile. The researcher further suggests that teachers must plan lessons thoroughly with their colleagues and potential areas of difficulty should be identified and

addressed at the outset of the lesson instead of basing on teaching alone. Collaboration should start at the planning level.

2.8.6 Classroom support

Classroom support is described by the Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) as a process where specialists collaborate with teachers in improving the learning environment, for example, arrange team teaching for the benefit of all learners. Bouillet (2013) conducted a study whose purpose was to analyse some aspects of collaboration in inclusive educational practice in Croatian schools by analysing teachers' experiences as a way of giving classroom support. Special attention of her study was devoted to the professional support resources available to teachers, as well as to teachers' views on the content and usefulness of the professional support they utilise. Bouillet's (2013) study sample was 69 primary school teachers who were interviewed regarding the elements of inclusive practices in their own schools. Each teacher also completed a short questionnaire about their opinions on elements that weaken inclusive practices in their school, as well as on some general data about schools. The data obtained were analysed on both the qualitative and the quantitative levels. Presenting partial results of a larger research project regarding various components of inclusive practice in Croatian primary schools, the results suggest that, at the present time, collaboration in Croatian schools was not well organised and defined. Only a relatively small number of various professionals who could support teachers and students in inclusive processes work in schools. Furthermore, the study established that schools do not compensate for this problem with stronger collaboration between schools and professionals in local communities. Teachers would like to receive more specific advice, as well as more concrete assistance in the education of learners with disabilities. The author concluded that a better conceptualisation of collaboration between schools and local communities was needed (especially a higher level of team work). This would certainly contribute to improving the quality of inclusive education in Croatian schools. In the current study, it is yet to be established what kind of professions provided specialist collaboration and the frequency with which this was done.

2.8.7 Assessment accommodation

Assessment methods are adapted to facilitate learners' demonstration of their learning outcome (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2010). A study by Chan and Yuen (2015) found that

differentiation in assessment strategies was practised in the school they studied. For internal formative assessments, students were often given a choice of assignments that they felt would allow them to demonstrate their knowledge in a certain subject. The authors report that a learner with poor writing skills was allowed to use oral and filmed presentation to demonstrate what he had learnt from field work. The purpose is to allow learners to demonstrate their learning outcomes in one way or the other. This approach avoided learners being excluded from the mainstream curriculum simply because of deficiencies in literacy skills. Forms of assessment are varied but the criteria for assessment should be standardised as far as possible, to reflect all learners' abilities at true levels. One way of doing this is to assign learners with SEN tailor-made tasks to test their achievements. For instance, Chan and Yuen (2015) found that in the Literacy Target Group (an English class designed for learners with learning difficulties) alternative assessments such as creating a PowerPoint presentation, designing an advertisement, or drawing a Mind Map were used to supplement general assessment. These assessments were intended to reveal more about each learners' abilities, and to give learners confidence in their own potential to succeed.

Index of inclusion

According to Zabeli and Behluli (2014) the Index for Inclusion is an instrument which helps the schools to develop through the inclusive model, ensuring long-term changes in structure, learning, and various areas of schooling. Research indicates that Index for Inclusion is used in many countries in the world as a suitable instrument for the development of inclusive schools. Booth and Ainscow (2016) add that it is a resource to support the inclusive development in schools. Hence, some of the elements of index of inclusion were used in this study in developing school setting of inclusive education through the whole school approach at the selected school.

Out of their study Booth and Ainscow (2011) came up with the benefits of the index which are:

- The Index helps schools to:**
- put their own framework of values into action
 - carry out a thorough self-evaluation
 - produce a detailed school improvement plan
 - empower adults and children to voice their ideas
 - improve the school for staff as well as for children and families

- minimise barriers to learning and participation
- bring together work on community, global citizenship, sustainability, rights and values
- present to governors and inspectors a clear rationale for development.

As a result a whole school approach was chosen in this study because of its similarities with the index of inclusion. Similar to whole school approach the index has also three dimensions and sections which are creating inclusive cultures producing inclusive policies and evolving inclusive practices (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

In addition Alborno (2013) states that the index also provides a flexible and adaptable framework for developing and evaluating inclusive schools with respect to cultures, policies and practices. However, the index of inclusion has some challenges which include translation, where the Index was perceived as ‘too English’, not only linguistically, but also on issues and emphasis of the indicators (Booth & Black-Hawkins 2001, p. 31).

2.9 Models of disability

There are a number of *models* of disability which have been defined over the last few decades. The two most frequently mentioned which are applicable to this study are the ‘social’ and the ‘medical’ models of disability.

2.9.1 The Medical Model thinking

According to Disabled World (2017), the medical model is presented as viewing disability as a problem of the person, directly caused by diseases, trauma or other health conditions which therefore requires sustained medical care provided in the form of individual treatment by professionals. The implication therefore is that while the majority of learners, including some with diverse special educational needs will attend mainstream non-selective schools, learners with moderate to more severe learning difficulties may attend a special school (Department of Education and Training Inspectorate, 2006). The medical model management is aimed at the ‘cure’ (Disabled world, 2015). Engelbrecht et al (2015) explored what a group of South African teachers do in their classrooms to make meaning of inclusive education, against the background of the development and implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. The participants were purposefully chosen and completed a questionnaire. Semi-structured individual and focus group interviews were conducted. The numbers of teachers interviewed

in focus groups differed in the schools (four to seven teachers per school) and three teachers were interviewed individually at two urban schools. In total, 49 teachers were interviewed. The sample was drawn from the Vaal Triangle area and the Pretoria area in South Africa.

From the results obtained, some teachers claimed that support practices for learners with barriers were not supposed to be only related to lack of fundamental resources but to the medical deficit approach. Teachers were viewing some of the learners with disabilities in their classrooms as having internal and fixed characteristics therefore believing that it was beyond their expertise and ability to support them but demand medical intervention. I have found these results to be very disturbing as I expect the teachers to have a better understanding of learners with diverse needs. It is now impossible to expect the teachers to give maximum help inclusively since they have a feeling some learners with diverse needs require medical attention and not teacher's attention. One teacher was also quoted saying, "...I was 100% in favour of inclusion before joining this mainstream school from the special school but my attitude definitely has altered. Many pupils simply cannot cope with mainstream schooling...society as a whole needs to change, not just schools." This statement indicates that inclusive practice is most likely not being effectively implemented by teachers. This is one of the reasons that made South Africa not to be among the chosen successful countries in implementation of inclusive education in the earlier section of success stories.

Another study by Lambe and Bones (2010) which followed the lines of the medical model thinking investigated the impact of a special school placement on student-teacher beliefs about inclusive education in Northern Ireland. With the student-teachers having gone for placement in various schools, 15 out of 41 chose placement in a special schools. After a month long of teaching in a special school, this is what one student teacher said during interviews, 'I was amazed by the wide range of pupils with SEN in my placement school. For example, in just one of my Year 8 classes I am teaching pupils with the following (some pupils having more than one): ADHD, Aspergers syndrome, epilepsy, asthma, ASD, eating disorders, Hodgkins disease, EBD, cardiac conditions, immune deficiency syndromes, dancing eye syndrome and speech and language difficulties. . . and that's all in one class!' The researcher believes placing learners with special educational needs is like condemning them and teaching them on their own based on their disability. However, in his review paper, Oliver (1990) argued that disability is a social state and not a medical condition. He stated that illness and disability are not the same though some people with disabilities have illnesses

at various points in their lives. Hence, medical intervention in, and more importantly, control over disability is inappropriate. Disability and illness are not the same (ibid). Basing on Oliver's argument, I concluded that failures of teachers in helping learners with diverse needs should not be rested upon medical model deficit but upon their lack of knowledge.

2.9.2 The Social Model thinking

The social model of disability sees the issue of 'disability' as a socially created problem and a matter of the full integration of individual into society (Disabled World, 2015). In this model disability is not an attribute of an individual but rather a complex collection of conditions many of which are created by the social environment (Shakespeare & Watson 1997). In support, Disabled World (2017) indicates that in a social model of disability, the management of the problem requires social action and the collective responsibility of society at large to make the environmental modifications necessary for the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of life. Thus management of the problem requires social action and is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the environment modifications necessary for the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life. The social model's distinction between impairment and disability is useful. Impairment is viewed as the physiological and/or mental limitation(s) of an individual (Goodfellow, 2012), whereas disability is considered as socially constructed barriers that constrain and/or disadvantage a person living with (an) impairment(s) (Barton, 1996).

A study conducted along the lines of the social model thinking by Chan and Yuen (2015) focussed on an overview of current policy, practices and problems concerning inclusion in one international secondary school in Hong Kong. A total of 13 interviews were conducted with the school management team, teachers, students and parents, supplemented by 12 classroom observations and two 'student-shadowing' exercises. Findings suggest that the school has been reasonably successful in raising teachers' awareness of inclusive education principles, creating a whole-school culture of inclusiveness, and forming a partnership with parents. However, the commitment of individual teachers to implementation of inclusive practices in their own classrooms varies. Some teachers are not adaptive enough in their teaching approach, and have difficulties differentiating instruction and learning activities. Improvements are also needed in the way that teachers work with their education assistants or classroom aides. Implications for improvement are discussed.

In another study, Mahlo (2017) carried out research on teaching learners with diverse needs in the Foundation Phase in Gauteng Province, South Africa. This study was carried out along the lines of the social model as well, focusing on the White Paper 6 policy, building an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education [DoE], 2001), that requires all learners, irrespective of race, gender, language, class, religion, disability, HIV/AIDS status, and culture, to have a right to access education, and acknowledges that all children can learn with support. Ten teachers who were teaching in the Foundation Phase were purposively selected to form part of the study. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The aim of the study was to find out how teachers cater for diversity in their respective classes when they are required to implement inclusive education. The findings indicated that teachers complained of large classes, lack of parental support, training for teachers, and social problems of the learners that were making the teaching of learners with diverse needs a challenge. However, Mahlo (2017) argues that although some teachers in service were not initially trained in inclusive education, they should still take their responsibility seriously and have a more reasonable expectation as teachers. The teachers were also encouraged to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning as early as possible within their phase and give necessary support, observing them carefully in all the learning areas so that necessary adaptations can be made. The current study also targeted one school and with learners from diverse background and disabilities living with special educational needs (SEN) and some without SEN at all. The current study sought to evaluate the whole school culture of the school, looking at adaptive teaching approaches used by the teachers, differentiation in instruction among other things.

I conclude this section by saying that the social model draws on the idea that it is society that disables people through designing everything to meet the needs of the majority of people who are not disabled. There is recognition within the social model that there is a great deal that society can do to reduce and ultimately remove some of these disabling barriers and that this task is the responsibility of society, rather than the person with disabilities. Since disability is a responsibility of the society, the society can teach the individual and in turn it is the responsibility of employing strategies such as whole school approach to provide conducive learning environment for learners with diverse needs.

2.10 Summary

This chapter started by outlining a literature survey of contemporary terms used in inclusive education. The Whole School Approach's three inter-connected dimensions of policies, culture and practices was critically examined as it provided the theoretical framework of the study. Critical literature review was presented on the conceptual framework which outlines 'Whole School Approach' characteristics namely, consensus, curriculum accommodation, differentiated teaching, peer support, teacher collaboration, and classroom support and assessment accommodation. Finally, a review of models of disability such as the Medical Model and Social Model thinking was presented. Essentially, such a process highlighted shortfalls in the area of the Whole School Approach in including children with special educational needs. The next chapter presents the methodology outlining how the study was conducted.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of the methodological approaches and instruments used to explore the implementation of the whole school approach on events of inclusive education where normal learners are moving into a special school. I outline and present a justification for the research design of the study. I then discuss the rationale and implementation of the chosen research methodology in the context of this study. I specifically describe instrument development, validity and reliability as deployed for data collection. This is followed by sampling procedures, ultimately explaining how different data were collected in tandem with the prescripts of validity and trustworthiness. The data analysis framework used in this study is explained, culminating in a conclusion that reflects on the ethical procedures that the study adheres to.

3.2 Philosophical underpinning

Traditionally, educational research is perceived as falling within the social sciences domain. In social sciences, the position of the researcher has a strong influence on the findings reported (Henning, 2004). As a way of conforming to best practices in educational research methods, the researcher is required to explicitly reveal his/her own ontological and epistemological assumptions, and explanation of what paradigm of research is employed in a study (Opie, 2004; Tobin, 2000). Ontology is concerned with the essence of things (Opie, 2004: 19) or the perception of reality, the extent to which a research paradigm affirms that reality can be studied objectively or whether it is subjective (Hays & Sing, 2012:34). Ontological assumptions are concerned with the form and nature of social reality and what can be known about that reality (Ponterotto, 2005: 130). On the other hand, epistemology is “the theory of knowledge, thus epistemological assumptions concern the nature of knowledge, what constitutes knowledge and what is possible to know, understand and represent” (Opie, 2004: 19). Epistemology therefore, from an anti-positivist perspective, asserts that all knowledge and truth is relative hence there are multiple realities, depending upon the social positioning and life experiences of both the researcher and the researched. Ponterotto (2005) asserts that social science research differentiates between quantitative and qualitative studies that is associated with the paradigm in which the researcher is located.

Opie (2004) suggests that quantitative research techniques are likely to be adopted by a researcher who holds a positivistic view, while qualitative techniques are largely adopted in an anti-positivistic outlook. In response to the above assertion, Opie's proposition is confirmed in this study wherein I hold anti-positivistic views which include interpreting the specific as opposed to generalising from the specific. My focus is on micro-concepts, individuals, personal constructs, negotiated meanings, naturalistic as opposed to experimental approaches and non-statistical analysis as opposed to statistical analysis. These views fall exclusively in the qualitative category.

In this study, the nature and scope of inclusive education were established. Furthermore, attempts were made to establish how best the school stakeholders could help in the learning of children with special needs by implementing a whole school approach model. The following characteristics of qualitative research made it appropriate for the purposes of the study. The basic assumption of qualitative research is that "social settings are unique, dynamic, and complex" (Hatch, 2002, p. 9). In qualitative research, the researcher interacts with the selected participants in their settings in order to identify, describe and analyse the participants' actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, Sutton & Austin 2015). Qualitative research "seeks to understand phenomena in the context specific settings" (Golafshani, 2003, p. 600) and qualitative methods enable detailed description and explanation of phenomena in natural environments (Hatch, 2002; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Other characteristics of qualitative research which made it suitable for this study include its focus on understanding social phenomena from the emic (participants') perspectives, the use of multi-method interactive data collection strategies, the role of the researcher as an active participant, the collection of data over a long period of time, and the focus on the social meanings that the participants make of the phenomenon (Hatch, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, Smith, 2011). In a 'whole school approach' model, issues involving school stakeholders are multifaceted and nuanced. To understand the interplay among factors that influence the nature and scope of inclusive education in such a context entailed attention to details of how school stakeholders participated and interacted with each other. In the subsequent section, a review of methodological approaches and instruments in studies of the whole school approach in implementing inclusive education is presented. Finally, the detailed methodology, including instruments and data collection procedures, is presented.

3.3 A review of the methodological approaches and instruments used to study whole school approach in implementing inclusive education

Research focusing on an exploration of the dynamics of inclusive education in classrooms falls broadly into what is called inclusive educational practices (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Kim, 2014). This research utilised various approaches and techniques to capture how inclusive education has and is still being implemented, practised and understood. Some of these approaches include examining perceptions and attitudes of several groups (special education and regular education teachers, administrators, parents, children) towards inclusive education, observing the practices and also listening, understanding and interpreting views of stakeholders with regard to inclusive practices in schools, and interviewing school principals, teachers and learners. The studies reviewed utilised quantitative and qualitative approaches.

3.3.1 Quantitative approaches

Lipsky and Gartner (1997) assert that early studies on the implementation of the whole school approach on inclusive education in classrooms employed mainly quantitative methods. The 1960s and onwards was marked by a virtual explosion of research into inclusion and integration with scholars exploring the subject from different angles (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). As mentioned earlier, most of the early and even recent studies were surveys examining perceptions and attitudes of several groups (special education and regular education teachers, administrators, parents, children) toward inclusive education. Instruments such as the Scale of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) (see, for example, Alahbabi, 2009); Attitudes Toward Persons with Disabilities (ATDP) scale and the Mainstreaming Attitude Scale (MAS) (see, for example, Alghazo, 2002); self-administered questionnaires (Al-Kindi, et al., 2012); Opinions Relative to Integration of Students with Disabilities (ORI) (see, for example, Alquraini, 2012); Attitude scale and a checklist (see, for example, Dukmak, 2012); Preservice Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusion questionnaire (see, for example, El-Ashry, 2009); regular education teachers' attitudes scale toward inclusion (see, for example, Hussien & Al-Qaryouti, 2014); and a scale to measure parents' attitudes (see, for example, Somaily, et al., 2012) were utilised.

Arguments have been levelled against the use of quantitative approaches to study human behaviour and thinking. According to Rennie (1998), one of these arguments suggests that

quantitative results have not been of much educational value because statistical figures cannot easily answer questions about human behaviour and thinking. It seems research on implementation of whole school approach on inclusive education has managed to escape a complete natural shift in methodological paradigms [quantitative to qualitative approaches] and the criticisms levelled against the use of quantitative approaches. Inevitably, during the last 25 years research has utilised either quantitative or qualitative approaches and the two have become fashionable and pursued more-or-less to the same extent.

3.3.2 Qualitative approaches

The use of qualitative approaches in inclusive education research methodology gained prominence around the 1990s the world over (Lipsky and Gartner, 1997). This was not as a result of a complete methodological paradigm shift [from quantitative to qualitative approaches] but a way of avoiding the ambiguity of language singled out as the singular demerit of the quantitative approach, investigating perspectives, feelings, thoughts, on inclusion of children with or without special needs, utilising more flexible tools, such as interviews (Alanzi, 2012) and observations (Almotairi, 2013; Gaad & Khan, 2007; Khochen & Radford, 2012), focus group interviews with teachers (Alborz et al.; 2012, Al Zyouidi, 2006; Wehbi, 2006), individual in-depth interviews with parents of learners (Abbs, 2009; ElZein, 2009), classroom observations and document reviews (Alborno, 2013; Aldaihani, 2011, Rodriguez, 2013); interviews with learners (Al Attiyah & Lazarus, 2007), reviews of lesson plans and documents, field observations of classrooms and teachers, concept maps, case studies, in-depth interviews, and interviews combined with surveys or open-ended questions.

As can be seen from the review of qualitative methods described so far, data collection can be done in a variety of ways including interviewing and asking respondents to give written answers to questions. The review of literature has shown that there has been no single most popular pencil and paper tool which is an open-ended questionnaire or test developed by researchers to explore whole school approach practices of inclusive education. Most researchers in inclusive education have been designing their own instruments related to their specific studies. Since research is a systematic process of collecting and analysing data for the purpose of addressing specified research questions, it is important that the selected research design and methods be relevant and appropriate to the goals of the study. What

follows is the design, methodology and research methods used in answering the research questions in this specific study.

3.4 Design

According to Narins (2004:1), the term paradigm comes from the Greek word, *paradeigma* meaning a pattern, model or plan. A paradigm is a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world (Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012). Philosophically, the methodology, research design and data analysis ought to align to one or a mixture of research paradigms befitting the study. As Merriam (2002:3) outlines, “linking research and philosophical tradition helps to situate the characteristics of different research orientations or paradigms.” The research paradigm is therefore the foundation on which one builds knowledge about human nature and society; about why people and their societies are troubled for instance, and about how to change them for the better. Given that human beings actively create their societies, nothing less than the future of society is at stake in the choice of a paradigm.

Pine (2009) postulates four major paradigms for conducting research. The paradigms are empirical-positivistic-quantitative, constructivist-interpretive-qualitative, critical theory-postmodern-praxis and eclectic-mixed methods. According to Creswell (2013), empirical-positivistic-quantitative research paradigm uses confirmatory scientific methods which focus on variables and their relationship as well as hypotheses and theory testing. Empirical data is used to test a hypothesis and theory. On the contrary, the constructivist-interpretive-qualitative research paradigm is concerned with exploratory scientific methods to generate new hypothesis or theories. It is generally used to understand people’s thoughts and experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The critical theory-postmodern-praxis paradigm is concerned with how power, control as well as the nature, foundation, scope and validity of knowledge are used (Pine, 2009). Its major concern is that even social and policy research do not always promote fairness, objectivity and justice. This approach seeks to provide a framework which promotes objectivity in research. As Relmer and Van Ryzin (2010) puts it, research projects conducted within this framework are seen as an enterprise that intends to free people from powers of oppression through scientific investigation. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) define

eclectic-mixed methods as the category of research where the researcher uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and approaches in a research study. Bergman (2008:53) summarises the controversies by saying that this paradigm refers to “adopting a research employing more than one type of research method.” As a result, each one of these four paradigms vies for acknowledgment and pre-eminence in the field of research.

Of the four major paradigms for conducting research, this study utilised the constructivist interpretive qualitative approach. This paradigm operates from a purist approach and is generally used to understand people’s thoughts and experiences. It was influential in disentangling the practices of whole school approach in implementing inclusive education in this current study. This design allowed gaining understanding of a circumstance (Henning, Gravett & Van Rensburg, 2002), in this case, the type of inclusion within the specific context of using the whole school approach in including children with diverse needs.

According to Creswell (2013), it is important to identify the strategy that is employed in the constructivist-interpretive qualitative approach. The strategies that may be employed are several and include ethnomethodology, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography as well as case study. Among these strategies, the *ethnographic case study* approach was used in this study. The research objectives articulate one case which is *descriptive*. Descriptive case studies present complete descriptions of phenomena within their context whereas explanatory case studies present data bearing cause-and-effect relationships. Ethnography literally means to “write (or represent) a culture” (Parthasarathy, 2008). Ethnographers also contextualise these in wider contexts for example the wider economy and government policies, among others. The ethnographic case study enabled me to look for patterns, describe local relationships (formal and informal), understandings and meanings (tacit and explicit), and try to make sense of each case in relation to the entire social setting and all social relationships. While a fully-fledged ethnography study typically demands long-term engagement in the field, one advantage of ethnographic case studies is that they can be conducted over shorter spans of time (Parthasarathy, 2008) to explore narrower fields of interest: implementation of a whole school approach in inclusive education in this instance, to help generate premises. This attribute became handy, useful and applicable to this study and hence some of the principles of ethnography were utilised.

3.5 Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology specifically using the ethnographic case study approach. During the last two-and-half decades, most of the reported research by the special needs education community has established a research agenda calling for more studies focused on inclusive education using either quantitative or qualitative methods, with very few studies combining quantitative and qualitative methods (Alkhateeb, Hadidi & Alkhateeb, 2016). On the one hand, the use of one methodology, for instance quantitative methods, instead of both, has been based on the conviction that they are clear cut but cannot answer "why" things happen. Furthermore, the results provided can easily be generalised, something which cannot happen by applying quantitative methods. Use of qualitative methods, on the other hand, enhances the formulation of new research questions when a quantitative research (survey) seems difficult to generate new hypotheses and ideas for a theme (Burns, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

There has been a long-standing debate on the relative merits and compatibility of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Mouton, 1996:38) and this thesis will not be entangled in this debate. Suffice to mention that the research methods and techniques chosen for this study are task-specific and the task was defined by the research goal which was to establish the extent to which the whole school approach could be utilised in implementing inclusive education at one special school in Zimbabwe so as to offer insights, patterns, describe local relationships (formal and informal), as well as understandings and meanings (tacit and explicit). Since there is an underlying belief that the status of inclusive practices in so-called inclusive schools is complex and there is need for it to be portrayed from many dimensions, rather than focusing on a narrow field (Gous, Eloff & Moen, 2014), this called for rich context-bound information to be assembled (Creswell, 2013). With this in mind, qualitative methods of data collection were used.

3.5.1 Site selection

The study was conducted in the Midlands province, one of 10 educational provinces in Zimbabwe. The major rationale was that the researcher works in this province and this enabled accessibility to research site(s). This study was conducted at a primary special school in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. This is one of the few special schools in the province.

Since the study is ethnographic in nature, the researcher was compelled to have a prolonged engagement at the site and observed how participants engaged in their activities. This logic justified the very small sample purposively utilised in this study. Ethnographers study cultures which entail relationships, values and habits that make people understand themselves as members of a group. It is done by spending significant amount of time in the cultures being studied, interacting with the people, watching and learning from the way they act and talk. I was at the school for about a year and presume this is enough engagement period at one site to have learned about the school culture. In this engagement, the researcher adopted the stance of both participant and non-participant observer (distanced interactive and observation participation).

3.5.1.1 Site Profile

I chose Big Tree Primary School (pseudonym) as the learning site for this study. The school is situated in one of the cities in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. It was founded in 1968 by a native Rhodesian-born man. He used Christian principles of charity, patience and non-judgmental tolerance after realising that there were a lot of disadvantaged and disabled people. Initially, both the disadvantaged and disabled stayed at a place he had identified under the same roof. Fortune knocked at his door when one Indian family donated some buildings which were formerly used as a Tuberculosis Convalescent Centre which they owned. This meant that this Good *Samaritan* could now separate the disadvantaged and the disabled. The disabled were moved to the former Tuberculosis Convalescent Centre whilst the disadvantaged remained at the initial place identified by this philanthropist. This is how the special school for learners with hearing impairment was formed. It was established in 1968 and named after the Indian family. Currently, it is a boarding school with an enrolment of about 160 learners, 15 teachers and 2 caregivers. It offers instruction to learners from Grade 1 to 7. Big Tree Primary School has historically drawn its learners from all over the country. Most learners are from disadvantaged families. However, some of the learners from the vicinity attend school from their homes as day scholars. The learners use English, Shona and Sign language as a means of communication. Beginning 2013, the school started enrolling learners without disabilities. These learners are mixed with learners with disabilities during all activities of the school curriculum.

3.5.2 Population

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:129), a population is classified as a group of individuals conforming to specific criteria, and whose knowledge the researcher wants to develop by generalising the sample results. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:139) describe population as a target group of interest to the researcher. To be part of the population, a set of elements that one desires to apply the findings of the study are considered. Elements are a total number of either objects or human beings among which the study is conducted at a particular point in time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Zimbabwe has a total of 24 special schools (Deluca, Tramontano & Kett, 2014). However, the Midlands province where the study was conducted has two special schools and one of these special schools was conveniently and purposively selected for this study. The selected school was chosen because it is situated in the capital of the Midlands Province and easily accessible from the neighbouring town where I work and stay as a researcher. The sampling was purposive because this is the only special school in the province and in the whole country where learners without special educational needs are enrolled to learn with those with disabilities.

Shifting focus to the participants, there are two heads of schools for special schools in the Midlands province. The head of school of the selected special school in the Midlands province took part in the study. In Zimbabwe, the phrase *Head of school* is used instead of school principal. The total number of teachers is 35, that is, all teachers from at least the two special schools in the province under study. The population for caregivers in the Midlands province is 12 (that is, 10 from 5 private schools, two from each school and 2 from the special school). The population for learners is 300, that is, 160 from the selected special school and 140 from the other special school not selected. At the selected special school, a class has an average of 10 learners except for Early Childhood Development (ECD) which has 3 classes of 30 learners each.

3.5.3 Sampling and participant selection

Purposive sampling was employed in this study to identify participants (Patton, 1990). This study utilised purposeful sampling because it selected participants who possessed particular

knowledge being sought for (Cohen et al, 2007, Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The school has a single head and this means he was purposively selected to take part in the study. From the school, three (3) teachers were purposively selected to participate in the study as follows: one (1) Early Childhood Development [ECD] teacher, one (1) grade one teacher and one (1) grade two teacher. These are directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education at the school. During the data collection period, the inclusive education system was up to grade 2 in the school. Five other teachers, one from each grade (Grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7), were selected and participated in a focus group interview. These five teachers were not teaching inclusive classes yet since the inclusive education system only went up to grade 2 at that time in the school. However, given that the study explores the ‘whole school approach’ in including children with diverse needs, these teachers were interviewed to get their views and determine the extent of implementation of the concept at the school. In the process, the nature and scope of inclusive education, including challenges experienced in implementing inclusive education at the selected school, were ascertained. Both caregivers were also purposively selected to participate in the study. Caregivers are among the people who are directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education at the school by assisting teachers when need arises. Specifically, they clean those learners who are not well toilet trained and mess up themselves. For a summary of selected participants, see Figure 3.1.

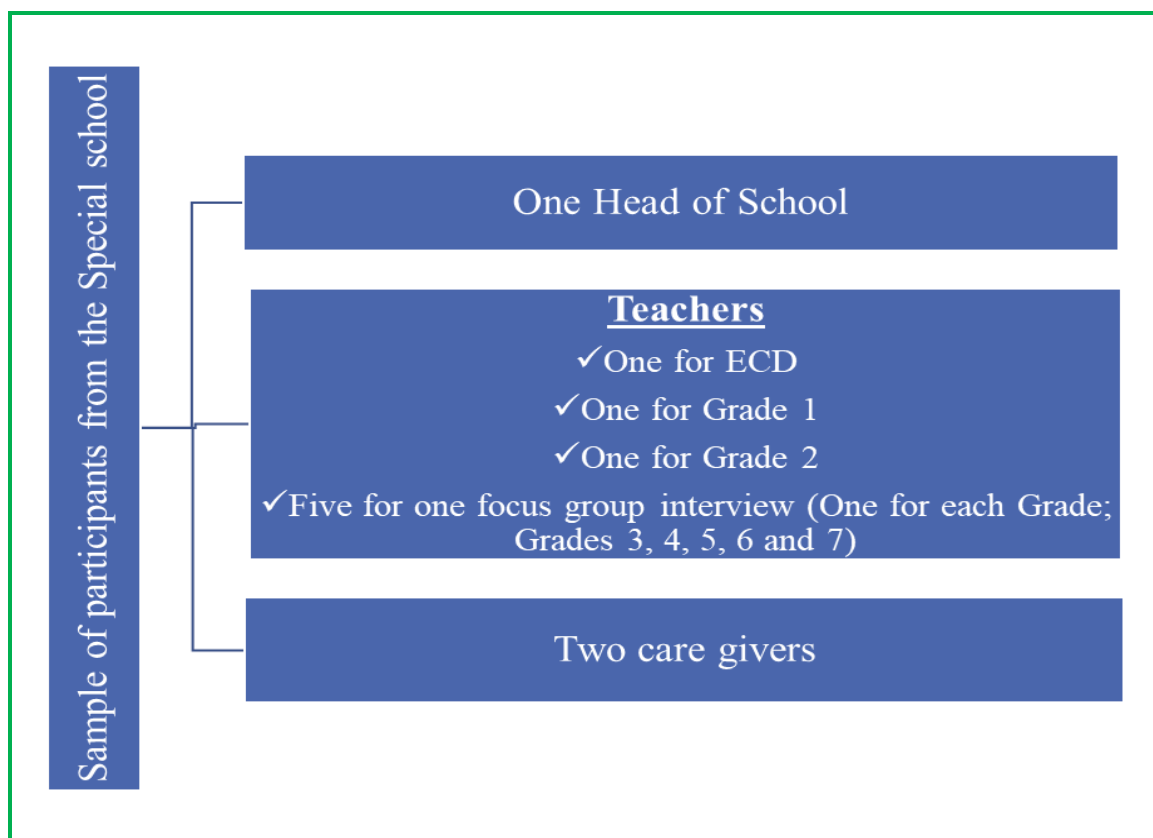


Figure 3.1: Sample of participants from the Special school

A summary of demographic variables for the head of school and 8 teachers who were interviewed of which only 3 (ECD, Grade 1 and Grade 2) were observed teaching since the inclusive education system is up to grade 2 in the school is outlined in Table 3.1.

Teacher code	Name	Qualifications	Grade level taught	Teaching experience
T1 (Male)	Ndlovu	Dip.Ed. (Primary), Dip.Ed. (Special Needs), B. Ed. (SN)	Head of School	15yrs
T2 (Female)	Machona	Dip.Ed. (Infant), Dip.Ed. (Special Needs)	ECD	5yrs
T3 (Female)	Mashava	Dip.Ed. (Infant), Dip.Ed. (Special	Grade 1	9yrs

		Needs)			
T4 (Female)	Mucheki	Dip.Ed.	(Infant),	Grade 2	2yrs
		Dip.Ed.	(Special		
		Needs)			
T5 (Female)	Bhungeni	Dip.Ed.	(Primary),	Grade 3	15yrs
		Dip.Ed.	(Special		
		Needs),	B. Ed.		
		(SN)			
T6 (Male)	Chibangwa	Dip.Ed.	(Primary),	Grade 4	6yrs
		Dip.Ed.	(Special		
		Needs)			
T7 (Female)	Jeza	Dip.Ed.	(Primary),	Grade 5	5yrs
		Dip.Ed.	(Special		
		Needs),	B. Ed.		
		(SN)			
T8 (Male)	Jombo	Dip.Ed.	(Primary),	Grade 6	12yrs
		Dip.Ed.	(Special		
		Needs)			
T9 (Male)	Muchezana	Dip.Ed.	(Primary),	Grade 7	31yrs
		Dip.Ed.	(Special		
		Needs), B. Ed. (SN)			

Table 3.1: Summary of demographic variables for the nine interviewed and observed teachers.

As illustrated in Table 3.1, the head of school and the eight teachers, one from each grade formed the study sample. The head of school and the eight teachers, pseudo-named, Ndlovu, Machona, Mashava, Mucheki, Bhungeni, Chibangwa, Jeza, Jombo and Muchezana respectively were chosen for the study for three major reasons. First, the head of school was well qualified to run the affairs of the special school given that he had studied special needs education up to degree level, having successfully completed a Diploma in Special Needs education at a teacher's college specialising in training only special needs teachers. Second, the teachers were judged to be the most experienced, given that all eight had special needs education qualifications obtained from a teacher's college specialising in training only special needs teachers and universities offering programmes in special needs education. Third, all

participants appeared to be cooperative and willing to participate in the study. All eight teachers were interviewed about their views on the ‘whole school approach’ in implementing inclusive education at their school. For three teachers (ECD, Grade 1 and Grade 2), as many lessons as possible for each of the three teachers were observed until saturation point was reached. For the ECD teacher 7 lessons were observed whereas for the grades 1 and 2 teachers 8 lessons were observed for each teacher. Table 3.2 gives a summary of demographic variables for the two caregivers.

Table 3.2: Summary of demographic variables for the two interviewed caregivers

Caregiver code	Name	Qualifications	Grade level assisted	Care giver experience
CG1 (Male)	Muchirinoza	Diploma in Social Work	All grades	31yrs
CG2 (Female)	Muusha	Diploma in Social Work	All grades	42yrs

As shown in Table 3.2, both caregivers had a Diploma in Social Work from one of the leading universities in the country. One was a female and the other was male and assisted all grades, that is, from ECD to Grade 7. They were called in to assist the teachers whenever need arose.

3.6 Data Collection Strategies

Consistent with case study research which allows the researcher to use multiple methods of data collection from a variety of sources (Bassey, 1999; Denscombe, 2007; Yin, 1994), a variety of data collection strategies were used in this study. Using multiple methods for data collection implied the use of a variety of research instruments. The methods and instruments enabled me to gather sufficient data to address the research questions. The data collected enabled me to “explore *significant* features of the case, create *plausible* interpretations of what was found and test the trustworthiness of these interpretations to make a *worthwhile* argument...convey *convincingly* to an audience this argument, provide an audit trail by which

other researchers may validate or challenge the findings or construct alternative arguments” (Bassey, 1999: 65). In this study, the data collection strategies and instruments included audio-recordings of semi-structured interviews, video-recording of classroom observations, researcher journal entries, and artefacts collected and used during lessons or sessions involving inclusion of children with diverse needs. The use of multiple sources of data, or data triangulation (Yin, 1994), helped in analysing and generating findings about the ‘whole school approach’ by establishing the nature and scope of inclusive education. In addition, multiple sources of evidence or the “development of *converging lines of inquiry*” (Yin, 1994: 92) served as a source of validating the claims made about various aspects of inclusive education. Details of the data collection process and strategies are described in the following sections.

3.6.1 Interviews

Two types of interviews were used in the study: individual and focus group discussion. While the head of school, teachers (ECD, Grade 1 and 2) and caregivers were individually interviewed, a focus group discussion with teachers each from Grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 was conducted. For both types of interviews, semi-structured interview schedules were used (see, Appendices A, B, C and D). All the interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Semi-structured interviews are open-ended but are fairly specific in intent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Opie, 2004). The use of semi-structured interview schedules assisted me in maintaining the focus of each interview and at the same time allowing the head of school, teachers and caregivers the flexibility to provide alternative and detailed responses to the questions when probed (Opie, 2004). The choice of semi-structured interviews was made, to allow an element of flexibility to reflect in the answers given, as well as the possibility to ask more in depth follow-up questions to draw out further information or revisit previous responses, rather than being restricted by a rigid model of questions (Glesne, 2006; Creswell, 2008).

3.6.1.1 Head of School Interview

The head of school was interviewed utilising a face-to-face semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix A). The purpose of the interview was to get to know the head of

school individually. In the interview, the head of school was asked how he understands the whole school approach to be and how to include learners with diverse needs, identify challenges experienced in implementing admission of learners and how to overcome the challenges, responsibility for the provision of in-service training and adequate resourcing, how effective he thinks inclusion is of all learners with all the diverse needs in one school as well as working with parents and out of school agencies. Probing was done in order to elicit additional insights and synthesise common understandings between the interviewer and the interviewee. This helped me to revise interpretations and correct preconceptions and misconceptions that informed my perspectives on the whole school approach to inclusion.

3.6.1.2 Teacher Interviews

Individual teachers (ECD, Grade 1 and Grade 2) were also interviewed separately (see Appendix B for interview schedule). Just as with the head of school, the purpose of the interview was to get to know the teachers individually, and collate data about their histories as teachers. In these interviews, the teachers were asked about their professional qualifications, how they identify special educational needs children, how they prepare for Special Needs children experiencing difficulties, how they collaborate and consult with other class teachers in setting realistic targets; as well as how they assume responsibility for on-going education plan in consultation with support services, parents and the head of school. As was done with the head of school, probing was deployed in order to elicit additional insights and synthesise common understandings between the interviewer and the interviewee. This again helped me to revise interpretations and correct misconceptions, informing my perspectives on the ‘whole school approach’ to inclusion.

3.6.1.3 Caregiver Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to get to know the caregivers individually utilising a face-to-face semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix C) as well as collect data about their histories as caregivers. The caregivers were interviewed individually. The interviews involved engaging caregivers in discussing their experiences while participating in inclusion programmes, the challenges they meet and how they overcame them.

3.6.1.4 Focus group discussion with teachers

A single focus group discussion was conducted during the data collection period as illuminated in the sampling and participant selection section (see, section 3.4.3). The discussions involved engaging the sampled teachers, one from each of Grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and hearing their experiences of participating in new inclusion programmes at the school (for interview schedule refer to Appendix D). Although inclusive education was implemented up to Grade 2 level at the time of data collection in the selected school, teachers from Grade 3 to 7 were purposively selected for the focus group discussion to navigate the ‘whole school approach’ context used in this study. Views of other staff members of the school not directly involved in implementing the inclusion programme were required, and became handy in augmenting the ‘whole school approach’ charter. I moderated the discussions by using the focus group discussion protocol (see Appendix D). The focus group discussion was conducted with five teachers from different grades to check and assess the implementation of the ‘whole school approach’ model in the school, and the sustainability of the approach. The purpose of the audio-recording the discussion was to collect data about the substance of the conversations in relation to the goals of the ‘whole school approach’ in the school, thus eliciting *implementation* of inclusive education. According to Steward, Shamdasani and Rook (2007:16) focus group interaction allows respondents to react to and build upon the responses of other group members, thereby creating a ‘synergistic effect’.

3.6.2 *Researcher’s field notes*

As part of the data collection process I made field notes at the special school during each visit I made to the school. I wrote notes in a journal of the research activities throughout the data collection process. Specifically, I made notes every time when I was waiting for interview sessions to start as well as when I went for classroom observations, sports and collection of artefacts with respect to the educational process and policies, accommodation and adaptation of learners, independence and responsibility given to learners, social and behavioural skills and general satisfaction of learners. The following issues (Education Bureau, 2010) were given special attention:

- i. Parents are invited to individual educational programme meetings, and parent-volunteers activities are organised;
- ii. Continuing professional development on special education is strategically planned for staff members;
- iii. A school development plan and contents of school self-evaluation regarding inclusion are laid down according to the developmental needs of the school
- iv. The school management establishes policies to cater for learners with and without special educational needs, and review the objectives and effectiveness regularly; and
- v. A Learner Support Team has been established to follow up and co-ordinate support measures for learners with special needs education.

These notes helped me to record what could not be captured on audio, such as the teachers' behavioural expressions of their participation in the 'whole school approach' programme or model. The field notes complemented the other data during analysis. Video transcription enables the researcher to record nonverbal behavior. This is accomplished through the play back of audio or video recording of events. According to Edware and Lampert (1993, p.3) 'transcription plays a central role in research on spoken discourse distilling and freezing in time the complex events and aspects of interaction in categories of interest to the researcher'. Another advantage of field notes is that they provide a good ongoing record and can be used as a diary in order to give continuity. The information is produced first hand and can be studied conveniently in the teachers own time. In addition they help a teacher to relate incidents and explore emerging trends. They give a good general impression of the classroom and its climate.

3.6.3 Classroom Observation

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) describe classroom observation as a purposeful examination of teaching and learning events through a systematic process of data collection and analysis. On the other hand, Gall et al. (2007) define it as a process by which the observer sits in one or more classroom sessions, records the instructor's teaching practices and student actions and then meets with the instructor to discuss the observation.

“One role of observational research is to describe what takes place in classrooms in order to delineate the complex practical issues that confront practitioners” (Good, 1988, p.337).

Observations can either be structured or unstructured. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), the observer looks for specific instances, events, and behaviours, as guided by predetermined criteria (for example, using a checklist) in structured observations. Simply by manually taking notes, the researcher or researchers can also record what happens in the classroom. Gall, et al. (2007) allude to the fact that use of observation schedules is known as structured observation. When the nature of the instruction comes out from data analysis, it is known as unstructured observation (Gall, et al., 2007). Here, the observer simply captures the lesson as it is without necessarily following a checklist (Cohen, et al., 2000). It is however worth noting that observation is guided broadly by the research focus or question in reality. There is really no such thing as observing everything and hoping to get a research question out of it.

The approach to the lesson observations in this study was that of a non-participant observer (Opie, 2004). For each of the observed lessons, I sat at the back of the classroom and took field notes. A colleague (research assistant) was video-recording all the lessons which I observed. The semi-structured lesson observation schedule (see Appendix E) was guided by a deliberate effort to capture characteristics of including learners with diverse needs in a classroom setting (Education Bureau, 2010). The following issues (Education Bureau, 2010) were given special attention:

- (i) Checking for diverse teaching strategies (such as collaborative teaching and co-operative learning) used to facilitate learning;
- (ii) Student support and school ethos such as facilitating the participation of learners with different abilities for development of their potential;
- (iii) Learning performance such as social skills through participation in ‘circle of friends’;
- (iv) Differentiated teaching;
- (v) Peer support such as organising activities to enhance learner awareness and respect for individual differences;
- (vi) Evaluation of individual education plans;
- (vii) Teacher collaboration; and
- (viii) Checking if school resources are pooled and deployed flexibly to provide appropriate support to learners.

I observed as many lessons as possible for each of the three teachers until I reached saturation point. By this I mean when my observations were giving me the same data regarding the articulated issues above, I then stopped making further observations. For the ECD teacher, 7 lessons were observed whereas for the grades 1 and 2 teachers, 8 lessons were observed for each. Table 3.3 provides a summary of the observed lessons and the related content areas that were covered by each of the three teachers. The observations were done consecutively, that is, one lesson after the other. All observed lessons were video-recorded by an assistant whilst I sat at the back of the classroom as a non-participant observer. According to Plowman(1999), the advantages of video based data to a study are its permanence as a record, its retrievability, and availability to other researchers to check the findings and reinterpretation. Observations provide information that other means of evaluation do not. For example, the researcher can observe the interactions between the teacher and the learners to determine whether the teacher has established rapport, treats learners with respect and addresses questions effectively. Observation also offers the opportunity to see whether the teacher uses effective teaching methods, has control over the class and is able to address the needs of all learners.

Table 3.3: Observed lesson related-sessions shown by title of content

Teacher Code	Lesson	Lesson-related content areas
T2 (Machona) – ECD	1	Pre-Maths-Sets
	2	Science and discovery - Things that use electricity
	3	English – Colours
	4	Art – Modelling
	5	Family Heritage - Family members
	6	Pre-Maths - Counting 0-10
	7	Play time - Hide and seek, see-saw
T3 (Mashava) - Grade 1	1	Mathematics – Counting
	2	Mathematics – Area

	3	English - Word making
	4	English – Comprehension
	5	English - Use of has, have
	6	English - Creative writing
	7	English – Opposites
	8	Mathematics - Area [more, less]
T4 (Mucheki) - Grade 2	1	English - use of true or false
	2	Home Economics – Food
	3	English - Reading words
	4	Mathematics - before, after
	5	Mathematics - before, after
	6	Shona – <i>Mutauro</i>
	7	English - Use of likes and like
	8	English – Revision

3.6.4 Document analysis

At the school, the following materials relating to inclusive policies regarding the ‘whole school approach’ were examined and analysed: policy on inclusion developed from the collective desire of the teaching staff to have a defined and uniform ‘whole school approach’ to the issue of inclusion, document(s) on vision and mission of the schools, documents such as scheme-cum-plans and Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs). The focus of this interpretative analysis (Gall et al. 2007) was to get a holistic picture about the extent to which the ‘whole school approach’ concept in including learners without diverse needs at the school was successfully implemented. Finally, I arrived at interpretations about the *implementation of whole school approach* of inclusive education which were the results of consensual agreement between myself and the participants. Documents reveal a true picture of what is happening on the ground and confirm the data from interviewees. The document analysis has the advantage of confirming the data generated during other techniques. It allowed me to have detailed analysis of the documents at my own pace.

3.7 Validation of instruments

According to Miller (2009), there are many different types of validity, which include *face validity*, *content validity*, *construct validity*, *criterion-related validity* (or *predictive validity*), *factorial validity*, *concurrent validity*, *convergent validity* and *divergent validity* (Miller,

2009). For the instruments used in this study, the types of validity significant and applicable to this study are mainly the first two.

Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) define *face validity* as the extent to which casual, subjective inspection of an instrument's items indicates that they cover the content that the instrument claims to measure. *Face validity* is about looking at the operationalisation and seeing whether "on its face" the instrument seems a good translation of the construct (McGartland & Kimberly, 2005; Miller, 2009). Simply put, face validity means the validity of a construct at face value. In this study the constructs are views about the nature and scope of inclusive education and the 'whole school approach' characteristics. Face validity can be established simply by asking other individuals in the researcher's field of study (Golafshani, 2003). Face validity of instruments in this study was determined by a panel of experts working in the same university where the researcher was registered. However, the criteria of validity in research go beyond 'face' and 'appearance' justifying therefore an examination of content validity.

Content validity establishes the degree to which an instrument fully assesses or measures the construct of interest (Miller, 2009). The extent to which an instrument or a test measures a representative sample of subject-matter content, for example the coverage of the content of a syllabus, is defined as content validity (Cohen, et al. 2000). The construct means a concept or notion which forms the basis upon which the researcher makes decisions about data collection and sampling designs, consistent with the construct (Bashir, et al., 2008). In other words, *content validity* is essentially about checking the operationalisation against the relevant content domain for the construct. In the case of exploring the *implementation of the whole school approach* in inclusive education using the 'Whole School Approach' framework, *content validity* addresses the question of whether or not the instrument's items are relevant to constructs, including inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices. Construct validity is established by consensus among content experts. The experts, familiar with the construct of interest, are known as raters (ideally 3 to 5) who give a rational analysis of the instrument. In this study, raters are a team of experts working in the same university where the researcher is registered and these reviewed all items for readability, clarity and comprehensiveness and came to some level of agreement as to which items should be included in the final instrument. The final instrument was piloted as described in section 3.7.1. Validity and reliability are crucial aspects of research, and in this thesis they are

discussed under the section on trustworthiness and rigour in the research which is section 3.8. Bashir et al. (2008) contend that examination of trustworthiness is crucial in ensuring reliability in qualitative research.

3.7.1 Pilot Study

Henk (1987: 66) states: “There is no question that the methodology of an investigation can be enhanced considerably by conducting pilot studies” whilst commenting on the importance of a pilot study. A pilot study is defined by Wiersma (1991: 427) as:

A study conducted prior to the major research study that ...is a small -scale model of the major study, conducted for the purpose of gaining additional information by which the major study can be improved - for example, an exploratory use of the measurement instrument with a small group for the purpose of refining the instrument.

This study neither adopted nor adapted any instruments, instead, all the semi-structured interview schedules used in the study for the head of school, teachers and caregivers were developed by the researcher (see instruments, Appendices A, B, C and D). As such, the instruments had to be piloted to ascertain their validity and reliability (Wiersma, 1991). Validation of the instruments was done to establish and provide confidence in the interpretation and reporting of results in the main study. It was also important to check the reliability of the measures of the instruments, by determining the possible fidelity which was to be achieved in the main study. This was made possible by obtaining detailed notes regarding data collection, data analysis, and modifications made to the instruments.

All the instruments were piloted at one of the private primary schools in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe with the head of school, teachers and caregivers. The feedback from the pilot study helped provide ways of improving how the instruments were to be administered in the main study. The major result out of the pilot study is that all instruments measured what they were purported to measure. The items in each of the semi-structured interview schedule were a correct and comprehensive reflection of the concepts the schedule intended to measure. Construct validity of each instrument was substantiated. The

participants acknowledged the clarity of the questions and user-friendliness of the schedule. In other words, piloting resulted in increased clarity and relevance in the instruments. Piloting also ensured the trustworthiness of the instruments. The whole process of piloting provided an opportunity for a first-hand understanding of the implementation of the reverse inclusion initiative. As required in qualitative research, other provisions to achieve trustworthiness such as triangulation, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement on site and member checking (Glesne, 2006; Stake, 1995) were incorporated within the study. These provisions are described in detail in section 3.8.

3.8 Data Analysis

Given that the study utilised a qualitative methodology, it is logical that qualitative approaches were used to analyse the data. Unlike in quantitative data analysis, in qualitative analysis there are often no clearly laid down procedures for analysing data (Hatch, 2002; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Yin, 1994). The form of the data which is mostly transcripts of conversations, interviews and descriptions of objects, events and processes compounds the complexity of analysing qualitative data. The challenge of qualitative data analysis is making sense of such data. Qualitative data analysis involves categorising data and identifying relationships (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), looking for patterns, themes, consistencies and exceptions in the data (Hatch, 2002; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Qualitative data analysis is also a process of “examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study” (Yin, 1994: 102) and involves noticing, collecting and thinking about emerging patterns (Seidel, 1998). These descriptions highlight the complexity of analysing qualitative data in order to derive meanings that can be used to answer research questions. In analysing data on the implementation of inclusive education, I interrogated qualitative data analysis as a “systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 364). Such a process is inductive in that pieces of evidence lead to a meaningful whole (Hatch, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This was done to generate the most rigorous description of the participants’ views on the implementation of inclusive education in utilising the ‘whole school approach’ in including children with special needs.

3.8.1 Analysis of interviews and researcher's field notes

Analysis of transcripts from the head of school, teacher interviews, teacher focus group interview, care givers and researcher's field notes culminated in a "hybridization" of the processes of analytic induction, sequential analysis and interpretational analysis following the procedures used by Eloff, Gous and Moen (2014), Alborno and Gaad (2014) and Sawhney (2015). The transcribed interview with the head of school, teacher interview excerpts and researcher's field notes were entered into ATLAS.ti Version 7.5 and analysed as data sets. The analytic induction involved continuous reading and re-reading of transcripts to identify common patterns. For each data set, emerging patterns were then used to develop categories for this study. Responses were then classified on the basis of the categories developed. The data was also looked at from the angle of sequential analysis, a slight variation to analytic induction (Harwell, 2000). In this process, interpretations for each response to a question were written as memos and comments. Memos and comments are used to record one's ideas and observations about codes, quotations and the hermeneutic units (HU). Formed comments and memos were reduced to clusters based on the responses. Interpretational analysis involved getting meaning out of the data. In analysing participants' responses to open-ended and interview questions the following sequence was followed¹.

1. All responses to each open-ended or interview question were continuously read through and phrases and sentences making reference to the implementation of inclusive education, specifically the nature and scope of inclusive education.
2. Each response to each protocol was read through and placed in the relevant sub-category which the head of school, teachers and/or caregivers identified based on three inter-connected 'Whole School Approach' dimensions of a school, namely, school policies, culture and practices. The questions were branded from the diary entries, observation schedule and interview schedule, which were designed with the research question in mind.

¹ The data analysis sequence followed in the current study was largely based on the 'hybridisation' analysis done by Sawhney (2015) in her analysis of Indian Primary School learners' responses to interview questions as well as Gous and Moen (2014) in their analysis of how principals of independent schools understood inclusive education. Details of the analysis procedure are found in Sawhney, S. (2015). Unpacking the nature and practices of inclusive education: the case of two schools in Hyderabad, India. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19(9): 887–907.

3. Responses to each protocol were continuously read through again and from the common patterns that emerged clusters of common ideas were used to form categories. Each category that was formed was given a code and this was done in Atlas.ti Version 7.5 to capture the main ideas expressed by the participants. For example, the code ‘diverse teaching strategies’ was assigned to represent the idea that the teachers were using several strategies such as collaborative teaching and co-operative learning to facilitate students’ learning.

4. Atlas.ti Version 7.5 then quantified responses as frequency counts. Each Whole School Approach dimension and inclusive education issue raised by the participants (head of school, teachers or caregivers) was counted as a frequency. Using Atlas.ti Version 7.5, head of school, teachers or caregivers’ interview responses were loaded as different primary documents and were further grouped as different families and this enabled the response to be counted only once in each family for that participant even if the participant raised it several times, for example in interview responses.

5. For each of the formed categories a comment was written to capture the general ideas expressed by the participants for that category.

6. The categorised responses were sorted out according to the broad ‘Whole School Approach aspects explored by the protocol items namely inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices.

7. Atlas.ti Version 7.5 grouped head of school, teachers and care givers quotations under each formed category hence the required quotations (statements), which could be used to illustrate and exemplify the formed categories.

Use of Atlas.ti Version 7.5 as a tool for indexing data aided analysis obtained from the head of school, teachers and care givers’ interviews. Complex phenomena hidden in the texts were uncovered and systematically analysed using the software. The programme provided tools that enabled me [the researcher] to locate, code, and annotate findings in primary data material and to weigh and evaluate their importance. Complex relations between findings were envisioned by use of the Atlas.ti Version 7.5 program.

3.8.2 Analysis of Classroom Observation

A scoring rubric developed from an adaptation and modification of the Whole School Approach to Catering for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) instrument of Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) was used for analysing lesson observation data. This was used due to the large number of lessons analysed. Three researchers (one PhD student and two Master's students working in the field of SEN), who had been previously trained on the instrument, all specialising in the field of SEN, independently watched the same nine videotaped lessons, three for each teacher, and produced scores for each teacher's practice, for each of the three sections of the Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) instrument.

The Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) instrument was adapted for this study as an instrument for data analysis. Some slight changes were made to the instrument and method of scoring. First, some syntactical changes were made to the statements. For example, statement A1 (see, Appendix E) was changed from "Staff accept students with SEN and are committed to supporting them" to "Teacher accepts all learners in the class, regardless of ability or disability and is committed to supporting them." In this instance, teacher replaces "Staff", which stands for members of staff. Second, researchers were required to score according to how often a given activity occurred in the lessons taught by the teacher by responding to each of the 18 statements on a bipolar Likert scale ranging from (1) need improvement (2) acceptable, (3) satisfactory, and (4) highly satisfactory. In scoring, each item response was allocated 1, 2, 3 or 4 from "need improvement" to "highly satisfactory", respectively. A high score (maximum = 72) is taken to mean that the teacher implements aspects of the 'Whole School Approach' framework to a large extent and the teacher's class is generally perceived as an inclusive one and a low score (minimum = 18) means the teacher's class is not inclusive. The scores were used to place inclusive practices along a continuum ranging from "not inclusive classroom" to "highly inclusive classroom."

Inter-rater reliability coefficients were calculated for each of the three sections using STATA (an Integrated Statistical Software package for data analysis, management and graphics). The following Kappa (κ) coefficients were obtained: Inclusive Culture (0.9714); Inclusive Policies (0.9385); and Inclusive Practices (0.9556) (see, Appendix F). This was taken to signify consensus among the three researchers.

3.8.3 Document analysis

Data from artefacts and documents were analysed using content analysis. The term ‘content analysis’ refers to a more sophisticated level of investigation, concerned with the identification of significant dimensions into which a given phenomenon can be analysed (Mouly, 1978: 213). Content analysis operates from the premise that reducing a text to its smaller components and systematically analysing it enables one to understand inter-relationships within the text and their underlying implications. The data were analysed to check if teaching staff have clear, well-defined guidelines on best practices of inclusion. The data was also analysed to check for consistency throughout the school and if optimum learning experiences were provided for all the learners.

3.9 Trustworthiness and rigour in the research

Rigour is paramount in research of this nature where the results are expressed in the form of claims based on qualitative evidence. According to Opie (2004), rigour has to do with generating and sustaining the readers’ trust and confidence. In qualitative research the researcher is the main instrument (Patton, 1990), hence the credibility of the research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). In this study, rigour was supported through a number of strategies that enhance validity and reliability of the findings. These have been explained in the preceding section (Section 5.2.5).

The idea of measuring ‘trustworthiness’ as an indicator of the quality in qualitative research studies was introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290) as an alternative to the concept of validity as understood in quantitative studies. Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the reader can trust the findings, interpretations and claims as being “worth paying attention to, worth taking account of.” Mishler (1990) goes even further, and links trustworthiness to the value that subsequent researchers attach to the findings and claims as a basis for their own research (Mishler, 1990).

Lincoln and Guba (1985:317) have suggested an “inquiry audit” as one measure which might enhance the dependability of qualitative research. This can be used to examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency (Hoepfl, 1997). Other researchers (Misler, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen 1992; Gall, et al., 2007) have suggested the need for an ‘audit trail’ in qualitative research in order to establish such trust and creation of value to the

findings. To Miles and Huberman (1994), an ‘audit trail’ would constitute evidence of documents produced as part of a process and descriptions of decisions made during the analysis to demonstrate how the researcher moved from data to the final findings and conclusions. The audit trail for this study included detailed notes regarding data collection, data analysis, and modifications made. In this study, I also provided detailed descriptions of all the stages and the procedures I followed, starting with the preparation of the research instruments, providing a separate section dedicated to a thick description of both the emic (insider’s views) and etic (outsider’s views) perspectives. All this was done in an attempt to address reliability and validity in this qualitative research. As Bashir et al (2008) insinuate, examination of trustworthiness is crucial as to ensure reliability in qualitative research.

In qualitative research, reliability is the fit between what actually happens in settings, events or the actual nature of phenomena and what is recorded as data by the researcher (Bogdan & Biklen 1992; Gall, et al., 2007). Stenbacka (2001) views reliability as having the purpose of ‘generating understanding’ in qualitative approaches to research. Issues of reliability have been questioned in qualitative research (Bashir et al., 2008). To be more specific with the term of reliability in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985: 300) use “dependability”, which closely corresponds to the notion of “reliability” in quantitative research. They further emphasise “inquiry audit” (p. 317) as one measure which might enhance the dependability of qualitative research. This can be used to examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency (Hoepfl, 1997). In the same vein, Clont (1992) and Seale (1999) agree that the term dependability is consistent with reliability in quantitative research. As suggested by Campbell, (1996), in this study, the consistency of data was achieved when the steps of the research were verified through examination of such items as raw data, data reduction products and process notes. This consistency and accuracy helped demonstrate a high level of dependability.

For *qualitative research, validity* has a plethora of meanings. The reason is that qualitative researchers are of the view that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, but at the same time, they have realised the need for some kind of qualifying check for their research. As a result, many researchers (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Stenbacka, 2001) have developed their own concepts of validity and have often generated what they consider to be more appropriate terms, such as quality, rigour and trustworthiness. The traditional method of judging the rigour of a research inquiry is by the use of several of the following six strategies:

triangulation, member checking, negative case analysis, prolonged engagement in the field, peer debriefing and support, or auditing (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Padgett, 1998).

The first three strategies are credibility and confirmability methods. *Credibility* refers to the confidence one can have in the truth of the findings and can be established by various methods (Golafshani, 2003). *Confirmability* refers to the quality of the results, in other words the degree to which qualitative data and their interpretations can be authenticated. *Triangulation* is defined to be “a validity procedure where researchers pursue for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000: 126). Triangulation is a way of corroboration that allows the researcher to be more confident of the study’s conclusions. In this study, with respect to triangulation, data from multiple sources through multiple methods (i.e. interviews, classroom observations and open-ended questions), was employed. The study also ensured that the techniques used for establishing credibility such as data triangulation and member-checking were employed since they are important for building confirmability.

The last three strategies (prolonged engagement in the field, peer debriefing and support, or auditing) are *dependability* and *transferability* of methods. To Denzin and Lincoln (2003) *dependability* refers to the stability of the findings over time and confirmability to the internal coherence of the data in relation to the findings, interpretations, and recommendations. Transferability means, in essence, that other researchers can apply the findings of the study to their own (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:143). To provide for applicability and dependability, the study presented the findings through “thick” descriptions of the participants, the data collection procedures, the analytic procedures, and the emergent patterns. The current study was framed in an interpretive model hence invested in these ways to improve and demonstrate validity.

3.10 Researcher’s role

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), the role of the researchers in qualitative studies is quite different from that of the researcher in quantitative studies. The researcher is considered an instrument of data collection in qualitative studies (Opie, 2004). This means that data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, closed questionnaires or machines. To fulfil this role, consumers of the research need to know about

the human instrument. The qualitative researcher needs to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, any expectations, and experiences to qualify his or her ability to conduct the research (Greenbank, 2009). For example, in this study, I exhibited qualities of the human instrument which included: good listening skills, establishing good rapport, reassuring confidentiality in order to ease tension from participants and make them feel free to talk. These qualities enhanced collection of rich, authentic and detailed data.

In addition, it is useful for the qualitative researcher to keep a researcher journal explicating personal reactions and reflections, insights into self and past, in a separate journal and how bracketing takes place. This was done in this study as described in the data collection strategies section. I also sought assistance of the gatekeeper of the school to gain entry and conduct interviews as this study is a model of qualitative practice.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) are of the view that research which involves human beings may be personally intrusive to the research participants. According to Juritzen, Grimen and Heggen (2011), ethical considerations are significant in a scientific study because they are intended to protect researchers and research participants. As argued by Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani and Cheraghi (2014), being considerate of ethics in research assists researchers avoid abuse of human rights or any behaviour that may jeopardise the study. Qualitative researchers therefore have to observe ethics in the conduct of research. Ethics have to do with the respect for the rights of participants in research. Ethical considerations include informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and fairness (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). In this study, these ethical considerations were taken into account in both negotiating access and the execution of the study.

As part of observation of ethics in this study, I applied for ethics clearance from the North-West University (NWU) ethics committee. Ethics approval was granted and this study was assigned ethics number NWU-00319-17-A9 (see Appendix G). After approval, the process of negotiating access involved applying to the National and Provincial levels of the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe. Approval was granted at national level. An approval granting letter as evidence was issued and the approval granting letter was taken to the Ministry of Education Provincial offices. The Ministry of Education Provincial officials stamped the letter to grant permission before accessing the research site which was the school (see

Appendix H). After obtaining approval, meetings were held with the head of school by appointment to negotiate access into the school and sought for his informed consent to participate in the study as the key gatekeeper. The head of school then introduced me to the school personnel and I explained the study to the participants and asked them to complete consent forms (see Appendix I for letters and consent forms) after showing them approval letters for all steps I had undertaken to ensure that ethics were observed in the study.

On the consent form, each teacher, head of school, caregivers and parents were asked to give their consent to participate or for their children to participate in the study, to be interviewed and audio-recorded. The ECD, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers' consent to be video-recorded was also sought. In the participants' consent forms, the right of the participants' anonymity was assured and no real names were used in this thesis. Thus, the identity of the research participants and the information that they gave was kept confidential and could or shall not be divulged to anyone. Participation was voluntary. No one was forced to participate in the study. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time if they wished to do so. As part of good academic conduct and rigour, the thesis was given to a language editor after its completion (see Appendix J).

3.12 Summary

In this chapter, I described the research design, the data collection procedures, the sample, and the data analysis framework. I explained the research methods used, the data collection and analysis procedures, and how ethical issues were addressed in the study. A reflective overview of the relevant features of validity and reliability for qualitative studies was given. In the next chapter, I present findings from analysis of data obtained from the head of school interview and document analysis of artefacts. This is done in relation to the analytic framework to answer the research questions on the prescribed duties of the head of school in a 'Whole School Approach' model.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS FOR HEAD OF SCHOOL'S CONCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings on how the 'whole school approach' could be utilised in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe are presented and discussed. In this effort, qualitative data pertaining to the study's first three sub-research questions is presented, analysed and discussed. These sub-questions read: (i) what is the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school? (ii) What do the stakeholders understand inclusive education to be? (iii) What challenges, if any, are experienced in implementing inclusive education using the 'whole school approach' at the selected school? This is done in relation to the analytic framework to answer the research questions based on the prescribed duties of the head of school in a 'whole school approach' model as a stakeholder.

Qualitative data was obtained from analyses of the head of school's responses from semi-structured interviews. Analysis of transcripts from the head of school responses, and researcher's field notes used a *hybrid* of the processes of analytic induction, sequential analysis and interpretational analysis following the procedures suggested by Gous and Moen (2014), Alborno and Gaad (2014) and Sawhney (2016) as also described in Chapter 3. The major theoretical tools guiding the data analysis were: a framework that categorises characteristics of the 'whole school approach' concept; for example, an analytic tool proposed by Nias *et al.* (1995:196) which can be used to measure the 'whole school consensus' construct. These theoretical tools were discussed and elaborated upon in Chapter 2. It was mentioned that the other constructs are whole school consensus, curriculum accommodation, differentiated teaching, peer support and peer tutoring, teacher collaboration, classroom support and assessment accommodation.

4.2 Problems encountered with the coding process

I experienced challenges during the transcription phase in coding data. Placing some of the head of school's responses into categories developed was problematic, for example, inclusive

cultures versus inclusive practices. Specifically, problems were encountered when placing some responses into respective themes of the relevant categories indicated in Table 4.1. For example, it was not clear into which theme ‘partnership with parents or parental involvement’ as a response would explicitly fit. To ensure rigour in the analysis, the researcher asked another researcher (assistant) to re-code a selection of this data based on the inclusive policy category defined in Table 4.1. Although at the start the researcher and his assistant’s congruence was about 89%, discussion of the themes from interview instruments and the hybridisation model used for coding enabled complete agreement between the two at the end of the process. An inter-coder reliability Kappa (κ) coefficient of 0,960 was obtained. Presentation of open-ended responses from the interview instrument was done category by category and theme by theme.

4.3 The nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school (Addressing sub-research question 1)

This sub-topic focuses on the extent to which the school deals with inclusive education from the school head’s perspectives. The nature of inclusive education has several key elements that differ from traditional and segregated special education. So the aim of this sub-topic is to assess how far the school meets the demands of an inclusive school in terms of school climate, curriculum instruction and assessment services, community involvement, parental involvement and resources amongst others. The data was obtained from interviews, field notes and document analysis.

Three main themes emerged from the interviews. The findings are presented in three themes namely inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices with emerging categories for each clearly shown. Table 4.1 shows the themes and respective categories.

Table 4.1: Inclusive themes and their categories

Themes	Categories
Inclusive cultures	• Teachers' fears and apprehension • Belief in inclusion • School welcoming climate • Community involvement • Respect and support of stakeholders • Resources • Teacher expertise
Inclusive policies	Inclusive induction policies • Open door policies • Partnership with parents • Support behaviour policy • Leadership role of school head • Teachers' responsibilities
Inclusive practices	• Curriculum accommodation • Parental involvement • Whole school consensus • Curriculum modification • Peer tutoring • Peer support • Teacher collaboration • Assessment accommodation • Differentiated teaching

Several categories emerged from the analysis of data derived from the head of school. The themes and their categories shown in Table 4.1 have been extrapolated into three figures, namely, Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 generated from ATLAS.ti as each theme is discussed. For trustworthiness of findings, applicable verbatim quotes obtained from the raw data are used to confirm and justify them.

4.3.1 Inclusive cultures

An inclusive culture certainly encompasses a commitment to workplace diversity. Thus, inclusive cultures involve the full and successful inclusion of diverse learners into a learning institution. In other words, an inclusive culture signposts a climate in which respect, equity, and positive recognition of differences are all cultivated, and the social and institutional response to disability poses no barrier to a positive employment experience. It also implies the establishment of inclusive values, relationships and beliefs in the school which are the essential for success. Accordingly, everyone in the school is valued and learners' understandings of and respect for individual differences is promoted. Figure 4.1 summarises the categories generated from the data under the theme of inclusive cultures. This diagram was cut and pasted from ATLAS.ti software program output and provides the framework for investigating the inclusive cultures as implemented in the selected school.

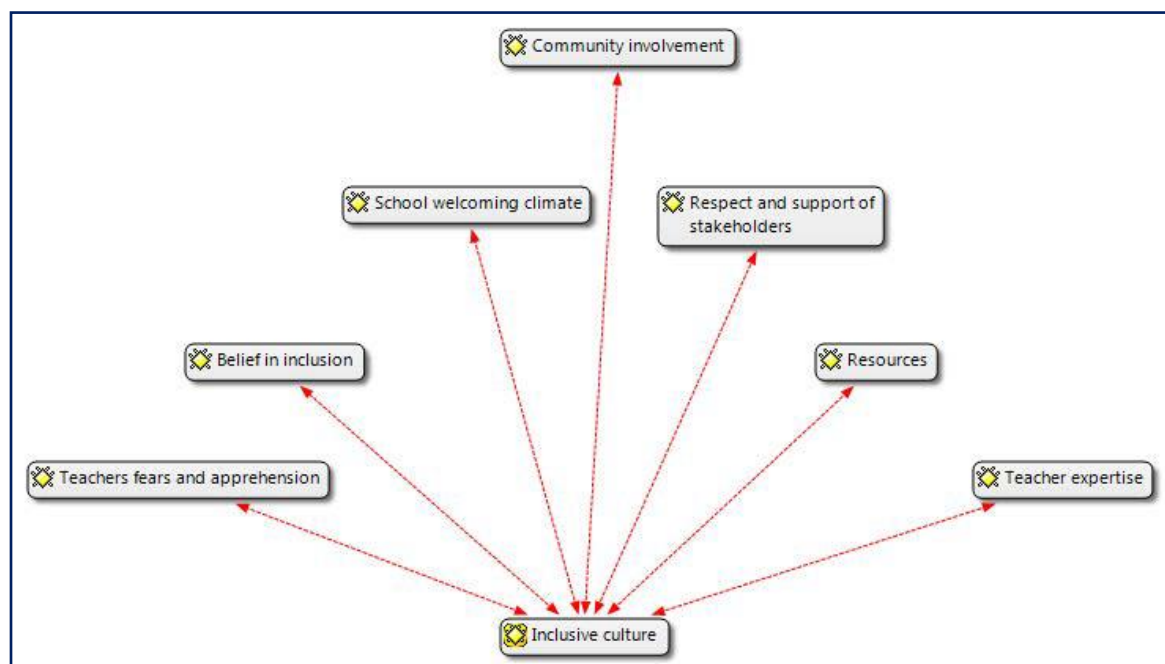


Figure 4.1: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive culture

4.3.2 Teachers' fears and apprehension

In answering the interview question regarding teachers' fears and apprehension, the school head said:

Teachers are very apprehensive about the initiative; they are only worried about the extra load of work. They also feel inadequate to support able-bodied and disabled students mixed together which means a lot of work. They are worried of failing to do the job properly.

Furthermore, when asked what might be done to overcome teachers' worries regarding the initiation of the inclusive programme, the school head responded:

...inclusive education could be successful, but many conditions need to be agreed upon for successful implementation. These conditions can be summarised into the need for more provisions such as practical training, regular support of specialists (according to specific disabilities) and the number of learners within classrooms.

As the discussion continued, the school head further explained what should be done to overcome teachers' worries regarding initiation of the inclusive programme:

On best approaches to inclusive education, there is need to share professional experiences with institutions who are practising inclusive education to improve service delivery. There is need to work with other institutions such as universities, schools, and teachers' colleges to capacitate teachers on how to handle differently abled learners. The programme needs to be monitored and evaluated by education authorities.

From the school head's responses it is plausible to conclude that there is lack of collaboration between colleges and schools, especially during the time when teachers are still in training. As a result, they complete their courses without the necessary skills and experience to teach learners of different abilities. It is interesting that very little attention has been paid to inclusive education by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe. However, inclusion can be extremely beneficial if learners are allocated to teachers who have adequate training on how to teach in an inclusive setting and work with learners enrolled in special education.

4.3.3. Belief in inclusion

When asked during interviews, “What is your belief in inclusion?” the school head responded:

I am a great advocate for inclusive education, with 15 years of special education experience as a head and I have a belief that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is on the right track to achieving more inclusive settings.

When probed further on the issue related to the same concept, the school head summarised the prerequisites for effective inclusion:

The programme needs to be monitored and evaluated by education authorities to check on progress or lack of it and give recommendations. There is need to share professional experiences with institutions who are practising inclusive education to improve service delivery. We need to change people’s mentalities and people’s attitudes. The programme also needs funding and a lot of training so that it works. Problems are in the government system. The government always delay change, but the concept is a right one and it follows all the international standards of human rights. My belief is that if we all work together, inclusion is a reality.

The school head held the belief that inclusive education is an essential move in the education system and the country was moving in the right direction. If all people had such a mentality like that of the school head, then inclusive education would be a success. When elaborating on the same point following a probe, the school head added:

At the beginning I faced a lot of rejection from most of the teachers, because they were afraid of the experiences they anticipated and the likelihood of the extra work and responsibilities the system would bring. Initially, all the staff members felt incompetent and not sure if they could handle it.

4.3.4 School welcoming climate

An analysis of field notes revealed that on approaching the school, a large sign was placed at the gate which reads: *Welcome to the Big Tree School (pseudonym): A School for the deaf*. Surprisingly, the school claims to be an inclusive school but the signpost still indicates the school as one for the deaf. Besides the school being an inclusive school, the term *deaf* is derogatory. However, as I walked through the school gate, I was welcomed by a clean and tidy school with a convivial foyer that displays numerous posters depicting various school activities and meetings by parents. The foyer leads to the administration corridor which overlooks an inner courtyard and the classrooms. But there were no posters about inclusive

practices or awareness messages about disability and inclusive education except one about the ‘school vision.’ The most fascinating discovery was that all the classrooms were acoustically designed. All the rooms had carpets and double windows making them sound-proof for those learners with hearing problems. In contrast to this ambience, the outside yard was covered with concrete stones and this made it difficult for learners with mobility problems to navigate around independently.

On visiting the school, I also noticed that the school does not have recreational grounds except for two small grounds where all school activities, including the physical education classes, take place. As for the relationships among the school staff, respect and support were evident features and this was highlighted several times in my field notes. As I walked through the school corridors during my school visits, I could hear staff generally spoke respectfully to each other and formally addressed each other whenever they discussed work aspects. This highlighted a positive environment that may promote inclusive education at the school.

4.3.5 Respect and support of stakeholders and community involvement (Addressing research question 2)

When answering a question related to respect and support of stakeholders and community involvement in an interview, the school head stated:

Stakeholders play an indispensable role as support partners in the school’s inclusive process. The school depends on the collaboration and support of public and private stakeholders in order to realise its inclusive mission, as an organisation. Although the school should be state maintained and should rely more on the state for resources, private support providers like the School Development Committee, School Association, private agencies and community members like churches are also engaged in supporting the school in general and its inclusive education development projects. I really appreciate the support we receive from these stakeholders.

The evidence that the school benefits from private agencies was seen on some of the buildings which were written donated by “Big Donor” (pseudonym) indicating the names of the donors. Furthermore, as I analysed the documents during lesson observation, I happened to have a look at some text books and discovered that some textbooks were also donated by UNICEF.

When probed further, the school head said,

Respect and support are the main attributes amongst all the stakeholders. Without stakeholders, inclusive education will die a natural death as a programme at its infancy. As a school head, I appreciate and value the teachers' efforts in driving inclusive education programme. Teachers are important stakeholders in this programme without forgetting the learners. We therefore need to respect each other and give each other the support we might require and deserve.

On responding to a probe as a follow-up on the same subject of respect and support of stakeholders, the school head indicated this:

The school runs a number of activities to promote awareness about disabilities and inclusive education. The various activities and strategies are to ensure that parents and children are aware of the new system and the activities include:

- (i) The school carries out an open day in the first week of each year to ensure that all parents are conscientised about inclusive education. Presentations show different types of disabilities and how both learners with and without disabilities are supported in the school.
- (ii) During the first week of opening of schools, special morning assemblies are carried out every day by the older learners at the school to welcome new learners (both with and without disabilities) into school. The assemblies are led by the school head as well as the boarding master.
- (iii) Parents are welcomed at the school at any time. The school has an open door policy for parent's visits and concerns, in addition to scheduled one-to-one parents' meetings every school term
- (iv) As a way of including parents into the system, the school prepares some special occasions such as Big Tree Day and Tariro Day with to celebrate the special programmes in cooperation with some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Still on the aspect of respect and support of stakeholders and community involvement, the school head reiterated this:

The school has a tradition of having ceremonies for both parents and learners at the beginning of the year to support the learners' settling in the new environment. Parents of children without disabilities are also sensitised on disability issues and act as ambassadors for enrolling more learners without disabilities.

4.3.6 Resources

When asked about the availability of resources, the school head stated:

The school is formally under resourced. Classrooms were designed to accommodate small classes of 7 to 10 learners with disabilities (hearing impairment) but due to inclusive education system we introduced, the rooms are no longer conducive. In a way, the classrooms were not constructed to accommodate learners without disabilities in mind.

He further stated:

So far, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) has been challenged by a severe shortage of expertise with respect to support services, such as speech therapy, physiotherapy and educational psychologist support, as well as all other forms of expertise to support learners with different disabilities. However, the government has donated some books for children to use, so in terms of text books we do not have complaints.

The school head further explained:

Lack of regular specialist services is of particular concern, as it affects the progress of learners with challenges. The services provided by the Ministry of Education need to be improved; our learners with disabilities are not getting the critically needed services.

The effect of shortage of resources in inclusive education has been documented by many studies (Ferguson, 2014; Makhmudayeva, 2016; Alborn, 2013, Udoba, 2014). However, the school head indicated that the school has come up with other means of attaining its inclusive education goals through a school action plan with the staff. The school head further noted: *“The school has to endeavour into activities for further means of acquiring extra-resources through fundraising like Funny Day, Talent Show and resource support from private stakeholders and has created a school action plan with the staff.”* This shows that the school is greatly moving towards an effective inclusive education programme.

4.3.7 Teacher expertise (Addressing research question 2)

In responding to an interview question the school head said:

All teachers at the school have attained special needs training at diploma level. In addition, some teachers went on to further their studies and are holders of Bachelor's degree mostly in Special Needs Education because this was a Special school. For me, training programmes in universities at degree level are too theoretical and lack hands-on experience of how to support the learners with the available resources in the classrooms. I have a feeling universities can do more because as school heads, we are forced to run workshops for teachers almost each term to equip them to handle learners. Worse now that we have two groups of learners, those with and without disabilities in the same classroom.

The school head further stated:

Human resource availability and staff initial training are important aspects of inclusive education services that fall under conceptualising and implementing inclusion. In these early stages of implementing inclusive education at this school, teachers are able to see how important teacher expertise becomes when dealing with a myriad of challenges posed by the inclusive education programme.

Concluding from the school head's responses human resource is not a challenge since all teachers are specialists. This is a great opportunity for the school to provide effective inclusive education considering that the country is undergoing economic hardships and is failing to provide resources as indicated in chapter one.

4.4 Inclusive policies

In this thesis, inclusive policies are principles that govern the teaching and learning achievement, attitudes and well-being of every learner at an educationally inclusive school. Schools with clear and consistent policy and procedures send a strong message to the whole school community about the beliefs and actions that support a safe and supportive environment (Friendly Schools, 2014). In this study inclusive policies are explored within the following aspects: inclusive induction policies, open door policies and partnership with parents, support behaviour policies, leadership role of school head and teachers' responsibilities as shown in Figure 4.2.

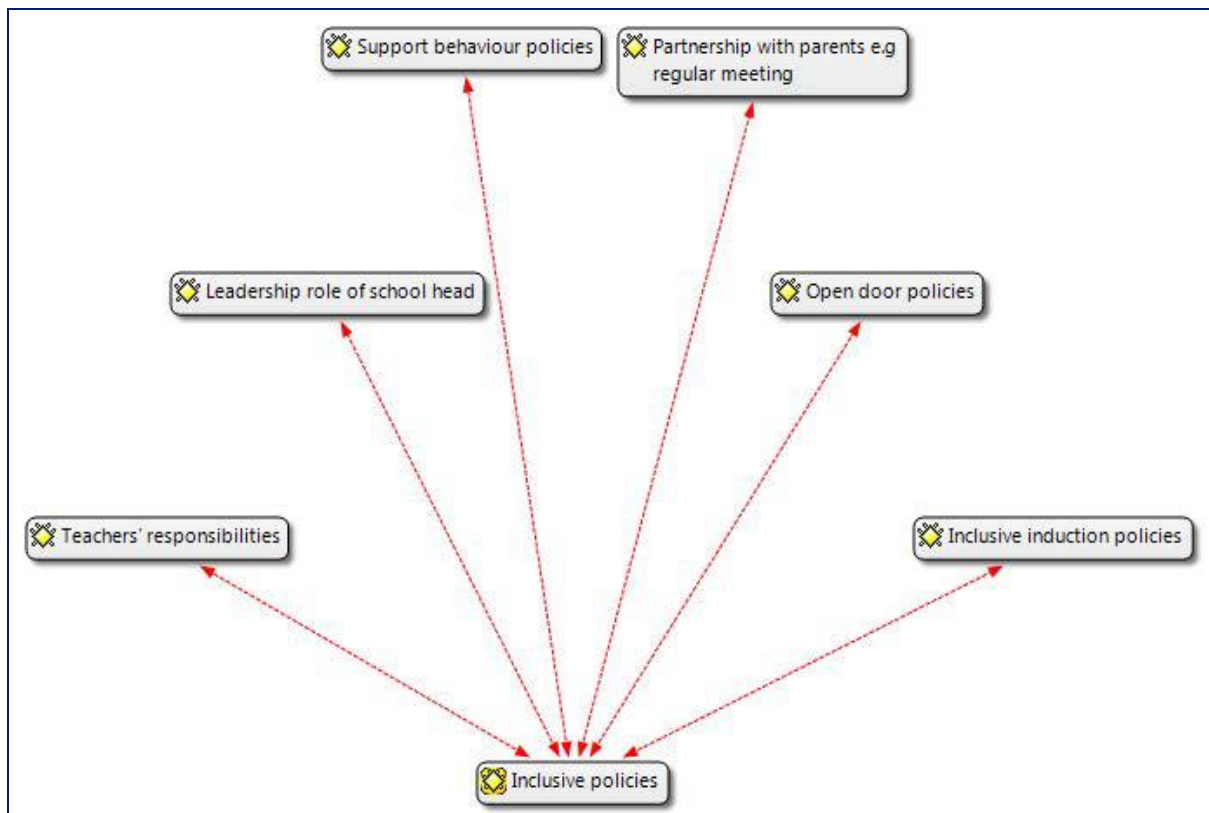


Figure 4.2: Tree diagram showing a network of the themes under the inclusive policies theme

4.4.1 Inclusive induction policies

When responding to a question on inclusive induction policies during interviews, the school head had this to say:

Firstly, enrolment of new learners with disabilities is carried out through the referral system from the Provincial Educational offices through Schools Psychological Services' office. The school is guided by MoPSE Circular on enrolment and placement procedures, Circular P36.

When probed further on how the school inducts learners into the school, the school head explained:

As soon as learners with hearing impairment get at the school, they are referred to the school audiologist for further assessments. This is done so as to check the degree of hearing loss. However, we take great care to help both groups of learners to settle into the way of school life. At times the school has welcome talks during morning assemblies, sports or tours of the school premises and drama performances by senior learners. All these events are done to make the learners settle in comfortably. Bearing in mind that the school is a boarding school and some learners will be separating with their parents for the first time, we ensure that active induction policies should be put in place.

However, the school head pointed out some induction activities done at the school but I have a feeling that more and motivating activities could be incorporated.

4.4.2 Open door policies

On answering a question regarding open door policies on the semi-structured interview, the school head noted:

The school has an open door policy for parent's visits and concerns, in addition to the programmed one-to-one parents' meetings every term, especially on the opening day. The school has an open door policy that encourages parents to come in and see us at any time for discussion in support of educational programmes. However, for all parents it is done in the first week of each academic term to ensure that all parents are aware of the new system of inclusive education. It is done termly so as to keep on reminding parents on what the system is all about. This day includes presentations about types of disabilities and how the learners will be supported in the school including learners without disabilities. Parents are also encouraged to visit classrooms, however, during times which are fair to teachers. Most parents are very happy about inclusive education, as it gives their children the chance to be educated alongside their peers, as well as the possibility of progressing to higher levels, inevitably avoiding segregation. Parents value the teachers and hold them in high esteem, showing them a lot of respect and appreciation for their efforts.

It is interesting to note that the school head's responses show a sincere advocate for inclusive education. When parents take an active interest in their children's teaching, learning and assessment, inclusion is enhanced. When asked about parents' channels of communicating with the school, the school head responded:

Open channels, open doors. Parents can walk in the school anytime they like. This promotes open communication, feedback and discussion. The school also organises parents' weekend functions each term to involve the parents in their children's progress. This is particularly important for boarding schools where distance works against parental involvement and participation in the school. At the same time parents have the freedom of speaking to me by through any means of communication. However, parents react differently in terms of their support; some are always asking about the welfare of their children especially parents of children without disabilities. On the contrary, others do not even attend the parents' meetings.

When answering the question, how the policy caters for other stakeholders, the school head commenced by quoting Harold S. Geneen and said, "A true leader has to have a genuine open-door policy so that his people are not afraid to approach him for any reason." He continued:

The school has an open door policy for every stakeholder. Teachers are the first point of contact by making appointments. However, teachers are often met during meetings and discuss issues. As for learners, the policy is that they should air their views or grievances through their concerned teachers, boarding master or senior teacher.

This finding has important implications for developing a successful inclusive education programme. Common goals for learners, especially those with disabilities and special needs, are achieved effectively when teachers and parents work together.

4.4.3 Partnership with parents (Addressing research question 2)

The partnership here specifically refers to regular meetings with the parents. Responding to a question in an interview which asked if there were any partnerships with parents, the school head answered:

The parents are involved throughout the process of testing and assessment. As expected, some parents are more involved than others and most of the time it depends on their level of understanding the importance of education. Parents of children with and without disabilities participate in the school's programmes to promote awareness about inclusion.

When probed further, on the same issue of partnership with parents, the school head said:

Equally, the relationship with parents is based on respect, support and understanding. The school runs programmes to improve the relationship with parents, aiming at increasing their awareness about inclusive education and improving collaboration with the school. Programmes include regular parents' meetings, awareness meetings at the beginning of the year for new parents about inclusive and parents are also invited to all celebration days both as helpers and guests.

Although I did not manage to interview parents and based on the school head's responses, I can prudently infer that parents are highly fused in the learning of their children.

4.4.4 Support behaviour policies.

This section elicited information on support behaviour policies given the complex situation the school finds itself in trying to cater for both learners with and without disabilities. When responding to the question in a semi-structured interview, "What supporting behaviour policies do you have as a school? The school head stated:

In order to ensure that school rules are firmly implemented, they are usually read out aloud during morning assemblies to the entire school at the beginning of every term. The school disciplinary team usually intervenes with a behavioural corrective design in cases where grade teachers complain of behavioural problems in the classroom.

The school head further explained:

I have recognised that the current behaviour problems are direct results of food in the dining hall. Learners with disabilities feel that learners without disabilities have no right to food since most of them are mostly not in boarding. So part of the remedial plan revolved around creating mutual understanding among learners, as well as behavioural modification sessions with boarding master who is always with the learners.

However, the school head indicated his concern and said:

Such learners sometimes are in need of more professional support, probably rendered by an educational psychologist who is supposed to be provided by the Ministry of Education but these are mostly not available. Currently, the education system is understaffed with regards support services.

Although there is no support rendered by a school psychologist, I argue that the school should have its own ways of providing effective measures towards learners who misbehave so as to instil discipline and a semblance of order among the learners.

4.4.5 Leadership role of school head

This category focuses on how the school head sees his leadership role as entrusted by both the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the community at large. During the interview when asked the question “What is your leadership role as a school head? This is how he responded:

I make sure that I keep an effective working relationship with the teachers and parents. I also adhere to a schedule of one assessment per school term for each teacher where I personally monitor the development of the IEPs and the progress of each learner.

Thus the school head hinted on the major role he thought he has to play as a leader. He went further and outlined his other duties:

I also make classroom observations and make myself available to assist teachers, especially with respect to lesson differentiation. This has been an aspect my teachers at times struggle with given that we are in the infancy period of teaching learners both with and without disabilities in the same classrooms. I control teachers' lesson plans to ensure that provision is made for extended opportunities for learners experiencing challenges in learning. I encourage teachers to always ensure that their lessons accommodate all learners with their varying learning abilities.

However, he expressed his concern about being able to keep up such momentum of close monitoring as the number of the learners has been increased. The school head's responses indicated that he knows his duties. I also noticed a roster on lesson supervision for teachers in the school head's office. However, in the period spent at the research site, I rarely saw him supervising teachers. This might have been due to his tight administrative schedule.

4.4.6 Teachers' responsibilities

This category came not as a result of trying to prove that the school head knew or did not know his teachers' responsibilities but as a way of establishing what his teachers ranked as the most important responsibilities. When responding to an interview question on teachers' responsibilities the school head echoed:

Teachers have full responsibility for the education of all learners as they have the most influence in academic goals. It is the duty of the teachers to review the IEP at the end of every term where short and long term objectives can be adjusted accordingly, depending on the learner's progress.

In sum, the school head was confirming that teachers are transformers of schools and are agents of such transformation. The results showed that teachers are essential partners to the head in developing the school towards inclusive education and in helping learners to achieve their goals. Although according to the school head teachers are reviewing IEP, I realised that parents were not included in reviews as it is ideally supposed to be. There were no signatures for parents on the forms.

4.5 Inclusive practices

Inclusive practices refer to flexible implementation of various resources and coordination of quality teaching, additional support and intensive individualised support. These serve to facilitate early identification and early support for learners according to their special educational needs. Evolving inclusive practices entails implementing all school practices that reflect inclusive school cultures and policies. In this study, inclusive school practices are analysed within the following aspects: curriculum accommodation and modification; whole school consensus; teacher collaboration and assessment accommodation; peer tutoring and peer support; and teaching differentiation as shown in Figure 4.3.

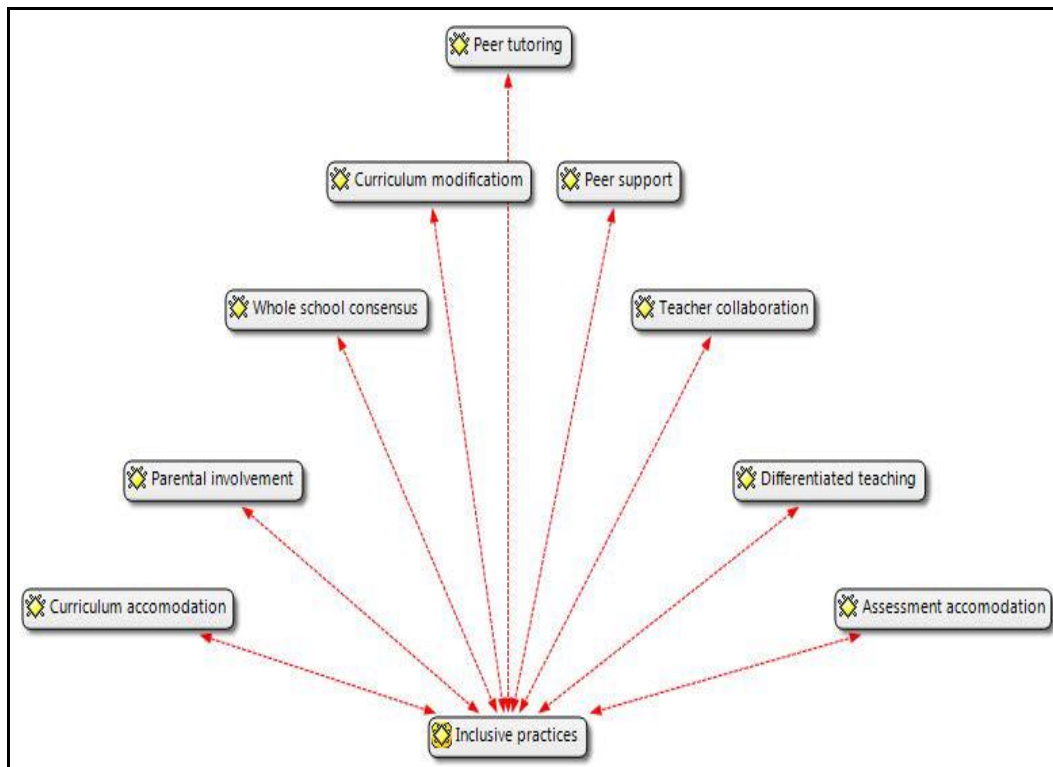


Figure 4.3: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive practices

4.5.1 Curriculum modification

This category elicited information pertaining to curriculum modification. With two different groups of learners, the category elaborates whether or not curriculum has been modified. According to Zollman (2016) curriculum modification entails fundamental changes that may include altering the standard expectations for a course as the learner may be unable to master any of the material. When answering the question on curriculum modification, the school head explained:

One major problem I have noticed is that my teachers are inexperienced enough in identifying the particular needs and capabilities of learners with different needs. Consequently, the choice of what to remove and what to keep rolls out on a hit-and-miss basis. Maybe this is as a result of the curriculum being examination-oriented; accordingly it becomes a challenge to modify it.

The school head repeated the same reasoning when probed further regarding curriculum modification by saying: *“There is no special curriculum; instead all learners use the same books, except that they follow their objectives, as stated in their IEPs.”*

He further mentioned:

The curriculum is not modified as it is supposed to be, what the teachers have to do is to remove the concepts that they feel are difficult for those learners with challenges. Although teachers say its modification, it is not except that only difficult concepts are removed, leaving the basic intact. This is known as keeping it uncomplicated. It is sort of watering down the content. The modification is carried out as a cooperation exercise among grade teachers, based on their knowledge and experience of the child’s ability. Teachers also use recommendations provided in the assessment form or medical report in cases of learners with learning difficulties. In its entirety, our curriculum is inflexible and is examination-oriented thus not suitable for learners with disabilities such as hearing impairment who are language disabled. It is thus a challenge.

This problem of curriculum modification by teachers has been documented by many studies (Udoba, 2014; Alborn, 2013; Madan and Sharma 2013). Undoubtedly, making any curriculum modification is a huge challenge considering the constraints posed by examination-driven teaching practices, poor teacher training, among other systemic inflexibilities. Hence, it is recommended that modifications to the curriculum are made in a recurring manner and with the support of all institutions and personnel concerned.

4.5.2 Parental involvement (Addressing research question 2)

As highlighted on section 4.1, there were significant problems encountered in coding. The ideas under this theme overlapped with those on section 4.3.3, “partnership with parents.” More-or-less, the same ideas recurred therefore as a consequence of this overlap. Regarding the issue the school head stated:

Parents differ in their involvement; some are very involved with regular phone calls and meetings often, to discuss and report progress and concerns. However, other parents consider this as the responsibility of the school and they do not even come to normal parents meetings. Once they come and drop their children when school opens,

to them they are done. They come and pick them up when school closes end of term. Usually these are few parents who have children with disabilities.

Responding to the same issue, the school head further said this:

Some cooperative parents participate in school projects and are also engaged in supporting the school in general and inclusive education development projects. Some parents play [an] important role through the School Development Committee in contributing money to make the projects successful.

I suggest that parents be empowered to actively participate in valued school activities that affect their charges. It would be of great help if schools signed agreements with parents with outlined activities that parents are expected to participate in. However, these agreements should be supported by a school policy.

4.5.3 Whole school consensus (Addressing research question 4)

This theme solicited ideas if there was sincerity in the school adopting inclusive education in its entirety. This is what was said by the school head:

The school is very committed to providing an effective inclusive environment through involvement of every staff. Among other things, the school is providing in-house training and also staff development workshops to assist the teachers and support staff where they struggle in implementing their duties.

Still responding on the same issue of whole school consensus, the school head said:

In this school, there is a genuine belief in inclusive education which I believe is right backed by most stakeholders; in addition to genuine efforts to support the learners, including extraordinarily supportive parents who are aware of and willing to co-operate at all levels.

However, the school head lamented,

Regardless of all this, progress is held back; mainly by the lack of professional support with respect to technical training, specialist therapy and inclusive training especially with respect to collaborative teaching. However, the teachers have been creative enough and have developed their own teaching material for effective learning to take place.

Although the school head once revealed that the teachers are very apprehensive about inclusive education, these results indicate that teachers are committed in this educationally inclusion programme.

4.5.4 Curriculum accommodation

Curriculum accommodation is seen as an adjustment and change of how a learner learns the material (Strom, 2014). In answering semi-structured interview question on curriculum accommodation, the school head outlined:

Without any supervision and management of this key aspect of curriculum accommodation by the MoPSE authorities and the official examination boards, some teachers may adapt the curriculum, while others will not, on grounds that they are inexperienced.

Still on the question of curriculum accommodation, the school head further stated this:

Learners with disabilities follow their IEPs, which defines a set of long term and short term objectives. These objectives are derived from the curriculum with appropriate modifications according to the needs of the learner. However, practically, the learners use the same text books in the classroom together with learners who are able-bodied despite their different operational levels.

The fact is that there is no official curriculum adaptation derived and informed by the MoPSE. Hence, the school head makes it clear that it is the responsibility of every classroom teacher to ensure that all learners have access to the curriculum and are successful in their educational endeavours. He further elaborated: *“Due to challenging and difficult working conditions of teachers, it then requires professional proficiency, self-assurance and personal will to undertake the task of curriculum adaptation.”* The school head went on to elaborate, *“In my school, there is no approved accommodation of the curriculum so most teachers adapt it in their classrooms as it fits them. Consequently the curriculum accommodation process lies at the discretion of each classroom teacher.”* However, the most interesting finding from the head was that in order to provide in-class learning support to all learners with different abilities most teachers implement learner-centred pedagogic strategies.

4.5.5 Differentiated teaching

As has been said in chapter two, if inclusion is to work, ways in which instruction is delivered need to be flexible enough to meet the diverse requirements of all learners (NCSE, 2010). This theme sought information on teaching methods and strategies that the teachers employed given that they had two different groups of learners, those with special educational needs and those without. Responding to the question on differentiated teaching, the school head indicated: *“The differentiation of teaching strategies are designed to enable all learners with different needs to have access to curriculum and participate in curricular activities organised by the school to attain their inclusive education goals.”* The school head however aired his concerns: *“Although the teachers use a variety of strategies in delivering their lessons such as role play, games and group competitions, at times the resources used and the teaching strategies fall short of stimulating serious thinking.”*

When probed further, the school head revealed: *“Most teachers deploy a lot of energy, sacrifice a considerable length of time and constantly adjust teaching methods through differentiation, role play, games, mixed grouping, among others to accommodate learners with different abilities in classrooms.”* In a nutshell, teachers do employ differentiated teaching in their classrooms as a teaching strategy. From the way the school head explained, the teachers have a singularly positive attitude towards inclusive education. They are advocates of inclusive education.

4.5.6 Peer tutoring

The school head was asked on peer tutoring in order to check if teachers use this method in considering the efforts of other learners. According to Hott and Walker (2014) peer tutoring is a flexible peer mediated strategy that involves learners serving as academic tutors and tutees. In responding to a question related to this aspect of peer tutoring, the school head stated:

Peer tutoring is an instructional strategy that has the potential to transform pedagogy in poorly resourced contexts like ours, so the teachers are effectively promoting it. I observe learners teaching each other during the time I will be carrying out lesson assessments to teachers. You can see they try to assist each [other] regarding various concepts taught before by the teachers.

When asked to explain further, the school head emphasised:

It is a double-edged strategy employed by both teachers and learners. Peer tutoring is used by teachers as a teaching instruction. Peer tutoring is also effectively used by teachers during co-curricular activities where able-bodied learners would be demonstrating to learners with disabilities. At the same time learners with hearing impairment would also teach sign language to the learners who can hear.

In general, therefore, it seems the teachers are effectively cultivating a culture of inclusive education. The use of this method instils confidence and self-esteem in learners.

4.5.7 Peer Support

This theme mostly referred to learners. From my field notes I noticed that able-bodied learners gave support to their peers with disabilities during playtime. I observed them assisting in organising their books and solving problems given to them by the teachers. The relationship between the learners was also based on mutual support and respect. During play time, I observed one learner on a wheelchair playing with her classmates and she was assisted by her peers to push her wheelchair. However, from my observation this seems to be the norm mainly in younger grades, while behavioural challenges appear to have changed in upper grades, causing relationships to be less supportive. To authenticate my observation, I narrated it to the school head and he substantiated it by saying: *“Learners used to be unfriendly and ganged up against each other at the beginning, but with more awareness campaigns around the school, the attitude is changing and they feel responsible for one another.”*

4.5.8 Teacher collaboration (Addressing research question 4)

This theme is aligned to that of peer support. However, focus in this section only relates to teachers. With regard to this aspect, the school head stated:

Teacher collaboration, as a joint effort of complementing each other's efforts and expertise within the classroom, is considered a teaching strategy. During team teaching, teachers help each other to teach areas of specialisation such as Mathematics, English and Content learning areas. Effective collaboration is also competently done during co-curricular activities and setting of tests.

The probing questioning on teacher collaboration made the school head to explain this:

I sometimes as well carry out regular meetings with teachers to discuss their concerns with a view to creating an atmosphere of collaboration, transparency and support amongst the teachers. To this end, the teachers are quite receptive of the ideas and they implement them.

From classroom observations, I confirmed this practice of collaboration. I could hear teachers asking each other on certain issues they were not knowledgeable about, especially sign language. From my observations again, I can safely construe that collaboration among teachers is significantly implemented at the school.

4.5.9 Assessment accommodation

This theme, though closely aligned to curriculum accommodation, is slightly different in that focus is on assessment. Making accommodation in assessment generally means that some aspect of the testing condition has been altered so that a child with a disability can more fully show what they know or can do. Regarding the assessment accommodation, the school head revealed:

Since the school is a former special school, most programmes are still catering for learners with disabilities. As soon as learners with disabilities are enrolled at the school they are referred to the school audiologist for further testing and assessment especially those with hearing impairment. The parents are involved throughout the process of testing and assessment. Some parents are more involved than others as you will expect and most of the time it depends on their level of education. With the level of disabilities ascertained and known for each learner, assessment of learning activities is done based on the level of difficulty.

Still on the same issue, the school head said:

As for learners without disabilities there is a scrutiny of learner academic progress record from the previous school, grade prior to placement and performance in formative and summative evaluations. However, the school is still in the process of making a proper programme on assessment procedures for learners without disabilities.”

The results from the school head on assessment accommodation revealed it is only learners with intellectual challenges who are excluded. Learners with hearing impairment are assessed by the audiologist while those without disabilities are given formative and summative tests.

This leaves only those who are intellectually challenged out of the assessment accommodation category.

4.6 Challenges experienced when utilising the Whole School Approach in the implementation of inclusive education (Addressing sub-research question 3)

During the semi-structured interview the head listed the following challenges that the school encounters:

- (i) Some teachers resent the added duties of coming up with different approaches for the same lessons.
- (ii) Some teachers are unwilling or unenthusiastic about working with differently-abled learners. This is a drawback to successful inclusion.
- (iii) The limited budget provided for special education from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) is a cause for concern.
- (iv) Shortage of specialists for all types of therapy including occupational therapy, speech therapy and physiotherapy, as well as support for all sorts of disabilities is a huge hindrance to the successful implementation of the inclusive programme.
- (v) The limited experience of special education teachers in leading the inclusion team, especially with respect to class management, behaviour management and teachers' collaboration is also a challenge.
- (vi) Parents' limited involvement in the progress of their children upsets the programme agenda.

All these are drawbacks to successful inclusion. These are the real and thorny challenges mentioned by the school head during interviews. Based on these results, most challenges listed by the school head emanate from lack of support from the MoPSE. If the MoPSE intervened timeously, then inclusive education at this school would be accomplished.

4.7 Discussion

This study assessed the nature and scope of inclusive education as it has evolved at one selected school following implementation of 'whole school approach' (WSA) concept. The aim was achieved by utilising an analytic framework grounded on three dimensions namely school culture, school policies and school practices. The approach was chosen as it provides a flexible and adaptable framework for developing and evaluating inclusive schools. The section critically discusses and reflects on the findings presented above. The findings based

on the school head's conceptions on the implementation of inclusive education relate to the first three sub-questions posed in chapter one of this thesis. The sub-questions read: (i) what is the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school? (ii) What do the stakeholders understand inclusive education to be? (iii) What challenges, if any, are experienced in implementing inclusive education using the Whole School Approach at the selected school? The themes are discussed in the order in which they were presented during findings section. First discussed are categories under the inclusive school culture followed by categories on school policies and lastly, categories relating to school practices.

4.7.1 Inclusive Culture

The first category is *teachers' fears and apprehension*. The school head reported that teachers are worried about failure to do their work properly and they felt that it was an extra load to them. In another study, Page *et al.* (2018) document needed to support inclusion of learners with disabilities and fear of failure that might affect their professional and teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in the Cook Islands. Their results showed that some teachers believed that all children are from God and should be mixed together with others. However, contrary was another group of teachers who reported negative attitudes towards learners who required additional attention. This group of teachers shared the same view with teachers in the current study. In sum, the results from the majority of studies demonstrate that teachers have mixed views towards inclusive education.

The second category under school culture is *belief in inclusion*. The results of this study showed that the school head is an advocate of inclusive education and he is in full support of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's (MoPSE) initiative. However, he felt that there are some prerequisites that need to be addressed for effective inclusion to be fully optimised. In line with these findings, Alborno and Gaad (2014) noted that inclusion could be successful provided that challenges from the lack of adequate services, limited teaching expertise and shortage of teaching resources are resolved. Consistent with the current findings, Makhmudayeva (2016) carried a study with English teachers as a second language, assessing their attitudes and understanding about implementation of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. The results revealed that teachers from three schools believed in the successful implementation of inclusive education but the severe types of disabilities should not be mainstreamed. These findings are in contrast to Donohue and Bomman's (2014) research

findings whose results were against inclusive education but supported segregated schooling. Results from these studies indicate that educators are ready to receive such an inclusive system provided the necessary prerequisites are provided to meet the needs of learners.

The third category is on *school welcoming climate*. As discussed in the results section, I was welcomed by a large sign which read: *Welcome to Big Tree School. A school for the deaf*. What is startling is that the school is still being addressed as one for the deaf whilst it is practicing inclusive education. Indeed it is a former special school but the sign post has not yet changed. This might be an indication that although the school is implementing inclusive education, the level of implementation of this practice is still very low. Another possible explanation is that, since the school is a former special school for learners with hearing impairment, the system might still be biased towards learners with hearing impairment. The external environment as well was originally designed with little awareness of inclusive education. This is because when I got inside the rooms, they were acoustically designed to cater for learners with hearing impairment yet the outside yard had concrete stones that made it difficult for learners with mobility difficulties to navigate the spaces independently. Such a disparity harps to more of integration than inclusive configurations.

Nonetheless, the school had a welcoming atmosphere. The school was clean and tidy with posters showing various school activities and meetings by parents although there were only a few about inclusivity. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Alborno and Gaad (2014) who identified that schools vary in the way they present their implementation of the inclusive initiative with respect to what they display. Alborno and Gaad (2014) showed that at one school there was a sign declaring that the school was an inclusive school and all learners were welcome, while at another school there was no single banner relating to the concept a “School for All” at the entrance.

On the aspect of relationships among staff, the findings here confirm that the relationships among stakeholders was good. This was seen by educators and parents who greeted each other politely and in a friendly manner.

Regarding the *respect and support of stakeholders*, the current study found that stakeholders play an indispensable role in supporting inclusive education at the school. The school head

strongly indicated that it is through stakeholders' support that made inclusive education viable.

Another important finding was that the school has various activities that help to incorporate, stakeholders like parents into the system. The present findings are significant in that the role of parents as partners in their children's learning and school life needs to be supported and upheld. When parents take an active interest in their children's learning, inclusion is enhanced. This is in agreement with Zhu et al's (2017) findings which showed that all the stakeholders involved in the study displayed positive attitudes towards inclusive programme, except for parents of children without special educational needs who were not involved. These parents had a feeling that children with disabilities may affect their children's academic learning. This makes the current study different from preceding studies. What is surprising is that with the current study the reverse is true, which means parents of children without disabilities are more supportive than parents of children with disabilities. This is an important finding which is contrary to historical submissions.

Commensurate with *resources*, the results of the current study indicate that the school is under resourced. According to the school head, this under-resourcedness is attributable to lack of support from the government as well as from the MoPSE. The school head specified that services from the ministry need to be improved since learners are not getting the critically needed services. However, the school has devised strategies of getting extra resources. This indicates that the head is an advocate of inclusive education. These results differ from earlier findings of Opoku-Agyeman (2013) and Poon-McBrayer (2014) who found that governments in the respective countries where the studies took place offered great support towards inclusive education. However, the current study is broadly consistent with Alborno's (2013) findings which showed that the zone under research was under staffed in terms of support services and had a shortage of specialists such as occupational therapists and physiotherapists who are the critical people in the progress of learners with disabilities.

Shifting focus to *teacher expertise*, very little was found in this current study except that all teachers had initial training in special needs at diploma level, with a few who had advanced to degree level. The results show that programmes at degree level lacked hands-on experience. This was brought out by the school head who intimated that training programmes at degree level are theoretical and abstracted from the real challenges in classrooms. This

may imply that degree programmes do not provide the necessary skills for class management. However, with a small sample size as that in the current study, caution must be applied as the findings might not be transferable to other teachers. This finding is in agreement with Robinson's (2016) findings which showed that discourses of expertise were very significant on the teaching by teachers. In contrast with the current finding is Greene (2017) who established that educators with more advanced higher education degrees had more positive views on inclusive education.

4.7.2 Inclusive policies

The second theme is inclusive policies, where the first category discussed is *inclusive induction policies*. Induction programmes are set up often with the goal of providing emotional support during the time of adjusting to new initiatives. With regard to the inclusive induction policies, the results showed that although the enrolment is done by the Educational Province, the school has some induction policies in place which help the learners to settle into the new system. While I appreciate that the school has some induction measures in place, it would be greatly helpful if the school had induction policies for teachers as well, since this inclusive programme is a new initiative to everyone. Furthermore, while many learners with impairments may well need no induction additional to what is generally helpful for all learners, for others there should be different considerations.

Regarding *open door policies*, this study's findings revealed that the school has an open door policy for every stakeholder, regardless of status one go. This open door policy is assumed to be an important factor in facilitating the progress of inclusive education.

Pertaining to *partnership with parents, for example regular meetings*, the results of this study indicated that parents are actively involved in facilitating progress of inclusive education although there are few parents who are not worried about what will be going on with their children. In South Africa, Donohue and Bornman (2014) carried out a study and the results from their study showed that parents were against the idea of inclusive education. These results are in contrast with results from the current study. The implication is that not all parents are concerned with their children's education. There are also external factors that might make some parents not actively involved in their children's learning like family size, and level of education. However, prior studies have noted parental involvement as a crucial

aspect in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Alborno & Gaad, 2014; Alur, 2010; Chan & Yuen, 2015).

Support behaviour policies, is another category under the school policies category. This study findings indicate that the selected school has behaviour policies in place. This finding corroborates the ideas of Alborno and Gaad's (2014) findings who found that the three schools studied had some supporting behaviour policies. One of the policies stipulates a change of environment to a child whose behaviour becomes intolerable. However, as mentioned in the literature review the researcher feels that instead of changing the child's environment because of intolerable behaviour, different types of behaviour modifications must be applied. Changing of environments may not be the best method but what is needed is to deal with bad behaviour. Learners should learn to adapt to the environment since it is the typical life they will lead as they join their communities as adults.

Regarding the theme of *leadership role of school head*, the current study found that the school head's role is to keep a sound relationship with the staff and monitoring learning progress through lesson observations and assessments of IEPs. This also accords with Alborno and Gaad's (2014) findings which showed that leadership role of head teachers emerged in two out of three schools. Although it can be argued that a single school leader can hardly succeed in creating a school culture without the involvement of members of staff, however, this is an unusual situation where a head is found with no leadership role to play. This is one of the most interesting findings of this study.

4.7.3 Inclusive Practices

The third theme is that of inclusive practices. The first category to be discussed under this theme is that of *curriculum modification and/or accommodation*. The current study found that there is no special curriculum modification as per se except that teachers remove difficult concepts. However, due to inexperience, teachers just agree as grade teachers on what to remove and what to keep. Whilst the curriculum should be modified, it is also interesting to note that it is examination oriented and learners should meet the demands of the examination through completion of all concepts. The current findings are in contrast with definitions by the Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010), and De Luis (2016) which view curriculum

accommodation as adapting, expanding or redesigning of objectives and not removal of content. In their study Chan and Yuen (2016) came up with very important finding that instead of removing content as a way of modifying the curriculum teachers should apply other constructs such as in-class support. Although these results differ from some published studies described above, they are consistent with those of Alborn and Gaad (2014) who found that curriculum was carried through deletion of difficult concepts by special educational needs committee. The difference is that unlike in the Alborn and Gaad's study, deletion is done by a committee yet in the current study, deletion of difficult concepts is done by individual teachers. An implication of this is the possibility that teachers might end up deleting all concepts that they are not comfortable teaching which in turn might deprive learners of a good education.

The next category to be discussed is that of *parental involvement*. This study found that due to differences in understanding the importance of their children's education, not all parents are actively involved. However, inclusive education always requires collaborative effort in order to succeed (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). The current finding is in line with that Alborn and Gaad's (2014) study who found that regular opportunities and programmes for parental involvement were implemented. Parents were not always taking the advantage of the various opportunities provided by the schools. In contrast to these findings is Cate's (2016) findings which showed that most parents were willing to be involved in the learning of their children with disabilities but were not practically involved. In this regard then, this study might be confirming that generally parents are different in the way they respond to inclusive education. Generally, the results showed that parents of low status in terms of literacy are less involved in their children's education. This also accords with Mpofu (1999) who found that in Zimbabwe there is a strong relationship between low economic status, low parental literacy levels and non-involvement of parents in their children's education.

When dealing with learners with diverse background and needs, *differentiated teaching* becomes a necessity and not a want. The findings on this category showed that teachers use differentiation in their teaching although the resources used and the teaching strategies fell short of promoting critical thinking or individualised learning. However, this finding is not a surprise, several studies have also concluded that teachers do not find it easy to adapt their style of teaching in mixed-ability and inclusive classrooms (Chan, Chang, Westwood & Yuen, 2002; Janney & Snell, 2004; Vogt & Rogalla, 2009; Yuen, Westwood & Wong, 2005).

In contrast with the current findings, researchers believe that if inclusion is to work, the ways in which instruction is delivered in the regular classroom need to be flexible enough to meet the diverse requirements of all learners (NCSE, 2010). This line of thinking was proved to be true by Stavroula, Leonidas and Mary (2011). The three carried out a research on investigating the impact of differentiated instruction in mixed ability classrooms in Cyprus. The results showed that scores for learners who received differentiated instruction were higher than those who did not receive differentiation. These findings suggest that learners can benefit better from the strategies used in differentiation.

Other categories, *peer support and peer tutoring* were generated under inclusive practices. The results revealed that learners supported each other during learning and playing times and teachers use peer tutoring as an instructional strategy. This finding is consistent with the study of Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015) who found that peer collaboration is one of the strategies used to provide support in regular classroom participation among learners with and without disabilities. In their study, Zhu et al. (2017) reported two cases which showed how typically developing children helped their peers with special education needs (SEN) and how teachers used peer support to improve the effectiveness of individual training in practice. This is interesting because learners in the current study did the same. Given that learners are from diverse backgrounds and ability with and without special needs, this kind of harmony is appreciated for inclusive education to be implemented fully in such a school.

Regarding the category of teacher *collaboration*, this study found that there is collaboration at the school among staff. The results showed that collaboration is facilitated by the school head who sometimes have meetings with the teachers discussing their concerns in a way to create an atmosphere of collaboration. As mentioned in the literature review, a number of terms or phrases can be used to refer to teacher collaboration. Hence, in his responses the school head referred to teacher collaboration as team teaching. Consistent with the current findings, Robinson (2016), and Waitoller and Artiles (2013) noted that there is widespread evidence that inclusive practices are most likely to emerge from collaborative action, reflection and enquiry. In contrast to these findings Goodman and Burton (2010) remark that even though some teachers showed appreciation of co-teaching, there were some teachers who thought it was a complete waste of time so they just sat in the lesson and walked off and that was it for them. These teachers felt that collaboration should start at planning level. In their study Alborn and Gaad (2014) came up with contrasting results as well. The results indicated that

teacher collaboration in all of the three schools was limited to the preparation of IEPs, differentiated worksheets and examination papers whilst with the current study, the collaboration extends to co-curricular activities. These findings suggest that teacher collaboration can be a controversial issue in implementing inclusive education so should be handled with care.

Last but not least is the category of *assessment accommodation*. The results showed that the school accommodates assessments. Learners especially those with hearing impairment are assessed with the help of parents. However, the school is still in the process of making a proper programme on assessment procedures for learners without disabilities and those with other types of disabilities. This is in support of Hong Kong Education's (2010) definition which says, assessment methods are adapted to facilitate learners' demonstration of their learning outcome. In contrast to the current findings, Chan and Yuen (2015) found that different assessment strategies were practiced in the school they studied. These findings are different from the results of the current study. Earlier studies used standardised types of assessments. This helps in reflecting all learners' abilities at true level.

In sum, a wholesome of challenges experienced when utilising the 'whole school approach' concept in the implementation of inclusive education were mentioned. In this study, these include resentment and unwillingness of some teachers to teach inclusive classes, shortage of specialists and parents' limited involvement; there were found to be some of the challenges the school was facing when utilising WSA in implementation of inclusive education. Teachers complained of as shortage of time in working with different abled learners. This finding is in agreement with Chan and Yuen's (2016) findings which showed that effective implementation of the 'whole school approach' requires teachers and other personnel to confer closely on a range of matters pertinent to students' needs. For this reason, adequate time must be made available for professional liaison to occur.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented results on the school head's conceptions on the implementation of inclusive education. Three major themes were emphasised. Under each theme, several categories were generated. The schools head's conceptions of inclusive education as implemented at the selected school were presented theme by theme. A discussion section followed the presentation of results. The next chapter deals with teachers' conceptions and

practices on the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school using the ‘whole school approach’ concept.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS ON TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present results on teachers' implementation of inclusive education in the selected school. This is done in relation to the analytic framework and answers the research questions based on the prescribed duties of *teachers* in a 'whole school approach' model.

The results are presented and discussed under three dimensions of 'whole school approach' namely inclusive policies, inclusive culture and inclusive practices in implementing inclusive education each with different categories. In presenting the results, each category is further described and illustrated with examples from the teachers' responses which are verbatim, indicating these are the direct words spoken by the participants. This is to ensure that the participants' voices are heard. The teachers were given pseudonyms for confidentiality.

These findings relate to the research questions posed in chapter one of this thesis:

- (i). What is the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school?
- (ii). How do the stakeholders understand inclusive education to be?
- (iii). What challenges, if any, are experienced in implementing inclusive education using the 'whole school approach' at the selected school?
- (iv). How best can the 'whole school approach' help in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school?

The subsequent section focuses on the extent to which the school deals with inclusive education from the school teachers' perspectives. The data is presented in the following order: classroom observation, field notes and document analysis as well as interviews. In so doing, sub-research questions one, two and three are addressed.

5.2 Results from classroom observation

Lesson observations were done in Early Child Development (ECD), grade one and grade two teachers' classrooms since they are the classes which are currently involved directly with learners who have diverse needs (learners with- and without disabilities in the same class) as indicated in chapter 3. This is crucial as it points to the explicitness of the type of inclusive

practices being implemented in a given classroom. Lesson observations were done as follows: ECD (7 lessons), grade one (8 lessons) and grade two (8 lessons). Lesson observations were discontinued after data saturation was achieved. Results are presented in the following order of the three dimensions: inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices.

5.2.1 Inclusive culture

As mentioned in Chapter 4, inclusive cultures enable the establishment of inclusive values, relationships and beliefs in the school which are the key to success of such an undertaking. Consequently, this involved the full and successful amalgamation of diverse learners into a learning institution. Figure 5.1 shows how three teachers implemented WSA inclusive culture aspects. Symbols A1 to A 6 on Figure 5.1 represent aspects which the researcher used as a checklist on inclusive culture pertaining to management and organisation in observing lessons. A1 refers to ‘teacher accepting all learners in the class, regardless of ability or disability and is committed to supporting them.’ A2 refers to ‘learners accepting each other’s uniqueness and individual differences.’ A3 refers to ‘teacher arranging learning activities in accordance with learner’s abilities.’ A4 refers to ‘teacher demonstrating that every learner is equal and has the right to participate in all school activities.’ A5 refers to ‘teacher keeping diary to show home-school collaboration and frequent communication between parents and teachers about learner progress.’ Last but not least, A6 refers to ‘a register is kept for learners with and without special educational needs in the class.’

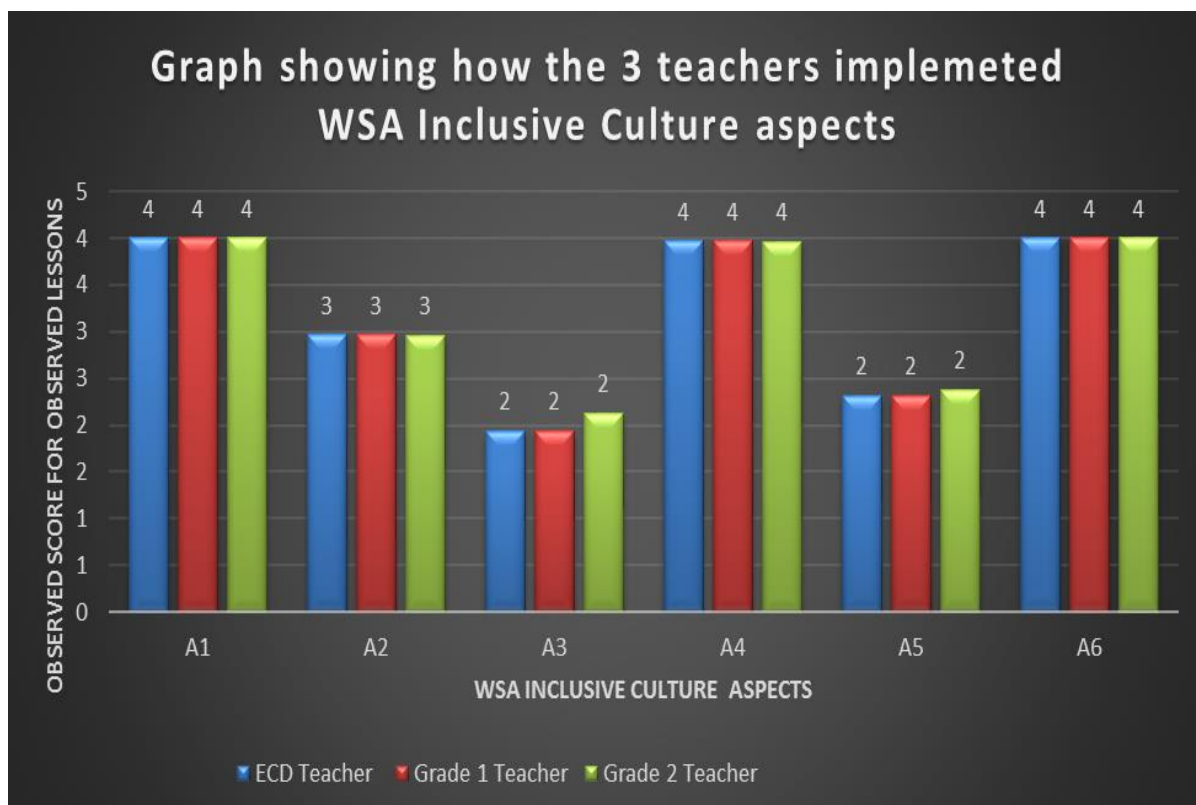


Figure 5.1: Graph showing how the 3 teachers implemented WSA inclusive culture aspects

On whether teachers accept all learners in the class, regardless of ability or disability and are committed to supporting them, the three teachers showed that they accepted all the learners in a highly satisfactory manner. For example, I observed that when sending learners to perform some task, the teachers would send any child regardless of their status. I observed that teachers accepted learners regardless of dis/ability and are committed to supporting them. Observation also confirmed that teachers accept learners in a highly satisfactory way. However, on more than one occasion, at the end of lesson observation, teachers could be heard commenting on the difficulties of class management and the use of words like *sasikamu* (derogatorily referring to a mentally retarded child) often meaning a fool, *I cannot manage* within audible range and occasionally in the presence of learners. This could be quite offensive to learners; unfortunately, it is a widespread phenomenon, where adults speak about children (especially the ones with disabilities) in their presence, assuming they do not understand or are not taking any notice of the verbal insults.

Regarding the aspect of whether or not learners accept each other's uniqueness, it is evident from Figure 5.1 that the scores suggest learners accept each other satisfactorily. Still on

‘accepting each other’ it was observed that learners indeed embraced each other. However, during lesson observation I discovered that learners from ECD and grade one classes were more accommodating to each other than learners from the grade two class. It can be inferred that learners are more accommodating at lower levels compared to when they go up the grade levels. In a grade two class, I discovered that able bodied learners were consistently complaining to the teacher about the behaviour of learners with disabilities.

Although arrangement of activities during lessons as seen in Figure 5.1 were done in an acceptable way there was less individualisation of work regardless of learners’ differences.

I noticed that teachers rarely individualise learning activities. In one of the one grade one lessons, some learners were struggling with addition of numbers up to twenty but the teacher did not reduce the task levels for those who could not master the concept. Thus, the bulk of learning activities were designed more for a group educational plan rather than Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) activities. However, although the teachers were not individualising the activities, all the learners were given the chance to participate during lessons.

All three teachers demonstrated that every learner is equal and has the right to participate in all school activities. With regard to home-school collaboration and frequent communication, observations indicated that there was no frequent communication through the use of diaries between teachers and parents. These results pointed to the resource constraints that teachers did not have diaries for communication with parents. It can therefore be assumed that since the school is a boarding school, there is less communication through the use of diaries. I did not see any diary during the time of my visit and teachers would just send messages to those parents whose children are day scholars. However, in all instances the messages were sent as word of mouth. Findings from ECD, grade one and grade two teachers revealed that class registers are kept for learners with and without special educational needs in the classes. I also confirmed the presence of registers during the time I was analysing the documents where registers were among the documents.

5.2.2 Inclusive policies

As mentioned earlier (Chapter 4), schools with clear and consistent policies and procedures send a strong message to the whole school community about the beliefs and actions that support a safe and compassionate environment. Inclusive policies are principles that govern the teaching and learning achievement, attitudes and well-being of every learner at an educationally inclusive school. Symbols B1 to B5 in Figure 5.2 represent the aspects which the researcher used as checklist on inclusive policies on support and school ethos while observing lessons. B1 refers to ‘school resources (e.g. accessibility of its premises) that are pooled and deployed flexibly to provide appropriate support to learners.’ B2 refers to ‘parents that are invited to individual educational programme meetings, and that parent-volunteers activities are organised.’ B3 refers to ‘continuing professional development on special education is strategically planned for staff members.’ B4 refers to ‘a school development plan and contents of school self-evaluation regarding inclusion that are laid down according to the developmental needs of the school.’ Lastly, B5 refers to ‘the school management that establishes policies to cater for learners with and without special educational needs, and review the objectives and effectiveness regularly.’

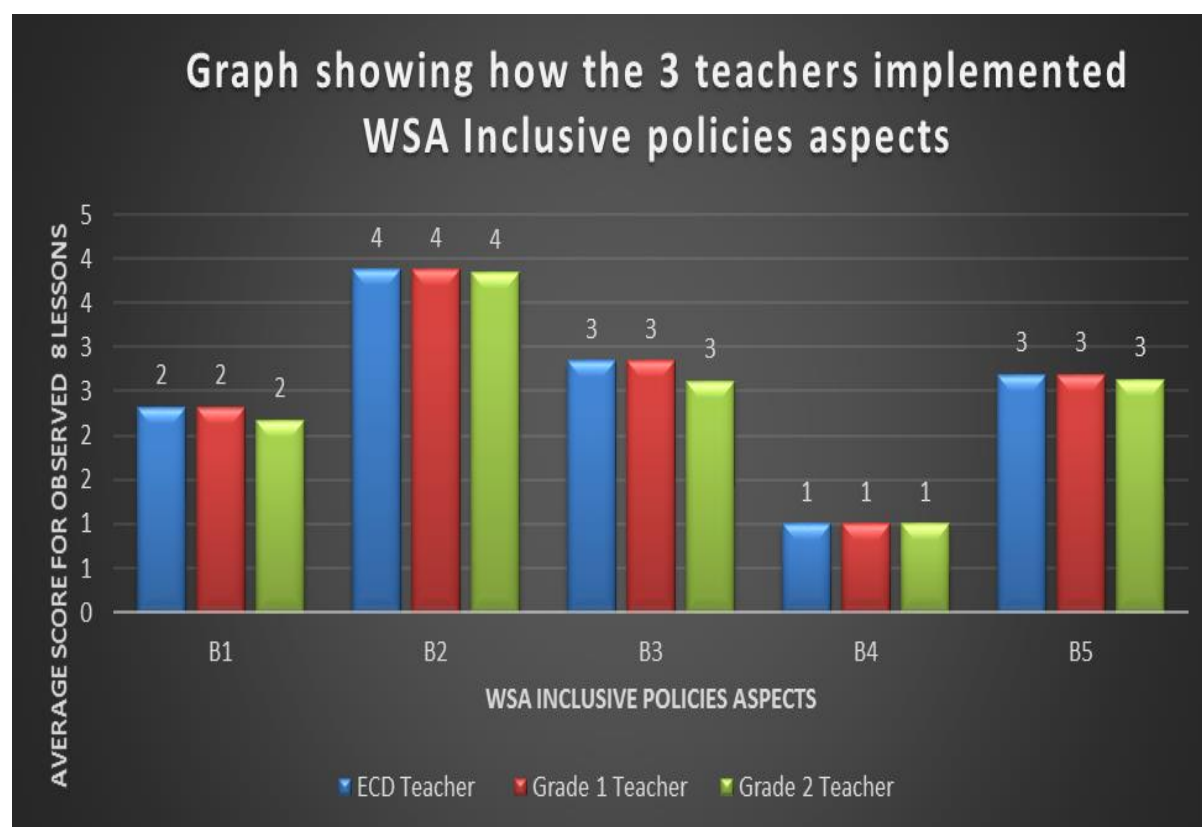


Figure 5.2: Graph showing how the 3 teachers implemented WSA inclusive policies aspects

Figure 5.2 shows how the three teachers implemented WSA inclusive policy aspects. On inclusive policies, five aspects were looked into as I observed the lessons. With regard to school resources for example, whether they are being pooled and deployed flexibly to provide appropriate support to learners, findings indicate that many of the resources used by teachers had either been acquired from teachers' own resourcefulness, or produced by teachers and learners. Classroom walls in each teacher's classroom had beautiful and colourful charts, posters of numbers, alphabets, days of the week and many others relating to subject and thematic topics, although teachers were rarely seen utilising this information during lesson delivery. As a result, I discovered that no school resources were pooled or deployed in order to support learners. Regarding whether parents are invited to individual educational programme meetings, and parent-volunteers' activities are organised, results indicate that parents are highly involved in school activities.

Results in Figure 5.2 show that the school provided continuing professional development on special education as a strategic plan for staff members in a moderate way. This could mean that teachers are exposed to in-service training and workshops, but not regularly. Results showed that the school does not have development plans and contents of school self-evaluation regarding inclusion which are laid down according to the developmental needs of the school. Deriving from the results displayed in Figure 5.2, the school management establishes policies to cater for learners with and without special educational needs, and review the objectives and effectiveness regularly. This indicates that the school is moderately inclusive pertaining to this aspect.

5.2.3 Inclusive practices

Evolving inclusive practices entail implementing all school practices that reflect inclusive school cultures and policies that is a sum up of what was mentioned earlier (Chapter 4) regarding inclusive practices. If inclusive practices are to be realised, flexible implementation of various resources and coordination of quality teaching, additional support and intensive individualised support need to be evident. Figure 5.3 shows how these three teachers implemented WSA inclusive practice aspects. Symbols C1 to C7 on Figure 5.3 represent the aspects which I used as a checklist on inclusive practices in learning and teaching when

observing lessons. C1 refers to ‘Individual Education Programmes being used to cater for learners in need of individual intensive support.’ C2 refers to ‘The school has improved its assistive technology to cater for learners with and without special educational needs.’ C3 refers to ‘Various classroom activities being conducted in accordance with learners’ abilities to facilitate the development of their potential.’

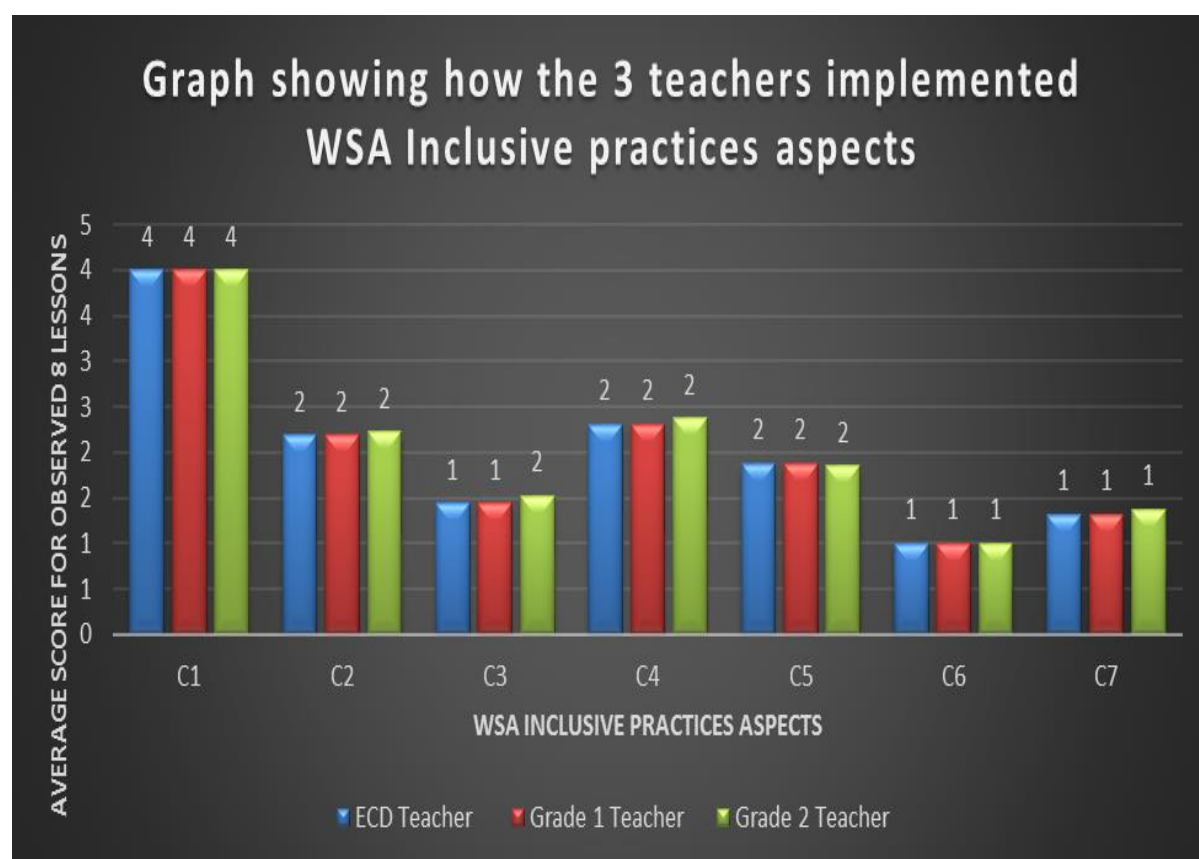


Figure 5.3: Graph showing how the 3 teachers implemented WSA inclusive practices aspects

C4 refers to ‘Various curriculum accommodation strategies being implemented to cater for learners.’ C5 refers to ‘A Learner Support Team (LST) has been established to follow up and co-ordinate support measures for learners with special needs education.’ C6 refers to ‘Diverse teaching strategies such as collaborative teaching and co-operative learning are used to facilitate learning.’ Finally, C7 refers to ‘Peer support programmes to provide learning support and to facilitate the cultivation of an inclusive culture.’

Scores for all teachers shown on Figure 5.3 indicate that all three teachers are welcoming and accept learners’ diversity hence they individualise the work. The graph shows that the teachers make use of IEP in a highly satisfactory way. They individualise the work in a

highly satisfactory way. They also have individual programme forms in place. This indicates that the classes are inclusive in a majority of the items. Results showed that the school has improved its assistive technology in a satisfactory way. This means that a lot still has to be done in terms of assistive technology. Through observations in the school, only an audiogram machine was available in terms of assistive technology. As much as the school has improved the assistive technology in some acceptable way, however, during class observations, I noticed that there were about two learners who needed speech therapy, as their pronunciation was not clear and they were both very shy and thus spoke very softly. By the end of the observation, these two had not been assisted in a manner that is expected from an inclusive environment.

Regarding the subject of whether various classroom activities are conducted in accordance with learners' abilities to facilitate the development of their full potential, Figure 5.3 shows that this was unsatisfactorily done. The ECD and grade one teachers need improvement on this aspect whilst the grade two teacher is practicing it in some acceptable way. Results from all the three teachers concerning how various curriculum accommodation strategies are implemented to cater for learners showed that teachers provided the strategies in an acceptable way. Teachers might still need to improve on this aspect.

According to results shown on Figure 5.3, a Learner Support Team (LST) has been established to follow up and co-ordinate support measures for learners with special needs. Responses indicate that although teachers value cooperative learning and implement it in an acceptable way, they do not incorporate other strategies such as collaborative methods effectively. As a result they need improvement as the scores on Figure 5.3 are quite low. With regard to peer support programmes that provide learning support and facilitate the cultivation of an inclusive culture, it is patently clear that teachers did not provide peer support programmes to learners. This aspect needs improvement. However, according to my field notes, I noticed learners supported each other, especially pushing wheelchairs for those who use the devices.

5.2.4 Average total scores for each dimension for the three teachers to determine level of implementation of inclusive education

The average totals for each dimension were calculated for each teacher. Scores were awarded according to how often a given activity occurred during lessons by responding to each of the 18 statements on a bipolar Likert scale ranging from (1) need improvement (2) acceptable, (3) satisfactory, and (4) highly satisfactory.

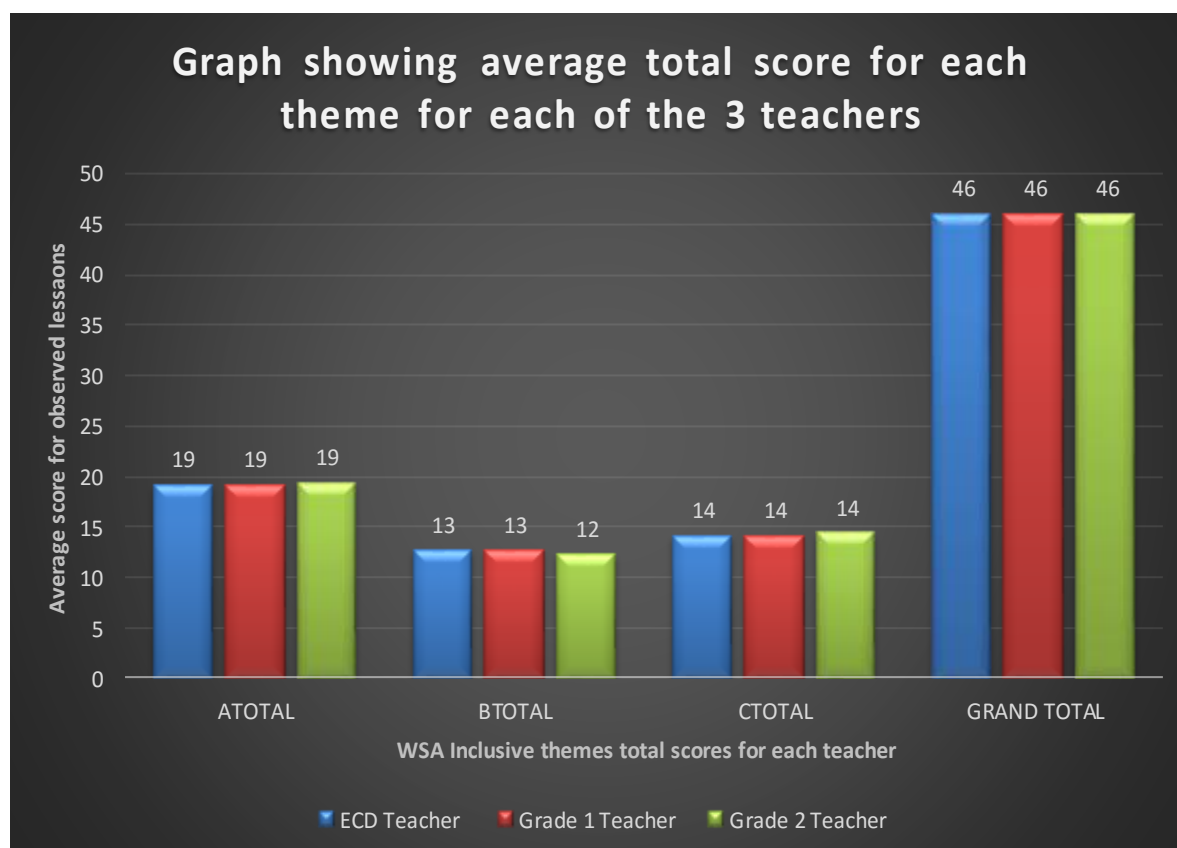


Figure 5.4: Graph showing average total score for each theme for each of the three teachers

In scoring, each item response was allocated 1, 2, 3 or 4 from “need improvement” to “highly satisfactory”, respectively. A high score (maximum = 72) is taken to mean that the teacher implements aspects of the Whole School Approach to a large extent and the teacher’s class is generally perceived as an inclusive one and a low score (minimum = 18) means the teacher’s class is not inclusive. As shown in Figure 5.4, all three teachers had a grand total of 46 out of a possible score of 72. Scores were used to place inclusive practices along a continuum ranging from 18 ‘not inclusive classroom’ to 72 ‘an inclusive classroom.’ The continuum on which the scores were mapped is as follows: 18.0 - 31.5 (not inclusive-unsatisfactory, needs improvement); 31.5 – 45.0 (fairly inclusive - acceptable); 45.0 – 58.5 (moderately inclusive-satisfactory); and 58.5 -72.0 (inclusive - highly satisfactory). A score of 46 falls within the third band which is that of moderately inclusive though quite at the bottom end of the band.

In responding to the first research sub-question, it can be concluded that the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school is moderately inclusive though improvement is needed in some dimensional aspects of the most inclusive practices.

5.3 Results from field notes and document analysis

In this section, I highlight the important aspects from field notes and document analysis. The rest of the results pertaining to this section are incorporated and presented together with classroom observations and interviews for purposes of coherence and to avoid unnecessary repetition. With regard to school resources, for example, accessibility of the school's premises, I discovered that the school grounds, buildings and classrooms have limited or no adapted facilities because they were originally designed and constructed with one type of disability in mind which was hearing impairment. There is, therefore, the problem of physical accessibility for learners with mobility difficulties.

During one of my school visits, I had the opportunity to see the schemes of work, IEP forms, school vision and mission statement. The schemes of work were well done in content areas. The lesson objectives were specific, measurable, accurate, and results-oriented and time framed, but there was no indication of individualisation of work. In short, there was less use of different strategies in the teachers' planning. The most interesting discovery is that although the school claims to be an inclusive school, its school vision and school statement still privileges integration rather than inclusion. This shows some contradiction in policy and practice.

All teachers had IEP forms well completed and these were kept in the learner's file. The relationship between the learners was also observed as based on mutual support and respect. During play time, learners without disabilities were observed playing with their classmates with disabilities, while those who are wheelchair users were assisted by peers to push them. This relationship seemed to be the norm mainly in lower school grades, while behavioural challenges surfaced in upper grades.

5.4 Results from interviews

This section focuses on the extent to which the school deals with inclusive education from school teachers' perspectives. The data was obtained from interviews, field notes and document analysis. The three main themes (interchangeably used as dimensions in the

preceding chapters of this thesis) emerged from the open-ended questionnaire responses and interviews. The emerging themes are presented as inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices, each with categories that answer the various research questions.

Table 5.1: Inclusive themes and their categories

Themes	Categories
Inclusive culture	• Teachers' fears and apprehension • Belief in inclusion school • School welcoming climate • Community involvement • Respect and support of stakeholders • Resources • Teacher expertise
Inclusive policies	• Inclusive induction policies • Open door policies • Partnership with parents • Support behaviour policy • Leadership role of school head • Teachers' responsibilities
Inclusive practices	• Curriculum accommodation • Parental involvement • Whole school consensus • Curriculum modification • Peer tutoring • Peer support • Teacher collaboration • Assessment accommodation • Differentiated teaching

Several categories emerged from the analysis of data from the teachers. The themes and their categories shown in Table 5.1 have been extrapolated into Figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 as each

theme is discussed. Figure 5.5 summarises the categories provided under inclusive culture as obtained from ATLAS.ti output. This categorisation provides the framework for investigating the inclusive cultures implemented in the selected school.

5.4.1 Inclusive culture

School culture determines the mission, vision, priorities, goals and objectives of a school. School culture affects how problems are resolved, the implementation of new ideas, and how people work together. Culture keeps the focus on what is important. The culture of a school breathes life and defines where meaning takes place (Chattman, 2017). Figure 5.1 summarises the categories provided under inclusive culture.

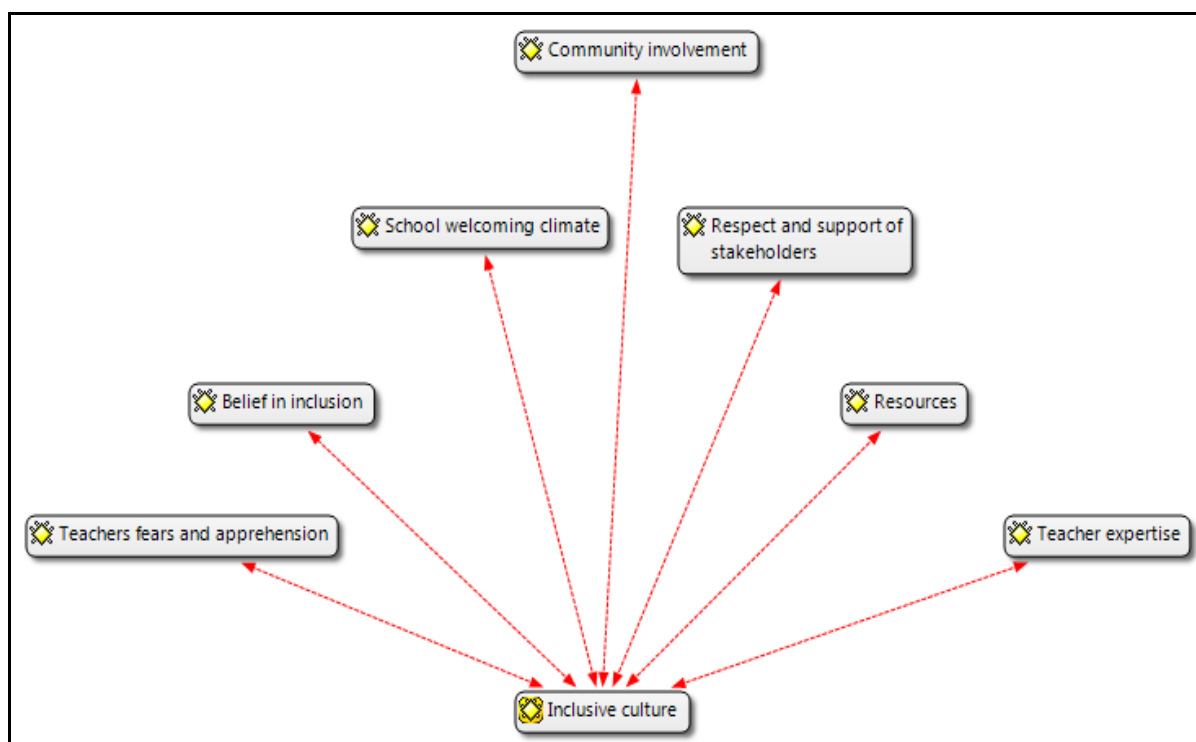


Figure 5.5: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive culture

5.4.1.1 Teachers' fears and apprehension

This is one category which emerged from the theme of inclusive culture. On this aspect of teacher's fears and apprehension, this is what the teachers had to say in responding to a question related to inclusive culture:

Grade one teacher: *I am afraid that I may get biased towards one group of learners. What I mean is I may become more focused towards learners with disabilities than on teaching and may unintentionally concentrate on that group or vice versa. This means one group of learners will suffer.*

ECD teacher: *I am afraid that I may fail to cater for individual differences and how to handle them.*

Grade 2 teacher: *I don't have any fear because I was trained as a conventional teacher but I then did special needs education so I am well equipped for all groups of learners.*

On answering interview questions on fears they might have towards the new system of inclusive education, the Grade 5 teacher - Bhungeni - from the focus group interview had this to say:

We are not sure if the learners are going to work together harmoniously. Due to societal beliefs, it looks like the able-bodied learners are still looking down upon learners with disabilities, especially those with hearing impairment. At times we hear them calling learners with hearing impairment names, for example mbeveve! mbeveve! (meaning the deaf one).

As can be seen from results presented above, mixed feelings emerged from the teachers: some teachers were afraid that the learners would fail to interact well amongst themselves and fail to work together harmoniously. As a result, it was going to lead to failure of the inclusive education programme. The teachers were also afraid that due to pressure, they could get biased towards one group of learners or they fail to treat them in the same manner. Teachers felt it was indeed an extra load to them so they were worried about failing to do their work properly. However, some teachers felt no difference since they were trained for both conventional teaching and have the extra skills to teach learners with special needs. According to this group of teachers, there was no problem at all.

5.4.1.2 Belief in inclusion

This is the second category which emerged from the data. When responding to questions related to this theme, the grade one teacher said:

An inclusive education system is a good thing because as they grow there will be no time for them to live separately. In real life as they become adults there is no time

when people with disabilities will be asked to live alone from the able bodied so they should learn to live together at early stages.

In answering the same question, the grade teacher 2 said:

...Ummmmm!! Yaa! its ok looking at our school because all teachers went for pre-service training and did special needs education as an additional so it is good to have inclusive classes since they can handle both groups. As long as teachers are prepared to look after these learners with different needs its fine. However, there are challenges like in my class there is a child who has cerebral palsy and he drools. He is always segregated by others including teachers when they get into my classroom. They first ask about where he sits so that they cannot sit at the same place. They shun him. Some learners always run away from him saying that he will mess with their pens or pencils even during group work, they do not want to be part of his group. In addition, some learners with mental retardation are destructive and some are self-injurious and they hurt others, hitting others so they need close monitoring but there is no time for that and personnel is limited.

When asked to outline her belief in inclusion, the ECD teacher said: “...ah, I take inclusive education as a challenge because the teacher should look into those different groups of learners, those with hearing impairment, some are intellectually challenged who operate at different levels.” There were contradictory responses to the question “What is your belief in inclusion?” A few responses are noted below:

Bhungeni: *I don't like inclusive education. The work is too much as compared to what I get.*

Chibangwa: *It is not practical at all due to shortage of resources. It's impossible.*

Jeza: *Inclusive education is good. It reduces segregation, stigamatisation and labelling of children with disabilities. However, the challenge is on resources. The resources are not adequate to cater for different needs of learners.*

The results of this study show that some teachers are advocates of inclusive education and are in full support of the system as they feel that it reduces stigmatisation and in real life there is no time people will be separated in society but will live together. Hence, they should learn living together from early ages. However, these teachers felt that for effective inclusion to be

fully optimised, the system should be well-resourced and all educators should have positive attitudes towards learners with disabilities.

5.4.1.3 School welcoming climate

Like one saying goes, making a school welcoming is much more than a list of things we can do. Whilst visiting the school, I observed that relationships among the school staff exuded respect and support as the predominant features. As I walked through the school corridors and during the time I was observing lessons, I discovered that staff in general spoke respectfully to each other, including visitors, and they formally addressed each other whenever they discussed working aspects. The atmosphere was relaxed, and I could see learners moving and playing around spontaneously.

5.4.1.4 Community involvement

This category emerged from teachers' responses when answering a question on how the community is involved in support of inclusive education. The grade one teacher had this to say: *"Parents from the surrounding community do help in some projects, for example we have parents who come and help in agricultural projects with learners"*. A supporting point was echoed by one of the teachers on the focus group, Mashava who said: *"We get support from the immediate community especially the church community. They always come and donate whatever they might have."* The ECD teacher said:

In a way of involving the community, I sometimes go out into the community and have awareness campaigns together with the student teachers who are attached to my class. I am very happy because the reception from the community people is good. In return, they sometimes come and help in agricultural projects with learners.

I also witnessed this during one of my school visits. I found some parents at the school busy with agricultural activities with some learners from the upper classes.

5.4.1.5 Respect and support of stakeholders

Respect and support of stakeholders emerged as a category when teachers responded to how stakeholders are involved in supporting the school. One teacher **Jombo** from the focus group stated this:

Stakeholders like Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are involved. We have organisations like British Oxygen Company (BOC), Christbell Blind Mission and others. However, I have discovered that since we started inclusive education, some organisations are slowly withdrawing. For example it was not possible for BOC to spend two weeks without coming, but now they can go for a term without coming. They are no longer coming to repair water tanks and they have stopped chicken project with school. I am not sure of what the reasons maybe.

The ‘school-community’ relationship can strategically connect activities in the school to the surrounding community and thus promote inclusive education. When probed, **Jombo** further explained this:

Parents do help in some projects, for example some parents are involved in agricultural activities with the learners. However, it is only those parents who are within reach who can come since our school is a boarding school some learners come from as far as Binga which is around 300kilometres from the school.

This view was also expressed by another teacher from the same focus group - Chibangwa who said: “Yes, some donors do help but not now because of this new system of inclusive education. They used to take learners with disabilities as charitable act.” Muchezana from the same focus group as well regarded support of stakeholders as very significant. He said: “we have a good relationship with the stakeholders as a result we sometimes have assistance from churches and from a few individuals. Stakeholders play a critical role as support partners in the school’s inclusive programme.” Muchezana was very excited to explain how the school makes the stakeholders be supportive. He stated:

Links with parents as well as other stakeholders and programmes are continually being reinforced, and attempts are made to integrate pupils into the society by organising activities that go beyond academic ones. The school has activities such as special ceremonies like Tariro day for both parents and learners at the beginning of the year to support the learners’ settling in the new environment and to familiarise the stakeholders with the new system. This helps parents of children without disabilities be sensitised on disability issues. As a result some parents get involved.

When asked about how stakeholders, besides teachers, help and support the school towards the success of inclusive education, the ECD teacher stated this:

...Ummmm as far as I can see, only teachers are helping in this system. As for parents, I have never noticed any of them chipping in to help. I do not even know that

they are supposed to help. Parents feel that everything is free to the extent of not paying fees and even sending their children here without uniforms.

When probed further on the same question on support of NGOs the ECD teacher explained:

Yes, NGOs are helping but not necessarily because of inclusive education but because they know that the school depends on donations. Yaah! Even some church organisations do help here and there. I always see church people coming and have prayers but when they come they do not come empty-handed.

This is what the Grade one teacher had to say on how stakeholders support inclusive education at the school:

Parents are involved in their childrens' education, for example, by helping with holiday work, however, in terms of monetary assistance ummmh...ummmh! Very few are able. Like last time parents agreed that each one of them was going to pay one hundred dollars towards the upkeep of their children but up to now no one had owned-up. They always promise that they will send the money but if a parent manages to pay ten dollars that will be great.

When probed further during the interview, the Grade one teacher continued: “*I can say yes we have some donors but there is no new organisation that have joined in because of inclusive education system except old organisations which were already there like CBM which is our main donating organisation.*” As I moved around the school during my visits I also observed that some classroom blocks were written ‘Donated by Big Donor (pseudonym)’ showing names of some NGOs (from my field notes). Contradicting statements were identified from teachers on the issue of support from parents. Some teachers like the ECD teacher indicated that she had never seen parents helping while Jombo and grade one teacher indicated that parents do help in their children’s learning. Muchezana also revealed that the school has various activities that help to incorporate stakeholders like parents into the system. Overall, findings from this category of *respect and support of stakeholders* show that teachers’ views and feelings varied from teacher to teacher. This rather contradictory result could be attributed to different attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education.

5.4.1.6 Resources

Research indicates that effective learning is fundamentally influenced by the availability of educational resources to meet the needs of diverse learning styles of all learners. A resource can be viewed as an aid, especially one that can be readily drawn upon when needed or supplied from which benefit is produced. The challenge is to make the best use of limited resources. When the grade one teacher was asked on the adequacy of resources, she said:

Initially the classrooms were meant for children with hearing impairment which can accommodate only 7 to 10 learners but now the rooms are accommodating about 26 learners. The classrooms are no longer conducive. The toilets as well are not user friendly to children who use wheelchairs. The infrastructure in general does not accommodate children who use wheelchairs, the grounds are covered with stones and this restricts learners' mobility.

When asked about human resources, she said:

There is no problem with human resources because initially all teachers were trained as general classroom practitioners then specialised later to teach learners with special education needs. So there is no shortage because they have skills for both groups of learners although it is a challenge having learners of mixed ability and needs in one class.

When asked whether or not the resources were adequate, the grade 2 teacher said:

There are no resources, like in my classroom I am supposed to have an assistant teacher but there is none. In terms of human resources there is a challenge as well because in my case I did special education but I specialised in hearing impairment so I do not have much knowledge on other disabilities like those with mental retardation.

The ECD teacher had this to say about resources: *"There is a critical shortage of resources. I need an assistant but I do not have. Some learners need speech therapists for speech training and physio-therapists but we do not have even one in the whole province."* During lesson observations, I realised that the absence of assistant teachers in inclusive classes, especially the ECD class where learners are around thirty five in number, was a critical hindrance and challenge. The teacher was struggling to control the class, bearing in mind that some of these learners have behaviour problems. The teacher was always on her toes trying to make every learner pay attention.

5.4.1.7 Teacher expertise (Addressing research question 2)

Another category which emerged from the data is that of teacher expertise. During interviews, the grade one teacher was asked her perspective on how skilled were the teachers on teaching learners with diverse needs. She said:

In terms of expertise there is no problem. Most teachers are specialists, however, the challenge is on mixing children with different types of disabilities and the able-bodied. For example, this school is a former special school for children with hearing impairment which means all teachers who are here are specialists in hearing impairment. The challenge is now on teaching those children with other disabilities which is not hearing impairment. I cannot teach a child who is intellectually challenged effectively.

The same sentiments were also echoed by the ECD teacher. But the ECD teacher raised them in form of a complaint as follows:

(Teacher looking tired!) I used to like teaching children with hearing impairment but now ummm it is a challenge. I have the expertise of teaching any child, but these ones with mental retardation I am struggling. Yes, I am a specialist, but my feeling is these learners should be classified according to severity of disability. However as a specialist, I am trying my level best to make every learner benefit.

In contrast, the grade two 2 teacher said:

There is no problem in terms of teacher expertise. All teachers here were first trained as conventional teachers then further as specialist teachers. So as for me I have no problem with teaching these children. I have all the skills to handle different types of learners.

During focus group interviews, teachers expressed different views concerning teacher expertise. What follows is what some of the teachers said:

Bhungeni: *Well, I am not directly involved in the teaching of inclusive classes but I have no problem if I am to be given an inclusive class. I am trained as a specialist teacher.*

Jeza: *Teaching inclusive classes is not much of a challenge but the challenge is on mixing learners with those with severe disabilities. There are no assistant teachers who can help especially with those who are severely disabled.*

What can be inferred from teachers' responses are mixed views some for and other against inclusion. This is an example why inclusion is viewed as fluid and not a static process.

5.4.2 Inclusive policies

In this thesis, inclusive policies were explored within the following aspects: inclusive induction policies, open door policies and partnership with parents, support behavior policies, leadership role of school head and teachers' responsibilities. A network of the categories to be discussed under inclusive policies Figure is shown on 5.6.

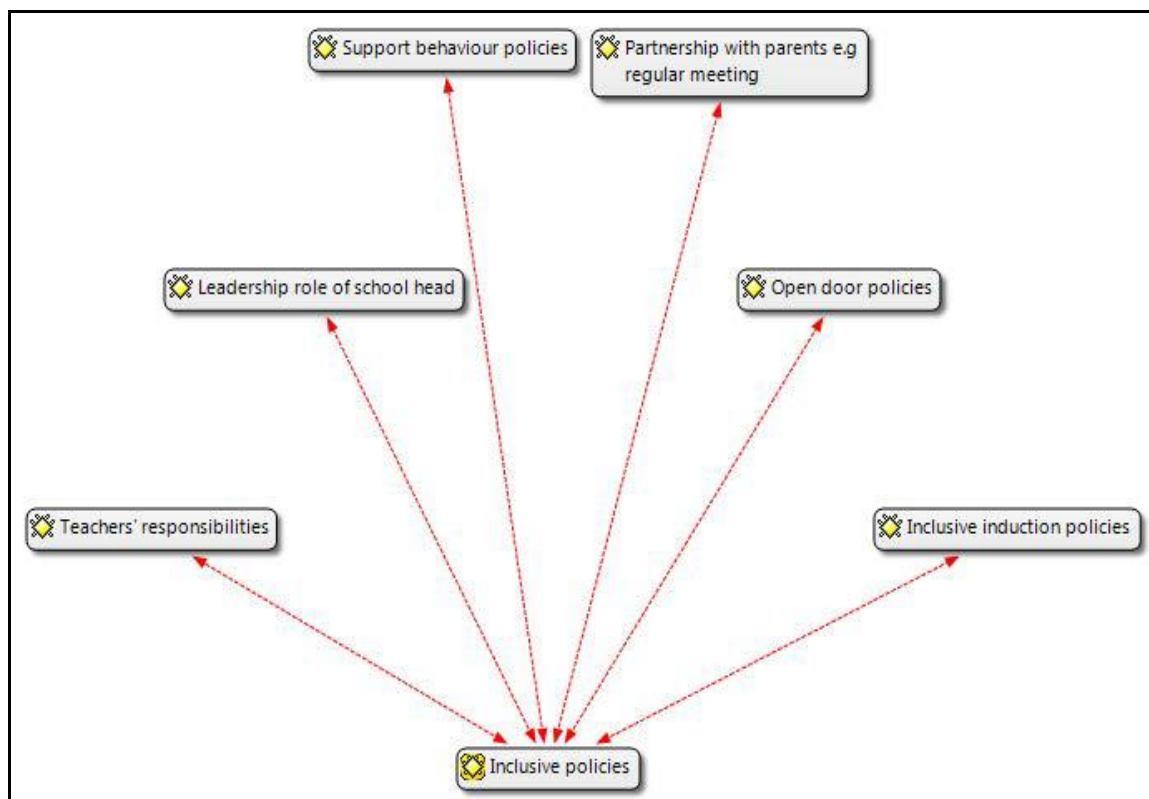


Figure 5.6: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive policies theme.

5.4.2.1 Inclusive induction policies

This is the first category under the inclusive policies theme. When asked about provisions or guidelines the school has in place regarding induction policies, the ECD teacher said:

When the learners come to school on the first day, the school head sits down with the senior teachers and gives a pep-talk to the learners hinting and emphasising that they are the same though different physically. At times they have dramas when they are mixed, those with disabilities and those without. This is to demonstrate to new students that they can mix and work together.

When probed further on how she inducts children in her class as a teacher she said:

At times I have a tour of the school with the learners explaining to them everything on the school premise. I let them play freely and I will be watching to see how they mix. I expose them to different activities they know like pada (an indigenous game where children throw a dice and jump boxes avoiding stepping on drawn lines), playing on swings. All these are ways of making them settle in the new environment freely.

Three of the five teachers on the focus group held informed knowledge that orientation is important because it lays the foundation for the new learner, encourages confidence and assists the new children adapt faster to the new environment. Bhungeni, Chibangwa and Jeza from the focus group were of the opinion that a well-planned orientation and induction programme will help make the transition into new school smoothly. When responding to a question regarding this aspect of induction, the teachers said:

Bhungeni: *At school level, it is done by the matron and boarding master. As the learners come, they are assembled and told the expectations. It is first done by the boarding master and matron because these are the two people who will be with learners most of the times. As the teacher, I can help especially in the afternoon. I can engage the old learners into dramas, football or netball and mix them with new students.*

Chibangwa: *Parents are also inducted, but as for parents the induction process is done by the head with his team of senior teachers. However, for parents it is not done on the opening day but parents come during the end of the term.*

Jeza: *I like opening days because those are the most exciting days when learners are being welcomed. I have a senior class so we do most of activities like dramas having fun days which include eating competitions. It does not take long before the learners adapt to the new environment. Although I appreciate the induction programmes at the current school, it was going to be of much help if parents were inducted at the beginning of the year rather than at the end of the term so that they get involved into the system at the earliest stage. Inclusive education calls for early invention.*

Findings from teachers are significantly contrary to those obtained from the school head's results which showed that parents are inducted at the beginning of the term. This contradictory result may be due to the way the school head runs the induction. This may also suggest that the school head inducts without really informing the teachers about what will be going on.

5.4.2.2 Open door policies

The second category is that of open door policies. Most teachers confirmed that an open door policy was being implemented. The teachers had the feeling that communication, collaboration and teamwork can be enhanced through open door policy. In support of the view, the ECD teacher said:

Yes, the school has an open door policy. Parents can come at any time and discuss with the teacher on the progress of their children. However, at times some issues can be solved at the office with the school head without involving the teacher but if the school head feels that the teacher may know better he then refers the parent to the class teacher of the child.

The grade one teacher affirmatively said:

Yes, the school has an open door policy, parents can phone the school head or the receptionist even to the teachers directly. Parents are also invited to attend the parents' meeting every end of term. However as expected not all parents are supportive, some are always enquiring about their children especially parents of learners who are able bodied and other parents do not even care to attend the parents' meetings.

When asked whether the school has an open door policy the grade 2 teacher said, *"Yaa sure, if there are problems parents are free to come any time it might be during the week or during weekends since there is a resident boarding master."* The above sentiment was supported by Jeza who said: *"Concerning the open door policy the school has no problem with that. Parents are even welcome to bring their suggestions to the school. They are free to come and discuss with the authorities."* It can be inferred from the above teachers' responses that indeed there seems to be an open door policy at the school which is good for promotion of inclusive education at the school.

5.4.2.3 Partnership with parents (addressing research question 2)

Partnership generally refers to an association of two or more people to conduct a business however, in this context it specifically refers to regular meetings with the parents. Responding to an interview question on partnerships with parents, all the teachers shared the same view that the school had a good partnership with parents. For example, the ECD teacher said:

There is a good level of teamwork between teachers and parents. Usually parents and teachers meet together at every end of term on closing days and discuss on the progress of the learners and other things that might be of concern to both the school and the parents. However, parents are still free to come and discuss with anytime if there is need.

The teacher further explained why meetings were pegged on closing days. This is what the grade 2 teacher had to say:

The school has decided to have meetings on closing days so as to make every parent attend as they will be coming to collect their children. As of late, we used to have meetings during the middle of the terms but few parents would attend.

When responding to a question on partnership with parents during interviews, the grade one teacher said:

There is a good relationship with parents, and meetings are held once per term on closing days. However, personally I have a student-teacher from one of the colleges who is on teaching practice so I asked for permission from the school head that I may have some campaign awareness meetings with parents concerning inclusive education for the benefit of both the parents and learners.

After further probing, the grade one teacher said: “(Excitedly), so far the turn up is very good. Parents are responding quite well and I am happy about it.” During one of my visits to the school, I personally saw some notices at the foyer inviting parents for the meeting. This I also noted in my field notes with keen interest.

5.4.2.4 Support behaviour policy

Due to implementation of inclusive education the school is bound to encounter some behaviour problems from both groups of learners. This section examines information on support behaviour policies given the complex situation the school finds itself, in trying to

cater for both learners with and without disabilities. In responding to an interview question the grade one teacher noted: *“Yaa that one is covered under guidance and counselling. We have one qualified teacher who deals with issues of behaviour to both groups of learners who will be misbehaving.”* Through further probing and prompting, different responses were given by the teachers to solidify their views on policies the school have towards behaviour. This is what an ECD teacher said: *“Yes there is a disciplinary committee of senior teachers who handle issues of misbehaving learners at school level.”* When asked on what she does to misbehaving learners, she explained that:

In a classroom situation if a child behaves I apply some behaviour modification measures but if I feel that there is a need for the disciplinary committee to chip in, I refer the case to them for assistance. Although at times some children are in need of more professional support like an educational psychologist.

The grade two teacher said:

The rules are there but they are not implemented because at times you see that a learner misbehaves but nothing is done. If a rule says do not steal and a learner steals nothing is done so the policy becomes useless, null and void. At times teachers report those learners who misbehave but nothing is done to them. The authorities will just say ‘ah they are still children.’

When probed for clarification to her response, some disturbing discoveries regarding behaviour policies not being implemented, emanated from the interview. The teacher had this to say:

Yaah! I am part of the group but at times I reach a point where I hit a wall. There are scenarios where teachers report bad behaviour among learners but the senior teachers who are involved in disciplinary matters just keep quiet and nothing is done. If a teacher tries to pursue the issue, the committee wants to know why the teacher is interested in the issue. So the teachers mostly withdraw themselves from issues of misbehaviour. However, in my classroom I discipline them accordingly.

Different views were aired from teachers regarding support behaviour policy. The findings showed that teachers have mixed feelings on how the policy is being implemented. While some teachers appreciate that the school has a behaviour policy in place others are saying it is just a written document which is not being implemented to learners. This rather contradictory result may be due to the way different teachers are involved in disciplining of the learners. It

is most possibly that some teachers feel to be part of the school and get involved in disciplining learners while others exclude themselves from the system and leave everything to the school authorities. The support behaviour policy stipulates a change of environment to a child whose behaviour becomes intolerable. I am of the view that instead of changing the child's environment because of intolerable behaviour, different types of behaviour modification practices should be applied.

5.4.2.5 Leadership of school head

This category focuses on how the teachers view the leadership role of the school head as entrusted by both the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the community at large. When asked "What do you see as the leadership role of a school head the grade one teacher responded as follows: *"I feel that the role of a school head is to see that the school is running smoothly."* When probed to further elaborate on her response, especially the phrase *smooth running of the school*, she said:

When I say smooth running of the school, I mean that he should see that there is harmony at the school, that is, staff and learners are working and progressing well. This can be done through thorough supervision. He must make sure that every staff as well as the whole community is working together towards the success of inclusive education. On the part of academic staff, an effective school head should be seen having lesson observations to check for progress. However, I do not have a problem with our school head. He is always on his toes to see that things are well and that learners have food to eat.

Different viewpoints came out from the focus group interview of grades 3 to 7 teachers. These are some of the sentiments expressed by the group.

Jombo: *It is the duty of the school head to see that good behaviour is maintained among teachers and learners. He should work as an in-between the Ministry of Education and the staff and parents well in facilitating the success of inclusive.*

Muchezana: *The school head should be at the fore front in sourcing for donors so that these learners can have adequate resources. Currently, the school is under resourced and I feel that viable awareness campaigns should be carried out so that*

the community will become aware of the new system and assist. However, it can only be effective if the school head is encouraging the teachers.

Still on the leadership role of the school head, the grade two teacher highlighted:

The school head should be the overseer of every activity at the school. He should see that teachers are having IEPs for different learners and that differentiation of lessons is effectively done. The school head should have consistent interaction with all learners regardless of status so that he is able to communicate to every one of them and know their concerns. Like at our school some learners use sign language so the head should be able to communicate using language.

From my own observation, I found that in the school head's office there was a supervision roster where the school head monitors school staff. This showed that the school head was supervising the staff.

5.4.2.6 Teachers' responsibilities

In all classrooms, learners have diverse learning needs and if teachers are not responsive to these needs and provide the necessary support, learners may experience challenges to learning. This theme category came as a way of establishing what teachers ranked as the most important responsibilities. When responding to an interview question on teachers' responsibilities the ECD teacher echoed,

I have full responsibility for the education of all learners as I have the most influence. I am the key element in the successful implementation of inclusive policies. I am the one who is always with learners and that is my responsibility to see that learning is taking place and instill good behaviour in them. I also do guidance and counselling to both groups of learners those with disabilities and those without disabilities so that they know that no one is more superior to the other. It is my responsibility to turn my class into an inclusive class.

On the same subject, the grade one teacher had this to say:

It is my duty to develop and do reviews of the IEP together with the parents and the multidisciplinary team. Personally, I see myself as the transformer of the school and I can be used as an agent for change. The school head cannot do anything without my

assistance. I am his essential partner in developing the school towards inclusive education.

The grade two teacher said: “My responsibility is to facilitate learning and transmit knowledge to learners. Although there is a guidance and counselling team, I also do guidance and counselling in my classroom as a way of instilling good behaviour in learners.” Responses indicate teachers who took part in this study are aware of their responsibilities which were well-tied to inclusive education.

5.4.3.1 Inclusive practices

In this study, inclusive school practices are analysed within the following aspects: curriculum accommodation and modification; whole school consensus; teacher collaboration and assessment accommodation; peer tutoring and peer support; and teaching differentiation. Figure 5.7 refers to a network of the categories presented under the inclusive practices theme.

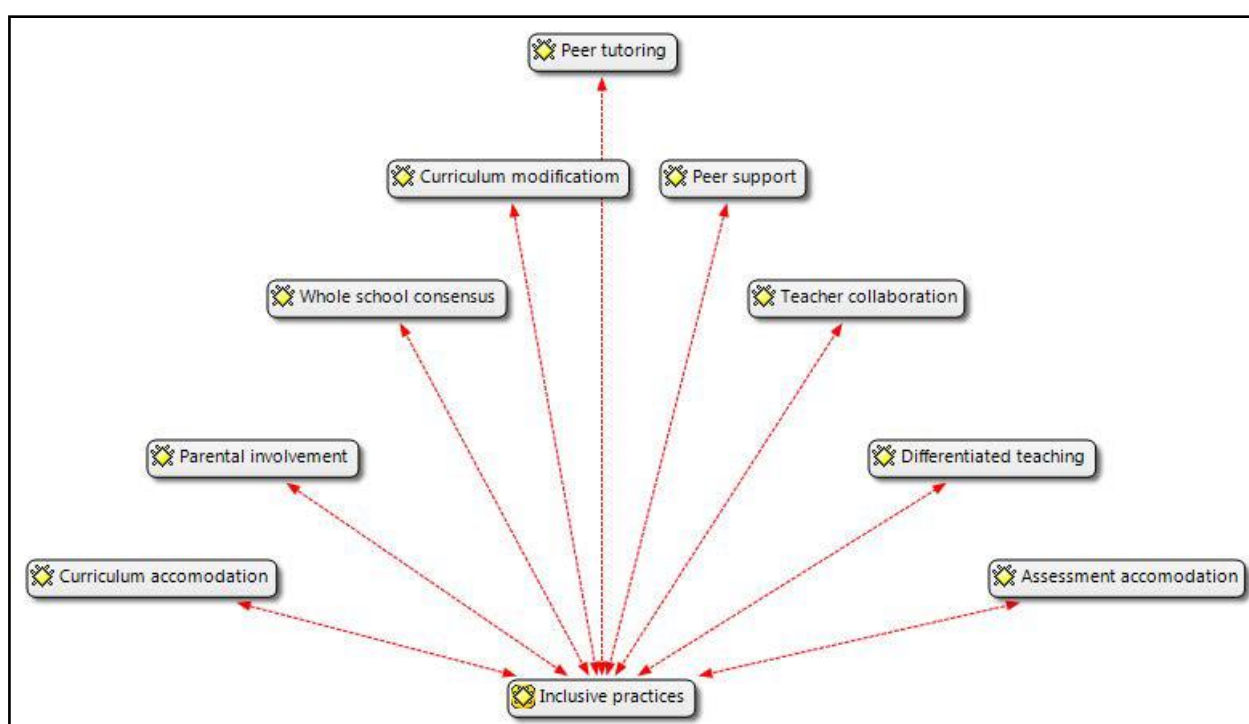


Figure 5.7: Tree diagram showing a network of the categories under the inclusive practices theme

Curriculum accommodation is the first category to be presented under this theme. During interviews, on curriculum modification, the grade one teacher had this to say:

There is curriculum accommodation in the sense that I individualise the work. I give different work to different learners according to their different levels of operation. I make a profile for each child so that the same matter is taught to all the children but the level of content is different. Learners with disabilities would learn better through individualised instruction.

On the same aspect of curriculum accommodation, the ECD teacher said:

Yaaah! That is where the challenge is because attending to individual differences becomes a problem. Imagine I have three different groups of learners who are operating at different levels so attending to each individual needs becomes a problem because of time constraints. I am expected to complete the syllabi at an expected time since the curriculum is examination-oriented but at the same I am expected to individualise the work. That is a challenge.

When probed further on what then she does to make every child benefit despite the challenges, she said:

I give them work according to their operational level but it is not effectively done. I have quite a heavy curriculum that I have to teach to the whole class, which gives me very little time to be able to support the learners with disabilities. I also have to carry out remedial plans. So it is all very time consuming and I do not get to spend enough time to support everyone.

On curriculum accommodation the grade two teacher said:

It is my responsibility as a teacher to select the content for those who have the potential to excel and the content for those who will be left behind, for example, learners with hearing impairment are good in practical work and that is what I give them and the able-bodied are good in academic subjects. However, our new curriculum is now encouraging hands on approach and this is now an advantage to our learners with hearing impairment who are good in practical work.

During lesson observation I established that although teachers were saying they individualise the work, it was not done consistently. This was an issue of concern which I highlighted in my field notes. In other lessons, the work was not being individualised. Some lessons were planned without individualisation of activities.

5.4.3.2 Parental involvement (addressing question 2)

The ideas under this category overlapped with those on section 5.3.3, partnership with parents. More-or-less, the same ideas were recurring so when asked during a focus group interview Bhungeni the grade 3 teacher said: *“Parents are involved but not as expected. Parents are supposed to be involved in paying of fees for their children but it is not seen happening especially parents of learners with disabilities.”* Jeza the grade 5 teacher said:

I think parents differ in their involvement, some are very involved with regular visits and meetings especially with the school head, to discuss and check on their children’s progress. I also sometimes see some parents participate in school projects like gardening although the turn-up is very low. However, the school has come up with regular opportunities and programmes for parent involvement. This is to try and make maximum participation from every parent.

However, I personally have discovered that these parents need to be appreciated for their efforts, and they need to feel that the teachers fully accept their children in their classrooms. This is because some of these parents are still struggling to get into acceptance to the disabilities of their children.

5.4.3.3 Whole school consensus (answering research question 4)

This is the third category under the inclusive practices theme. During interviews when asked on how they work together as a school the grade two teacher said:

Ummmmm! On that one as far as I know, parents especially those with hearing children bring their children here as the last resort after failing to get vacancies at other schools as a result they become less involved. They see this school as a charitable organisation which needs no assistance from parents. However, with the rest of the staff (academic and non-academic) as well as non-governmental organisations there is consensus. We always work together in harmony, sharing ideas on how best we can help the mixed groups of learners. However, the challenge is on shortage of specialists like psychologists, physio-therapists and even speech therapists. Some need attention of specialists.

Regarding the whole school consensus category, the grade one teacher acknowledged:

We are very committed to providing an effective inclusive environment through involvement of every one of us here. We get in-house training and also staff development workshops to assist us teachers and support staff where we struggle in implementing our duties.” The teacher further explained: “Parents are involved in their children’s education by paying fees and help them in homework for those who are not boarders.

When probed for clarification on how other stakeholders besides academic staff help, the grade one teacher said:

As far as I know this school depends more on non-governmental organisations. They are highly involved in the learning of these learners, although their involvement initially was not because of the inclusive education programme.

However, since the school was a special school stakeholders are of the view that the learners might need help. Indeed, there is whole school consensus within the school.

5.4.3.3 Peer tutoring

This aspect checked if teachers are considering the efforts of other learners when teaching inclusive classes. In responding to a question related to this aspect, the ECD teacher said:

Peer tutoring is possible but the problem is if one makes the able-bodied teach those with disabilities, those with disabilities feel that the able-bodied are more superior. At the same time if one makes those with disabilities especially those with hearing impairment teach the hearing, it is like wasting other learners’ time because mostly the hearing are a bit ahead academically of those with hearing impairment as a result they do not even listen. However, in my classroom I group them according to their abilities and let them teach each other.

When responding to a question on peer tutoring the grade one teacher said:

Peer tutoring is very effective to me. It is a teaching method that I usually use to learners. Some of them especially those with hearing impairment learn better if they are taught by their peers. They explain to each other better than I at times do. This method is also effectively used by teachers during co-curricular activities especially in dramas where able-bodied learners would be demonstrating to learners with disabilities. At the same time learners with hearing impairment would also teach sign

language to the learners who can hear. All learners are part of the class irrespective of ability or impairment. As for the learners, through experience, I have observed that each child likes to belong. Therefore, participation from the child's end is usually very positive. At times learners understand each other better than when the teacher is explaining.

On the issue of peer tutoring the grade two teacher said:

Normally, I pair them according to their level of operation despite being able bodied or being with a disability. If a child with a hearing impairment is operating at the same level with a child without hearing impairment I pair them like that. It is not always the case that able bodied learners are better intellectually. I also make use of this method during group work. I instruct anyone who will be operating above them all to be the tutor not considering the status of the learner.

In my field notes, during lesson observations, I had scribbled that teachers encouraged all learners to participate in discussions and they were encouraged to peer teach each other and they were all given positive feedback for their participation. Teachers as well used peer tutoring especially during co-curricular activities like drama. Teachers using this strategy appeared to be convinced that it was the best way to make the learners help each other. I found that the concept of inclusion was brought out from the way how the ECD and grade one teachers were using the peer tutoring method. The method promoted interaction of learners despite their status.

5.4.3.4 Peer support

This theme mostly concerns learners. When asked during focus group interviews on how do learners support each other, this is how the teachers responded:

Jombo: *Mostly they rarely mix .Usually I always see those with disabilities on their own and the able bodied on their own. Even during eating times they sit separately. However, there are very few who at times mix especially those who are physically challenged and the able-bodied.*

Muchezana: *At first these learners used not to understand each other especially the so called ‘normal’ learners. They used to look down upon those with disabilities but with time they are now helping each other. You can see them helping those with problems of mobility.*

Jeza had the same sentiments: *Yaah! At first these learners who are so-called the “normal” used to have societal beliefs of looking down upon people with disabilities. They used to call them with all sorts of negative names like ‘mbeveve’ meaning “you deaf” but with time and after some counselling they are now associating well. You can see them playing together during play times.*

Once in a while during my school visits, I would see learners with disabilities playing together with those without disabilities. This caught my eye and was well-highlighted in my field notes. I would see them playing soccer especially boys during lunch hour.

5.4.3.5 Teacher collaboration (addressing research question 4)

This category focuses on peer support among teachers. With regard to this aspect, during interviews, the ECD teacher said:

Teaching teams are synonymous with this category and are very much a part of the practice and learning support provision of the whole school. We consider teacher collaboration as one of effective teaching strategy as a result we use it. In case a teacher is facing a problem in teaching a certain concept we always help each other. The teacher can bring a topic and ask for help if he/she is facing a problem in teaching that topic. We should work together for the sake of all learners in the school.

When probed further on the issue of teacher collaboration, the same teacher explained:

Teachers must plan for instruction and learn from each other. This type of teamwork helps us to improve teachers’ overall instructional delivery. We learn instructional strategies from each other, brainstorm with each other to create innovative lessons and make sure the needs of learners receive equitable opportunities.

When answering an interview question on teacher collaboration, the grade two stated:

We collaborate when setting tests, doing staff development meetings and buddie teaching. For example, if I may have a problem with a learner who is intellectually challenged, then I approach another teacher for assistance. I can also invite another teacher as a resource person on sign language where I feel that I am failing to sign fluently.

The grade one teacher shared the same view with other interviewed teachers and said:

Teacher collaboration is done during staff developments whereby teachers share their problems and suggestions of dealing with the problems are given. Effective collaboration is also effectively done during co-curricular activities as well as cooperation when setting up long and short term objectives of the IEP.

It can thus be inferred that teacher collaboration is being done satisfactory at this former special school during the implementation of inclusive education.

5.4.3.6 Differentiated teaching

Literature is replete with studies where teachers are aware that children come to their classes with different abilities, skills and knowledge, socio-economic backgrounds and personalities. In order to respond to learners' diverse needs they need to differentiate teaching methods and strategies. This category focuses on differentiation of teaching strategies which are designed to enable all learners with different needs to have access to curriculum and participate in curricular activities organised by the school to attain their inclusive education goals. When asked during interview on the issue of differentiation of teaching methods, the grade one teacher said:

I differentiate my teaching methods. I always try to make my lessons more interesting by differentiating the methods and by creating more visual materials and more tactile teaching aids which may help all the learners especially the ones with disabilities.

The teacher further explained: *"I also utilise multiple teaching strategies to facilitate learning for all abilities for example I can use question and answer method, discussions as well as peer tutoring through group activities".*

The ECD teacher's views regarding this category are:

I know I should differentiate the strategies when I am teaching, for example when I am talking to learners with hearing impairment I should be facing them. I should use concrete aids so that they can visualise and manipulate especially for those who have

hearing impairment and visual impairment. I can also use the whole word approach when teaching reading to learners with hearing impairment and then phonetic approach to those who can hear.

She went on to explain that: “*as a teacher I am the one who selects the teaching method to use on different groups. Not all methods work to all learners hence the need for differentiation of teaching methods.*”

The same sentiments were expressed by the grade two teacher: When interviewed on the issue of differentiation of teaching methods, this is what she said: “*I vary my teaching methods according to the learners’ level of understanding, for example, for a child who is intellectually challenged I use methods which will accommodate his/her understanding like use of games and songs.*” The grade two teacher proceeded:

A combination of teaching approaches and methods might be used in different contexts and for different purposes. For example children with speech and language communication issues, the approaches and methods should be different from those having behaviour, emotional and social developmental problems. If I do not use proper teaching approaches, teaching and learning is very difficult. However, with good teaching approaches I am able to deliver the intended learning outcome to learners. Some of the methods and approaches I use are use of peers in the classroom, participatory method in small groups, picture drawings, and approaches of using positive enforcement.

I noticed that the teachers were using a variety of strategies in delivering lessons although the resources used fell short of individualised learning. I also discovered during lesson observation that some of the strategies which were being used when teaching were not planned in schemes of work.

5.4.3.7 Assessment accommodation

This is the last but not least category under the inclusive practices theme. When asked during interviews on the issue of assessment, the grade one teacher said:

When learners come especially those with hearing impairments, they are assessed by an audiologist to check for the severity of the hearing loss. As far as I know, the school system is still biased towards learners with hearing impairment. Why I am

saying so is because most facilities here cater for learners with hearing impairment mostly unlike other disabilities.

This however is expected since the school used to be a specialist school focusing on learners with hearing impairment. The teacher was further asked on how she assess the learners as they get into her class and she responded as follows:

I give them progress test checks, to check whether the learner is progressing well. This type of check is done to those who can be assessed academically but as for those who are intellectually challenged, I do daily checks in terms of emotional, social or physical development.

During interviews, the grade two teacher responded as follows:

As for me, I used a test. I gave them a test on the first day to see their level of operation because at times these learners may operate at the same level despite the status of the child. However, I know that the school only take those with hearing impairment for tests. They are tested by the audiologist but as for the other groups of learners I had never seen them being tested.

My field note comments indicate that the teachers' progress record books were showing some marks for tests given to learners as a form of assessing the operational level of each child. However, there was nothing that showed how learners who are intellectually challenged were assessed. For learners with hearing impairment, some audiograms were displayed which showed the degree of hearing loss after assessed.

5.4.3.8 Challenges experienced when utilising the whole school approach in the implementation of inclusive education (*Addressing sub-research question 3*)

When asked during interviews on the issue of challenges they face when utilising the whole school approach in the implementation of inclusive education, these are some selected responses from the teachers:

ECD teacher: *...these learners do not grasp the concept at the same level and sometimes those with disabilities lag behind unlike the 'normal' learners. This makes it a challenge for the teacher to individualise the work especially when mixed with those who are severely disabled. If the infrastructure is not adjusted to suit disabilities some learners might not fit. If correct intervention is not completely handled in terms of devices to be used the inclusiveness cannot be effectively done. The curriculum as*

well is examination-oriented so there is not enough time to individualise the work since I will be targeting in finishing the syllabus.

Grade one teacher: *So far I do not see inclusive education as effective because concentration span of a learner who is hearing and a non-hearing child are different and the way they grasp concepts is different because the one who can hear understands faster and better than the one who cannot hear who need more time for explanation. The hearing should learn on their own and then non-hearing on their own. Plus some kids with mental retardation are destructive and some are self-injurious and they hurt others, hitting others so they need close monitoring but there is no time for that and personnel is limited. There are some as well with severe problems which need some specialists because some of conditions are too medical so they need medical attention. Considering that we have big teacher-pupil ratio, if I try to give more attention to one learner I deprive other children. Like those children who need to be lifted from point A to point B. They do not even understand anything and they need extra care which I cannot give without an assistant.*

The same sentiments were also aired by the **grade two teacher** who said:

The problem with children with diverse needs is their concentration span which is short. Even if you give them work to do, a child may decide not to write and just put dots whilst you expect him to write something big. At times they may make the discussion or play too long after leaving what they should concentrate on and divert to other things which are not under discussion. And then the noise, when they are not happy, they push those who are normal down and become violent in a way of seeking for attention. This disrupts the smooth learning of the children.

Indeed the challenges highlighted and brought to light need attention. The challenges really seem extreme and need to be attended to.

5.5 Discussion

The purpose of this section is to critically discuss and reflect on the findings presented above. The themes and respective categories are discussed in the order in which they were presented in the findings section.

5.5.1 Inclusive culture

The first theme to be discussed is that of inclusive culture. On the category of teachers' fears and apprehension, the findings of the current study are consistent with those of Alborn and Gaad (2014) who found that teachers had fear of the unknown due to lack of previous training in the transferable skills needed to support the inclusion of learners with disabilities and fear of failure that might affect their images. The most interesting finding was that among the teachers there are some who are in support of inclusive education. They are greatly in support of inclusive inclusion. This finding is in line with Makhmudayeva (2016) whose results showed that although the teachers were not specialists they were not afraid to teach inclusive classes. From this finding it can be clearly inferred that teachers' beliefs vary basing on their professional knowledge of inclusion as well as the type and severity of disabilities of their learners.

On the theme of belief in inclusion, the results revealed the nature of the inclusive system at the school. The present findings seem to be consistent with other researchers (Makhmudayeva 2016) who found that inclusion could be successful provided that challenges like lack of services are resolved. However, from the results of the current study not all teachers are in support of inclusive education. Some teachers are in agreement with Donohue and Bomman's (2014) findings which were against inclusive education but were in support of segregated schooling. Teachers in the current study also felt that the work load was too much as compared to their salaries and some learners with disabilities have disruptive behaviour when mixed with the 'normal' and there is no time to monitor them well due to lack of personnel. In different countries, institutions of higher education incorporate inclusive education components differently in their in-service and pre-service teacher education programmes. These programmes are assumed to be an important factor in determining the level of understanding of a teacher's conception of inclusive education. The fact that teachers' conceptions of inclusive education differ might point towards instruction on inclusive education differing during in-service teacher education programmes. This could be true given that the teachers did different programmes or courses at different institutions.

From the researcher's observation on the theme of school climate, the results indicate that the school climate in terms of staff relationships was good. Staff spoke to each other with respect

whenever discussing issues. This is what is expected if a 'whole school approach' is well implemented although it is the climate should be like that in a good working environment. There must be harmony among stakeholders. However, this is in contrast with Udoba's (2014) findings which revealed that special needs teachers had a very minimal relationship with regular teachers. The results further showed that teachers could coordinate on very few issues, for example, when attending a staff meeting called by the headmaster. This shows that there is still a lot to be done for inclusion to be successfully implemented.

Regarding the aspect of community involvement, the current study's results show that the community is highly involved in support of inclusive education for example some community members come and help in agricultural projects and church members assist by donating whatever they feel worth to be of help to learners. I witnessed it during one of my visits to the school. I found some community members busy with learners in the school fields. This is a good move towards inclusive education and shows a positive attitude from the society and is an indication of acceptance. However, the current finding contradicts the results found by Makhmudayeva (2016) where some teachers indicated that their society was not yet ready to accept disabilities and the community was not even willing to accept them. This might be due to lack of awareness campaigns within societies.

Regarding the theme on respect and support from stakeholders, the current study found out that stakeholders play a critical role as support partners in the school's inclusive programme. The teachers appreciated the role that some other stakeholders play in support of inclusive education especially the Non-Governmental Organisations, parents and the religious groups. This finding is in agreement with Zhu et al's (2017) findings which showed that all the stakeholders involved in the study showed positive attitudes towards an inclusive programme except for parents of children without special educational needs who were not involved. However, some teachers felt that the rate at which these NGOs used to help has decelerated since the start of inclusive education. My interpretation is that these NGOs lack the knowledge of the inclusive programme and the school is now more exposed to more demands than before the inclusive education era. The school should have awareness campaigns towards these NGOs. Surprisingly, this is a contradiction with the head of school's view who showed that it is because of the support of stakeholders that inclusive education is made viable at the school. The head of school's comment is supported by the evidence I saw when I was moving around the school. Some classroom blocks are written donated by 'Big Donor'

(pseudonym). The name of the organisation that donated is written on the classroom block in appreciation. Though, teachers' results are consistent with those of Zhu et al (2017), they differ with those of Greene (2017) who found that in India it is not the responsibility of the government alone to implement inclusive education but NGOs have a policy in support of inclusive education and they attempt to make up for the lack of services being provided by the Indian government.

Regarding *resources*, the results of this study showed that the school is under-resourced. All the teachers shared the same sentiment of lack of resources which cannot meet the needs of learners. These results differ from earlier findings from different studies by Opoku-Agyeman (2013), Vrasmas and Vrasmas (2007) and Poon-McBrayer (2014) who carried studies in different places and found out that governments in respective countries were in great support of inclusive education. This is opposite to Zimbabwe where the current study was undertaken. The Zimbabwean government rarely assist in succession of inclusive education. However, findings of the current study are consistent with those of Alborn (2013) and Udoba (2014) who found that the zones under research were under staffed in terms of support services and had a shortage of specialist teachers.

The results emanating from the issue of *teacher expertise* appear to be encouraging. What is evident appears to be that teachers know how to teach inclusive classes although some teachers like the ECD and grade one teachers had feelings that those with severe disabilities should not be mixed with others. These findings suggest that teachers are prepared to intervene in particular where learners are mixed with consideration of the severity of disability. This is contrary to findings by Makhmudayeva (2016) and Udoba (2017)) which showed that all teachers had less experience in teaching children with special needs and very few teachers were trained as special teachers and at the same time those who were trained were not prepared to teach learners with special needs. However, they would use their specialisation as a stepping stone to get to other jobs which are not related to their profession. This finding is also in line with the one from Suc et al. (2016) who had a research with the Slovenian teachers. The results of this study suggest that, after completing their teaching course, teachers often do not feel ready to face a class that can include a child with special needs. The teachers view inclusion of children with special needs as an additional burden that contributes to their general dissatisfaction with the existing school system and society as a whole.

5.5.2 Inclusive policies

The first category to be discussed under the second theme inclusive policies is *inclusive induction policy*. The results indicate that the school has welcoming induction activities. From the findings the teachers revealed that orientation is important because it lays the foundation for the new learner, encourages confidence and assists the new child to adapt faster to the new environment. This finding is in line with the findings of Alborno and Gaad (2014) who noted in their research that the schools studied had welcoming inductive policies. In the same line was Madan and Sharma's (2013) finding who noted that all the children of the school must be sensitised about the purpose of the programme and the children attending to it. These two researchers also discovered that it is critical that children are presented with facts and that the sensitisation process is not a one-time affair but constant reinforcement is necessary for learners to truly appreciate and respect diverse needs of children with different abilities.

Findings on the theme of *open door policies* reveal that the school practices an open-door policy to stakeholders. The school has an open door policy to every stakeholder. Parents are free to call or visit the school any time the need arises. This finding is in agreement with Chan and Yuen's (2015) who noted that the school has a very clear policy of inclusion in its vision statement and that the school's SEN policy was readily available on its website for access by parents, students and members of the public. According to my understanding this is a sign of openness. Furthermore, Alborno and Gaad (2014) found that the three schools studied had some supporting behaviour policies although the current researcher is against the way how it is applied at the schools.

Relating to *partnership with parents, for example, meetings*, the results reveal that there is good level of team work between parents and the school staff. Parents always meet with teachers every end of term on closing days of the school. The evidence that meetings were being held was shown by invitations for meetings displayed at the foyer. There was a time when I visited the school towards the end of the term and I saw notices at the foyer inviting parents for end of term meetings. The present findings seem to be consistent with Udoba's (2014) who did a study to establish challenges faced by teachers when teaching children with developmental disability. The findings showed that parents and special needs education

teachers have a good collaboration in both two schools, for example, teachers and parents meet every end of the month having a meeting to discuss various issues regarding their children. This is most interesting findings because prior studies have also noted parental involvement as a crucial aspect in successful implementation of inclusive education (Alborno & Gaad, 2014; Alur, 2010; Chan & Yuen, 2015). In contrast are the results from Donohue and Bornman's (2014) study in South Africa whose results showed that parents were against the idea of inclusive education.

Regarding the theme of *leadership role of school head*, the current study found that the school head should work as an intermediate between the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the staff and parents as well in facilitating the success of inclusive education. The teachers felt that it is the duty of the school head to source for donors and facilitate campaign awareness on inclusive education to the community at large. This finding corroborates the ideas of Greene (2017), who suggested that school administration leaders must recognise the need for inclusive curriculum and advocate for the use of it. This indicates that it is the duty of the school head to see that the curriculum being used by teachers is well modified to suit the diverse needs of learners. In her study Chattman (2017) stated that the role of school leaders has evolved from a managerial position to an instructional leader, one that is responsible for the continuous advancement of learners as well as professional development of staff to educate diverse groups of learners. This sentiment was also aired out by Davis and Darling Hammond (2012). Chatman (2017) further indicated that school leaders are responsible for determining the needs of all learners and ensuring that resources are put in place to meet those needs. This is in line with the current study's finding where teachers viewed one of the school head's role as sourcing donors so that the learners may have adequate resources.

An interesting finding from the issue of *teachers' responsibility* is that teachers know that it is their responsibility to turn their classes into inclusive classrooms. Results also revealed that it is the teachers' duty to facilitate learning and transmit knowledge to learners. The teachers view themselves as the agents of change. There are similarities between the attitudes expressed by teachers in this current study and those described by Makhmudayeva (2016).

5.5.3 Inclusive practices

Shifting focus to the third theme which is inclusive practices, the first category to be discussed is that of *curriculum accommodation*. The finding of this study, which indicates that it is the teachers who select what to teach and not to teach to different learners is disturbing. The results show that teachers individualise the content in a way to accommodate every learner. However, according to teachers it is a challenge since the curriculum is examination-oriented, there is a need of completing the syllabi and it becomes a challenge to individualise the work. Due to this reason when observing scheme-cum plans, the activities were not showing individualisation. This shows that although the school is practising inclusive education, it is done at a moderate extent. The current results are consistent with those of Udoba (2014) who found that teachers have a challenge of accommodating the curriculum since it is done by policy-makers. In the same line is Alborn and Gaad (2014) who found that curriculum was carried through deletion of difficult concepts by a special educational needs committee. The difference is that unlike in the Alborn and Gaad's study, deletion is done by a committee yet in the current study, selection of concepts is done by individual teachers. An implication of this is that teachers might end up deleting all concepts that they are not comfortable with which in turn might deprive learners of quality education.

The current findings are in contrast with definitions by the Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010) and De Luis (2016) which view curriculum accommodation as adapting, expanding or redesigning of objectives and not removal of content. In their study Chan and Yuen (2016) came up with very important finding that instead of removing content as a way of modifying the curriculum teachers should apply other constructs such as in-class support. In support of Chan and Yuen (2016), Driel et al. (2016) suggested that it is relatively easy to make adjustments within schools themselves to better balance the curriculum by including books, films, websites, etc. that better represent the diversity of the classroom activities.

Regarding the issue of *parental involvement* the results reveal that parents are involved in the learning of their children. However, according to teachers the parents differ in their level of involvement; some are very involved with regular visits and meetings especially with the school head, to discuss and check on their children's progress. The results also indicate that parents as well need appreciation from teachers on their efforts and show them that their

children are fully accepted in the classrooms. This is because some of these parents are still struggling to get to accept the disabilities of their children. It is interesting to note that the same teachers who were saying parents are not involved are the same who said parents should be appreciated for their efforts. These findings are consistent with findings from studies around the world (Udoba, 2014, Alborn, 2013) which have consistently shown parental involvement differs. Parental involvement has been said to be one of the most important factors in promoting the success of inclusive education (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Chan & Yuen, 2016). These results however, contradict the finding by Cate (2016) who discovered that most parents were willing to be involved in the learning of their children with disabilities but were not practically involved.

The results on the category *whole school consensus* showed that there is consensus among the stakeholders who are the teaching staff, non-academic and NGOs. However, on the part of parents, the results indicate that some parents are working together with other stakeholders whilst others are not involved in the programme. These results however, contradict the findings of Udoba (2014) whose results showed that special teachers have minimal relationship with regular teachers. They only confer during meetings. Regular teachers consider themselves superior. This rather contradictory result maybe because all teachers at the school in the current study are specialist teachers and understand the importance of whole school consensus. In her research Chatman (2017) indicated that all staff members need to be involved in the inclusive service delivery.

After checking if teachers considered the efforts of other learners when teaching inclusive classes, the results on *peer tutoring* show that teachers weigh up this method as an effective method hence they use it during their teaching. ECD, grade one and grade two teachers used this strategy. Findings from this study support results from Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015) who found that peer collaboration is a significant strategy used to provide support in regular classroom participation among learners with and without disabilities. This is in agreement with Adriel et al's (2016) findings which showed that peer educators may not have the same depth of knowledge as the expert, however, their communication with other students is often more effective. As shown in the literature review, a number of terms are used to refer to teacher collaboration. In their study Adriel et al (2016) call it cooperative learning and peer education.

Another category, *peer support* was generated under inclusive practices. The results revealed that learners supported each other during learning and play times. According to teachers, learners without disabilities used to look down upon the learners with disabilities. However, after receiving some counselling they started to get on well together. It can be concluded that given that learners are from diverse backgrounds and abilities, with and without special needs, this behaviour is expected at any inclusive setting. During one of my lesson observation sessions in an ECD class I noted that some learners, especially those with hearing impairment, were helping learners with intellectual challenges to match things of the same colour. However, this was not found in other classes especially in grade two class. I realised that young children were more accommodating than older children and this was common even during play times. Consistent with the current study, Zhu et al. (2017) reported two cases which show how typically developing children helped their peers with special education needs (SEN) and how teachers used peer support to improve the effectiveness of individual training in practice.

Regarding the category of *teacher collaboration*, this study found that there is collaboration at the school among staff. An interesting finding from this study is that there is a stronger relationship among staff in doing some activities especially when setting tests, planning IEPs, during co-curricular activities and during the times they face some challenges. This findings are consistent with those of Robinson (2016), Waitoller and Kozleski (2013) and Chatman (2017) who noted that there is widespread evidence that inclusive practices are most likely to emerge from collaborative action, reflection and enquiry. Ferrante (2017) referred to collaboration as team teaching found that participants valued the use of team teaching as resulted in more learners being reached on individual level. However, these results contradict that of Alborn and Gaad (2014). Their results indicated that teacher collaboration in all of the three schools was limited to the preparation of IEPs, differentiated worksheets and examination papers whilst with the current study, the collaboration extends to co-curricular activities. This contradictory result is in line with Udoba (2014) who noted that the special needs teachers had minimal relationship with the regular teachers. These findings suggest that teacher collaboration can be a controversial issue in implementing inclusive education and should be handled with care

Differentiated teaching is another category discussed under inclusive school culture. According to results, teachers revealed that they use differentiated teaching methods in order

to cater for diverse needs. When observing lessons the teachers were also observed utilising multiple teaching strategies to facilitate learning for all abilities. However, in their plan of work, some lessons were not showing different strategies to cater for individualisation although in their teaching once in a while different strategies were applied. This indicates that teachers cater for inclusivity though not to its highest level. In agreement with the current finding are Udoba (2014) and Ferrante (2017) who discovered that all teachers were using differentiated teaching in a way to reach the needs of every learner and to keep learners' attention captured.

From the results of *assessment accommodation* I found that the school has assessment accommodation provision in place. Learners especially those with hearing impairment are assessed by an audiologist as soon as they are enrolled at the school. However, according to the findings, the system is biased towards learners with hearing impairment. During lesson observation I noticed audiograms for learners with hearing impairment being displayed. These audiograms show the level of hearing loss. There are no proper assessment procedures for learners with other types of disabilities and those without disabilities except assessments which are done by individual teachers in their classrooms. This is a contradiction to the findings of Chan and Yuen (2015) who established that all learners were assessed through the use of different assignments that would allow them to demonstrate their knowledge in a certain subject. Regardless, though I appreciate that the school does not have a proper assessment accommodation programme in place for all learners, individual teachers assess the learners to check their operational levels. In this respect, teachers are the most important agents who should know about the learners' ability since they deal directly with the learners. Diagnostic test papers were seen displayed in the classrooms for grades one and two classes.

5.5.4 Challenges experienced when utilising the whole school approach

A number of challenges experienced when utilising the 'whole school approach' in the implementation of inclusive education were mentioned by teachers. Lack of materials for example, lack of assistant teachers and specialists like physiotherapists were some of the challenges. This is in contradiction to the results of Chan and Yuen (2015) who noted that in Hong Kong schools relied heavily on the support of dedicated education assistants (EAs) to achieve inclusion in mainstream classrooms. The other challenge mentioned was the structure of the curriculum which the teachers said they cannot change much since it is examination-

oriented. Through observation I also realised that the environment was not conducive for learners with mobility challenges. These challenges raise a cause of concern and thus need to be addressed.

5.5.5 Summary

This chapter presented results from teachers' conceptions on the implementation of inclusive education. Three major themes were highlighted. Under each theme, several categories were generated. Teachers' conceptions when implementing inclusive education at the selected school within each of the three themes were identified and interrogated. The conceptions were presented category by category. A discussion section followed the presentation of results. The next chapter deals with caregivers' conceptions and practices during the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school.

CHAPTER 6

CAREGIVERS' RESULTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from analysis of data derived from caregivers' interviews. This was done in relation to the analytic framework in an attempt to answer research questions, specifically research sub-question (ii) based on the prescribed duties of caregivers in a 'whole school approach' model. Qualitative data was obtained from caregivers' semi-structured interviews. The results are presented and discussed under the categories identified in data analyses of interview data. Following the patterns in the previous two chapters, the results in each category are presented, described and illustrated with examples from the participants' (caregivers) responses and are written verbatim as they are the direct words spoken by the participants. This ensures that the participants' voices are evident. The caregivers were given pseudonyms Memory and Ruth for confidentiality.

6.2 The results from caregivers' interviews

This section focuses on the extent to which the school deals with inclusive education from the school caregivers' perspectives through semi-structured interviews. In the field of inclusive education, caregivers are known as paraprofessional, or assistants to the teacher and in some instances this might include parents. These terms can be used interchangeably. According to Cook and Friend (2010), a paraprofessional is a teacher's assistant who in the general education classroom helps learners with disabilities as needed. In some cases, they can assist with academics as well as adaptive skills. A caregiver can be assigned to a group of learners with disabilities or an individual learner depending on the learner's needs. In this thesis, parents are not categorised as caregivers. This is because the school in question does not allow parents to act as caregivers on the school premises as there are two people employed to do this job on permanent basis. After analysing the interview data, four categories emerged from interviewees' responses. The categories identified in the data were as follows:

- Duration at the school and understanding of learners with diverse needs
- Caregivers' responsibilities
- Challenges experienced by caregivers and solutions to overcome the challenges
- Collaboration with teachers and inferred learner views

6.2.1 Period of service at the school and understanding of learners with diverse needs

This category focuses on information on the period of service of caregivers at the school under investigation in a bid to identify the foundational knowledge and relevant experience they have that facilitates their effective support. Roles of caregivers take on countless shapes and forms. However, within a schooling system, the roles of caregivers are well defined. These responsibilities may get out of hand when one becomes isolated and does not ask for help and support. In this study, the period at the school by a caregiver and understanding of learners with diverse needs are pivotal as this provides information from a whole school approach on how this paraprofessional aid is of great importance.

During interviews, when asked for the period the first caregiver, Memory, has been at the school, her response was as follows, *“I have forty years of experience with these children. However, I did not start at this school. I commenced working with the real-disabled children before I joined this school”*. When probed to explain further on what she meant by real-disabled children, she illuminated, *“I mean those children who are physically disabled”*. To Memory, the learners at this school are thus not wholesomely disabled. In answering the same question on period at the school, the second caregiver Ruth said: *“I have been here since 2014”*. The responses to the question on period at the school indicate that both caregivers are experienced enough in the education system dealing with children with diverse needs although it shows that one of the caregivers started working with learners with disabilities before inclusive education was formally introduced. The period the caregivers have been working with learners with special educational needs can be deemed sufficient to provide knowledgeable responses regarding this process. The response by Memory, *“I started working with the real-disabled children”* shows that she lacks the knowledge on the meaning of technical terms such as disability regardless of her vast experience. It seems to Memory that disability refers to physical challenges only. A possible explanation for this is that Memory might not have undergone staff development when the school became inclusive.

When asked to outline her understanding on learners with diverse needs, Memory said, *“Ahhhhh! These are learners who have different ways of behaving. If you look around here you see that these learners are different. Some cannot talk, others can talk and others are not normal.”* In responding to the same question, Ruth said, *“To me, these are the learners who*

need different types of care because some of them mess themselves while others can go to the toilet alone. They are different.” Responses from Memory and Ruth show that both caregivers know the meaning of diverse needs. Their responses harbour traits of knowledge and experience working with learners living with diverse needs. Possible reasons might be due to experience with learners, and, they are now able to see the differences among learners.

6.2.2 Caregivers’ responsibilities

This category identified what caregivers see as their responsibilities. As mentioned earlier, caregivers are important members of the education team within a school. When caregivers are assigned to a teacher or classroom to assist learners with diverse needs, it is crucial that they are viewed as agents rendering support for all learners. This encourages and allows the teacher to take ownership for each learner in the class. It also provides the teacher and all learners an opportunity for extra support

When responding to an interview question on caregivers’ responsibilities, Memory said:

Although the teachers have a fundamental role, which is sharing knowledge and skills, they cannot do it alone. My duty then, is to assist teachers especially on learners who sometimes mess themselves in classrooms. I also sometimes act as loco parentis and do some guidance and counselling to some learners.

On the same issue, Ruth echoed,

My responsibility is to monitor the cleanliness of learners and instil discipline especially when they are in their dormitories without teachers being there. I also take care of the learners, I put the learners first in everything. That is what I do. Even if it is something that I do not want to do ... it is not about me, it is about them.

Furthermore, relating to the issue of understanding of learners with diverse needs is the issue of their responsibilities as caregivers. In responding to a question on their responsibilities, Memory said, *“I have to provide care, mobility and companionship in conjunction with the teachers”*. Ruth said, *“Amongst other responsibilities, I provide companionship, clean up when some learners have messed up and provide mobility to those who need it.”* These responses indicate that both caregivers were aware not only of their responsibilities, but also the significance of the support they offer. From these responses, it can be insinuated that both caregivers show appreciation of the importance of the ‘whole school approach’. This might

be shown by the link of working with teachers as one of their fundamental roles. Thus, it shows teachers have to work closely with caregivers. This indicates that, to some extent, whole school the approach is being implemented at the school.

6.2.3 Challenges experienced by caregivers and solutions to overcome the challenges

Caregivers are a great asset to the educational team, but there are some constraints they face as they execute their duties. This category focuses on such challenges and possible solutions to overcome the challenges encountered. When asked during interviews on challenges they face, Memory stated:

... I do not have any challenges I can pinpoint specifically, maybe it is because I am used to the work. However, there is only one challenge of parents who bring their children to school without enough materials to use like toiletries. It makes my work difficult.

Ruth said:

... At times these learners are a thorn in the flesh. Sometimes some of the learners mess themselves and I end up thinking that they are doing it intentionally. However, with the teachers' help the cases are becoming less and less.

Very little was found from caregivers on the issue of challenges they face when carrying out duties except for learners who mess themselves and those who come to school with inadequate resources. However, it is not possible to assume that any caregiver is less likely to encounter challenges especially in the case of one like Ruth who has forty years of experience working with learners with special needs in schools. Probably, one possible explanation of this scenario is that Memory was afraid that she might be victimised by authorities even though I tried to explain to her that her submissions were all confidential.

Shifting focus to possible solutions to the challenges they experience, the caregivers had different but related views. Memory said:

We are sometimes given time to talk to parents when they come for end of term meetings but mostly it is not helpful. This is because the learners will always come without enough resources to sail through the term. Maybe it is due to poverty, I am not sure.

Responding to the same question, Ruth echoed:

With the assistance of the teachers, the cases of learners who mess themselves are becoming less. It looks like these children are afraid of teachers more than us because if a teacher reprimands even those with wild behaviour they listen.

6.3 Collaboration with teachers and learner views

According to the literature, collaboration is a process of joining together to work on tasks in a cooperative, respectful, and purposeful manner. The relationship between the classroom teacher and the caregiver, along with their interaction with the rest of the school team (school head, non-governmental organisations and others) is the key to success for learners in any learning environment. It is working together that builds and yields success. On answering interview questions on how they collaborate with teachers, Memory had this to say:

We communicate with one another with openness and honesty. We consider one another as friends and make efforts toward building a relationship that is more than work-related. I collaborate with teachers in many ways, like if I meet a challenge with any of the learners, especially those with behaviour problems, we strategise on how to resolve this impediment. Teachers have their unique ways of dealing with these children unlike me. I can also invite teachers if I meet a problem on understanding those learners with problems of speech.

Ruth shared almost similar views as those of Memory by saying, *“Most teachers here are very cooperative with us. We sometimes collaborate with them during co-curricular activities. We will be assisting especially on accompanying the little children to the toilet and in maintaining discipline.”* What I infer from these responses as a researcher is that this might indicate that the school is practising a ‘whole school approach’ from the way staff at the school collaborate with each other.

I wanted to also interview learners in groups but I was advised against this practice by the Faculty’s Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC) for ethical reasons during the proposal stage. This practice to deny interviews with vulnerable children is supported by the Economic and Social Research, (Council, 2005) (Weijer & Emanuel, 2000). Weijer and Emanuel (2000) consider participants to be vulnerable if they are not in a position to provide informed consent, due to their position (such as being in prison), or not possessing adequate intellectual faculty (such as children or the mentally ill). In this study it happens to be children and some of them are mentally ill. I then decided to ask the two caregivers how they see learners’ views

on inclusive education when they are in hostels in order to make inferences. This is what the two caregivers had to say:

Memory: *Some learners with disabilities always indicate that they would want to be at their own school.*

Ruth: *These learners have mixed feelings, whilst some do not want to be mixed with learners without disabilities, others like that. At the same time, some learners with disabilities always wish if they were learning from home while at the same time others do not like to be learning from home.*

This can be an indication that the learners were not guided and counselled enough on inclusive education. At the same time this might be attributed to the way they are treated by the society when they are at home that made them think that being excluded from the *normal* society is better than inclusion.

6.4 Discussion

This section critically discusses and reflects on the findings presented above. The categories are discussed in the order in which they were presented during findings section just like in other chapters.

Regarding the period of caregivers at the school, the results indicate that both caregivers are experienced in the system and know what diverse needs mean, although, there is one who is more experienced in working with learners with disabilities. However, despite one caregiver being more experienced both exhibited that they know the meaning of diverse needs. This is shown from the way they explained what children with diverse needs are like. Although it is good to have experienced caregivers, this might create problems if the teacher is new and trying to control a person who has forty years of experience at the station, who feels that she has seen enough.

On the category of caregivers' responsibilities, both caregivers revealed that they know their duties. The caregivers indicated that although teachers have a fundamental role, they cannot do without caregivers. It is not surprising that caregivers are saying this because literature confirms the affirmative. For instance, White (2012) indicated that paraprofessionals complained of teachers who only give them boring work to do and were never given opportunity to work with the children. Paraprofessionals complained that instead of running off papers and errands, they have some skills that they surely would like to use if just given

the opportunity. I can infer that these assistants know their duties, regardless that most of them are not given the chance to demonstrate their expertise which might not be fair to them.

Pertaining to challenges faced by caregivers, very little was found. However, caregivers complained of parents who sent children without enough materials to use throughout the term and of learners who always mess themselves. The findings of the current study differ with the previous research, for example, White (2012) found that paraprofessionals have challenges with teachers who do not give them opportunities to express their experiences as one paraprofessional was quoted saying, *"I know my job is to support the teacher, but five playground duties every week, no matter what the weather is like, is a little too much. When I try to talk about it to the teacher, she just shrugs and says, 'that is your job'."* A possible explanation for this might be that there is a problem of communication between teachers and paraprofessionals. Conflict can occur when there are communication problems. When teachers are unable to express themselves in a way that is comprehensible to their colleagues, information and knowledge are not as effectively shared as it should be. However, this is different from the current research findings where caregivers showed that they collaborate effectively with teachers.

On the issue of overcoming the challenges, the caregivers stated that at times they are given time to talk to parents and they also get assistance from teachers. This contradicts the findings of Bubb-McKinnie (2017), who established that if caregivers are facing obstacles to their involvement, it is the duty for school communities to find ways to overcome those hurdles. This means that instead of caregivers getting involved in solving their problems on their own, it is the duty of the community to help solve these problems. This finding differs from the one found in current research where caregivers are involved in solving their problems.

When considering collaboration, among professionals there are several areas of concern that need to be addressed for the best collaboration efforts. At the centre of all, good collaboration must embrace sharing of knowledge to enhance one another's ability to support a learning in all areas of the school environment. Regarding collaboration, both caregivers indicated that they collaborate well with the teachers with openness and honesty. When considering collaboration among professionals, I reckon that there are several issues and areas of concern that are important to address for the best collaboration to exist like successful circulation of information and knowledge between team members.

6.5 Summary

This chapter presented results from caregivers' conceptions on the implementation of inclusive education. Findings were presented under four categories namely period of service at the school and understanding of learners with diverse needs, caregivers' responsibilities, and challenges experienced by caregivers and solutions to overcome the challenges and collaboration with teachers and inferred learner views. Caregivers' conceptions of inclusive education as implemented at the selected school were presented category by category. The discussion section critically examined findings presented under each category after the presentation of results. The next chapter distills this study's findings by bringing everything together and through presenting the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER 7

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter; the summary, conclusions and recommendations are presented. The summary highlights the following; the objectives of the study, the methodology, instruments used, description of the pilot study and ethical procedures in an attempt to answer research questions. The conclusion is presented under three constructs; inclusive culture, inclusive policy and inclusive practices. Recommendations and limitations of the study are also highlighted.

7.2 Summary

This study set out to establish the extent to which the ‘whole school approach’ could be utilised in implementing inclusive education at a selected school in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. The study’s major effort was to achieve the following objectives, which were to:

- i. Establish the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school;
- ii. Determine what stakeholders (head of school, teachers, caregivers and learners) understand inclusive education to be;
- iii. Describe the challenges, if any, experienced when using the ‘whole school approach’ in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school; and
- iv. Establish how best the whole school approach’ could help in the learning of children with diverse needs in the context of the selected school.

Within that effort, the study also contributed to unveiling and illuminating the *status quo* of implementing inclusive education following the ‘Whole School Approach’ framework and philosophy at the selected school. This was done with reference to the three dimensions of inclusive culture, policies and practices (Education Bureau, 2012). However, some elements of index for inclusion were also incorporated in the implementation of the whole school approach. The ‘index for inclusion’ is a resource to support school development; it presents itself as a principled approach to developing schools and putting inclusive values into action. ‘Developing learning and participation in schools’ is the subtitle of the Index (Nes, 2009).

Thus, the reason to include it in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school.

Based on the understanding that the status of inclusive practices in so-called inclusive schools is complex and there is need for it to be examined from many dimensions rather than focusing on a narrow field (Gous et al., 2014), this called for rich-context bound perspective to be assembled. Hence, the study employed a qualitative research methodology and specifically used the ethnographic case study approach, to provide a rich, contextualised picture of the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, this offered insights, established patterns and described local relationships (formal and informal), as well as the understandings and meanings (tacit and explicit) that participants displayed. Data were collected using qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews, non-participatory observations as well as analysis of documents and the researcher's field notes. Purposive sampling was employed to select the school and participants (school head, teachers, and caregivers), allowing the specific identification of information-rich cases, where the educational provisions and services under study predominantly prevailed. An ethical approach was adhered to, throughout the study and was guided by the North West University's (NWU) Research Ethics Committee guidelines.

A pilot study was conducted prior to data collection of the main study, which aided in increasing the clarity, relevance and efficiency of the data collection instruments. Interview and observation schedules were piloted at a private school where some teachers in the school have learners with and without disabilities. Participants from this private school did not take part in the main study. The piloting process enhanced clarity and relevance of the refined research instruments. This also ensured trustworthiness of the instruments. Provisions for trustworthiness were incorporated within the study through triangulation where multiple data collection methods were used and examining the perspectives of multiple participants. Other provisions included member checking, peer debriefing and support, and prolonged engagement at the research site. Data collection and analysis phases in this study were intertwined, where data was collected, recorded and transcribed systematically from the case school. These protocols were aligned to a data collection plan.

The data were analysed as a context-situated case study investigating how the particular school was implementing inclusive education following the 'whole school approach'

principles. The data analysis followed McMillan and Schumacher's (2006) approach of creating data displays which is derived from induction. Emerging themes and categories were identified and developed. The main themes identified in the empirical investigation were inclusive school culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices. The evidence gathered in exploring the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school, together with complimentary conceptual constructs deduced from the literature provided insights leading to the conclusions advanced in this thesis. Wittingly, the contributions of results chapters are highlighted and evaluated by presenting research results of each theme and its categories. A summary of findings responding to each research question is provided in the relevant sections. The gaps filled by the research are pinpointed and areas for further research identified. Finally, recommendations derived from the study are submitted.

7.3 The nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school (sub-research question i)

This section summarises findings of sub-research question (i) on the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school. The summary is provided under the three main themes: inclusive culture, policies and practices.

Inclusive culture

The objective was to assess the extent to which the school has met the demands of an inclusive school in terms of school climate, curriculum instruction and assessment services, community involvement, parental involvement and resources through the three themes. From 23 classroom observations that I made as the researcher, the results revealed that all three classes observed (ECD, Grade 1 and 2 classes) are moderately inclusive. I came to this conclusion after utilising the Hong Kong Education Bureau's (2010) instrument for data analysis in this study. Some slight changes were made to the instrument and method of scoring. First, some syntactical changes were made to the statements as explained in Chapter 3. With a total of 18 items, a high score (maximum = 72) from a Likert scale ranging from (1) to (4) meant that the teacher observed implemented aspects of the 'whole school approach' to a large extent and the teacher's class was perceived as an inclusive one. A low score (minimum = 18) meant that the teacher's class was not inclusive. Scores for all three teachers were 46 (sum from different statements) which is within the lower end of the third band of 45.0 – 58.5 and indicates moderate inclusiveness of classroom activities. By moderately

inclusive, this means teachers scored three on most statements on a Likert scale ranging from one to four and a score of three indicates that the class is moderately inclusive. Not only was this an issue ascertained from nominally assigned numbers, but this was also corroborated by qualitative indicators described below

Overall, the results on the school welcoming climate revealed a relaxed atmosphere characterised by clean and tidy yards with good infrastructure mainly for learners with hearing impairment. Contrary to this welcoming climate was the outside environment. The environment did not accommodate learners who use wheelchairs due to stones strewn around and the obvious unavailability of ramps. This might be because the school was once a special school for learners with hearing impairment as a result the outside environment was less accommodative to learners who use wheelchairs. Regarding resources, results indicated that there is a critical shortage of resources such as classrooms which are accommodative to all learners. Infrastructure at this research site is not conducive to inclusive education. Classrooms were designed for a few learners with hearing impairment but they now accommodate more learners with different special educational needs, including those without disabilities. The school has no assistant teachers except two caregivers who are mostly assigned to maintenance of dormitories and learners who mess themselves during the teaching and learning process.

Regarding respect and support of stakeholders, teachers varied considerably in how they perceive the support of stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as illustrated in the results chapters. The study found that the school head's views differ from the teachers' views. While the school head appreciated the work done by the NGOs, teachers indicated that NGOs were slowly withdrawing their services from the school since the start of inclusive education. This might suggest that the 'whole school approach' ideology is not explicitly implemented, hence this difference of results. It can then be concluded that culturally, the nature and scope of inclusive education at the selected school is moderate but some improvements are needed in aspects such as attitudes towards inclusion and creating a conducive environment for all learners.

Inclusive practices

This study established that the school does not have a special curriculum which means there is no curriculum modification at the school, instead teachers just remove what they think is

difficult. However, teachers claim that there is curriculum modification since they individualise the work, which is contrary to observations made during lesson observations. Results from lesson observation showed that individualisation of work was not consistently done. Results from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 show that there is whole school consensus. Teachers get in-house training and staff development workshops to assist and support them where they struggle in implementing their teaching duties. Analysis from results revealed that there is also collaboration at the school. Teachers collaborate when setting tests, the school head carries regular meetings and staff development workshops to enhance collaboration, transparency and support. Information from caregivers shows that they collaborate with teachers during co-curricular activities and when they need help on disciplinary measures related to learners. Regarding the issue of learner access and participation, results show that there is limited participation, most probably due to an unfriendly environment and lack of facilities that would add recreational components of sports.

Inclusive policy

In addressing the issue of induction of inclusive policies, results from both the school head and the teachers show that the school has some policies regarding induction of both learners and their parents. Different activities are undertaken as a way of induction. These include drama performances and speeches from the matron and boarding master. Although the results indicate that parents are inducted, as a researcher, I am convinced that the induction programme should be held during the very early days of opening schools rather than at the end of the term. Based on the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5 it can be tentatively concluded that the school has an open day policy meant for every stakeholder. Results suggest that there is an open door channel to everyone, even though there is limited participation from some parents due to the nature of the school which is a boarding facility. Weekend functions are organised for parents on a termly basis to involve parents in their children's progress.

7.4 Determining what stakeholders (head of school, teachers and caregivers) understand inclusive education to be (sub-research question ii)

This section summarises findings of sub-research question (ii), which entailed determining what stakeholders (head of school, teachers and caregivers) understand inclusive education to

be. The summary is provided again under the three main themes: inclusive culture, policies and practices.

Inclusive culture

Information from teachers regarding their fears and apprehension elicited mixed views. Some teachers from one focus group indicated that they had fear of the known and similar sentiments were shared by one of the teachers interviewed individually. The same group of teachers felt that inclusion was a challenge which brought an extra load to them and was not practical at all. However, some teachers from another focus group, as well as two teachers interviewed individually, saw this differently. These results show that some teachers understand what inclusive education means while others have a limited understanding of the same construct. Nonetheless, some teachers, as well as the school head, proved that they were sincere advocates for inclusive education. These results show that inclusive education is controversial. Stakeholders see it differently regardless of operating from the same contextual settings.

Mixed views emerged from the participants concerning teacher expertise. Results showed that although all the teachers were specialists, some were not ready to have inclusive classes, for example the grade one and ECD teachers. One teacher (Jeza) from the focus group expressed the same sentiments. Only the grade two teacher seemed to accept inclusive education. Results from caregivers showed that they know what inclusive education is all about. However, there is a need for staff development about the meaning of terms. One of the caregivers lacked knowledge about the meaning of technical terms such as disability, regardless of her vast experience. For this caregiver (Memory), disability refers to physical challenges only. This is evident in her reference and use of phrases such as *'I started working with the real disabled children'* meaning those who are physically challenged. Despite the fact that the caregivers lack some understanding of some terms, they are highly involved in the system.

Inclusive practices

In terms of assessment accommodation, results revealed that teachers are aware that learners require assessments. However, school-based assessments are biased towards one type of disability (hearing impairment). This may be attributed to the fact that the school is formerly a special school which catered for hearing impaired learners only. Although the school does not have any other assessment accommodation for other learners, results demonstrate that teachers carry out assessments in their classrooms.

From document analysis performed, I discovered that learners with intellectual challenges are excluded from assessments. Overall, this study found that teachers understand what inclusive education requires and teachers moderately differentiate their teaching strategies. The school head indicated that teachers differentiate their teaching methods though at times the strategies used do not promote critical thinking. This was also corroborated by classroom observation results.

Inclusive policy

Regarding teachers' responsibilities, the results showed that teachers are the agents for change, transmitters of knowledge and transformers of the school. They also acted as counsellors. In general, therefore, it seems teachers played the most important role in making inclusive education successful. Furthermore, the study established that teachers cannot work competently without the school head. The school head monitors progress, maintains order and is a facilitator between teachers and the ministry of education. These results indicate that teachers are aware that inclusive education is not a one-man-band but requires cooperation, collaboration and consensus.

Data from interviews with teachers on support behaviour policies exposed that the school has policies on behaviour in terms of the disciplinary team which intervenes through behavioural remedial plans. However, there were some sentiments from the school head and some teachers that some behaviour problems need interventions of specialists like psychologists who are currently not available. One worrying issue was raised by the grade two teacher who argued that the policies are just written records but these were not implemented holistically. For inclusive education to be implemented successfully, all policies stated need to be adhered to.

7.5 Challenges, if any, experienced when using the Whole School Approach in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school (sub-research question iii)

Summarising sub-research question (iii), the challenges experienced when utilising the ‘whole school approach’ philosophy in the implementation of inclusive education, as observed in the school, revolve around the following issues:

Inclusive culture

Results from teachers showed that they have challenges of extra load due to the introduction of inclusive education at the school without the attendant teaching assistants. The school also experiences a shortage of specialists for different types of therapy such as speech therapists, physiotherapists and educational psychologists who should be visiting the school as seconded from different government departments to assist the learners. Findings showed that there is also a negative attitude from some teachers, especially towards learners with intellectual challenges. Furthermore, although all teachers are specialists, they face a problem when teaching inclusive classes since they are specialised in teaching learners with one disability, which is hearing impairment only.

There is a high teacher-pupil ratio which makes teaching a challenge considering that there is need for one-to-one interaction. Results from the school head showed that some teachers are not differentiating in their teaching. The school head also noted that some teachers feel that it is an extra responsibility working at this inclusive school as they are unenthusiastic about working with differently-abled learners. As a result, this lack of enthusiasm is a drawback to successful inclusion. Results from caregivers indicated a challenge on the limited participation of parents in providing enough resources for their children which makes work difficult for the caregivers.

Inclusive practices

Results showed that teachers face challenges on individualisation of work due to the different operational levels of learners. Thus some individual learners are deprived of one-to-one sessions with the teacher that they might require. Furthermore, the curriculum is examination-oriented, hence teachers have to pace their teaching in order to finish the syllabi. By so doing, learners with learning difficulties are left behind. The school head stated the

limited experience of special education teachers in leading the inclusion team, especially with respect to class management, behaviour management and teachers' collaboration.

Results from teachers indicated that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are slowly withdrawing since the start of the inclusive programme. These results might indicate that certain NGOs target a special group of learners with a certain disability, for example those with hearing impairment only. However, considering that the school depends on donations, the inclusive system may end up being affected regarding resources and funding. Based on one of the caregiver's comments, there is a challenge of learners who are not toilet trained and mess themselves. This makes the caregiver's job more difficult given the increased teacher-pupil ratio since the commencement of the inclusive education programme.

Inclusive policy

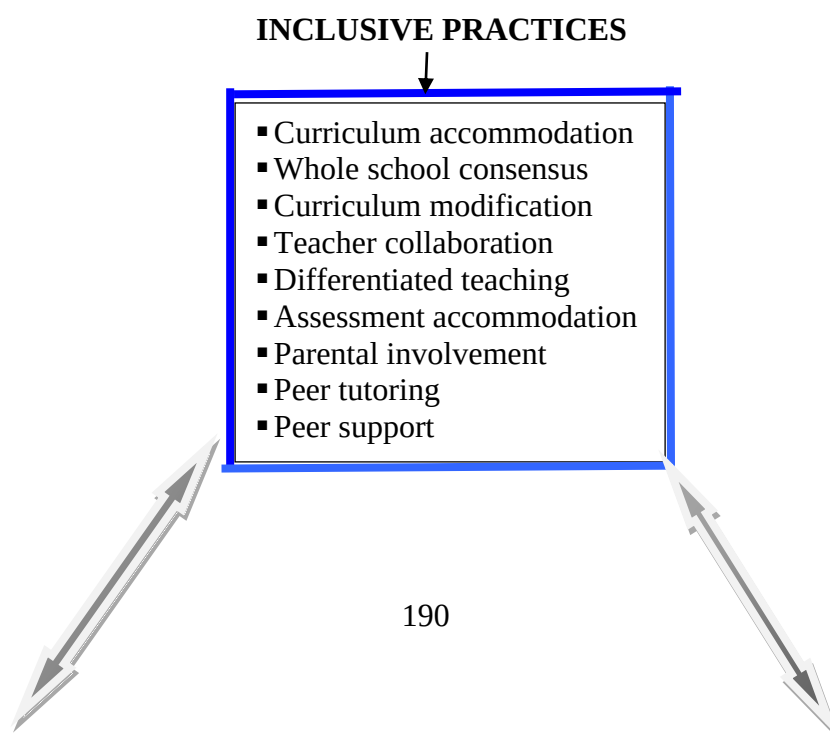
The school does not have an explicit policy on parental involvement and this poses a great challenge in that their involvement is limited in the progress of their children. No stern measures are taken against a parent who does not cooperate with the school. Thus a laissez-faire type of relationship exists between the parents and the school. The school also has a support behaviour policy which, according to some teachers, is not being effectively implemented. Thus, the school may experience an increase in indiscipline given that the policy is not effectively implemented.

From several lesson observations, I discovered that as much as there might be a challenge with resources, there are computers which might be used by learners who are hyperactive or those who cannot concentrate on one thing at a time. Instead, these computers are now mostly used by learners without challenges. In a way, this is a challenge as resources are not pooled and deployed flexibly to provide appropriate support to all the learners' needs. Findings from this study show that enrolment of new learners with disabilities is carried out through the referral system from the Provincial Educational offices rather than the Schools Psychological Services' offices. However, when learners get to the school, teachers are not able to continue assessing them, especially those with severe disabilities who need specialists. Consequently, individual attention which should be rendered to these learners might not be provided and they may not develop to their full academic potential

7.6 Establishing how best the ‘whole school approach’ could help in the learning of children with diverse needs in the context of the selected school (sub-research question iv)

The ‘Whole School Approach’ as a guiding framework entails three inter-connected and interdependent dimensions of a school namely culture, policies and practices. Figure 7.1 gives a picture of the nature of interaction among inclusive practices, culture and policies. This study demonstrated some interaction between inclusive practices’ aspects and inclusive culture aspects. That interaction, however, is not a causal relationship. Practising most of the inclusive aspects does not on its own reduce inclusive culture aspects such as teacher’s fears and apprehension or belief in inclusion. Teachers who were practising differentiated teaching for instance, exuded apprehension and fears regarding some issues of participating in the ‘whole school approach’ during the implementation of inclusive education at the school.

The interaction between inclusive policies and inclusive culture appears quite a complex system. While inclusive policies such as inclusive induction policy and consequently, teacher expertise (inclusive culture) appear to have some influence on both differentiated teaching and curriculum modification (inclusive culture), their translation into an ‘effect’ is both complicated and difficult to locate, illuminate and elucidate. Each dimension informs the others as indicated in Figure 7.1. For example, factors from inclusive school culture are inter-related to factors from inclusive school policies as well as factors from inclusive school practices. While Figure 7.1 shows boxes, suffice to point out that the boxes might actually be *deceitful* and it would be safer to map the interactions in terms of a mesh where all components belong together. It is an interwoven interactive system.



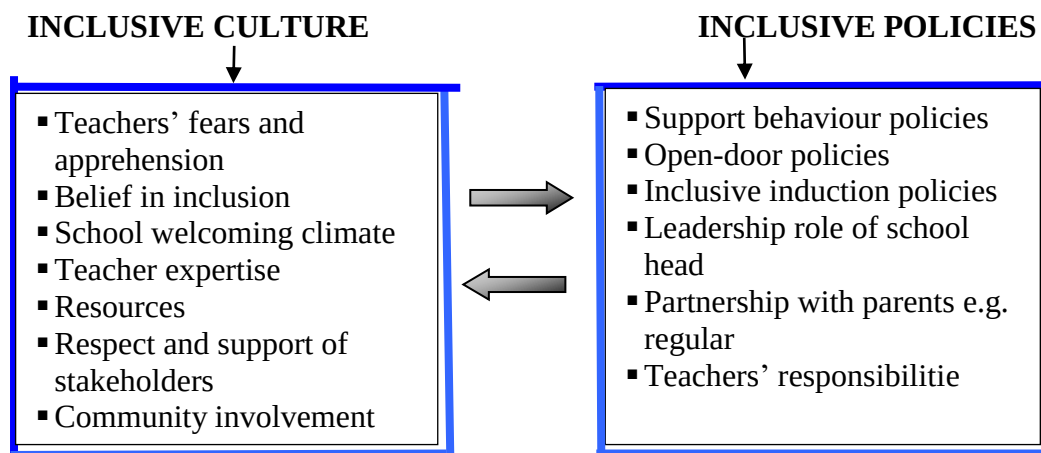


Figure 7.1: Interactions among inclusive practices, culture and policies

In responding to the question, how best could the ‘whole school approach’ help in the learning of children with diverse needs in the context of the selected school? this study cast a faint ray on the validity of the stance of a ‘whole school approach’ as a cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2010), that has been strategically constructed to improve the interconnectedness of school policies, culture and practices. This stance was taken given that such propositions have not paid much attention to the potential influence of schools employing the ‘whole school approach’ in implementing inclusive education. The illuminative evidence gleaned from the observations of ECD, Grade 1 and 2 classes, appear to give some weight and credence to the notion that there is an underlying conviction that inclusive education addresses and responds to diverse needs of all children by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education (Nguyet & Ha, 2010). In sum, looking at the three dimensions - school policy, school culture and school practices holistically, it can be inferred that school practices provide evidence for the implemented policies and reflect school cultures of which the opposite is also true. The best that can be said as of now is that the interdependence and inter-connectedness of the three dimensions need to be considered as the best means on which the ‘whole school approach’ could be utilised in implementing inclusive education in the context of the selected school.

7.7 Establishing the extent to which the ‘whole school approach’ can be utilised in implementing inclusive education at a selected school in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe (aim of the study)

Much of what was discussed in addressing sub-research questions (i) to (iv) above is relevant to answering the main research question posed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. How can the Whole School Approach be utilised in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe? As mentioned earlier, Ferguson (2014) refers to *inclusion* as the meeting of children’s special educational needs within the mainstream, where children are socialized and educated alongside their peers.

Authorities such as Sermier-Dessementet and Bless (2013) view *inclusion* as a radical process where the regular school curriculum, teaching methods, organisation, and resources need to be adapted quite significantly to ensure that all learners, regardless of disability, can participate successfully in the mainstream of education. The term *reverse* as an adjective refers to ‘going in or turned towards the direction opposite to that previously stated’. As a noun the term ‘reverse’ denotes ‘the opposite of that previously stated’. Extrapolating from the definition of inclusion provided by Sermier-Dessementet and Bless (2013) and other definitions in literature (Ainscow, Dyson & Weiner, 2014; Narang & Agarwal, 2011; Tod & Ellis, 2014; Webster & Blatchford, 2014, Ferrante, 2017), inclusion is viewed from a single perspective which is that of introducing learners with special educational needs to mainstream education. This explains why this author coined a new concept for the practices occurring at the selected school. The author borrowed terminology from the field of inclusive education and coined a new concept, *reverse inclusion*. This is a new form of inclusion in its infancy where the so-called ‘normal learners’ or ‘learners without diverse needs’ are included into the special schools, which is the exact opposite to the placement of learners with a disability or difficulty into an ordinary school environment and regular curriculum.

As mentioned earlier, according to this thesis, inclusive education refers to a process involving changes in the way schools are organised, in the curriculum and in teaching strategies, to accommodate the range of needs and abilities among learners. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all learners from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils (Sebba & Sachdev, 1997).

From the results chapters, what has consistently emerged is that in the school under study, inclusion has been practised, but in a different way. In most cases schools enrol learners with disabilities into the mainstream. At this school, however, they are enrolling learners without disabilities into a special school hence the term *reverse inclusion*. In Zimbabwe this is the only school implementing this type of inclusion and there might not be many of them in the world. It is a school that enacts not *reverse* in terms of the system but *reverse* in terms of the type of learners being enrolled.

In sum, this study found that the ‘whole school approach’ has been moderately utilised in implementing inclusive education at the selected school in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe. The nature and scope of inclusive education is moderately inclusive at the selected school. Findings presented and discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 attest to this.

7.8 Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions derived from the views of the participants in the study, the following recommendations are made for the effective implementation of inclusive education in former special primary school in Zimbabwe. On the premise of what was observed during school visits, the researcher recommends that the school should revisit the school vision and school statement. These two should be inclusive. In their present state, they only address one type of disability, which is hearing impairment. This is not surprising as the school used to be a special school for learners with hearing impairment. This observation justifies the recommendation for the school vision and statement to be re-visited. Furthermore, school policies should be re-visited for the same reasons given for school vision and school statement. The policies need to be more explicit as they currently suit integration rather than inclusion.

The role of the teachers in ensuring that the diverse learning needs of all learners in the classroom are catered for cannot be overemphasised. Teachers play a pivotal role in observing and identifying learners in their classrooms who experience challenges to learning and in devising interventions that address such challenges. Over and above this, the following recommendations are made with regard to teachers ensuring that their classes and teaching are not only inclusive, but also responsive to the diverse learning needs of all learners, including those who experience challenges to learning:

- From the school head's concern that as much as teachers are specialists, they lack practice during their period of training. Therefore, schools should work together with other institutions such as universities, and teachers' colleges on the best approaches to inclusive education as well as share professional experiences with institutions practising inclusive education to improve on service delivery.
- Given the contrast among teachers involved in this study, one wonders what could be done to encourage teachers like the ECD teacher to become more like the grade two teacher. Workshops and in-service teacher training programmes organised to focus specifically on curriculum modification could go a long way towards redressing problems of accommodating learners with diverse needs. This might capacitate teachers on how to handle learners with and without disabilities differently. However, such a proposition advises the programme to be monitored and evaluated by education authorities. Thus communities of practice are recommended within organisations such as this school in question.

Data collected from participants indicated that the school faces a critical shortage of resources such as educational psychologists, physiotherapists, speech therapists and teaching assistants. It is urgently recommended that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education supplies schools with such resources that teachers could use to address specific challenges experienced by a particular learner and provide regular support. In an effort to institutionalise curriculum modification, it is recommended that teachers be orientated on curriculum modification. Institutionalisation of curriculum modification entails differentiating content that they teach to accommodate all learners without lowering the standards and compromising quality learning. Accordingly, teachers should:

- Systematically take learners through the content and not rush through topics in an attempt to cover and complete the syllabi, thus ignoring learners with learning difficulties.
- Differentiate assessment activities in class, knowing that assessment should not be pitched at the same uniform cognitive level for all learners because learners differ in the way they learn.
- Frame and design school-based assessment so that the school shifts from being too dependent on teacher-based assessments and begins to accommodate all learners.

The study recommends the organisation of workshops, in addition to awareness campaign programmes focusing on the involvement of NGOs in helping schools towards the implementation of inclusive education. The organisation of these workshops is anticipated to redress problems identified, especially on shortage of resources. Assistant teachers could be a valuable and laudable addition to alleviate the load on the class teacher such that the class teacher might support these learners a lot better. The other recommendations from this study are as follows:

- As much as the country might be going through a phase of economic hardships, this study recommends that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, should provide necessary resources like ramps and proper toilets for wheelchair users. This is regarded as a ‘right’ of all children with special educational needs (Oliver, 1990). From a social model perspective, it is the prerogative of the community to provide a conducive environment for people with disabilities.
- One of the caregivers’ terminology regarding inclusive education is a cause for concern as appraised in Chapter 6. There is need for caregivers to have workshops that provide current and relevant information on inclusive education.
- As the researcher, I noted that the school lacked facilities that would add recreational components of sports where learners’ talents could thrive and develop so that academic achievements are not the only way to measure success. As a result, the study recommends that the school provide necessary sport facilities that cater for all learners.
- The study identified areas of concern and gaps in practice that need to be addressed in future development plans at both the school and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education levels, such as the quality of teachers’ training (at degree level) with respect to content and training strategy. The current training levels are far too theoretical and lacking specifically hands-on activities that aid in transferring the skills to the classrooms. This study recommends more practical work (more practicum time) during the training programme.

- If the goal for inclusive education for all citizens is to be taken seriously, then something needs to be done about creating conditions which enable teachers to be motivated. The government should motivate teachers by paying them well.
- Research has shown that if parents are not involved in their children's education and not empowered and enlightened as to what is expected of them, they are bound to lack interest in supporting the progress of their children (Willis, 2016). Therefore, this study recommends that schools, supported by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, should have clear policies concerning parental involvement in schools.

7.8.1 Recommendations for future study

- Further study on the phenomenon of the whole school approach in the implementation of inclusive education should include special and full service schools so that similarities and differences on implementation can be established.
- This study was conducted specifically at one primary school. Further studies on the same phenomenon could be researched in secondary schools to establish if the age of learners contributes to different cultures and practices.

7.8.2 Limitations of the study

This study was limited to the participants who were conveniently and purposefully selected based on specific criteria, including their expertise. One limitation of this study, therefore, is that the results cannot be extrapolated to other different contexts and these are not representative of the general teacher and school head populace as this is a case study within the qualitative paradigm.

7.9 Conclusion

This study has provided a detailed account, from stakeholders' perspectives, of the journey of one primary school towards inclusive education by enacting the 'whole school approach.' The accounts of this journeying were analysed to provide an understanding of the nature and scope of the inclusive system with respect to cultures, policies and practices. In this thesis, the Whole School Approach has been used as a conceptual framework. The 'whole school

approach' was used in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected school. Informed by the results, *reverse inclusion* was coined in the study to reflect the practices in this specific school as the opposite of normal inclusion.

The Whole School Approach as a conceptual framework was used successfully in this study to explore a 'whole school approach' in the implementation of inclusive education at a selected school. The same framework was used as an analytical tool for data organisation and analysis. This study also established that in Africa not many countries are operating at the optimum in the implementation of inclusive education except countries like Ghana which is markedly ahead of many countries such as Zimbabwe where this study was conducted. However, countries like South Africa are also following the steps of Ghana as policies are in place through White papers that advocate inclusive education. The study successfully employed an ethnographic approach in data gathering enacted through a prolonged engagement at the research site for one to understand the cultural practices. Thus, as the researcher I was at the school for almost a year for data collection. The subsequent sections are concluded according to the respective themes used in this thesis. The resulting accounts were analysed to provide an understanding of the nature of the inclusive system with respect to cultures, policies and practices.

Inclusive school culture

I noticed that the school has a relaxed atmosphere, albeit with no adapted facilities because they were originally designed and constructed with one type of disability in mind which was hearing impairment. Teachers, in response, are compelled to teach towards passing the examinations as well as covering a curriculum. Having a mixed class within such a classroom becomes a burden, and a problem rather than an opportunity for learning and variation to achieve better education for all. Shortage of resources, limited participation of parents and unavailability of resources in terms of ramps, proper classrooms and sports grounds are a drawback to successful inclusive education.

Inclusive school policy

General findings from classroom observations revealed that implementation of inclusive policies by all teachers in the school is done at a moderate level. On the other hand, the study recommends that most school policies need to be revisited. For example the school vision and school statement still focus on integration, which is a relic from historical practices. The

school has an open door policy promoting transparency, however, results indicated that some policies were debatable concerning their implementation. For example, there was evident incoherence between the teachers on the implementation of support behaviour policy. Consequently, school re-visiting policy may be a priority if inclusive education is to be success at the school.

Inclusive school practices

Information gathered showed that the school does not have a special type of curriculum except that teachers choose what to teach and what not to teach. However, all teachers' documentation such as schemes of work and record books were up to date. Concluding on what I witnessed from lesson observations, teachers' practices are moderately inclusive. In support, information from interviews indicated that there is whole school consensus and teachers use teaching methods that include learners like peer tutoring. There is also a moderate degree of collaboration among staff. Although the school does not have assessment accommodation, teachers assess learners in their classrooms according to their knowledge. The investigation of teacher instructional practices showed that generally the level of individualising work and tasks is low. Individualisation of work is not done consistently.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

HEAD OF SCHOOL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What do you understand by the term inclusive education?
2. When did your school start to implement this inclusive education programme?
3. Why have you adopted the whole school approach at your school?
4. Who has been involved in this inclusive teaching programme?
5. How do you coordinate an effective *whole school approach* to inclusive teaching as the head of school?
6. In what ways do you think this approach will benefit both learners with and without disabilities at your school?
7. Describe your responsibility for the provision of in-service training and adequate resources to your staff.
8. Describe a situation in which you might find it justifiable to break the schools policy or alter standard procedure on the inclusion of children with disabilities and those without into your school?
9. How do you assess the effectiveness of this inclusive approach at your school?
10. What challenges do you encounter in implementing the inclusive education programme?
11. Suggest what can be done to overcome the challenges you face as a head of the inclusive education programme in your school?
12. How do you involve parents in the implementation of *whole school approach*?
13. Any other comments.

APPENDIX B

TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ECD AND GRADES 1 AND 2 TEACHERS

1. What do you understand by the term inclusive education?
2. What are the challenges of teaching in an inclusive class?
3. How do you manage the challenges?
4. How do you collaborate and consult with other class teachers in setting realistic targets for the inclusive education programme?
6. What motivates you to teach learners in an inclusive setting?
7. Give me examples, if any, of where you create times for social considerations such as opportunities for interaction of all learners with or without disabilities?
8. Think of a time (or times), if any, when you had a task that was particularly targeting instructional adaptations to accommodate diverse learning styles. How did you do it?
9. What do you see as the benefits of *whole school approach*?
10. In terms of inclusive education, what are your personal strengths as a teacher regarding implementation of the *whole school approach*?
- 11 (a) How does the school policy guide you regarding assessing learners with special needs education?
- 11 (b) How are issues in special needs education provision adequately addressed by the policy?
12. What is the sitting arrangement of your learners like in your inclusive class?
13. How do you manage different teaching and learning methods in your inclusive class?
14. How do you rate the learners' performance?
15. Comment on the learners' social adjustment in terms of relationship with peers and peers.
16. Comment on the learners' social adjustment in terms of participation in classroom/school activities.
17. What strategies do you use to cater for learners who need individual intensive support?
18. How do you keep track of learners with and without disabilities?
19. Any other comments?

APPENDIX C

CAREGIVER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. For how long have you been working here?
2. How do you feel about caring for learners with disabilities and those without disabilities?
- 3 (a) Do you sometimes face some challenges?
- 3 (b) If yes, what are the challenges?
4. How do you manage the problems which you face when caring for these learners?
5. Did you ever have had an experience you did not enjoy/like?
6. If yes, what had happened? How did you manage the situation?
8. Any other comments?

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 TEACHERS

1. What do you understand by the term inclusive education?
2. How do you feel about the new system where you will end up with learners both with and without disabilities in your class?
3. How best do you think you will teach learners with and without disability in one class?
4. What are the good things of having some learners without disabilities at the school if any?
5. How are you being involved in including the normal learners in your school activities?
6. How can you help in improving the effectiveness of *whole school approach* to achieve inclusive education in this school?
7. What do you see as the benefits of *whole school approach* in the implementation inclusive education in this school?
8. In terms of inclusive education, what are your personal strengths as a teacher regarding the implementation of whole school approach?
9. What problems if any do you foresee of interaction between learners with and without disabilities?
10. Any other comments?

APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

A	Inclusive Culture- Management and Organisation	Highly Satisfactory (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Acceptable (2)	Need Improvement (1)
1	Teacher accepts all learners in the class, regardless of ability or disability and is committed to supporting them				
2	Learners accept each other's uniqueness and individual differences				
3	Teacher arranges learning activities in accordance with learner's abilities				
4	Teacher demonstrates that every learner is equal and has the right to participate in all school activities				
5	Teacher keeps diary to show home-school collaboration and frequent communication between parents and teachers about learner progress				
6	A register is kept for learners with and without special educational needs in the class				

B	Inclusive Polices-Support and School Ethos				
1	School resources (e.g. accessibility of its premises) are pooled and deployed flexibly to provide appropriate support to learners				
2	Teacher facilitates the participation of learners with different abilities for development of their potentials.				
3	Organising pastoral care activities in promoting inclusive ethos				
4	Teacher enhances self-esteem and confidence in learners				
5	Teacher keeps a systematic way of sitting				
C	Inclusive Practices-Learning and Teaching				
1	Individual Education Programmes are used to cater for learners in need of individual intensive support				
2	The school has improved its assistive technology to cater for learners with and without special educational				

	needs				
3	Various classroom activities are conducted in accordance with learners' abilities to facilitate the development of their potentials				
4	Various curriculum accommodation strategies are implemented to cater for learners				
5	Diverse teaching strategies such as cooperative learning				
6	Diverse teaching strategies such as collaborative teaching and co-operative learning are used to facilitate learning				
7	Peer support programmes to provide learning support and to facilitate the cultivation of an inclusive culture				

Source: *Adapted from Whole School Approach (WSA) to Catering for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) instrument of Hong Kong Education Bureau (2010)*

APPENDIX F

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

Whole school Approach dimension	Kappa (κ) coefficients
Inclusive Culture	0.9714
Inclusive Policies	0.9385
Inclusive Practices	0.9556

Output table for Inter-rater reliability from STATA

name: <unnamed>

log: /Users/Egbon/Destop/Stata/annah kappa2.log

log type: text

opened on: 2 September 2017, 13:56:33

```
. use "annah kappa2.dta", clear
```

```
. kap rater1 rater2 rater3 if dimension== "Inc Pol"
```

There are 3 raters per subject:

Outcome	Kappa	Z	Prob>Z
-----+-----			
2.25	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
2.25	-0.0909	-0.31	0.6236
2.25	0.4000	1.39	0.0829
2.25	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
2.25	-0.0909	-0.31	0.6236
2.5	0.6571	2.28	0.0114
2.5	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
-----+-----			
combined	0.9385	3.29	0.0005

```
. kap rater1 rater2 rater3 if dimension== "Incl Cul"
```

There are 3 raters per subject:

Outcome	Kappa	Z	Prob>Z
-----+-----			
2.25	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
3.25	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
3.25	-0.0909	-0.31	0.6236
3.25	0.1111	0.38	0.3502
2.25	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
3.5	0.4000	1.39	0.0829
-----+-----			
combined	0.9714	3.76	0.0001

```
. kap rater1 rater2 rater3 if dimension== "Incl Pract"
```

There are 3 raters per subject:

Outcome	Kappa	Z	Prob>Z
-----+-----			
3.5	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
3.5	0.4000	2.39	0.0829
3.75	1.0000	3.46	0.0003
3.75	0.1111	0.38	0.3502
3.5	0.1111	0.38	0.3502
-----+-----			
combined	0.9556	3.33	0.0004

APPENDIX G

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom,
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900

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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by the Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSREC) on 06/02/2017, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: A whole school approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A case study.																														
Project Leader/Supervisor: Dr E Materechera																														
Student: A Dudu																														
Ethics number:	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>9</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td colspan="6">Project Number</td><td colspan="2">Year</td><td colspan="3">Status</td></tr></table> Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation	N	W	U	-	0	0	3	1	9	-	1	7	-	A	9	Institution			Project Number						Year		Status		
N	W	U	-	0	0	3	1	9	-	1	7	-	A	9																
Institution			Project Number						Year		Status																			
Application Type: Doctoral																														
Commencement date: 2017-01-30	Expiry date: 2020-01-30																													
Risk:	N/A																													

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the HSREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the HSREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via HSREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the HSREC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via HSREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and HSREC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the HSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- HSREC can be contacted for further information via Estie.Fmtoch@nwu.ac.za or 018 289 2873.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or HSREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof LA
Du Plessis

Digitally signed by
Prof LA Du Plessis
Date: 2017.02.14
12:17:27 +02'00'

Prof Linda du Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

APPENDIX H

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ZIMBABWE

All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary
Education"
Telephone: 799914 and 705153
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax: 791923



Reference: C/426/3 Midlands
Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
ZIMBABWE

6 July 2016

Annah Dudu
Marian Junior School
3332 Mandava Township
Zvishavane
ZIMBABWE



**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MIDLANDS PROVINCE:
GWERU DISTRICT: JAIROSI JIRI NARAN CENTRE**

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research in the above mentioned centre in Midlands Province on the research title:

**"A WHOLE APPROACH IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE
PROVINCE IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY."**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Midlands, who is responsible for the centre which you want to involve in your research.

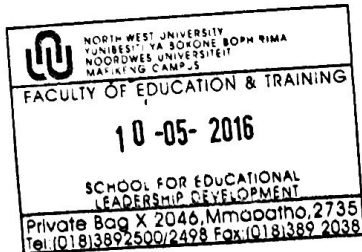
You are required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

E. Chinyowa
Acting Director: Planning, Research and Statistics
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**
cc: PED – Midlands Province
r/amkwala216



APPENDIX I

LETTERS AND CONSENT FORMS



Private Bag X2046, Mmabatho
South Africa, 2735

Tel: 018 389-2111
Fax: 018 392-5775
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Email: eliza.senne@nwu.ac.za
Date: 21/04/2016

The Provincial Office
Ministry of Education
Midlands Province

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to confirm that Mrs. Annah Dudu (26548984) is a Doctoral student registered at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. The title of the thesis is: **A Whole School Approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A Case Study.**

Permission is hereby kindly requested to enter **Jairos Jiri Naran Centre Primary School in Gweru Urban district** to collect data from the Head of School, teachers, care givers and learners. Data collection will be by way of questionnaires interviews, documents and classroom as well as field observations.

Collection of data will occur outside school contact time so as not to interfere with teaching and assessment processes or office duties. The dates and times of the collections are to be agreed upon by the Head of School and all other participants.

Participants will participate voluntarily in the data collection. The identity of the participants and the school and Provincial Office will be kept confidential and anonymous. The information collected therefore cannot and will not be used to evaluate the school in terms of its performance in comparison with others, because the information collected will not be about academic results or teachers' teaching performance in specific schools.

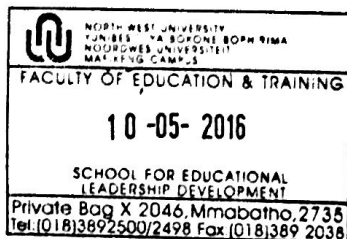
Should you enquire more information about the project, kindly contact the supervisor for this project: Dr. Ellen Materechera (+27 18 389 2058).

Herewith permission is kindly requested to perform this research in your province. It would be appreciated if you would kindly grant **written** permission to this student. Any assistance given to the student to perform the research will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Prof P Du Toit

Director: School for Education Leadership Development (School in which the Masters and PhD programme is registered) Mafikeng Campus



Private Bag X2046, Mmabatho
South Africa, 2735

Tel: 018 389-2111
Fax: 018 392-5775
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Email: eliza.senne@nwu.ac.za

Date: 21/04/2016

The Head of School
Jairos Jiri Naran Centre Primary School
Gweru Urban district

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to confirm that Mrs. Annah Dudu (26548984) is a Doctoral student registered at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. The title of the thesis is: **A Whole School Approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A Case Study.**

Permission is hereby kindly requested to enter **Jairos Jiri Naran Centre Primary School in Gweru Urban district** to collect data from the Head of School, teachers, care givers and learners. Data collection will be by way of questionnaires interviews, documents and classroom as well as field observations.

Collection of data will occur outside school contact time so as not to interfere with teaching and assessment processes or office duties. The dates and times of the collections are to be agreed upon by the Head of School and all other participants.

Participants will participate voluntarily in the data collection. The identity of the participants and the school and Provincial Office will be kept confidential and anonymous. The information collected therefore cannot and will not be used to evaluate the school in terms of its performance in comparison with others, because the information collected will not be about academic results or teachers' teaching performance in specific schools.

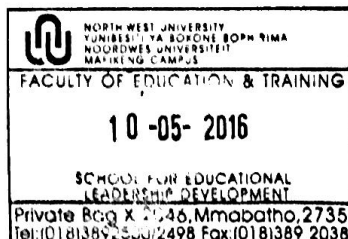
Should you enquire more information about the project, kindly contact the supervisor for this project: Dr. Ellen Materechera (+27 18 389 2058).

Herewith permission is kindly requested to perform this research in your school. It would be appreciated if you would kindly grant **written** permission to this student. Any assistance given to the student to perform the research will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Prof P Du Toit

Director: School for Education Leadership Development (School in which the Masters and PhD programme is registered) Mafikeng Campus



Private Bag X2046, Mmabatho
South Africa, 2735

Tel: 018 389-2111
Fax: 018 392-5775
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Email: eliza.senne@nwu.ac.za

Date: 21/04/2016

The Teacher

Jairos Jiri Naran Centre Primary School
Gweru Urban district

Dear Sir/Madam

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This is to confirm that Mrs. Annah Dudu (26548984) is a Doctoral student registered at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. The title of the thesis is: **A Whole School Approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A Case Study.**

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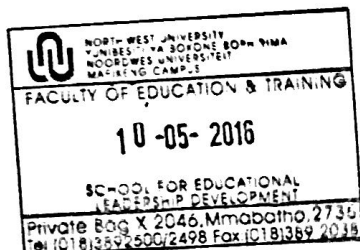
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Email: eliza.senne@nwu.ac.za

Date: 21/04/2016

The Parent

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to confirm that Mrs. Annah Dudu (26548984) is a Doctoral student registered at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. The title of the thesis is: **A Whole School Approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A Case Study.**

Permission is hereby kindly requested to enter **Jairos Jiri Naran Centre Primary School** in **Gweru Urban district** to collect data from your child. Data collection will be by way of questionnaires interviews, documents and classroom as well as field observations.

Collection of data will occur outside school contact time so as not to interfere with teaching and assessment processes or office duties. The dates and times of the collections are to be agreed upon by the Head of School and all other participants.

Participants will participate voluntarily in the data collection. The identity of the participants and the school and Provincial Office will be kept confidential and anonymous. The information collected therefore cannot and will not be used to evaluate the school in terms of its performance in comparison with others, because the information collected will not be about academic results or teachers' teaching performance in specific schools.

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Yours sincerely

Prof P Du Toit

Director: School for Education Leadership Development (School in which the Masters and PhD programme is registered)

Mafikeng Campus

CONSENT FORM

HEAD OF SCHOOL

I, _____,

the Head of School for Big Tree Primary School (pseudonym) give consent that I participate in the research.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CONSENT FORM

TEACHER

I, _____,
the Teacher for Big Tree Primary School (pseudonym) give consent that I participate in the
research.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CONSENT FORM

CAREGIVER

I, _____,

the Care giver for Big Tree Primary School (pseudonym) give consent that I participate in the research.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CONSENT FORM

PARENT/GUARDIAN

Kindly fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child to participate in the research project called: **A whole school approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A Case Study.**

I, _____,
the parent/guardian of (name of learner) _____
give consent that he/she may participate in the research. I understand that he/she may be
video-recorded during the teaching and learning process.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX J

LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



Office: 0183892451

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Cell: 0729116600

Date: 15th May, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

I, Muchativugwa Liberty Hove, confirm and certify that I have read and edited the entire research thesis, **A whole school approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A case study**, [orcid.org/ 0000-0002-2282-5017](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2282-5017) by **Annah Dudu** submitted for the degree *Doctor of Philosophy (Learner Support)* at the **North-West University**.

Annah was supervised by **Dr Ellen K Materechera** of the North-West University.

I hold a PhD in English Language and Literature in English and am qualified to edit such work for cohesion and coherence. The views expressed herein, however, remain those of the researcher/s.

Yours sincerely

Dr M.L.Hove (PhD, MA, PGDE, PGCE, BA Honours – English)

