

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EXPERIENCE OF MEETING
THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF PUPILS
IN SHIFT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN JAMAICA**

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of**

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by

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Abstract

School days are organised on a whole day and or a shift basis in different countries. When the school day is arranged on double shift basis, two sets of pupil attend the same school in a given day. This thesis is based on a phenomenological research which examined how the education of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was addressed in shift primary schools in Jamaica.

A case study was undertaken with a view of understanding the day-to-day experiences of the issues of how shift primary schools constructed and managed the SEN of pupils and sought to understand the 'why' in operation. In addition, a survey (using questionnaires) was carried out in 10 shift primary schools (including the case) in several parishes of the island which targeted administrators (n=26) and teachers (n=205) to further explore some of the issues which were picked up on in the case study such as understandings of the concept of SEN, the challenges they encountered in their attempts to cater for pupils' SEN and how pupils' SEN impacted on the school system. An interview was also conducted with an official from the Ministry of Education (MOE) which investigated the philosophical orientation which guides the education of pupils with SEN and the how they are catered for in Jamaican schools.

Grounded Theory, ably assisted by the tool of Thematic Analysis, was used to explore this complex research context to help to unpack dilemmas and tensions which existed. One of the major insights gained from the data is that the Jamaican primary shift school context is 'resource famished' whilst being simultaneously 'SEN dense'. The main research findings revealed that the shift system and its resultant time constraint were major inhibitors to the effective meeting of pupils' SEN. The complexity and challenges of this educational context were further exacerbated by factors such as limited understanding of the concept of SEN, inadequate resources in general and more so with specific focus on catering for pupils with SEN, low teacher efficacy for meeting pupils' SEN, large classes and inadequate parental support. Administrators reported concern for impact of pupils' SEN on their schools in ways such as lowering examination passes and the overall performance of schools. One of the main concerns of teachers was how pupils' SEN disrupted lessons and how this impacted on other learners without SEN. In addition, the most commonly manifested SEN of pupils were reading and behavioural difficulties. The role of the Guidance Counsellor was re-defined as the main school personnel for the management of pupils' SEN in shift primary schools.

From the point of view of the MOE the practice and provision for pupils with SEN were governed by the concept of 'Least Restrictive Environment' and not the current concept of inclusion that is in wide usage in the field of special education. Importantly, not only were schools experiencing difficulties in satisfactorily providing resources for the meeting pupils' SEN, but this is also experienced at the level of the MOE.

The chief implications highlighted based on of the research findings was the dire need for the reconstruction of teacher training in Jamaica with a specific aim of equipping teachers to effectively cater for pupils' SEN and the dire need for legislation to safeguard the education of pupils with SEN. In addition, recommendations were made to promote improvements of pupils with SEN in general and particularly those being educated in shift primary schools. Finally, several suggestions for future research were put forward.

CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	ii
Declaration	xii
Acknowledgements.....	xiii
List of Figures.....	xvi
List of Tables.....	xviii
List of Abbreviations.....	xix
Chapter One - Introduction	1
1.1 Selection of the Research	1
1.2 Background to the Research Problem.....	2
1.2.1 Implementation of Universal Education in Jamaican Schools.....	2
1.2.2 Jamaica’s Response Implementation of Universal Education.....	3
1.3 The Practice of ‘Shifting’ in Jamaican Schools.....	3
1.4 Primary Education in Jamaica.....	4
1.5 Grounded Theory.....	4
1.6 Statement of Focus.....	5
1.7 Rationale of the Research.....	5
1.8 Scope of the Research.....	6
1.9 Significance of the Research	6
1.10 Research Questions.....	7
1.11 Chapter Conclusion and Summary.....	7
1.12 Thesis Outline.....	7
Chapter Two - Literature Review.....	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Section One	10
2.2.1 Caribbean Region.....	10
2.2.2 Jamaica and its Basic Demographics.....	10
2.2.3 The Place of Education in Jamaica.....	12
2.2.3.1 Historical Background of Education in Jamaica.....	13
2.2.3.2 Current Education System.....	13
2.2.3.3 Primary Education.....	16
2.2.4 Social Stratification in Jamaican Education.....	17

2.2.5 Section Conclusions	18
2.3 Section Two.....	19
2.3.1 Overview of Multi-shifting in Schools.....	19
2.3.2 Implementation of the Shift System in Jamaica.....	21
2.3.2.1 Prerequisite of the Shift System in Jamaica.....	23
2.3.2.1.1 Contact Time.....	23
2.3.2.1.2 'Holding Area'.....	24
2.3.3 Research on Shift Schooling in Jamaica.....	25
2.3.4 Section Conclusions and Summary.....	27
2.4 Section Three.....	28
2.4.1 Special Education.....	28
2.4.2 Special Educational Needs versus Special Needs.....	29
2.4.3 Integration versus Inclusion.....	30
2.4.4 Genesis of Inclusive Education.....	31
2.4.5 Brief History of Special Education in Jamaica.....	33
2.4.6 Education of Children in Special Educational Needs.....	34
2.4.7 Teacher Training and Meeting Special Educational Needs.....	37
2.4.8 Legislation and Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs.....	40
2.4.9 Pressures and Constraints in the Jamaican Education System.....	42
2.4.9.1 Economics Constraints.....	43
2.4.9.2 Inadequate Learning Environment.....	44
2.4.9.3 High Attrition of Teachers.....	45
2.4.9.4 Large Class Size.....	46
2.4.9.5 Shift System.....	48
2.4.9.6 Inadequate Play.....	49
2.4.9.7 Rural/Urban Dichotomy in Education.....	50
2.4.9.8 Low School Attendance.....	51
2.4.9.9 High Levels of Illiteracy.....	52
2.4.9.10 Pupils' Negative Behaviour.....	52
2.4.10 SEN Strategies in Jamaican Schools.....	53
2.4.10.1 Streaming.....	53
2.4.10.2 Reduced Class Size.....	54
2.4.10.3 Special Class.....	54
2.4.10.4 Government Special Unit.....	55

2.4.10.5 Resource Rooms.....	55
2.4.10.6 Teaching Assistants.....	55
2.4.10.7 Repeating a Grade.....	56
2.4.10.8 Differentiation.....	56
2.4.10.9 Multiclass Teaching.....	57
2.4.10.9.1 Advantages of Multiclass System.....	57
2.4.11 Section Conclusion.....	58
2.8 Chapter Conclusions and Summary.....	58
Chapter Three- Research Methodology.....	60
3.1 Introduction	60
3.2 Philosophical Perspectives.....	61
3.3 Research Paradigm and Approach.....	62
3.3.1 Phenomenology.....	62
3.4 Theoretical Orientation.....	63
3.4.1 Grounded Theory.....	63
3.5 Research Sample and Sampling Strategy.....	64
3.5.1 Research Participants.....	66
3.6 Research Design and Phases.....	66
3.6.1 Foundation Phase.....	68
3.6.2 Phase One: Case Study	69
3.6.3 Phase Two: Survey	69
3.7 Research Methodology	69
3.7.1 Research Methods.....	70
3.7.1.1 Case Study.....	70
3.7.1.2 Interviews.....	72
3.7.1.3 Participant Observation.....	74
3.7.1.4 Questionnaires.....	76
3.7.1.4.1 Construction and Piloting	76
3.7.1.4.2 Questionnaires Content	76
3.7.4.1.3 Administration of Questionnaires.....	77
3.7. 4.1.4 Response Rate.....	78
3.7.4.1.5 Questionnaire Analysis.....	80
3.7.1.4.6 Limitations of Questionnaires.....	80

3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	81
3.8.1 Access.....	81
3.8.2 Institutional Consent.....	82
3.8.3 Informed Consent.....	82
3.8.4 Confidentiality.....	83
3.8.5 Anonymity.....	83
3.8.6 Power.....	84
3.9 Authentication and Verification Process.....	84
3.10 Research Reflections	85
3.11 Chapter Summary.....	86

Chapter Four: Case Study Findings and Results.....87

4.1 Introduction	87
4.2 Section One.....	87
4.2.1 Context Staging.....	87
4.2.2 Section One: Characteristics of Maple Meadows Primary School*.....	87
4.2.2.1 School’s Profile.....	88
4.2.2.2 History and Pupils’ Background.....	89
4.2.2.3 School’s Classification.....	90
4.2.2.4 School Day Organisation.....	91
4.2.2.5 School Buildings and Resources.....	91
4.2.2.6 Admission and Placement of Pupils.....	92
4.2.2.7 Academic Staff.....	93
4.2.2.8 Attrition of Specialist Teachers.....	94
4.2.2.9 Teachers’ Assistants.....	94
4.2.2.10 Community Partnership.....	94
4.2.3 Section Summary.....	95
4.3 Section Two.....	95
4.3.1 Case Study Data Source.....	95
4.3.2 Semi Structured Interviews.....	96
4.3.3 Procedure for Data Analysis.....	96

4.3.4 Emergent Themes.....	100
4.3.4.1 Theme One: The Time Factor.....	100
4.3.4.1.1 Shift System.....	100
4.3.4.1.1.1 Administrators.....	100
4.3.4.1.1.2 Teachers.....	100
4.3.4.1.1.3 Pupils.....	101
4.3.4.1.1.4 Parents.....	101
4.3.4.1.2 Time Constraints in MMPS.....	101
4.3.4.1.2.1 Incomplete Delivery of the Curriculum	101
4.3.4.1.2.2 Teacher Stress	102
4.3.4.1.2.3 Curtailment of Pupils’ Play.....	102
4.3.4.1.2.4 Disruption of Instructional Time.....	103
4.3.4.2 Theme Two: School’s Leadership and Culture.....	103
4.3.4.3 Theme Three: Policies and Procedures.....	104
4.3.4.4 Theme Four: Teaching and Learning Environment.....	105
4.3.4.4.1 Classroom Spaces.....	105
4.3.4.4.2 High Temperatures.....	106
4.3.4.4.3 High Noise Levels.....	106
4.3.4.4.4 Sparse Use of Technology.....	107
4.3.4.5 Theme Five: Incidences and Prevalence of Pupils’ SEN.....	107
4.3.4.5.1 Reading Difficulties.....	108
4.3.4.5.2 Behavioural Difficulties	109
4.3.4.6 Theme Six: School’s Response to Pupils SEN.....	109
4.3.4.6.1 Deployment of Teaching Staff.....	110
4.3.4.6.2 Deployment of Teachers’ Assistants.....	110
4.3.4.6.3 Special Educational Need Intervention Strategies.....	110
4.3.4.6.3.1 Targeted Grouping of Pupils with SEN.....	111
4.3.4.6.3.2 Low Ability Streams.....	111
4.3.4.6.3.3 Special Classes.....	111
4.3.4.6.3.4 Reading Programme.....	111
4.3.4.6.3.5 After-school Lessons.....	112
4.3.4.6.3.6 Special Kids Club.....	112
4.3.4.6.3.7 Grade Repetition.....	112
4.3.4.6.3.8 Punishment.....	113

4.3.4.6.3.9 Guidance Councillor.....	113
4.3.4.6.3.10 Mico CARE Centre.....	113
4.3.4.6.3.11 Reduced Class Size.....	114
4.3.4.6.3.12 Differentiation	114
4.3.4.7 Theme Seven: Teacher Efficacy and Pupils’ Special Educational Needs.....	114
4.3.4.7.1 Teacher Training and SEN.....	114
4.3.4.8 Theme Eight: Parental Support for Pupils with Special Educational Needs.....	115
4.3.4.9 Theme Nine: Special Educational Needs and Pupils’ Self-concept.....	117
4.4 Chapter Conclusions.....	117
4.5 Chapter Summary.....	119
Chapter Five: Case Study Discussion	120
5.1 Introduction.....	120
5.2 Emergent Themes.....	121
5.2.1 Theme One: Time Factor.....	121
5.2.1.1 Shift System: views.....	121
5.2.1.1.1 Administrators.....	121
5.2.1.1.2 Teachers.....	123
5.2.1.1.3 Pupils.....	125
5.2.1.1.4 Parents.....	125
5.2.1.1.5 Shift Impact on Pupils.....	127
5.2.1.1.6 School’s Use of Time.....	129
5.2.2 Theme Two: School’s Leadership and Culture.....	133
5.2.3 Theme Three: Policies and Procedures.....	136
5.2.4 Theme Four: Teaching and Learning Environment.....	138
5.2.4.1 Classroom Spaces.....	138
5.2.4.2 High Temperatures.....	139
5.2.4.3 High Noise Levels.....	140
5.2.4.4 Sparse Use of Technology.....	141
5.2.5 Theme Five: Incidences and Prevalence of Pupils’ SEN.....	142
5.2.5.1 Reading Difficulties.....	144
5.2.5.2 Behavioural Difficulties	145
5.2.6 Theme Six: School’s Response to Pupils’ SEN.....	147
5.2.6.1 Allocation of Resources.....	147

5.2.6.2 Deployment of Teaching Staff.....	148
5.2.6.3 Deployment of Teachers’ Assistants.....	150
5.2.6.4 Special Educational Need Intervention Strategies.....	152
5.2.6.4.1 Low Ability Streams.....	153
5.2.6.4.2 Special Classes.....	155
5.2.6.4.3 Reduced Class Size.....	156
5.2.6.4.4 Reading Programme.....	157
5.2.6.4.5 After-school Lessons.....	158
5.2.6.4.6 Special Kids Club.....	158
5.2.6.4.7 Grade Repetition.....	159
5.2.6.4.8 Punishment.....	159
5.2.6.4.9 Guidance Councillor.....	160
5.2.6.4.10 Mico CARE Centre.....	161
5.2.7 Theme Seven: Teacher Efficacy and Pupils’ Special Educational Needs.....	162
5.2.7.1 Teacher Training and Special Educational Needs.....	167
5.2.8 Theme Eight: Parental Support for Pupils with SEN	167
5.2.9 Theme Nine: Special Educational Needs and Pupils’ Self-concept.....	171
5.3 Chapter Conclusions and Summary.....	174
Chapter Six: Survey Findings and Results	176
6.1 Introduction	176
6.2 Section One: Phase 2 Survey.....	177
6.2.1 Sample Description.....	177
6.2.2 Resultant Participants.....	178
6.2.3 Respondents’ Qualification.....	179
6.2.4 Respondents’ Teaching Experience.....	180
6.2.5 Shift School Teaching Experience.....	182
6.3 Section Two: Administrators’ Qualitative Data.....	183
6.3.1 Administrators Understanding of the Term SEN.....	183
6.3.2 Most Frequently Identified SEN.....	184
6.3.3 Remit of Specialist Teachers.....	185
6.3.4 Impact of Pupils’ SEN on Schools.....	185
6.3.5 Challenges Faced by Schools	186
6.3.6 Sources of Help Sought by Administrators.....	187

6.3.7 Support Required by Administrators.....	188
6.4 Section Three: Teachers’ Qualitative Data.....	189
6.4.1 Teachers’ Understanding of SEN.....	189
6.4.2 Teachers’ Most Frequently Identified SEN.....	190
6.4.3 Teachers’ Views on the Remit of Specialist Teachers.....	192
6.4.4 Impact of Pupils’ SEN	189
6.3.5 Challenges Faced by Teachers.....	193
6.4.6 Sources of Help Sought by Teachers.....	196
6.4.7 Additional Support Required by Teachers.....	198
6.5 Chapter Conclusion and Summary	199
Chapter Seven: Survey Discussion.....	202
7.1 Introduction.....	202
7.2 Emerging Themes.....	203
7.2 .1Theme One: Conceptualisation and Identification of SEN.....	203
7.2.1.1 Identification of Pupils’ Special Educational Needs	205
7.2.2 Theme Two: Resourcing for Pupils Special Educational Needs	206
7.2. 3 Theme Three: Time Pressure and Special Educational Needs	208
7.2.4 Theme Four: Effects of Pupils’ Special Educational Needs.....	209
7. 2.4.1 Pupils’ Behaviour.....	209
7.2.4.2 School’s Performance.....	212
7.2.4.3 Teachers’ Stress.....	212
7.2.4.4 Pupils without Special Educational Needs.....	213
7.2.5 Theme Five: Teacher training and Special Educational Needs.....	214
7.2.6 Theme Six: School Features and Special Educational Needs.....	218
7.2. 6.1 Attitudes toward the Presence of Pupils with Special Educational Needs	218
7.2.6.2 Large Classes.....	219
7.2.6.3 Space Constraints	220
7.3 Chapter Conclusion.....	221
7.4 Chapter Summary.....	223

Chapter Eight: Results, Findings and Discussion.....224

(Ministry of Education Interview)

8.1 Introduction	224
8.2 Emerging Themes.....	225
8.2.1 Theme One: Overarching Philosophical Orientation.....	225
8.2.1.1 Inclusion versus Least Restrictive Environment	225
8.2.1.2 Definition of School Spaces.....	227
8.2.2 Theme Two: Current Status of Meeting Special Educational Needs.....	229
8.2.2.1 No Formal Identification.....	229
8.2.2.2 Intervention Strategies.....	229
8.2.3 Theme Three: Resourcing for Special Educational Needs.....	230
8.2.3.1 Inadequate Resources	230
8.2.3.2 Teacher Training.....	230
8.2.3.3 Support Services.....	231
8.2.4 Theme Four: Future Vision.....	231
8.2.4.1 'Child Find'	231
8.2.4.2 Vision and Auditory Screening	232
8.2.4.3 Regional Special Education Unit.....	232
8.2.4.4 Special Education Policy.....	232
8.3 Chapter Conclusions.....	233
8.4 Chapter Summary.....	233

Chapter Nine: Research Conclusions.....234

9.1 Introduction.....	234
9.2 Overview of the Research Process.....	234
9.3 Answering the Research Questions.....	235
9.4 Synopsis of the Key Findings in Light of the Research Question.....	235
9.4.1 Research Question 1.....	235
9.4.2 Research Question 2.....	237
9.4.3 Research Question 3.....	239
9.4.4 Research Question 4.....	241
9.5 Implications for Policy and Practice.....	242
9.5.1 Teacher Training.....	242
9.5.2 Special Educational Policies.....	243

9.5.3 Resourcing Pupils' SEN.....	243
9.5.4 In-school Pupil Groupings.....	243
9.6 Research Recommendations.....	244
9.7 Contributions of the Research.....	249
9.8 Limitations of the Research.....	251
9.9 Further Research.....	252
9.10 Concluding Summary.....	252
References.....	254
Appendices.....	274
Appendix 1: MOE Letter of Access.....	275
Appendix 2: Case School Letter.....	276
Appendix 3: Parents' Consent Letter.....	277
Appendix 4: Survey Schools' Consent Letter.....	278
Appendix 5: Research Participant Information Sheet.....	279
Appendix 6: Consent Form.....	280
Appendix 7: Questionnaires' Cover Page.....	281
Appendix 8: Teachers' Questionnaire.....	282
Appendix 9: Administrators' Questionnaire.....	285
Appendix 10: Research Log (abridged).....	289

Dedicated to my Mother,

Valerie Lois Sherwood

'Mamma'

*Who unconditionally loved beyond her
circumstances and gave ALL.*

*Mamma, your sacrifice for and faith in me have
lifted me and given me a higher 'reach' in life
and for the beyond.*

*I am the teacher you wanted to be
and more importantly,
a woman of God like you are!*

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this Thesis is the result of my independent investigation, except where I have indicated my indebtedness to other sources.

I hereby certify that this Thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any other degree, nor is it being submitted concurrently for any other degree.

I hereby give consent for my Thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signature:

Candidate

Signature:

Supervisor

Date:

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Map of Jamaica	11
(http://www.jamaicatravelandculture.com/pictures/maps/map_of_jamaica2.jpg)	
Figure 2.2: Regions of the Ministry of Education.....	14
Figure 2.3: The Jamaican Educational System.....	15
(Source: Compiled from Economic and Social Survey Jamaica, Evans, 2001)	
Figure 2.4: Differences in Shift Schooling (Bray, 2000).....	19
Figure 2.5: Features of Double Shift Schools	20
(Source: Adopted from Linden (2001))	
Figure 2.6: Focus Areas of ‘shift system project’ in 1981	26
(Adapted Leo-Rhynie, 1981)	
Figure 2.7: Emotive Responses relating to Shift Schools	27
(Ruddock, 1999 as cited in Baxter, 2000)	
Figure 2.8: Functions of Legislations	41
(Adapted from Eleweke and Rodda, 2002)	
Figure 2.9: Constraints in Jamaican Education System.....	43
Figure 2.10: A Current Jamaican Primary Classroom.....	47
Figure 2.11: Strategies used to Manage SEN of Pupils in the Jamaican Context.....	53
Figure 2.12: Areas of Differentiation Application.....	56
Figure 2.13: Factors for Multiclass Teaching.....	57
Figure 3.1: Chapter Contents.....	60
Figure 3.2: Research Participant and Research Methods.....	66
Figure 3.2: Research Design.....	67
Figure 3.3: Research Timeline.....	68
Figure 3.5: Ethical Considerations.....	81

Figure 4.1: Elements Addressed in the Profile of MMPS.....	88
Figure 4.2: Maple Meadows Primary School Timetable.....	91
Figure 4.3: Research Data Analysis Procedure.....	99
(Adopted from Braun and Clarke, 2006)	
Figure 5.1: Case Study Emergent Themes.....	120
Figure 5.2: SEN Intervention Strategies used by MMPS.....	152
Figure 6.1: Subsections of Demographic Data.....	177
Figure 6.2: Respondents' Gender.....	178
Figure 6.3: Qualifications of Respondents.....	179
Figure 6.4: Respondents' Engaging in Further Studies.....	180
Figure 6.5: Respondents' Teaching Experience.....	181
Figure 6.6: Teachers' Teaching Experience.....	181
Figure 6.7: Teachers' Teaching Experience in Shift Schools.....	182
Figure 6.8: Administrators' Understanding of SEN.....	183
Figure 6.9: Frequently Displayed SEN in Schools.....	184
Figure 6.10: Impact of Pupils' SEN on Schools.....	185
Figure 6.11: Challenges Faced by Schools Catering for Pupils with SEN.....	186
Figure 6.12: Administrators' Sources of Help for Pupils with SEN.....	187
Figure 6.13: Teachers' Understanding of the term SEN.....	190
Figure 6.14: Impact of pupils' SEN on Teachers Lessons.....	193
Figure 6.15: Teachers' Sources of Help for Pupils with SEN.....	197
Figure 7.1: Survey Emerging Themes.....	202

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Shift Schools in Jamaica.....	23
(MOEY&C Education Statistics 2000/1 and Census, 2001)	
Table 2.2: Enrolment in Special Schools by Disabilities.....	28
Table 2.3: Distribution of Teachers by Qualification.....	39
(MOE Teacher Statistics, 2008/9)	
Table 3.1: Interview Participants.....	74
Table 3.2: Distribution Methods of Questionnaires.....	78
Table 3.1: Response Rates for Questionnaires.....	79
Table 4.1: Number of Pupils in Lower Ability Classes across Shifts.....	108
Table 4.2: Pupils' Attendance Patterns by Stream (Grade 2).....	116
Table 4.3: Pupils' Attendance Patterns by Stream (Grade 3).....	116
Table 4.4: Pupils' Attendance Patterns by Stream (Grade 6).....	116
Table 6.1: Support Required to Cater for Pupils with SEN	188
Table 6.2: Most Frequently Identified SEN.....	191
Table 6.3: Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Meeting Pupils' SEN.....	195
Table 6.4: Support Required to Cater for Pupils with SEN.....	198

List of Abbreviations

BBC.....	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAPE.....	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination
CPD.....	Continuing Professional Development
CXC.....	Caribbean Examination Certificate
DfE.....	Department for Education
GCE.....	General Certificate of Education
GOILP	Grade One Individual Learning Profile
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
GSAT.....	Grade Six Achievement Test
GT.....	Grounded Theory
MCT.....	Multi-class Teaching
Mico CARE.....	Mico Child Assessment and Research in Education
MMPS.....	Maple Meadows Primary School
MOE.....	Ministry of Education
MOEY&C.....	Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture
NAP.....	National Assessment Programme
PATH.....	Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education
PIOJ.....	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PTA.....	Parent Teachers Association
RPC.....	Revised Primary Curriculum
SEN.....	Special Educational Needs
SSC.....	Secondary School Certificate
TAs.....	Teachers Assistants
UK.....	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF.....	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA.....	United States of America

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter one lays the foundation by supplying background information and explaining the ideas that resulted in the research. It gives a brief outline of the education system in Jamaica. It discusses how the introduction of compulsory universal education led to an even more pronounced shortage of school spaces which resulted in the introduction of the shift system in school. Grounded Theory (GT) guides this research and as such it will be described and justified. It will also present an explanation of the aim, scope, rationale and significance of the research. Importantly, the research question will be identified. Finally, it outlines the structure and sequencing of the chapters of the thesis.

1.1 Selection of the Research

Hart (1998) asserts that not many researchers inform their readers on how their research topic was chosen. In this section, the researcher will explain the meandering path that culminated in the execution of this research and as a consequence the writing of this thesis. This is being done with the hope that readers will gain a deeper appreciation and insight into the ‘why’ of this research.

The researcher undertook her teacher training in Jamaica and specialised in secondary education. She taught in several secondary mainstream schools in Jamaica and continued doing so on her arrival in the United Kingdom (UK). After a period of time in the UK, the researcher made a career shift into Special Education and then started teaching in Special schools. In light of the researcher’s educational background in Jamaica, she had limited encounter with the term ‘special educational needs’ (henceforth SEN) until she started teaching in special schools in London and Essex. This encounter whetted her intellectual appetite and was the stimulus for the researcher pursued a Masters degree in special education.

However, during the undertaking of the MA degree, the researcher soon realised how deeply embedded the ethos of inclusion is in both policies and practice in

the UK. The scope of the MA programme did not allow for an in-depth investigation of the policies and practice of SEN in Jamaica despite the researcher's desire for a better understanding of the issues surrounding these. This fuelled the researcher's aspiration to undertake a PhD to investigate this phenomenon in the Jamaican context. However, when the researcher embarked on the preliminary pilot stage of this research she discovered that inclusion was not practised in the Jamaican education system, rather 'casual integration' as described by Miles (1989, as cited in Ainscow, 1999). The researcher noticed that there was a void in the extent to which the SEN of pupils were catered for in primary shift schools. Therefore, the researcher decided to explore this focus that was unearthed. The next section will explain the background to the research.

1.2 Background to Research Problem

1.2.1 Implementation of Universal Education in Jamaican Schools

In spite of the reality of scarce resources especially in developing countries, it is still the norm for governments to have universal education as one of their goals. Initially, the goal in the international community towards universal education was proposed in 1948 in the Universal Declaration to Human Rights. It was later reinforced at the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2003). Although Jamaica and other Caribbean countries can boast of almost 100% attendance rate for primary education, the critical question is, are learners with SEN being catered for while attending schools? United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (1998) identified that a major shortcoming in the near achievement of universal education is that children with SEN (especially for those with learning difficulties and physical disabilities) are not adequately provided for. This is underscored by Mohite (1985 p. 225)

the central issue as it regards the universalization of primary education is that while it may be possible to provide schooling facilities, the more difficult problem is to ensure that children enrol and learn successfully. It is the quality of education which should form the focus of all attempts.

The next section will explain Jamaica's response to the implementation of universal education.

1.2.2 Jamaica's Response to the Implementation of Universal Education

There were insufficient school spaces to facilitate the educational ideal of universal primary education in Jamaica. School serves to further the society's aspiration for the education of its populace, particularly that of children (Novak and Pelaez, 2004). Therefore, when there were insufficient school spaces to cater to the need for formal education, then this presented a problem of colossal magnitude. In addressing this dilemma different countries utilise diverse strategies such as:

- Extension of existing school sites
- Multi-shifting
- Building new schools

Due to financial constraints the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) primarily utilised the strategy of multi-shifting to provide the urgently needed school spaces with the implementation of universal education. Specifically, the double shift system (referred to locally as the 'shift system') was introduced to provide a cost effective strategy to increase school capacity. The 'shift system' will be further elaborated in the upcoming section.

1.3 The Practice of 'Shifting' in Jamaican Schools

The 'shift system' is a representation of one of the nuances in the Jamaican educational structure. When a school day is organised on a shift basis, it accommodates two different sets of children in one day. The first set attends school from early morning to midday; then the other set attends from midday to late afternoon. Both sets of pupil use the same school facilities and amenities. However, they are mainly taught by different teachers (except for specialist teachers in some schools). On the other hand, it is typical in Jamaica that school are organised on single session basis, that is, whole day. A whole day school starts at approximately 8:45am and ends 3:15pm; normally a mid-morning break of 15 minutes and 50- 60 minutes for lunch are given to teachers and pupils. At the end of a school day pupils usually participate in extracurricular activities on a choice basis. It is worth noting that this educational innovation is not confined to the Caribbean, but is also practised in other countries such as Singapore, Puerto Rico, Brazil, India and Senegal (Bray, 2000). With societies of the world becoming more and more concerned for the education of pupils with SEN, an investigation is warranted within this specific context of shift schools.

1.4 Primary Education in Jamaica

Brandon (1997) asserts that despite the pockets of excellence, there is a widespread perception that Jamaican schools are performing poorly. According to Hall (1999) from a national standpoint educators in Jamaica have long been concerned about the perception of the deterioration of the quality of education in Jamaica. In a report of the Jamaican Education Sector done in 1973 one of the main findings is that the major weakness of the entire education system is the primary level of education (Ministry of Education, 1977). Therefore, the primary level of education which is noted as having pronounced difficulties presents a research opportunity to investigate how the SEN of pupils are addressed at this level. The theoretical orientation which directs this research will be discussed in the upcoming section.

1.5 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory (GT) was first put forward by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This theory is emergent and comes out of specific situations. Essentially it is used to find out theory from a given research data in a systematic manner, hence the term ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Research methods, data collection, analysis and developing theory are closely interlinked. Grounded Theory according to Strauss and Corbin (1998) refers to theory that was obtained from the data, which was collected and analysed in a systematic manner. Critically, the objective of the process of GT is to cultivate an integrated set of concepts that has the ability to offer a comprehensive theoretical account for the social phenomenon under review (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Its theoretical foundation is originated from Symbolic Interactionism and Pragmatism. The crucial elements from these theoretical bases are; firstly, how change is perceived and handled since a phenomenon is experiencing constant change due to variations in circumstances. Secondly, players have control even in the presence of change (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

The fact that GT is an emergent theory was one of the primary factors of appeal which led to its choice. The researcher conducted the research after living away from Jamaica for a number of years and not practising as a teacher in the Jamaican education system. In many ways it felt like going back to investigate what could be viewed as ‘foreign’, an ‘unknown educational culture’. Therefore, GT lent itself to unearthing the richness of what had been ‘produced’ rather than ‘forcing’ an external theory on the research data. Grounded Theory was quite useful since it is an emergent theory which is

anchored in a specific set of data, it facilitated preserving the ‘Jamaican-ness’ of the knowledge produced. Thus, increasing potential utility of the research to the Jamaican education system, and boost its potential in being a catalyst for policy making and implementation; which are lacking in the Jamaican education system.

In addition, GT is interactive in nature and as such it lends itself to discovering pertinent conditions but more importantly it finds out players’ responses and their consequences of their choices (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). This strength dovetails with the focus of the research. Grounded Theory also accommodates multiple sources of data which is central to the purpose and richness of this research. Since one of its critical tenets is simultaneous data collection and analysis it facilitates and in a sense advances complements the phenomenological approach.

1.6 Statement of Focus

The researcher argues that there is added complexity involved in attempting to meet the SEN of pupils in shift school context in what due what Bray (2000) describes as the ‘pressurised’ environment that exists there. This is worthy of research efforts.

1.7 Rationale of the Research

The research is to engage in an exploration of the conceptualisation and meeting of the SEN in shift primary schools in Jamaica. It has both relevance and novelty. The education of pupils with SEN has been topical (especially in developed countries) and the shift schooling less so. However, SEN receive far less attention (research, policy, legislation and otherwise) in the Jamaican context. It is an area of education that is emerging and is still in its ‘toddler’ stage. Although shift schools account for more than 10% of schools in the country, research activity is also at low ebb. Whilst other researchers have looked at SEN in primary school in general, this is the first research to position its investigation in the shift context which presents added complexity. This narrower focus has much value since it will provide insights into what could be considered to be uncharted educational territory of examining the phenomenon of SEN with a shift context. In addition, the thesis can be used as a resource tool for practitioner and policy maker and to provide feedback to the Ministry of Education (MOE).

1.8 Scope of the Research

At the time of doing the research, the most recent data available from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (2000/1) reveal that there are 967 public schools throughout the island of Jamaica. Over 10% (N= 112) are shift schools with 87 in urban area, 23 in rural areas and 2 in remote rural areas. It is worth noting that over 60% (n=70) of these shift schools offer primary education. The process of de-shifting in Jamaica requires significant extra school spaces whether by extending and or building new schools. This achievement would be a major long-term task; especially in light of the fiscal constraints being experienced by country. If the route of constructing new schools were taken, at least 112 new schools would be needed. In fact it would require in excess of 112 because some shift schools still experience overcrowding and to achieve the MOE proposed teacher pupil ratio of 1:27 at the primary level of education (Ministry of Education Statistics, 2008), it would need even more school spaces.

1.9 Significance of the Research

In the *Report of the shift System in Jamaican Schools* (Leo-Rhynie, 1981); the only in-depth research done (to date) on the shift system commissioned by the MOE, undertook an in-dept analysis targeted several difficulties in the following areas:

- Pupils' health and behaviour
- School site and resources
- Staff and pupils (at home and school)
- The curriculum
- Administration of shift system
- Economic analysis

It is the intention of this researcher to extend the discourse and address the critical area of examining how primary shift schools conceptualise and meet the SEN of their pupils. The next section will outline the research questions.

1.10 Research Questions

The basic purpose of this research was to explore how the SEN of pupils are conceptualised and managed in the context of shift primary schools in Jamaica? This primary focus was explored by investigating the perceptions of four main stakeholder groups:

1. What are the views and administration of the Ministry of Education regarding SEN of pupils in Jamaican primary schools?
2. What are the limiting and enabling factors in shift primary schools with regards to meeting the SEN of pupils?
3. How do pupils with SEN account for their experiences of having their SEN met in a shift primary school?
4. What are the views of parents regarding their children's SEN being met in a shift primary school?

1.11 Chapter Conclusion and Summary

This research is concerned with how SEN is addressed in Jamaican primary schools with particular reference to those whose school day is organised on a shift basis. It focuses its investigation primarily on 'hearing the voices' of the MOE, administrators, teachers, pupils considered as having SEN and their parents with regards to the school's attempt of meeting their children's SEN. In essence, how does the school account for its conceptualisation and management of pupils with SEN? Grounded Theory directs this research.

1.12 Thesis Outline

Following this introductory chapter, the thesis has eight other chapters. Chapter Two provides a critical review of the salient literature and will also identify gaps in it, thus providing the basis on which to demonstrate that the research questions are relevant. Importantly too, it will provide the framework for understanding the research. Chapter Three examines the research methodology and methods. Chapter Four will present the main research findings and results from the case study. The chapter which follows will present the discussions of the case study findings and results. The results and findings of the survey will be presented in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven will discuss them and will tease out the tensions and dilemmas which exist. The research findings, results and discussion from the interview with the personnel from the MOE will be presented in

chapter Eight. The final chapter, nine, draws conclusions, cites implications, and suggests recommendations based on the research evidence. Critically, the research questions (see Section 1.10) will be answered and the contribution of the research will be explained. This chapter pulls together and summarises the entire research project.

Chapter Two- Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

At this juncture it is necessary to present a critical review of the pertinent literature that will provide the premise on which to illustrate that the research questions (see Section 1.10) are both relevant and necessary. Importantly too, it will also serve to contextualise the research project and set the framework for understanding the research. However, there are a few issues that need to be acknowledged from the outset. Firstly, some of the material being used in this literature review is old. With some usage this is quite appropriate because they are supplying critical historical perspective. In other cases, they are being used because there is a scarcity of research information. Specifically, there is an acute shortage of research relating SEN in Jamaica and in the other Caribbean islands (Dixon and Matalon, 1999). Therefore, even more literature from other countries will be used to supplement this gap to provide a robust review of the literature.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section One will serve two purposes. Firstly, it will give a brief overview of the salient issues of the Caribbean relating to educational practice. Secondly, it will examine in greater details the Jamaican context in which the research is being executed, thus providing a framework for the research questions. It discusses characteristics of Jamaica in terms of its geographical features, labour market, population composition and primarily the operation of its educational system (with specific regards to the management of the SEN of children). In Section Two, the practice of multi-shifting will be examined with emphasis on the operation of the shift system in Jamaica. The third section will position the meeting of pupils' SEN within the specific context of mainstream shift primary schools in Jamaica. Importantly, the pressures and constraints of this research context will be examined. Finally, a summary will be done to identify the gaps in the literature and how this research will fill these gaps.

2.2 Section One

2.2.1 The Caribbean Region

Bacchus (2005) purports that educational developments and practices are best appreciated and comprehended within a specific social, economic and political context in which they happen. Therefore, salient issues about the Caribbean and in particular Jamaica will now be scrutinized. The Caribbean region is small when international comparisons are made (Atchoarena, 1994). It comprises of 13 countries which reflects diversities in culture, population composition, ethnicity, size and language. Amongst the countries there are significant differences in national advancement. These countries form the regional grouping known as Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM). This community is divided to two groups, that is, More Developed Countries (MDCs) and Less Developed Countries (LDCs) (ibid.).

At the start of the 18th century all Caribbean islands were colonies of European countries (Ferguson, 1990). The Caribbean's economies are strongly impacted by their proximity to the United States of America (USA) and their relationships to Europe. Tourism plays a pivotal role in the region's development. However, unemployment continues to be a problem. On the other hand, significant employment vacancies exist in some skilled professional and managerial sectors partly because of low enrolment to tertiary institutions and high emigration to countries such as USA, UK and Canada (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2001) and even other parts of the Caribbean.

2.2.2 Jamaica and its Basic Demographics

Jamaica is the largest English-speaking Caribbean island surrounded by the Caribbean Sea with a surface area of 11,244 square kilometre (or 4,411 square miles) situated in the Southern Caribbean. It is amongst the MDCs and is centrally located in relationship to other Caribbean islands (The World Bank, 2003). According to the latest statistics for 2008/9, Jamaica has a population of 2,695,600 with an almost equal distribution between the genders (Male= 1,328,100 and Female= 1,367,500) (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010). The population is distributed across 14 parishes (see Figure 2.1) which are further grouped in three counties namely; Cornwall, Middlesex and Surrey (Population Census Jamaica, 2001). The urban and rural population compositions are 55% and 45% respectively. Like the rest of the Caribbean, Jamaica has a high unemployment rate of 11.4%. This is a reflection of 145,800 unemployed labour force

(male: n=55,700 and female: n=90,100) (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010). It has an annual population and labour force growth rates of 9% and 1.5 respectively (<http://www.historycentral.com/nationbynation/Jamaica/Index.html>).

Jamaica is located in the Tropic at approximately 18⁰North latitude and 77⁰West longitude. It has a tropical climate experiencing temperatures on average of 21-33⁰ Celsius. It has two distinctive annual wet seasons, that is, May to June and September to November. The warmest months are June to August and the coolest are December to February (<http://www.metservice.gov.jm./rainfall.asp>, 2010). It is the norm that Jamaica experiences approximately 12 hours of daylight for most of the year. However, these temperatures and rainfall patterns have practical implications to the realities of shift schools since two sets of pupils attend school in the same day spanning from 7am to 5-5:15pm. Severe rainfall can and sometimes do lead to school closures and soaring temperatures makes the teaching and learning environment unbearably hot considering that Jamaican classrooms are usually not air-conditioned.



Figure 2.1: Map of Jamaica

(http://www.jamaicatravelandculture.com/pictures/maps/map_of_jamaica2.jpg)

Jamaica is a country of diversity as is reflected in its motto “Out of Many, One People”. It is home to people of different ethnicities such as Indian, Chinese, Caucasians and Blacks (the largest composition). This in turn echoes in its cultural diversity as is reflected in language, diet, music, dress and others. The official language spoken in the country is English. However, ‘Patois’ (Jamaican Creole) is actually the mother tongue for most Jamaicans (Hall and Narinesingh, 2003). Importantly, the language of instruction in schools is English. Representative government was established in Jamaica in 1944 after a long period of Crown Colony Government. Historically,

Jamaica economy was an agrarian one; however, there has been a change to this. Tourism is the most thriving industry in the Caribbean (Prichard, 2000) and in Jamaica in particular.

2.2.2 The Place of Education in Jamaica

Schools are neither essential nor adequate to guarantee the acquisition of education. However, they are usually the site where educational success occurs especially for the poor and disadvantaged (Borrow, 2007). The overarching educational system directly guides what happens at the school level which in turn is reflected at the classroom level. Therefore, sufficient details about the country's educational system need to frame this research. Some Caribbean governments allocate a considerable share of their national budgets to education. Education has high regard and is seen as a necessity for obtaining employment and social mobility, but also to increase productivity, economic growth and national development. There has been a concern for functional illiteracy and about the failure of the formal school system to equip pupils for the world of work and for functioning effectively. Therefore, this has spurred many governments to restructure their education systems (Ellis, 2003). Without question education makes a significant contribution to the economic growth of a country (Jones, 2003). Todaro and Smith (2003) contend that education is not only critical to the development of human capability but it lies at the very centre of the advancement of any nation. The Jamaican economy has been underperforming for more than a decade (Prichard, 2000) and in 2009 the economy experience decline by 2.7% when compared to 2008 (<http://statinja.gov.jm/PressReleases/perssreleasequarterlyGPD.aspx>,2010). Educational research is one of the areas which are crucial to the economic development of the Caribbean. Education has long been viewed as the way through which working and lower class children can achieve a better life (D'Oyley and Murry, 1979). Specifically, Ying (1997) asserts that education in Jamaica is considered to be the vehicle of social mobility, especially for individuals who are poor and those devoid of status and power bestowed by means of colour and ancestry. Consequently, it is viewed as a means of attaining the ideals of power and status. Education has been historically critical in Jamaica's development as it moved from slavery to Adult Suffrage and then to Independence in providing skills, competencies and appropriate attitudes to foster self management and to achieve maximum levels of economic and social development (Ying, 1997).

2.2.3.1 Historical Background of Education in Jamaica

When the slave trade was rife hence there was no need for the administration of an education for slaves for plantation work. However, at the abolishment of the slave trade, it became necessary to see to the education of the would-be freed slaves in 1834. Jamaica's slaves were emancipated in 1838. It remained under Britain's colonial rule until 1962, when it gained its national independence. Historically, education was seen as the method of getting away from the escape from the harsh farming condition (Evans, 2001). Vernon (1960 p. 7) posits that education was viewed as a “*welfare service, to be carried out as cheaply as possible*”.

In a groundbreaking text, *A Short History of Education in Jamaica* (Whyte, 1977), the first attempt at education was for the children of plantation owners of overseers from Britain since education was considered unnecessary for slaves. After some time missionaries used the Sunday school method as the first attempt at educating slave children. After emancipation a general elementary system was established. With time, high school education was developed in the 1860s and 70s. Towards the start of the 20th century, education for girls was set up. In the 1940s university education and prior to independence, secondary education were implemented (Miller, 1985). At this time too, the ownership and management of the majority of the elementary schools in Jamaica was done by different religious groups, for example, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Wesleyan (King, 1989). It was The Education Act of 1965 that started the regulation of the changing education system (The Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, 2004).

2.2.3.2 Current Education System

According to Howley and Howley (2007) educational practices differ from country to country. Differences may be caused by differences in availability of resources, cultural norms, geographical uniqueness and political climate to name a few. Howley and Howley (2007, p. 176) posit that there are “substantial and instructive” differences in the way school systems are managed in different countries and that these school systems are organized and classified by their governments. They state that every school is embedded in a culture and has a culture of its own. Consequently, to grasp an understanding and appreciation of schools and their practices, certain elements of societal structures and norms should of necessity be taken into consideration.

In Jamaica there are two parallel school systems; the public and the private (both undertaking the same examinations) as is reflected in Figure 2.3. The Ministry of

Education, Youth and Culture (recently the aspects of Youth and Culture have been reassigned to different government entity, hence it is now known as Ministry of Education, MOE) which administers and delivers education in Jamaica. It has its head office in Kingston and five other regional offices throughout the island (see Figure 2. 2).

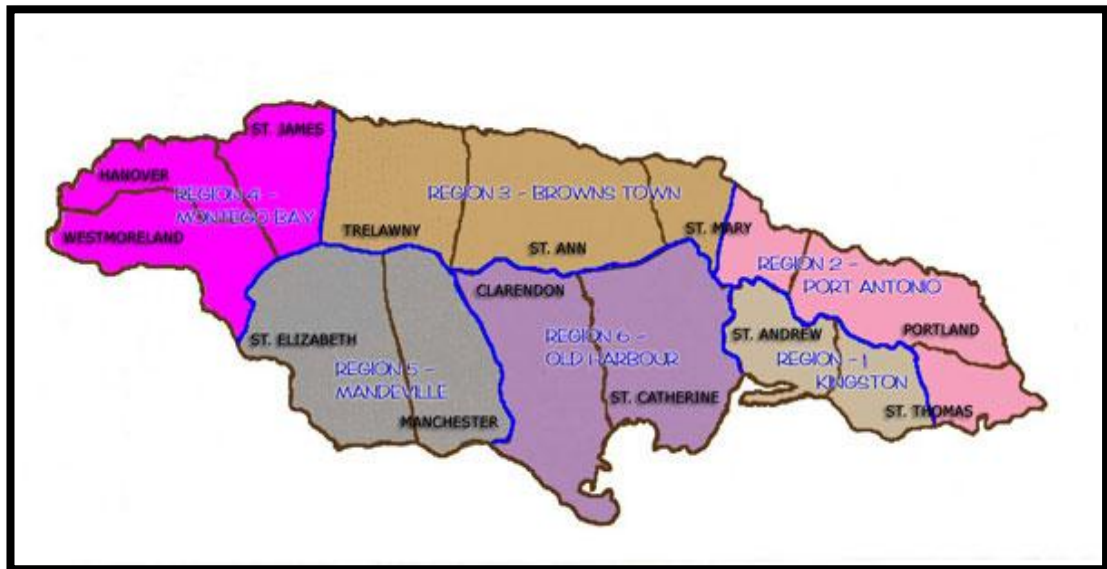


Figure 2.2: Regions of the Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture <http://www.moec.gov.jm/regions/index.shtml>

Formal education is provided primarily by the government and in collaboration with trusts, churches and Non government organizations (Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, 2004). However, it is worth noting that special education is the only entity of the education system that still has over a third being independently owned and operated (n=10; 37%) (MOE Education Statistics, 2008/9). Having roots in Britain, most institutional structures in Jamaica are modelled from the British system including its educational system (The World Bank, 2003; PIOJ, 2006 and MOE, 1991).

Age (yrs)	Level	Public Education	Private Education	Curriculum	Examination/ Educational Assessment
0-3	Early Childhood	Day Care Centres	Kindergarten Dept. Preparatory school	National Early Childhood Curriculum	
4-5		Basic Infant School & Kindergarten Dept.			
6	Primary Education Grade 1	Primary schools, All / Age & Primary And Junior High (Grades 1-6)	Preparatory School	Integrated Primary Curriculum Grades 1-3	Grade One Readiness Inventory (now The Grade One Individual Learning Profile GOILP)
7	Grade 2				
8	Grade 3				Grade Three Diagnostic Test
9	Grade 4			Grades 4-6 Subject-based Primary Curriculum	Grade Four Literacy Test
10	Grade 5				
11	Grade 6				Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT)
12	Secondary Education Grade 7	Primary And Junior High, All / Age (grades 7-9), Secondary schools	Private Secondary Schools	Lower Secondary Cycle Formal Secondary Curriculum (Grades 7-9)	
13	Grade 8				
14	Grade 9				Grade 9 Achievement Test, Technical Exam
15	Grade 10			Curriculum is based on syllabi of external examinations	
16	Grade 11				CXC, SSC, GCE
17	Grade 12	Lower Sixth Form			A' Level exam, CAPE
18	Grade 13	Upper Sixth Form			A' Level exam, CAPE

Figure 2.3: The Jamaican Educational System

Source: Compiled from Planning Institute of Jamaica (2006) and Evans (2001)

According to the Jamaican Education Act (1965) the statutory system of public education is organised in four levels namely early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary. In reference to Figure 2.3 above, primary school pupils take examinations

throughout this phase of education. The Grade One Readiness Inventory Test has been replaced by The Grade One Individual Learning Profile (GOILP) since 2007/2008. Commendably, with the GOILP, pupils are now being tested in areas such as reading, work habits and classroom behaviour; all of which are critical areas of assessments. Suffice it to say, that the full benefits of these data will not be maximized unless they are used to inform the teaching process, resourcing, staffing, school objectives and other such dimensions of school life. It is critical that the results of this and other examinations should be particularly targeted in terms of the usefulness of the results; since the competencies (or lack of) at Grade One potentially sets the foundation for the trajectory of the primary school years and for the ensuing education levels. Pupils that gained mastery in none or only one component of the test should be earmarked for specific educational attention to stave off the possible prospect of underachieving in the requirements of the curriculum.

One of the benchmarks set by the MOE is that pupils should have gained literacy and numeracy skills comparable with global standards by the end of Grade Six (MOE, Education Statistics 2008/9). The Grade Four Literacy Test is given to pupils at the end of Grade Four and is intended to assess the literacy levels in word recognition, reading comprehension and writing task. It is also used to identify additional support that may be required by pupils to make sure that their performance matches their grade level (*ibid.*). However, considering the grave literacy problem experienced by the Jamaican education system, this test is being administered far too late for any meaningful intervention and amelioration to take place prior to them having to sit the GSAT as they prepare to leave the primary level of education. Having already spent possibly four years in primary education and if pupils are still manifesting literacy difficulties it is less likely that in two years the situation can be sufficiently rectified. Therefore, assessment and intervention of literacy performance would be more beneficial if done at an earlier grade. The focus of this research is the primary level which will be addressed in the upcoming section.

2.2.3.3 Primary Education

The Education Act (1980) defines primary school as a school or a department within a school that offers at least five years of educational training and experience to pupils aged six to eleven (see Figure 2. 3) (The Education Act Jamaica, 1980). Jamaica is one of the two Caribbean countries having the latest starting age (6 years) and earliest finishing (11 years) age for compulsory education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics,

2001). Primary education can be obtained from several types of educational institutions (as is outlined in Figure 2. 3) which are primary, preparatory, All/Age (grades 1-6) and primary and junior high (Population Census Jamaica Education Volume 3 Part A, 2001).

In Jamaica, primary education is mandatory, universal and it is free. The gross enrolment rate at the primary level in Jamaica is 95.9% (PIOJ, 2006 and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2001). Notably, Jennings (2000) asserts that although primary schooling in the Caribbean may be considered to be efficient in light of its percentage enrolment, however in terms of its learning processes, it has been ineffective. School fees were required for secondary education until as recent as August 2007 when the newly elected Prime Minister, Honourable Bruce Golding, abolished the long existing school fee at this level. Private primary education is offered in institutions called preparatory school and is mainly funded by the fees charged. Private preparatory schools tend to act as 'feeder schools for traditional high schools (Kuper, 1976). Both the public and private systems may be co-educational or single gender. It is important to note that institutions that offer private education, school day is always organised on a whole day basis, never shift. The upcoming section will briefly highlight how social stratification is reflected in the education provision in Jamaica.

2.2.4 Social Stratification in Jamaican Education System

One may ask, 'how does social stratification relate to the subject under consideration?' Like other societies, Jamaica is stratified and this is echoed in the educational system in a number of ways (Hyman-Anglin, 2000). Shift schools are deemed by many in the Jamaican society (and elsewhere) to be of an inferior quality (Linden, 2001). He contends that shift schools cater for children of lower class and the often disadvantaged. The Jamaican society is marked by deep social class boundaries established on colour and educational clout (Atchoarena and McArdle, 1999). The claim is made that the school system is used as an instrument to promote and perpetuate the class system. The factor of social class is directly related to the quality of education a child gets (Ennew, and Young, 1981). There is a continuous endeavour for upward social mobility (Hyman-Anglin, 2002). One of the determinants of social class is education. In Jamaica, Miller (1985) states that there are four social strata; upper white, traditional middle class, emerging middle class and lower class (mostly blacks). When complete abolition of slavery occurred in 1838, it meant that the measures used to keep social order during enslavement were no longer legal after this date (Turner, 2001). Freedom had little

impact on the social hierarchy in the island. During 1835-1845 the British government increased private education through the medium of the Negro Education Grant. On the whole, the quality of teachers in schools is significantly influenced by the schools' pupil enrolment and location (Maier and Young, 2009). Preparatory schools offer private primary education which is viewed as more superior as is reflected in their results for nationally administered examinations at this level. For example, the national average for the percentage proficiency by the number of 5 subsets of the GOILP assessment is 23.4%. The preparatory school proficiency is 53.7% and for the public primary school it is 22.0% (MOE, Education Statistics, 2008/9). The private entity gained almost two times the national average whilst public primary level falling below it.

2.2.5 Section Conclusions

- The Caribbean and specifically Jamaica experience pronounced economic constraints which impacts on their ability to invest in education. There are also high unemployment rates experienced in the region.
- Jamaica's education system is patterned after the British having been her colony.
- The MOE is the main dispenser of public education in Jamaica.
- Primary Education is compulsory and because of inadequate school spaces and the consequential issue of overcrowding; the strategy of 'school shifting' has been employed to alleviate the challenge.
- Jamaica's climatic conditions, that is, high temperatures and rainfall patterns impact the experience of shift schooling.
- The education system in Jamaica is stratified and is the vehicle through which many find upward social mobility.
- One of the aims of the MOE is for learners leaving the primary level of education, is to possess comparable global literacy and numeracy skills.

2.3 Section Two

2.3.1 Overview of Multi-Shifting in Schools

The practice of ‘shifting’ is used to provide adequate school spaces and will be examined in this section. The school day is structured as either the whole day basis or the multiple shift system. The trend in most countries is for the school day to be organised in a whole day structure. As was previously mentioned, when a school day is organised on a double shift system, it accommodates two different batches of children. The first batch attends from early morning to about midday; then the other attends from midday to late afternoon. Both sets of pupil use the same school facilities and amenities; however, they may be taught by the same set of or different teachers. It is worth mentioning that double shift system may be referred to by several terms depending on the contexts such as half-day, bi-sessional and double-sessional schools (Bray, 2000). In Jamaica it is called shift system. Based on Bray’s (2000) analysis of double shift schooling, there is a broad continuum of nuances of double shift schooling as is shown in Figure 2.4.

- End- on shifts
- Overlapping shifts
- Differences in the duration of school week
- Teachers: taught by different or same
- Two levels of education using one set of school facilities
- Rural / urban dichotomy influencing double shift schooling
- Day and boarding schools
- Rotation of staff and pupils
- Children and adults using one set of school facilities
- Ownership of school facilities

Figure 2.4: Differences in Shift Schooling (Bray, 2000)

The occurrences of shift schools are more prevalent in urban areas due to high population densities and high cost of land (Bray, 2000). In addition, Linden (2001) states that the practice of shift schooling is prevalent in some countries; especially developing ones. One of the limitations of Bray’s (2000) work on *‘Double-shift Schooling’* is his weak referencing on numerous occasions. This has lead to what may be viewed as unsubstantiated statements. For example, he states, “*the relative strengths of each model [of shift school] have been carefully appraised in Jamaica*” (p. 83). This raises the question of whose work is he referring to? This makes it rather difficult for

the reader to access primary sources throughout his work for one to make first hand evaluation of the work referred to. One may assume that it is the work of Leo-Rhynie (1981) because he suggests it at the end of the text for further reading. However, the fact remains that this is simply an assumption. This compromises his work because conclusions have to be treated with caution since one is not in a position to make a value judgment especially in the area of research outcomes. Some of the concerns are what research approach and methodology were used, sample size, issues of ethics, the time the work was done. In essence, are conclusions based on sound empirical evidence or is it only anecdotal expressions? Similarly, Linden's (2001) observations may not have been based on empirical evidence and as such should be taken with caution. However, his work brings to the fore some issues that are worthy of greater scrutiny (see Figure 2.5). These weaknesses further highlight the need for rigorous research in this area. This research is a response to this need.

1. Double shift schools are seen as substandard schooling and consequently attract poor public perception.
2. Double shift schooling is frequently seen as a temporary measure.
3. Double shift school doubles the pressure on school facilities therefore shortens their life span and increases maintenance costs.
4. There is a lack of evidence regarding cognitive achievements in double shift schools.
5. Usually weaker teachers are present in double shift schools.
6. With double shift schools there is usually a reduction in the curriculum offerings.
7. The enrolments in double shift schools appear to be from the disadvantaged sector of society.

Figure 2.5: Features of Double Shift Schools
(Source: Adopted from Linden (2001))

In Figure 2.5 numbers 1, 5 and 7 are critical issues in the operation of shift schools and have substantial implications on the education of pupils' learning in this type of school facility. Measures should be introduced to cushion the effects of these realities from the governing bodies of education in countries and at the point of implementation; the school level. Having discussed the practice of multi-shifting (particularly double shifting) in a general sense, in the next sections the background and implementation of the shift system in Jamaica will be explored.

2.3.2 Implementation of the Shift System in Jamaica

In Jamaica, the innovation of the shift system was first recommended by the Honourable Harold Haughton (former Director of Education in the Ministry of Education) in 1953. The rationales for his proposal were as follows:

1. Providing increased school space for increased school age children
2. Reducing overcrowding in primary schools
3. Acted as a answer to the then pending compulsory education

From the outset, the then Minister of Education, Honourable Edwin Allen, expressed misgivings, although he supported it. It was emphasised that the education strategy should be a temporary measure. In 1955 a new political party came to power and the proposal for the shift system was shelved. With another change of government in 1962, the shift system was introduced on a five year experimental basis in 'staggered attendance' (now known as overlapping shift) in an All/Age school in St Andrew. The experiment ended in 1967. However, the prevailing harsh economic realities which prevented the option of building new schools, possibly made the shift system an attractive solution. It was described by the MOE as the "*most readily applicable method of accommodating increased numbers of students in schools*" and was reported to have led to significant reductions in overcrowding (MOE Annual Report, 1976-1977, p. 53).

Although the GOJ acknowledged the shift system as a mechanism to provide urgently needed school spaces and started putting this innovation in the design of school buildings, it was abandoned for another five years. Later it was reintroduced in 1972 on an 'end-on' shift arrangement in two urban schools (a primary and a secondary). In this new arrangement each shift was viewed as separate school; with one principal and two vice-principals. Two years later the 'In-Depth Report on Primary Education' made the recommendation that the shift system be continued in order to create enough school spaces for those eligible to access primary education. In 1974/75 two basic schools also experimented with the shift system. The school day spanned 8:30 am to 5:30 pm which

resulted in the enrolment increasing by 63%. In 1975/76 there was an increase of 11 primary and All Age schools to 20 to 31 using the shift system. In the following year there was an increase of 8 primary and All Age schools operating on a shift basis (MOE Annual Report, 1976).

High population densities put strain on public amenities and facilities, one of which is school places for school age children. Initially, the shift system was only utilised in the urban areas where there is a gross shortage of school places and where schools were overcrowded by 50%. Table 2.1 gives an outline of the current distribution shift schools according to population densities, parishes and locations. In Jamaica, St Andrew, St Catherine and Clarendon are the parishes with the highest population densities and they have the greatest numbers of shift schools (n=11, 27 and 13 respectively; see Table 2.1 for further details). The present distribution of shift schools throughout the island (based on the education statistics of 2000-2001 which was the reference point for this research where shift schools is concerned) is a far removed from the original picture in 1972. However, it is worthy of note based on the most current educational statistics of 2009-2010, of the 14 parishes operating shift schools, six parishes have the same number of shift schools. In five parishes, seven schools were taken off the shift system and in the remaining three parishes there were six additional schools that practised shifting. Technically, after almost a decade, only one school was de-shifted. St Catherine, the parish with the highest population density, had the largest increase of four. This suggests what could be deemed as the 'unacknowledged permanence' of shift schools.

Table 2.1: Shift Schools in Jamaica (MOEY&C Education Statistics 2000-2001& Census 2001)

Parishes	Population Densities	Number of schools	Number of Shift schools	School Locations	Extended Schools
Kingston	96,052	45	2	2 Urban	0
St Andrew	555,828	106	11	11 Urban	1
St Thomas	91,604	48	1	1 Rural	1
Portland	80,205	52	5	4 Urban 1 rural	0
St Mary	111,466	68	5	2 Urban 3 rural	1
St Ann	166,762	78	9	6 Urban 3 rural	1
Trelawny	73,066	37	5	4 Urban 1 rural	0
St James	175,127	51	8	6 Urban 2 rural	0
Hanover	67,037	39	3	3 Urban	0
Westmoreland	138,947	65	9	5 Urban 3 rural 1 remote rural	0
St Elizabeth	146,404	85	6	3 Urban 3 rural	0
Manchester	185,801	72	8	5 Urban 3 rural	0
Clarendon	237,024	104	13	12 Urban 1 rural	3
St Catherine	482,308	117	27	24 Urban 2 rural 1 remote rural	1
Total	2,601,631	967	112	87 Urban 23 rural 2 remote rural	8

Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture Education Statistics (2000-2001)

When the shift system was introduced in Jamaican school, there were certain prerequisites which were thought to be necessary for its success; two of the important ones will be discussed in the upcoming section.

2.3.2.1 Prerequisites of the shift System in Jamaica

2.3.2.1.1 Contact Time

One of the original recommendations referred to as a ‘precondition’ for the implementation of the shift system, was the amount of contact time that pupils should receive. Contact time is referred to as the period of time that teachers and students are actively engaged in the teaching and learning process. The original plan with regards to contact time in shift schools was as follows:

Each shift should attend [school] for five hours each day Monday to Friday. Four and one-half hours each day should be for class teaching or 'teaching contact' periods. The first or AM shift would extend from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and the second or PM shift would start at 12:30 p.m. and end at 5:30 p.m. On one of these days each shift would have an extended day – an additional four and one-half hours. This 'long day' was arranged to facilitate the inclusion of extra-curricular and other enrichment activities. Thus, each student had 22½ contact hours per week i. e. hours of actual teaching, plus 4½ hours of enrichment, making the school week 27 hours in duration (Leo-Rhynie, 1981 p. 3)

The idea of a 'long day' is praiseworthy. However, it raises several questions. Is it workable? Where would the each shift get the classroom space to accommodate the long day? How would it affect parents? An obvious weakness of the above suggestion is that there was no time allocated for transition between the shifts. It is impossible for the first shift to exit the classrooms at exactly 12:30 pm and the second shift commencing at that time too. This was simply not workable. Unless, the first shift start to vacate the classrooms at 12:15 –12:20 daily. If this is done it would further reduce pupils' learning time between 50minutes to 1hour 15 minutes per week. At least 10-15 minutes should be allocated for a smooth and practical transition between shifts without which there may be chaos and or the second shift will commence later than the set time. In addition, the suggested end time for the second shift is too late considering the inadequate transportation service which exists in the country. A dismissal time of 5:30 pm means that pupils would still be in school while the bulk of the work force would be making their way home (with the average work day of 9am to 5pm). It is being acknowledged that currently the majority of shift schools operate with earlier times of 7 and 5 o'clock start and finish times respectively. The implications and practical outcomes of the proposed and even the current times of this late dismissal will be addressed in more details in Section 2. 4.97.

2.3.2.1.2 'Holding Area'

Another 'pre-condition' for the successful implementation of the shift system is the construction of a 'holding area'. A 'holding area' is a large auditorium-like space which is designated to be a space for off-shift pupils to assemble until it is time their shift to start school or to stay after their shift has ended (MOE Annual Report, 1976-1977). In essence, it is designed to accommodate pupils that arrive too early for the afternoon shift and those of the morning shift that do not go home after the termination of their shift. Later, the concept of 'holding area' was broadened to include 'neighbourhood

centres'. The neighbourhood centres would be holding areas which are either on or near the school compounds where off-shift pupils can get involved in activities such as creative play, art, craft, music and singing; instead of waiting aimlessly and unsupervised in the school yard or on the streets. It was envisaged that in addition to National Youth Service (NYS) volunteers there would also be Special Employment Program Workers trained to operate these centres (MOE Annual Report, 1976-1977). The 'holding area' is a critical resource for the successful practise of multi-shift schooling. This 'pre-condition' is not in place in some shift schools and in others where it is present, it is not being utilised for its designated purpose due to space constraints. The expansion of the concept of the 'holding area' to include neighbourhood centres is an good one; which in theory has the potential to offset the impacts of shift schooling. However, this expansion did not materialised; possibly because of similar reasons and conditions that lead to the practise of shift schools in the first place, fiscal constraints which prevented the building of new schools.

There are several implications of not having a space to 'hold' off shift pupils; a primary concern being that of the safety of the pupils. A 'holding area' has the potential to reduce loitering, children left at or returning home unsupervised could lead to children being lured into gangs- considering the violence infested communities in which some pupils reside, promiscuity and child labour. If the 'holding area is properly organised and manned (for example, one section could be designated as a quiet zone and the other reasonable sound is tolerated to facilitate peer work), it has the potential to 'extend' the short school day by having pupils in an area conducive to studying, revision, peer tutoring and completion of homework.

2.3.3 Research on the Shift Schooling in Jamaica

Having discussed the intended prerequisites for the practice of successful shifting in the previous section, this section will examine some of the research pertaining to the practice of shift schools in Jamaica. It is being acknowledged that extensive use is being made of the *Report of the shift System in Jamaican Schools* (Leo-Rhynie, 1981), because to date it is the only in-depth research done on the shift system commissioned by the MOE. In a 'shift system project' commissioned by the MOE in 1981, an analysis targeted several issues as is outlined in see Figure 2. 6.

- Pupils' health and behaviour
- School site and resources
- Staff and pupils (at home and school)
- The curriculum
- Administration of shift system
- Economic analysis

Figure 2.6: Focus Areas of 'shift system project' in 1981

(Adapted Leo-Rhynie, 1981)

It is critical to note that whilst the analysis was indebted it delimited its focus from academic achievement of pupils whether between morning and afternoon shifts and shift and non-shift schools. The reasons stated for the delimitation of this study, is time, financial constraints and the difficulties of controlling variables in order to attribute conclusions to the shift system whilst the differences could be other confounding variables.

In addition to the seminal research the shift system *Report of the shift System in Jamaican Schools* (Leo-Rhynie, 1981), there are other research projects which investigated aspects of the shift practice. Baxter (2000) in a comparative research in two shift and two whole-day primary schools (of approximately same sizes and locations) in the Jamaican Corporate area concluded that whole-day schools are more favoured than shift schools, more organised and perform at a higher academic standard. However, it should be noted that only grades 5 and 6 pupils were included in this research which does not provide a sufficiently holistic picture in a school in terms of its performance. It needed a wider cross-section of grade levels in the sample.

Ruddock (1999 as cited in Baxter, 2000), a former Senior Education Officer, posits that there was insufficient information 'selling' the shift system to the Jamaican people, therefore this education strategy has lost credibility with them and as such the notion of the shift schools is met with "emotional responses" rather than an informed views as is reflected in Figure 2.7).

1. Shift schools are established only in deprived areas.
2. There is a shortage of teachers
3. The Jamaican climatic conditions are unsuitable for shifting
4. The shift system strategy is only done in underdeveloped countries
5. Shift schools are of second rate quality
6. The Jamaican society does not view kindly the idea that accompanying feature of the shift system, is that children are sometimes left unsupervised.

Figure 2.7: Emotive Responses relating to Shift Schools

(Ruddock, 1999 as cited in Baxter, 2000)

Some of what are deemed “emotional responses” are in fact legitimate concerns (especially number 6). It is possible that when children are left without proper adult supervision they may get involved in inappropriate behaviours such as crime and violence. In addition, it is also a fact that the climatic conditions of extreme heat in the long summer months and afternoon rains during the rainy months (as was briefly discussed in Section 2.3), can be problematic for schools in general and even more acute in shift schools because of the early start and late dismissal times.

2.3.4 Section Conclusions and Summary

- It appears as if the shift system was born in a time of much political changes and that its fate was stalled amidst political forces. This is an example of how the political arena can have direct impact on educational practice.
- There has always been opposition and scepticism to the shift system; schools organised on the whole day basis being deemed as superior in quality.
- The practice of shifting was a temporarily introduced to solve the problem of inadequate school spaces and its consequential overcrowding in Jamaica. Shifting was originally done in the urban area where there is pronounced scarcity of land. However, the shift system appears to be a permanent part of the educational tapestry and is in operation in all fourteen parishes in Jamaica; with those having the highest population densities having the greater number of shift schools (see Figure 2.7).

- Critically, the original conceptualisation of a shift school is that it was treated as two schools whilst presently a shift school is treated as a single school.
- Preconditions for shift school are frequently not in place.
- Shift school have limitations that need ‘educational scaffolding’ to reduce the potential educational impact on learners.

Although there are over a hundred shift schools in operation, the shift system is seen as a weakness in the Jamaican education system and it has been recommended to be discontinued (Jamaican Task Educational Force, 2004). In light of the previously mentioned peculiarities, tensions and dilemma of the shift system in Jamaica, the upcoming sections will focus on issues related to the education of pupils with SEN within this context.

2.4 Section Three

2.4.1 Special Education

The MOE (Education Statistics, 2008/9, Jamaica) in its description of special education states that:

It caters to children who find it difficult to learn in the regular school setting without specialised support services. Special education provides for the blind, deaf and hearing impaired, mentally challenged, students with multiple disabilities, the physically challenged, the learning disabled and the gifted and talented

In addition, the MOE further itemised area of disability in special education institutions as is reflected in Table 2.2 below.

**Table 2.2: Enrolment in Special School by Disabilities
(MOE, Education Statistics, 2008/9)**

Disabilities	Numbers
Blind and visually impaired only	99
Deaf and hearing impaired only	421
Learning Disabilities only	444
Mentally Retarded	1737
Multiple Disabilities	670
Physical Disabilities	217
Autism	103
Attention Hyperactivity Disorder	52
Speech and Language Disabilities	275
Other Disabilities	382

On close examination a few observations are worth highlighting. Firstly, in a school system that has a pronounced level of negative behaviour, there is no acknowledgement of pupils with behavioural difficulties neither in the description nor its itemisation according to disabilities. Is to be understood that there are no children in Jamaica that their behavioural difficulties warrant them attending special schools? Or could it be argued that they are subsumed in the category of ‘other disabilities’. It is plausible that the posited definition and naming of disabilities could be a cultural reflection in that negative behaviour is seen as bad manners and just that, and not as SEN. Beattie et al, 2006 in citing reasons for children needing special education specifically named ‘behavioural difficulties’. In some countries such the UK, emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) would be a distinct category and much attention has been devoted to addressing this area of SEN (Department of Education, 1997, Daniels and Cole, 2002 and Cross, 2004).

Secondly, whilst the gifted and talented are mentioned in the description of those who are deemed as having SEN, this discreet category is not being enrolled in any special education institution. Again, why is this so, are they no ‘gifted and talented’ school children in Jamaican schools? If they are subsumed in the ‘other disabilities’ categories, why is there no focus on it? There could be those who are gifted and talented that their potentials are not being tapped. The picture above begs the question how the MOE would handle SEN in mainstream schools (especially at the primary level)? Would there be re-conceptualisation or would there be a photocopying? The upcoming section will seek to establish an operational definition of SEN and also to make a distinction between special needs.

2.4.2 Special Educational Needs versus Special Needs

A significant portion of the debates that occurs in the field of special education from as early as the 70s has been with the issue of definitions and as consequence, incidences (Moses, 1996). Pring (2000) strengthens this idea of a continual contestation when he opines that there is almost never a unanimous acceptance of given definitions. This is so, he reasons, because terms are usually value laden, which themselves are contested in the wider society. However, in spite of the contestable nature of terminologies, conceptual clarity is vital in research (Evans, 2002) and as such much effort has been invested in this research to achieve this critical element. Consequently, for the purpose of clarity and consideration for the Jamaican context, a distinction is being made

between special needs and special educational needs (SEN). The use of the term SEN was established in England after the terms handicapped was disapproved of (Farrell, 2004). Education Act 1996 (UK), Section 312 states that a child possesses SEN if there is a learning difficulty that requires that special educational provision be done for them. A SEN should be understood in the context of children's learning in relation to schools' learning objectives which are directed by the NC. If pupils are lagging behind in their achievements, it represents a position in relation to what is regarded as normal in relation to the prescriptive requirements of the NC. The NC is not neutral; it is a statement of a preferred set of values.

On the other hand, special needs may refer to personal issues that may adversely affect an individual. In essence, special needs can impact learning and can probably manifest itself ultimately as SEN; but it critical that the concepts are not treated as synonyms. For example, a popular special need amongst school age children in Jamaica is a nutritional deficit that is likely to have an impact on children's health and as a consequence may affect their ability to positively engage with the rigors of schooling. It is not a SEN, but it can lead to it. According to the MOE, SEN refer to "*as having mental, physical and intellectual capabilities which deviates significantly, from the norm expected at their age*". Notably, again this definition excludes behavioural difficulties. Therefore, a plausible conclusion is that behavioural difficulty is not named because it not conceptualised as a SEN. When the definitions of SEN from the UK and from Jamaica are compared there is a major difference. The definition used in the UK not only points out the needs of children but goes further to state the needs necessitate special provision. The definition used in Jamaica stops short of aligning provision to the identified needs. Identification without a commitment for provision will eventually lead to frustration on the part of administrators, teachers and most critically the pupils concerned.

2.4.3 Integration versus Inclusion

Increasingly, pupils with SEN are being educated in mainstream schools (Stakes and Hornby, 2000). Again conceptual clarity is useful. The concepts of integration and inclusion are sometimes used as synonyms. There is also much difficulty as it relates to their meanings. However, they should be seen as dynamic rather than fixed concepts (Leadbetter and Leadbetter, 1993). However, there are sufficient grounds on which a distinction can be made. In the UK, the term 'integration (synonymous to

mainstreaming) was in popular use in the 1980s (Farrell and Ainscow, 2002). In the 1990s the terms became broader than was used in the Warnock Report (1978) encompassing a wider set of educational provision. According to Casey (2005) integration is about those with disabilities and by extension learning difficulties being required to adapt to their environments. In essence, they are to get better and do better, in order to fit in. According to Elkins (2005) integration refers to the schooling of children in mainstream schools without much change to the hosting school system. Inclusion goes significantly further to imply a total acceptance of a pupil with disability and SEN in a school system and making changes to foster full involvement.

Later the term 'inclusion' came to popular usage. The change of terminologies from integration to inclusion represents a change in educational thinking and practice. Inclusion is complex educational development (Zollers et al, 1999). Its meaning can be very different depending on the context and the person (Casey, 2005). The conceptual shift from integration to inclusion is significant as it marks advancement in thinking of the rights of the disabled in the society and importantly, the new responsibilities of settings, such as schools. According to Gilhool (1989, as cited in Zollers et al, 1999) inclusion refers to educational programme in which pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties are educated alongside their age appropriate peers in ordinary classrooms with suitable support and learning aids. Friend and Williams (1998) defines inclusive education as integrating and educating most learners with disabilities in mainstream education system. Herein is typified the debatable issues with definitions- the term integration is used synonymously for inclusion.

2.4. 4 Genesis of Inclusive Education

Although Jamaica practices integration and not inclusion, it is still needful that an overview be done of the latter since it is the current trend of practice in meeting the SEN of pupils (especially in developed countries). Inclusive education finds its roots in several events. According to Mitchell (2004) the concept of 'normalization' which originated in Scandinavia in the 1960s is one of the earliest influences on inclusive education. In UK, the Warnock Report (1978) was an iconic report in a critical era for the education of individuals with disabilities. Other influences include the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) as declared by the UN (<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/37/a37r052.htm>). Importantly, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) added tremendous momentum to the quest towards inclusion. This landmark report also had much influence in European countries.

Essentially, inclusion embraces the notion that all learners as much as is possible should learn together irrespective of their diversity (UNESCO, 1994). It is important to bring into the discussion an important variation in the issues surrounding inclusion, that of full inclusion. It is worth noting that there are strong arguments for and against inclusion. Many argue that it is the basic human right (Centre for Studies of Inclusive Education, 2002). That is all learners no matter what the disability should be educated together at their local schools with age-appropriate mates with support (Mesibov and Shea, 1996). This view of inclusion may be seen as short sighted and fails to take into account all the practical implications of such a view of inclusion. Based on the researcher's experience as a teacher of pupils with SEN in special schools, the argument being made for greater inclusion is a legitimate one. However, there is still need for special schools. The critical issue is finding the balance and placing pupils in the right context to meet their educational needs. In essence, inclusion should be child-focus and not simply just complying with a political dogma. For example, there are some pupils whose needs are such (especially those pupil with profound and multiple disabilities, PMLD) which require significant medical input and whose classroom position maybe on a special adjustable bed. These pupils' personal care issues can be really complex which makes educating them in ordinary classroom may, paradoxically, be considered an infringement on their personal dignity and human right, which are the very fundamentals of inclusive education. Rightly, Smith and Dowdy (1998) call for what he refers to as 'responsible inclusion' herein lays the sensitive balance if inclusion is going to succeed. The point is not being made that pupils with PMLD cannot be educated in mainstream schools, rather that some pupils due to the nature of their SEN, their needs would be better served, even if temporarily, in special school contexts. Eleweke and Rodda (2002) opine that the implementation of inclusive education would mean a greater number of children in developing countries would be getting an education. Interestingly, whilst Jamaica does not subscribe to inclusive education per se, the aim of its education system bears close resemblance to the ethos and values of inclusive education as can be seen below:

education for citizenship rather than for status; to provide equality and not identity of opportunity; to fit our schools to the needs and capacities of the children ... rather than to fit the children to our schools...

(Kendal Report on Education, Jamaica (1983, p. 4)

2.4.5 Brief History of Special Education in Jamaica

Special education in Jamaica is an emerging practice and as such it is evolving. In 1956, formal Special Education started in Jamaica at the School of Hope for pupils with mental retardation. Throughout the ensuing years similar schools emerged over the country (<http://www.moec.gov.jm/divisions/ed/specialeducation/specialisation.htm> 2005). The education of pupils with SEN (known then as mentally and physically handicapped) has been a cause for much concern for a long while. Special Education is a recent frontier and similar to most of the other educational developments, it too was established by private initiatives (Miller, 1985). In 1976 a Special Education Department was launched at Mico Teachers' College, in a historic moment free education was extended to the handicapped child for the first time. In September 1973 free education in public secondary school was implemented (*The Education Thrust of the 70's*, 1973). In 1975/76, for the first time, "Equal Opportunity in Education for All" (MOE Annual Report, 1976, p. 52) was incorporated under the government's policy. In 1975, October 12-15 there was a Caribbean Regional Conference on the Handicapped Child (the term used then) held in Jamaica. In the 1976-77 Annual Report (MOE, 1976/7, p. 44) the following shortcomings were highlighted:

- *Lack of knowledge of the incidence and prevalence of handicapping conditions.*
- *Inadequate procedures for diagnosis, prescribing and placing children in suitable educational provision.*
- *Lack of co-ordination among governmental authorities and private agencies dealing with handicapped children.*
- *Unnecessary isolation for many children in special schools and classes excluding them from normal activities and associations.*
- *A tremendous shortage of teachers for teaching the handicapped.*
- *Lack of the responsibility and authority for special education programmes conducted in Unit classes in regular schools.*
- *Inadequate space available for children needing special education.*
- *An absence of governmental standards for curriculum and performance of students and teachers in government supported institutions.*

To date many of the above cited shortcomings still continue to dog educational practice in Jamaica. The area that has seen the greatest educational advancement is that of 'governmental standards for curriculum'. There is a NC in operation in primary schools and beyond. Consequently, there is need for this and other such research which will zero in on the pupils with SEN with the hope that the findings can provide a platform for positive changes that can translate in the amelioration of the education of those children deemed as having SEN. In 1989, Special Education was removed from the

Early Childhood Department in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture and was established as a separate entity known as Special Education Unit. One element of the Jamaica Five Year Developmental Plan for the period of 1990-1995 (1990, 39) was that

other policies of the education sector crucial to the basic needs of the population are those dealing with special education for the disabled and gifted... Provisions will be made to accommodate students with special needs throughout the education system and to sensitize the society to responding appropriately to their requirements

One of the targets set is that individuals with SEN will be catered for within the education system and that the wider society will be made aware of their role in accommodating them. This has implication for the school system which will be further explored in the upcoming section.

2.4.6 Education of Children with Special Educational Needs

We are living in changed and changing times (Nettleford, 2001) and as such a school is by necessity much more than a system comprising of governors (school board in the Jamaican context) principals, teachers, diverse pupils, parents, curriculum, text books and other such elements. It is critical that the 'why' of the system is understood. The education process should be so structured that every child's potential is maximised. It is important that 'every' really means 'every' which includes pupils with SEN. The practice of special education has experience relatively recent and inconsistent development in various parts of the world (Reynolds and Ainscow, 1994). According to Miller (1985) children in the Caribbean with SEN were educated separately from their peers. He also states that children with mild or moderate difficulties are educated alongside their peers without the necessary identification of and provision for their SEN. Since the mid 60's most of the governments of the Commonwealth Caribbean have incorporated their special schools into the public education system. As a consequence of this incorporation, mainstreaming of children with SEN became possible (Miller, 1985). In some Caribbean countries special education units have been built in primary schools. In Jamaica there are 7 primary schools which have Special Units attached to them (MOE, Education Statistics, 2008/9). There is no official figure in Jamaica with regards to the number of pupils in mainstream schools that have SEN. In the Jamaican Task Force on Educational Reform Report (2004, p. 6) in what is called a 'Transformed Education System' under the heading of 'Curriculum, Teaching and

Learning Support' the condition regarding pupils with SEN in mainstream schools is described as follows:

*The extent of special needs children- both gifted or challenged
–is not known and so the first step is to embark on a “child find.
Both the gifted and the challenged require special treatment,
and teachers, instructional material and other support must be provided*

There are a significant number of pupils with SEN which is being educated in the public education systems in the majority of the Caribbean (Armstrong et al, 2005). They further state that only the minority of these children are likely to be children that have a presenting disability that is sensory in nature. In other words there are not blind, deaf (or partially hearing) or brain damaged, rather having learning difficulties which are inhibitions in their ability to achieve educational objectives.

Lowe and Ragbir (1983) in *The Survey of Handicapped Children* in the Jamaican schools, funded by the Netherlands government, 4.42% of the then pupil population aged 4 to 11 in Jamaican public schools (N= 18,269) were screened for the presence of what was then called handicaps. The research concluded that 8.27% (approximately 1:12) of the sample were found to be handicapped in one of seven categories: hearing, visual, physical, speech, emotional, mentally retarded and learning disabled. Importantly the category of the learning disabled was significantly most common (35.3%). The other results in order of prevalence were as follows: mentally retarded (17.2%), hearing impaired (14.0%), emotionally handicapped (13.2%), visually impaired (13.1%), speech impaired (5.6%) and physically handicapped (1.7%). Importantly, handicaps are categorised in levels of severity- mild, moderate and severe. The approximate ratios of outcome were 6, 3 and 1 respectively. Males manifested more handicapping characteristics than females at a ratio of 3:2. This research was carried out almost 3 decades ago whereby progress has been made in terms of terminologies (some of which would now be considered inappropriate). A ratio of 1:12 with regards to the presence of SEN appears to be rather low given the context of the Jamaican education system especially at the primary level where they are identified problems. It is therefore critical in the Jamaican educational landscape that issues such as definitions, categorisations and methods of identification be addressed with a matter of urgency so that issues relating to teacher training, legislation and policies, provisions and school management are tackled in order to adequately address the needs of those pupils with SEN in Jamaican schools.

If the UK ratio of pupils with SEN of 1 in every 5 (Warnock Report, 1978) is applied to the Jamaican context, it means therefore that of the 271,722 pupils attending mainstream primary schools in Jamaica (MOE Statistics, 2008/9); 54,344 of them are likely to have SEN without the benefit of either assessment or adequate provisions. It is also possible that the prevalence of pupils with SEN is more than 1 in 5 in Jamaican schools in light of the fact that it is a developing country and that there is no strategy for early intervention.

In a recent landmark special education research (in the Jamaican context) carried out by Baker-Henningham (2007) in which it aimed at determining the number of children which were experiencing learning difficulty in Zone 6 (see Figure 2.2) using the National Assessment Programme Tests results at grades 1, 3, 4 and 6. In this research the results of the national tests revealed that a significant proportion of pupils are not meeting the requirements of the NC. A large proportion of children were classified as non-mastery. Test results were as follows: only 38% of the grade one pupils achieved mastery at the Grade One Readiness inventory. On the Grade 3 Diagnostic Language Arts and Mathematics Tests, 90% and 95% respectively did not master all the subscales. On the Grade 4 Literacy Test, almost half (45%) of the pupils did not master all the subscales. Two thirds of the pupils scored below 50% in mathematics and almost half scored below 50% in Language Arts of the Grade 6 Achievement Test. The teacher questionnaire collected information primarily on teachers' confidence in teaching pupils with learning difficulty and their teaching strategies. The following are some of the pertinent key results from the teachers' questionnaire:

- *Over 55% of teachers had low self confidence in the ability to teach pupils with learning difficulties.*
- *Children with learning difficulties are reported to be less likely than the children to do their homework and this is of concern as it is the children with difficulties who will need the practice the most.*
- *Nearly 90% of teachers reported that all the children in the grade 6 do the same test.*
- *Teachers reported rarely see the parents of children with learning difficulties suggesting that teachers and schools are not successful in reaching out to the parents of these children who need assistance [the most].*
- *Children learning difficulties are not being successfully engaged in the teaching learning process according to the teachers report. The percentage of time these children are on tasks is unacceptably low.*
- *Teachers reported using a range of undesirable strategies in their dealing with children or having difficulty with the work. 55% of teachers reported beating children having difficulty, 20% reported calling them idiot, fool or dunce, 72% shout at them and 86% threaten to punish them.*

- *Teachers also reported using some helpful strategies with children with learning difficulties. The most common strategy supported were to encourage children by praising them (86%), re-teaching the material (72%) and offering an incentive for doing the work (71%). The least, strategies were to give children experiencing difficulties easier were in the same subject area (35%) and to reach out in a positive way to the child's parents (approximately 30%).*

(Baker-Henningham, 2007 p.24)

It was revealed that teachers reported that approximately 20% of pupils have SEN and reading difficulties. Criticality too, the outcome of both the National Assessment Progress tests and teachers questionnaires highlighted that underachievement was especially prevalent in boys and they were at risk for learning difficulties and substandard academic performance. The above mentioned findings potentially have far reaching effects and have significant implication for teacher training programmes and school policies and practices. The next section will examine teacher training in Jamaica generally and specifically in relation to meeting pupils' SEN.

2.4.7 Teacher Training and Meeting Special Educational Needs

Teachers are critical to the achievement of educational goals (Turner, 2001). The provision of teacher education is challenging in most countries but it is acute in developing ones (Mashile, 2008). There is a relationship with the training of teachers and their ability to meet the SEN of their pupils and this in turn will influence their sense of efficacy. In the UK, one of the prerequisites of all newly qualified teachers is having the ability to recognize pupils' SEN including those with English as second language, having specific learning difficulty and being gifted (Teacher Training Agency, 1999). There is no such stipulation in the Jamaican context. In Cains' and Brown's (1998) research they state the newly qualified teachers (primary and secondary) felt they were not adequately prepared to address issues of SEN presented by pupils. It is worth noting that in the UK context where there is an explicit criterion where training of teachers in relation to SEN of pupils is concerned, and there is a feeling of inadequacy what about the Jamaican context where this criterion does not exist?

For both general and special education teachers, meeting the needs of diverse learners is quite a challenging task (Mercer and Mercer, 2001). A significant number of educational investigations included a critical look at teacher training. The main reason education was not made compulsory in Jamaica like in other Caribbean countries, is the limitedness of resources for both buildings and trained teachers. Therefore, the populace

had the option of utilising or ignoring whatever educational provision that was made available (Turner, 2001), which invariably led to the shift system.

The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) provides quality assurance in teacher education in Jamaica (since 1965) (www.jbte.edu.jm/ 2010). Over this period the JBTE has certified in excess of 50,000 teachers across the Caribbean, primarily in Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize. The Jamaican educational workforce is multi-layered. The MOE has in its employ (at the minimum) pre-trained teachers (usually high school graduates with good external examination passes), trained teachers (with a teachers college diploma which is less than a bachelor's degree) and trained graduate teachers (usually those with teacher training along with a bachelor's degree). Teachers who work in primary schools in Jamaica, in most cases, received their training in teachers' colleges which are institutions which grant teaching diploma after three years of study. A few colleges are now granting degrees after adding a fourth year of study then awarding of a Bachelor of Education. However, the starting baseline for the majority of teachers in Jamaican primary schools is a diploma in teaching after having specialised in primary education or their areas of specialism such as Music and Physical Education. Many teachers, after having taught for a number of years, pursue further qualifications to earn bachelors and other higher degrees as part of their CPD.

Currently in Jamaica there are 25,015 teachers employed by the MOE in the public education system (MOE Teacher Statistics, 2008/9). In most countries school teaching is female dominated (Addi-Racah, 2005 and Drudy, 2008). The teaching profession in Jamaica is in keeping with this general trend. The female to male ratio stands at 9:1; with female accounting to 79% (n=19,774). Notably, although female teachers account for such an overwhelming majority, only 6% of them function in administrative roles (principals and vice principals) when compared with 9% males. Table 2.3 gives an overview of the distribution of teachers by qualification based on the MOE's Teacher Statistics (2008/9).

Table 2.3 Distribution of Teachers by Qualification

Teachers' Qualification	%
Trained College Graduates	53.5
Trained University Graduates	31.8
Untrained secondary School Graduates	5.5
Untrained University Graduates	5.1
Untrained Tertiary Level Graduates	3.1
Trained Instructors	1.0

In keeping with the baseline requirement for teaching jobs in Jamaica over half of the teaching workforce are trained college graduates. The 5.5% untrained secondary school graduates are cause for concern and they should be identified and supported to become qualified. The ratio of trained to untrained teachers working in the system is 6:1 respectively. Specifically there are 3,681 untrained teachers with 43.2% of them having only secondary education (MOE, Education Statistics, 2008/9). With almost half of untrained teachers having only secondary education it has the potential to compromise the education of pupils. This has grave implication to the quality of the education being given to pupils especially in light of the projected number of pupils with SEN. If teachers which are trained repeatedly report feeling out of their depth when trying to meet the needs of pupils with SEN, it is highly likely that teachers with only secondary education will be operating completely out of their skill set- limited in subject content and unprepared in the critical areas of classroom management skills and teaching methodology. The reduction and eventual eradication pre-trained teachers from the Jamaican school system is an issue which require urgent action by the MOE.

In 1975, a formal Special Education programme was established in Jamaica. This was achieved through development collaboration between the governments of Jamaica and the Dutch. The Dutch government provided assistance in several areas, one of which was the construction of Special Education Units attached to primary and All-Age schools. These units were built to facilitate mainstreaming which provided for the education of pupils with SEN in the least restrictive environment (<http://www.moec.gov.jm/divisions/ed/specialeducation/specialisation.htm>). In addition, in 1976 a Special Education Department was added to the areas of specialization at Mico Teachers' College which facilitated the training of special education teachers in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. A decade later a first degree in Special Education was introduced at Mico College and was offered in collaboration with the University of the

West Indies. Importantly, the Mico Child Assessment and Research in Education (Mico CARE) Centre was established. This centre offers diagnosis, therapeutic intervention, and clinical practice for trainee teachers majoring in Special Education; facilitates and advances research in special education and fosters public awareness about children with special needs (Mico CARE Centre, 2005). It is the primary institution in Jamaica that offers assessment for children educational challenges in a multi-disciplinary context.

2.4.8 Legislation in Jamaica for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Having explored teacher training in relation to meeting the needs of learners with SEN in the foregoing section, this section will explain the legislative framework in which teachers operate to meet these needs. In most developed countries there is legislation that specifically addresses the education of children with SEN. In the UK pupils with SEN often have statements, have supportive legislation and social services to look after the welfare of the children concerned (SEN Code of Practice, 2001). Whilst some countries' education system is bombarded by a plethora of policies others have very little. Eleweke and Rodda (2002) contend that it is critical that relevant legislation be passed to ensure quality of education for all and specifically for disabled children.

Since the International Year of Persons with Disabilities (1981), there has been greater acknowledgment of the necessity to promote change in public policy and programmes which are geared towards greater self agency and inclusion of those who are mentally or physically challenged. As a consequence of this promotion, a National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was agreed to by the GOJ in 2000. This saw increased attention in several areas of which education is key. In spite of the then impetus, improvement support fell below ideal standards, primarily due to inadequate resources (McDonald, 2002). It is worth noting that although the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities provided much-needed guidelines for the betterment of adults and children with disabilities, it lacks the 'weight' of the status of legislation (Innerarity, 2002). However, a National Disability Act is being drafted. In addition, Jamaica has ratified several international policies such as UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (<http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20100906/lead/lead3.html>) and the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1991 (Davies, 2000). Although the signing of the Convention of the Rights of the Child heralded a commitment to reviewing legislation which impact children (Davies, 2000), however, there is only a draft policy for special education for Jamaican school children. Although legislation

does not guarantee the amelioration of the quality of education received by pupils with SEN, however, they provide critical functions (see Figure 2.8) which are usually precursor for this.

- Define the provision that the pupils with SEN are entitled to
- Address gaps in provisions
- Create a context for monitoring and evaluating educational service providers
- Provides accountability
- Defines outcomes of non-compliance

Figure 2.8: Functions of Legislation
(Adapted from Eleweke and Rodda, 2002)

For example, Row (2005 p. 19) asserts that “*you [caregivers] have rights in law, as does your child*”. This statement was made in the UK context as an advice to caregivers to remind them of their rights to access support for their children with SEN. Would this statement be true in the Jamaican context? In Jamaica the legislative structure is inadequate in relation to the level of care and provision needed for individuals in general with disabilities and pupils with SEN in particular. According to Peresuh and Barcham (1998) it is the norm that there are policies and laws in place in developed countries to govern the education and other services for persons with SEN and disabilities, but this is not often so in developing countries. Although The Education Act (Jamaica) (1965) states that school attendance for the age cohort of 6 and 11 is mandatory. However, there is no legislation or policy that specifically addresses the education of those with SEN. Presently a Special Education Policy is being drafted; but it is still not in the public’s domain.

As was previously mentioned, free education for all was established in 1973 by the Government of Jamaica that had implications for the education of children with SEN. The MOE acknowledged its responsibility for the education of children with handicap (handicap being the term in use then) (MOE, 1977). In 1974, the GOJ agreed to support children who would be able to profit from being educated in the context of mainstream (<http://www.moec.gov.jm/divisions/ed/specialeducation/history.htm>,2008). Despite the lack of specific legislation to provide for and support pupils with SEN of pupils, it is worth noting that the following government and non-government agencies cater for individuals with disabilities and learning disabilities including children (McDonald (2002):

- The Jamaica Association for Children Learning Disabilities (JACLD)
- The 3D Projects
- Private Voluntary Organizations Limited (PVO)
- The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPC)
- The Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD)
- The Jamaica Association for Persons with Mental Retardation (JAPMR)
- The school of Hope Network (SHN)

2.4.9 Pressures and Constraints in the Jamaican Education System

The previous section addressed legislation in Jamaica for pupils with SEN, this section will address the constraints that exist in the Jamaican educational system. Education systems throughout the world will experience similar and peculiar pressures which make meeting the educational needs of pupils difficult. This section will seek to discuss some of the more pertinent pressures and constraints in the Jamaican education system in which the SEN of pupils are addressed in Figure 2.9.

- Economic Constraints
- Inadequate Learning Environment
- High Attrition Rate of Teachers
- Managing the Education for those with Education Disabilities
- Large class sizes
- The shift system
- High levels of Illiteracy
- Pupils' Negative Behaviour
- Rural/Urban Dichotomy reflected in Education
- Low School Attendance

Figure 2.9: Constraints in Jamaican Education System

2.4.9.1 Economics Constraints

Jamaica's inadequate national budget brings about financial constraints whereby not all sectors can be acceptably catered for (Davies, 2000). McDowell, 2000) posits that there is a dire need for the children of the Caribbean to be adequately provided for. One of the resultant features of living in the Caribbean and in other developing countries is the reality of poverty and this often manifested in limited educational opportunities of some individuals and inadequate provisions supplied by schools. A country's economic situation has major effect on the educational choices people make in terms of the type and the levels (Kambon and Busby, 2000). Significant social and economic reforms have been occurring in the Caribbean since the 1980s and 90s which is a reflection on the attempt to cope with growing economic deficits and increasing external debts (ibid.). Miller (2000) asserts that Caribbean countries indebtedness continues to have negative impact on their abilities to maintain and make new investments in education. Since the economies of the Caribbean countries are small and open they experience difficulties competing on the world market (Ellis, 2003). A country's economic buoyancy or lack thereof can have far reaching impact. For example, in the Caribbean Consultation World Conference on Education For All held November 22-24, 1989 at the Jamaican Conference Centre (The Debt Crisis and its Impact on Jamaican Education) it was stated that due to the debt crisis felt at the macro level (government) and the micro level (families, schools), the financial difficulties in the 1980s led to the government closing one teacher training college and a teacher training department in a

community college, withdrew some welfare initiatives (such as discontinued giving free school uniforms to needy students and reducing financial help at the secondary level) teachers' salaries could not be increased, increased taxes and in 1986 a cess (which is paying a portion of one's tuition fees) were introduced. Whilst poverty is not necessarily a precursor to underachievement it is possible for children fail at school for non-educational reasons.

Due to the economical constraints cited above, Jamaica, like most developing countries receives external assistance in several ways for its education system. The British government helped to implement the secondary textbook rental scheme. Loans were received from the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and USAID to assist in the development of the primary and secondary levels of education (Caribbean Consultation World Conference on Education for All held November 22-24, 1989 at the Jamaican Conference Centre (the Debt Crisis and its Impact on Jamaican Education). Inadequate financial power usually leads to inadequate learning environment which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

2.4.9.2 Inadequate Learning Environment

The physical environment in schools affects pupils' learning. Suitable light, noise control, and learning materials and temperature are necessary for optimal learning. Both teacher and pupils are affected by extremes in these conditions (Manlove et al, 2001). Johnson (1999) conducted a survey in Jamaica where data were collected from field officers and teachers from 135 classrooms within 40 schools in rural and urban primary and All Age schools investigating classroom resources. The classroom observation schedule checked for 12 items which were predicted to be present in classrooms including instructional charts, curriculum guides, chalkboard/chalk, desks and chairs for students, chalkboard partitions and desks and chairs for teachers. According to Johnson's findings, less than half (45.5%) had adequate chairs for their students whilst 6% had none. Sixty-nine percentage of the classrooms had partition (for example, see Figure 2.10). This study concluded that on the whole there is marked inadequacy of facilities and equipment in primary schools both at the classroom and school levels, thus making teaching difficult.

2.4.9.3 High Attrition of Teachers (especially SEN specialists)

Teachers are critical in the delivery of education. As was previously mentioned a shortage of qualified special education teachers endanger the quality of education pupils with disabilities are given (Billingsley, 2004). From as early as 1976/7 one of the shortcomings of the highlighted in the Jamaican education system was a dire shortage of teachers for pupils with SEN (then called handicapped) (MOE Annual Report, 1976). Teachers leave the classroom for different reasons. Special education teachers who are uncertified, inexperienced and younger are more prone to attrite (Billingsley, 2004). Ondrich et al (2008) assert that newly trained teachers are less effective than those with more experience, hence implying that pupils in schools with a greater number of inexperienced teachers will learn less than those who have more experienced teachers (with all the other factors being the same). It also has higher attrition rate in comparison with other professions (Addi-Racciah, 2005). The recruitment and retention of teachers have been the source of major concern to education officials, researchers and legislators. Ondrich et al (2008, p. 122) assert that “*schools with a large concentration of disadvantaged students may have a more challenging working environment than schools with relatively advantaged students*”. This disparity in working environment may influence teacher mobility.

Brownell et al (1997) in a research with 93 special needs teachers in Florida using telephone interviews to investigate why they leave the classroom, their employment standing and career projections. One of the findings was that the majority of them demitted the classroom because of the dissatisfaction with the working conditions. The attrition rate of special education teachers can have a negative effect on setting up premier programmes for pupils with disabilities. Attrition rate in addition to the general shortage of teachers inevitably lead to untrained personnel operating in special education role (ibid.).

In the case of Jamaica there are 27 special schools (17 public -including the 7 special education units attached to primary schools and 10 independent); the teaching workforce in the public special schools is 424. A little over a third of them is untrained (n=152). It is worth noting that there is a similar pattern of a strong presence of untrained teachers in the independent special schools too (N=78, untrained n= 35, 44.8%) (MOE Education Statistics, 2008/9). If the presence of untrained teachers is so pronounced in special schools, it is plausible to believe that trained teachers available for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools would also be in short supply, maybe even more so. Without adequate numbers of teachers to deliver the NC, there will be dire

effects. Research *has* been inconclusive regarding the attrition rates for teachers of different subject. However, it seems like the attrition rate for special education teachers is constantly higher than for other subject. This high attrition rate for special education teachers is challenging since these vacancies are usually most difficult to fill (Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004).

There are numerous reasons for the high attrition from the teaching profession in Jamaica and other developing. One of these reasons is that teachers do not feel like they are appropriately remunerated within their own countries. Therefore, they are attracted to more lucrative employment in more developed countries; coupled with the constantly devalued home country currency. Kofi Annan (the then UN Secretary General), in a report stated that approximately 191 million people have immigrated to developed countries. Whilst he mentioned the benefits of international migration, he emphasized the danger of ‘brain drain’. He stated that approximately 60% of the highly educated Jamaicans had migrated (BBC News, Global Migrants Reach 191 Million, June 7, 2006). The factor of large classes will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.9.4 Large Class Size

Class size remains a much-debated political and educational subject. Walters and Castle (1967) described Caribbean schools in the late 60’s to be of one or more large rooms, with different classes being taught alongside each other. Desks are usually heavy, narrow and awkward (see Figure 2.10). Many teachers are untrained with students having very little learning resources. Class sizes are frequently extremely big (even 100 students) with the prevailing teaching method being ‘chalk and talk’. They also state that in some school there are no lavatories and equipment for Home Economics, Wood Work and Science. In addition, there are not enough specialist teachers for these subjects (teacher training and attrition of teachers have been addressed in Sections 2. 14 and 2.16.3 respectively). Forty years have elapsed since this description was made, in the case of Jamaica, how much has this picture changed?

In Jamaica, primary classrooms are still crowded spaces. The degree of congestion is not only an issue of the number of pupils in the classroom but also the physical space in which the pupils and teachers work and learn. Some teachers work in cramped and awkward shaped classrooms that impinge on level of flexibility available (Comber and Wall, 2001). Whilst the occurrence of overcrowding is not experienced only at the primary level, it is particularly acute there due to the government’s

implementation of universal compulsory education. Of the 25,013 teacher workforce, 32.7% (n=10,734) of them work at the primary level of the education system in 792 primary education granting institutions serving 271,722 primary pupils. This reflects a teacher/pupil ratio at this level of 1:27 (MOE Teacher Statistics, 2008/9). However, this teacher/pupil ratio is not reflected in the classroom reality. The MOE has acknowledged that the figure for the number of teacher used to calculate the teacher/pupil ratio includes administrators, guidance counsellors and teachers who are on leave. Without question this would not paint an accurate picture of the largely overcrowded primary classes which exist in Jamaica. A more accurate representation of teacher/pupil ratio would be to exclude those educational personnel who do not directly participate in teaching (such as principal and vice principals) and those who are largely excluded from teaching because of their highly specialist function in schools.

According to Bray (2000) the shift system is a strategy used in numerous countries to attempt to achieve universal education. The overcrowding of classrooms can be addressed in several ways. As was previously mentioned, one of the strategies used in Jamaica being used to cope with this problem is organising the regular school day on a shift system. Shift system was intended to alleviate the capacity problem on a short-term basis (Task Force on Educational Reform, 2004). Even in shift schools in Jamaica, class size in primary schools can be as large as being in the 40s. In spite of the government's aim of reducing the teacher/pupil ratio in primary school to 27 (MOE, Education Statistics, 2008/9) they still remain high, even though not as high as 100 as was stated by Walters and Castle (1967). Many primary classrooms continue to be just a large open space portioned off by chalkboards with the old-fashioned heavy wooden desks; seating two and in extreme cases three pupils (see Figure 2.10).



Figure 2.10: A Current Jamaican Primary Classroom*

*To preserve anonymity, this classroom was not taken from the case study school (MMPS). It is one from a different school which is comparable.

In Figure 2.10 of a current Jamaican classroom it can be observed that classrooms are still being partitioned using chalkboards and the heavy wooden desks are still in operation. Unquestionably, this learning environment would be frequently noisy which is not conducive to optimal learning, since there is no permanent wall partition which would act as a sound barrier. This learning environment also limits teachers' scope to be creative in their teaching methods; it is little wonder that even to date the 'chalk and talk' method is still popular. It is also important that Walters and Castle's (1967) description be understood in the context of Jamaica normal climatic conditions especially in the summer month which can be oppressively hot.

Class size impacts seating arrangement. According to Hastings et al (1996) it was the norm in Victorian classrooms for pupils to sit in rows. However, there has been a shift in English primary schools for pupils to be seated in groups. He further states that the practice of pupils sitting in rows is still current in some countries such as France and Jamaica. The bipolarity of Hastings et al (1996) categorisation of seating arrangements is limited. Another possible seating arrangement could be that of 'sitting in rows in groups' not simply one or the other; but rather a combination. This is a common mode of seating arrangement in Jamaican primary schools. These conditions have implications for the practice of the shift system which will be discussed in the upcoming section.

2.4.9.5 Shift System

Sections 2.8 to 2.8.2 have already addressed the shift system in great details. However, in this section it is being addressed expressly as a limitation (an interim measure since its inception). The shift system has been repeatedly acknowledged by the MOE (Task Force of Education, Jamaica, 2004) as a deficiency in education system. Pupils that attend schools which operate on the shift system have less contact time with teachers and other professionals than pupils that attend schools which operate on the whole day basis. In terms of co- curricular activities, when shift schools are compared with those schools which are arranged on the whole day structure, in the shift system at its best it is reduced and at its worst it eliminates this important aspect of school life which serves as a critical instrument in the development of pupils. It is therefore important that measures are put in place in these schools to address the deficit in the lives of pupils

impacted by the shift system. Pupils attending shift schools, (depending on the distance they live from school) in order to be on time for school can be strenuous especially for those on the morning shift. It possibly they will have to get up by 5:30 to 6 am. For some, this will also mean missing breakfast.

On the whole, governments award a high utility value on whole day shift schools. This is demonstrated by the government of Trinidad and Tobago who began a process of de-shifting in the 1990s even though it was experiencing fiscal recession (London, 1991). In the quest to transform the educational system, one of the recommendations given by the Task Force on Educational Reform, Jamaica (2004) is that the shift system in all Jamaican schools be eliminated and to achieve a teacher/pupil ratio of 1:25 at the primary level. In an interesting article entitled 'shift system to go- 429, 000 more spaces required for students', Rose (2006) cites that the then Minister of Education in Jamaica, Noel Monteith in the State of the Nation Debate in the Senate on February 3rd 2006 gave a two year timeframe for the government to eliminate the shift system in Jamaican schools. He went on to say that in order to achieve the recommendation given by the Task Force on Educational Reform (2004), 408 new schools would be needed and that 14,000 new school spaces would be available by September 2007. Whilst it may be argued that the shift system fills a gap in the education system caused by insufficient capacity, research evidence reveals that there are many challenges associated with it.

2.4.9.6 Inadequate Play

Play is critical to children (Casey, 2005). It has been identified as being vital to their learning and development (Morgan and Kennewell, 2006). In fact, Article 31 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) deems play as a right of children. One of the primary roles of education is that of socialisation (West and Currie, 2008 and Novak and Pelaez, 2004). Specifically, schools contribute to the intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs of pupils (Smith, 2002). Whilst play is not the only means by which students develop socially, any school structure that does not adequately allow time for play, is in a sense infringing on the rights of children, and more importantly, may be injuring their social development. Play has been relegated to the fringes of the school day in shift schools because the school day is significantly compressed and also to meet the demands of the NC. There is a significant reduction to the time schools allocate for break and lunch; usually times during which children would choose to play. There is usually no time designated for break and fifteen

to twenty minutes for lunch period hardly is enough time to eat; let alone to play. According to Van der Aalsvoort et al (2004, p. 154)

Young children at risk [of developing learning difficulties] need play to develop both socially and emotionally. Social play, elicits social skills, as children practice [practise] getting along with others. Children learn the skills of sharing and these skills contain both social and cognitive elements.

The impact of this consequential relegation of play in the shift context is often acute since the reality is that a significant percentage of the pupils in attendance of these educational facilities is likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds; in which there is a shortage of safe play area and ‘space’ and intellectually stimulating gadgets and environments to promote play which is safe and beneficial. In addition, a significant portion of pupils attending shifts schools have learning difficulties therefore the absence of play may exacerbate the situation.

2.4.9.7 Rural/Urban Dichotomy in Education

Having addressed the inadequacy of time to play for pupils in the previous section, this section will address rural/urban dichotomy reflected in education. The inaccessibility of some rural and remote rural schools presents a problem whether by public and to a lesser degree, private transportation. In addition, there is almost always a disparity in school resources between the urban/rural dichotomy (O’Jon, 1979). The former usually being better resourced. It is not unusual for rural schools to still have outmoded sanitary conveniences, no running water nor electricity. With no electricity, equipment such as facsimiles, computers, let alone Internet access to support learning is often unavailable.

Whilst shift schools are largely an urban phenomenon, they do exist in rural parishes. Table 2.1 reflects that there are 23 rural and 2 remote rural shift schools. The start and dismissal time for the school day especially in the rural areas of the country can be problematic with regards to public transportation for both staff and pupils. As was previously mentioned, on the whole, shift schools start and end times are 7am -5 pm respectively. If 9 am to 5pm is taken to be average work day for adults, it therefore means that the bulk of the workforce would be leaving work with or before shift school pupils. This would mean there would be ‘transportation competition’ for both shifts; those getting to school with those getting work, vice versa. In the metropolitan area, transportation largely falls in the remit of the GOJ where there is set fares for adults and children. Children fares are usually half of and in some cases a third of adults’ fares. This is not so in the rural parishes; rather it is primarily privately owned and operated.

This sometimes adds another level of complexity because fares and access to the service can be based on the discretion of drivers. In peak times some drivers 'screen' the passengers in preference of adults in order to get higher fares. This leaves children stranded, thus getting home even later. A whole day school times (averagely 8:30am to 2:30 pm) is more congruent with the public transport off-peak and peak times; hence 'screening' is less likely to be practised. In fact children are treated as prime candidates during the off-peak times till the bulk of the workforce arrives. Pupils in rural shift schools are at a greater disadvantage with regards to accessing transportation which may negatively affect their school performance because transportation can be a stress factor in terms of getting home later and possibly having less time for homework, having to wake up at earlier times than is necessary and just being more tired having to wait longer times to get transportation.

Not only is there transportation difficulty associated with the rural/urban divide amongst schools, there is also the issue of language. According to Atchoarena and McArdle (1999) the speaking of the Patois by Jamaicans and almost totally in the rural parishes is posing difficulties to the educational system. Some pupils experience much difficulty in making the transition between the language spoken at home and in their communities (largely Patois) to the formal language used in school, that is, Standard English. This 'language clash' makes reading, spelling and the general mastery of the spoken and written English rather difficult. The effect may be that in reality Standard English is their second language rather than their first, which would have implication for the classroom practice. Another issue that may be associated to the rural/urban divide is that of low school attendance. This will be addressed in the next section.

2.4.9.8 Low School Attendance

School attendance in many regions is low and consequently illiteracy rate is high (Ferguson 1990). High absenteeism has long been a problematic feature that has dogged the Jamaican school system. This is usually pronounced on Fridays especially in rural parishes mainly amongst the boys where some children have to help their parents go to the market or the farm. In Jamaica, child labour is found in three main economic sectors - tourism, manufacture and agriculture (Ennew, and Young, 1981). At the start of the academic year in 1973, every child in grades 1 and 2 received school uniforms since this was one of the identified constraints that led to lowered attendance rates (*The Education Thrust of the 70's*, 1973). The negative trend of low attendance is still being manifested in schools today but it is not as chronic as before.

2.4.9.9 High levels of Illiteracy

Reading is one of the elementary results of the education system (Myles and Botting, 2008). However, one of the major concerns about the Jamaican education system is the increasing number of children (at both the primary and secondary levels) who are illiterate and innumerate (Hall, 1999). Decoding of print and comprehension are the critical elements of reading (Myles and Botting, 2008). Smart et al (2001) purport that reading difficulties are frequently the earliest precursor of learning difficulties and are often related to later academic challenges such as Mathematics and Spelling). Smart et al (2001) in a 6 year follow-up research in an Australian Temperament Project with 1,665 children with reading difficulties in their early years, manifest learning difficulties over different subject areas. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds frequently have weaker educational outcome than their peers from more advantaged backgrounds (Myles and Botting, 2008). It is still a debatable subject whether the relationship between reading difficulties and behavioural difficulties is co-relational or causal (Smart et al 2001). It is the later that will be discussed in the upcoming section.

2.4.9.10 Pupils' Negative Behaviour

Problems with behaviours are often linked to problems of learning (Dean, 1996). Pupils' behaviours lie on a continuum and not many are consistent along it (Blandford, 1998). It is critical to note that the behaviours of pupils are significantly context related. For example, Daniels and Cole (2002, p. 312) posit that emotional and behavioural disorder (EBD) is a "context-specific phenomena". A basic prerequisite for learning is a calm environment (Radford, 2000). The management of pupils' behaviours is critical to teachers' ability to deliver the contents of the NC. Therefore, EBD faced by pupils are a major concern for educationalists (Bennett, 2006). Adults need to be cognisant of the need to vigorously uphold positive behaviour that is in keeping with the values of the school (Radford, 2000). The demands of the NC put pressure on both pupils and teachers. The behaviours of pupils are impacted by the very nature of the content of the NC and the strategies used to deliver it (Cooper et al, 1994). In a results and excellence driven culture, schools are reluctant to cater for pupils who are disruptive. Therefore, pupils with EBD are further disadvantaged (Farrell and Polat, 2003).

...children at-risk of learning difficulties often experience tasks in a classroom that are too challenging. Therefore, they act in such a way that they either avoid the task or prevent the teacher from confronting them with the failure they have learned to dread... (Van der Aalsvoort et al, 2004, p. 154).

2.4.10 SEN Strategies in Jamaican Schools

Different countries employ different strategies in their management of the SEN of children. There are many factors that influence their choices; some of which are available resources (human and non-human), and schools' ethos. Figure 2.11 presents the main methods used in Jamaican primary schools which will be discussed. The constraints addressed in the previous section form a backdrop to options available; hence these methods are 'positioned' in light of this educational context.

- Streaming
- Reduced Class Size
- Special Class
- Government Special Unit
- Resource Rooms
- Teaching Assistant
- Repeating a Grade
- Differentiation
- Multiclass Teaching (MCT)

Figure 2:11: SEN Strategies used in Jamaican Primary Schools

2.4.10.1 Streaming

Evans (1999) contends that school practices can have a profound effect on pupils experiences and hence their performance. However, although streaming remains one of the most contentious issues in education (Boaler, 1997 and Davies et al, 2003), it continues to be a popular practice in Jamaican schools. Streaming may be defined as grouping students based on their academic ability. This categorisation may be done as distinct groups with in class or as separate classes at the same grade level (Evans, 2001). Streaming is not simply putting pupils in different hierarchy of classes based on abilities; it speaks to the matter of value and bespeaks an underlying ideology and even political agendas (Boaler, 1997). In some countries they have been vacillating between streaming and mixed abilities. It is worth mentioning, that even in mixed ability classes, streaming is often done because of large class size. Streaming embodies not only an academic distinction, but it is also a social division; hence their teaching and treatment is different (Evans 2001).

Streaming as a major aspect of school structure has a significant and long-lasting effect on students' access to knowledge and achievement, their self-esteem, aspirations for the future, the formation of social categories, and relations with other students. It serves to bind many students to their social class origins and withhold from these students the emancipatory promises of education
(Evans, 2001, p. 144)

It is worth noting that UNESCO in a report regarding *Development of Secondary Education in Jamaica* cited that early streaming was one of the problems affecting primary schools. It was argued that streaming pupils early in their school life, the groupings often become impermeable and self-fulfilling, which lock in pupils in a predicted mould set for them (UNESCO, 1983). Evans (2001) opines that within the streaming process pupils will require additional attention, motivation and resources in order to achieve and in most cases their needs are not met.

2.4.10.2 Reduced Class Size

Since one of the constraints of Jamaican primary classes is high teacher/pupil ratio, reduced class has special appeal as an SEN strategy. Class size is based on the allocation of teachers and how the school is arranged (Miller, 1992). There has been an ongoing debate with regards to the relationship of class size on students' learning. Ayers (2006) asserts that there is not a direct relationship between small class size and increased learning. Importantly, he further states that smaller classes or group would benefit pupils with learning difficulties.

In light of this reality relating to large class size that exist in many Jamaican primary schools, attempts have been made to lower pupil numbers in targeted classes as a strategy attempting to give pupils with SEN greater teacher time in attempting to meet their learning needs. However, simply lowering pupil numbers without addressing teacher training (equipping them to effectively teaching pupils with SEN) and providing other non-human resources will not magically deliver the desired outcomes.

2.4.10.3 Special Class

In the Jamaican context the use of special class may be synonymous with streaming. However, in some application there is a distinction, especially in schools where streaming is not practised. Special class as a SEN strategy is often combined with reduced class size to benefit from its effect. In addition, in an idealised setting not only

would it be beneficial for special classes to be smaller, but they should be taught by special education or SEN experienced teachers and given supplemental resources.

2.4.10.4 Government Special Unit

In Jamaica there are 7 Government Special Education Units attached to primary schools. The main function of these units is to offer a two year intervention programme for pupils experiencing mild learning difficulties (grades two to four). According to the MOE pupils are admitted on the basis of a recommendation of a clinical or educational psychologist. On the completion of the programme of intervention pupils are expected to return to their schools of origin (<http://www.moey.gov.jm/special%20education/programme.shtml#unit> 2010). It is worth noting that these special units are classified by the MOE as special schools. The catchment area of the Government Special Education Units are oftentimes pupils with SEN attending the school to which the unit is attached as identified by teachers. Based on the number of primary schools throughout the island (N=729) it is apparent that this strategy is limited in its application based on limited numbers. Five of the schools with Government Special Education Units also have Resources Rooms in operation. The latter will be addressed in the forthcoming section.

2.4.10.5 Resource Rooms

In addition to the Government Special Education Units there are presently 22 Resource Rooms established in primary schools throughout the island. The main purpose of the Resource Rooms is to provide intervention using pull out and self-contained resource services for pupils having specific learning difficulties with literacy being the chief focus (ibid.).

2.4.10.6 Teaching Assistant

The practice of having extra in class support for teachers is relatively new. More specifically, pupils with SEN receiving education in mainstream have it brought to the forefront (Birkett, 2003). It should be noted that having TAs is not a common practice in the Jamaica classrooms. Teaching assistants refer to adults working in the classroom in conjunction with teachers to support the learning of pupils (Lacey, 2001). It should be noted that TAs are sometimes referred to as Learning Support Assistants (Blatchford, 2003).

Some their benefits are:

Improving pupil achievement, encouraging pro-social behaviour, helping classroom management, helping specific categories of pupils such as low achieving pupils and pupils with special needs, fostering parental involvement and improving pupils' self-esteem (Gerber et al., 2001 as cited by Muijs and Reynolds, 2003 p. 220)

2.4.10.7 Repeating a Grade

Repetition of a grade level is used to give pupils with SEN what is deemed as 'another chance'. This is based on the assumption that if the NC content is learned for the second time, the likelihood of pupils' learning would be increased. The opportunity given to pupils to repeat a grade level is often given to pupils who are younger than their peers so that when they are repeating the grade level they would be on par in terms of age with the rest of the class. The potential of this strategy omits pupils who need educational support but whose age would rule them out. In addition, because of the previously mentioned constraint of large class size, class repetition cannot be done on a comparable scale to what may be needed because it would add to further overcrowding. In essence, not many pupils could benefit from this strategy; hence its use is limited. Differentiation will be explained in the next section.

2.4.10.8 Differentiation

One of the critical issues of meeting the SEN of pupils is that of differentiation. It may be viewed as teachers making adjustment in different area of teaching and learning to cater to the diversity amongst learners. Specifically, Westwood (2003) state that differentiation techniques can be in used in several areas as is outlined in Figure 2.12. Implementing differentiation strategies is a difficult task. Whilst differentiation is used for all learners, it is a device used with the accommodation of pupils with disabilities in regular context of learning by removing barriers (ibid.).

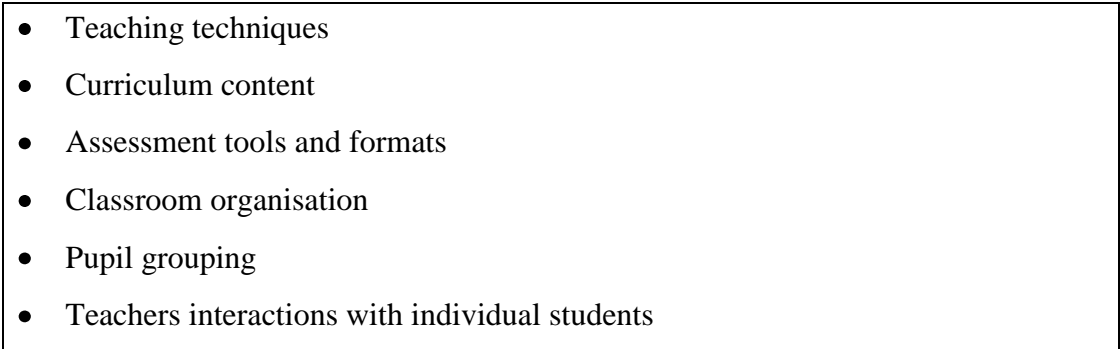
- 
- Teaching techniques
 - Curriculum content
 - Assessment tools and formats
 - Classroom organisation
 - Pupil grouping
 - Teachers interactions with individual students

Figure 2.12: Areas of Differentiation Application

2.4.10.9 Multiclass Teaching (MCT)

Multiclass teaching sometimes referred to as composite class teaching or multi-grade teaching. It may be defined as a single teacher, teaching two or more year groups in a given class (UNESCO, 1991). Multi-class teaching represents one of the peculiar practices in primary education. Multi-class teaching is a common practice in many parts of the world such as China, the less accessible parts of the USA, Africa and Europe (UNESCO 1991). Multiclass teaching is practised for several reasons (see Figure 2.13).

1. Shortage of teachers,
2. Small school population in remote rural areas
3. Low population density of primary school age children
4. Insufficient classrooms
5. Targeted use of Multi Class Teaching (MCT) for economic benefits

Figure 2.13: Factors for Multiclass Teaching

2.4.10.9.1 Advantages of Multiclass System

In really small schools that translate in very small class size, the individual learning needs of pupils are better served.

- A sense of belonging is engendered in pupil because of a more intimate school setting.
- Despite being a difficult task for teachers, prolonged experience can enhance competence and students usually reap the benefits.
- It reflects the larger picture of society with individual of different ages and development learning together.
- It presents a scope for the more advanced and sometimes older pupils to assist the younger and sometimes less able ones (ibid.).

The phenomenon of MCT and shifting are usually used in small and large schools respectively. At first glance they appear juxtapose to each other. However, in the complex and often constrained teaching and learning environment of large shift schools, MCT is being employed to garner its advantages with the view that it can be of tremendous benefit to this sub-set of pupils with SEN in a specialised learning environment. However, it is essential to note that the presence of these advantages, by themselves, will not automatically convert into meeting the SEN of pupils. There has to be a management driven, whole school approach to the meeting of the needs of all pupils but with particular attention to those with SEN.

2.4.11 Section Conclusions

- The definition of special education given by the MOE did not acknowledge behavioural difficulties even though there is a prominent presence of this SEN Jamaican schools.
- There is a distinction between special education and SEN. The former may lead to the later. However, a special need does not necessarily constitute a SEN.
- Similarly, there is a distinction between integration and inclusion. Pupils with SEN are increasingly being educated in main stream schools. A large portion of pupils with SEN in Jamaica mainstream schools are there because of default.
- Special education in Jamaica is still in its developing stages. Jamaica is a signatory to several international legislation.
- Jamaica has no official figure of the incidences of SEN amongst its school-age children.
- Several constraints beset the Jamaican education system in general which makes it even more difficult for the SEN of pupils to be catered for.
- There is a shortage of SEN teachers in Jamaican special and mainstream schools.
- Several intervention strategies are employed in Jamaican schools to address the SEN of pupils.

2.4.12 Chapter Conclusions and Summary

- The literature suggests that shift school appear to have a higher numbers of pupils with SEN.
- To date, there is no SEN legislation in Jamaica that directly target pupils with SEN. Consequently, there is no stipulated provision for them.
- ‘Causal mainstreaming’ is practiced in Jamaican school with regards to learners with SEN. No specific figure about the prevalence of pupils with SEN is available.
- There is the strong presence of Patois in homes which conflict with the Standard English used in schools which can be problematic.
- It appears that the MOE treats special education as a lesser priority then other sectors of education.

- The definitions given by the MOE relating to SEN need more specificity that will assist in their delineation for incidences; which have implications for provisions.

Several research have been done looking at the shift primary schools and SEN independently, but none has undertaken to examine them in combination, which is what this research intends to do. This research has an added dimension. The manner in which a school is organised with specific regards to its school day has significant effect on the life of the school, pupils, teachers and administrators.

In light of the foregoing issues coupled with the scarcity of research on primary education in the Caribbean (Miller, 1992) there is the need to carry out research in this context with specific interest in children who have SEN and attend primary school whose school day is organised on a shift basis. Therefore, the need to investigate the education of primary pupils in general and specifically those with SEN in shift schools is a worthwhile undertaking.

This research is designed to understand how the SEN of pupils are conceptualised and managed in the context of shift primary schools in Jamaica. This focus was explored by investigating the perceptions of the four main stakeholder groups of Moe personnel, teachers, parents, support staff (TAs) and pupils. It seeks to unpack the tensions and dilemmas which existed. The next chapter will explain how this needful research was undertaken and how challenges were handled.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two the relevant literature related to the Research Question (see Section 1.10) was explored in appropriate detail. This chapter focuses on the research methodology, the details of which are outlined in Figure 3.1. The overarching research approach and important philosophical issues will be discussed. A detailed discussion of the selected methodology and related methods will be presented and a justification of these choices will be made. Importantly, the ethical considerations which were borne in mind throughout the research process will be explained. The measures taken to authenticate and verify the data will be critically addressed. Finally, the researcher will reflect on some of the procedural dilemmas encountered along the research path and explain how these were addressed.

- Philosophical Perspectives
- Research Paradigm and Approach
- Theoretical Framework
- Research Sample and Sampling Strategy
- Research Design and Phases
- Research Methodology
- Research Methods
- Authentication and Verification Process
- Research Reflections

Figure 3.1: Chapter Contents

3.2 Philosophical Perspectives

To carry out research without addressing ontological and epistemological concerns is essentially naive. One of the critical questions is ‘how do epistemology and methodology relate?’ One of the aspects of the rigour of research is an examination of the theoretical underpinning (philosophical position) (Evans, 2002). Every researcher is guided by an epistemological orientation (whether consciously or unconsciously) which drives all claims to knowledge. In this research an interpretivist phenomenological epistemological posture was adopted by the researcher. This epistemological posture acknowledges the researcher's perspective of a subjective view of social reality. This posture is suitable to this research because inherent to it is the quest to comprehend and make sense of the stakeholders’ understanding and attempt to meet the SEN of pupils in the context of shift schools they operate in. In keeping with the interpretivist phenomenological epistemological perspective, the researcher's perspective is premised on the view that there can be multiple realities in operation simultaneously in a given context with a view to tap into the standpoints of individuals (Krane and Bird, 2005). Therefore, the research is anchored in the interpretive paradigms which view as reality as being socially constructed; as opposed to there being an objective truth somewhere out there to be discovered are determined. Schools are complex social systems (Harkins and Roth, 2007). The research occurred in school context which is not static, rather it ever-changing from all standpoints. Hence, the researcher's epistemological stance guided the selection of research methods that possess the necessary reflexivity and flexibility to capture the nuances of this dynamic interplay of activities and processes (case study, interviews, questionnaires and observation). Therefore, rather than forcing a fixed predetermined view on the players (as in the positivistic orientation) this stance affords the unearthing of insiders’ worldviews and the research gives them a space to voice their own or understanding of their world. According to Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg (2005, p.733)

The epistemological use of methods assumes that researchers acquire knowledge of the epistemological background and the theoretical assumptions embedded in a method and take these into account when using the method. When epistemological considerations guide the method selection, the uses of the methods produce knowledge that is both adequate and legitimate regarding the discourse in which the method operates.

3.3 Research Paradigm and Approach

In the area of research there are several major paradigms that researchers may consider. Each research paradigm has its accompanying philosophical presuppositions and congruent methods which the researcher may contemplate in respect of the particular research question under investigation. There has been an increased usage and respectability of qualitative research (Dam and Volman, 2001) which was used in this research project. The qualitative research approach was most suitable to the research question, aims, objectives and the research context. Importantly, an emergent research design (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, Merriam, 1998) was useful in this research context because it lent flexibility to the research process and changes can be made where necessary. In this research, 'shift primary school' is being treated as an educational phenomenon.

There are several basic tenets of qualitative research. It focuses on the experience and processes of self-understanding and that of others; meaning derivation, which is the very substance of this type of research (Keller and Mohammed, 2003). Cohen et al (2007) posit that the primary concern of qualitative research is for the individual to attempt to make sense of subjective human experience and how they make sense of their world. This genre of research captures the 'quality' and 'texture' of these human experiences and critically the investigation is done within its natural environment (Willig, 2001).

According to O'Donoghue (2007) educational research can be informed by one of four 'big' theories as is described by Walcott; that is, positivism, interpretivism, postmodernism and critical theory; each of which can be further subdivided into several theoretical perspectives. The specific paradigm being utilised in this research within the qualitative genre, is interpretivism. Examples of theoretical positions within interpretivism are ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism (O'Donoghue, 2007). Phenomenology was selected and will be explained in the upcoming section.

3.3.1 Phenomenology

Upon close examination of these theoretical positions within the qualitative genre, phenomenology was chosen because it offered the most utility. Its main proponent is Husserl (1859-1938). The word phenomenology means 'the description or study of appearances'; an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon. Phenomenology deals with the

view of a phenomenon (Peim, 2001). Phenomenology places emphasis on experience and the value of the (inter)subjectivity of individuals. Participants' 'voices' take centre stage (Knibbe and Versteeg, 2008, 49). They state that to tap into participants' 'flow of life' (reality) 'epoche' is critical. This refers to the bracketing of reality, that is, the suspension of the pronouncements of 'truths'. Similarly, Psathas (1973 as cited by Bogdan and Biklen, 2003) state that phenomenological investigation start what is described as 'silence', the purpose of which is to grapple the essence of their enquiry from the viewpoints of their participants. The idea of 'bracketing' has been the subject of much debate. The theoretical framework which used to address the phenomenon of meeting pupils' SEN in shift school context will be explained in the upcoming section.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

Theory is developed through evidence derived from observations of the relevant phenomenon which informs practice. It goes beyond findings. Theorising is the act of constructing from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationships (Porter and Lacey, 2005). Silverman (2000) posits that without a theoretical underpinning, there is no point to research. Cohen et al (2000) argue that in qualitative research, theory should come after research, not before. However, it is the researcher's view that theory should guide/inform the research from the outset as much it is possible but not in an inflexible manner. As was previously mentioned, this research has adopted a flexible approach (Robson, 2002, Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) and as such Grounded Theory was chosen and will be discussed in the next section.

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

The concept of Grounded Theory (GT) was first postulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The essence of GT is to unearth theory from a given set of data in a systematic manner, hence the term 'grounded theory'. This theory is emergent and comes out of specific situations (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Critically, Glaser and Strauss contend that researchers should conduct the research prior to doing a review of the literature, in essence, entering the research field in a state of 'tabularasa'. According to Strauss and Corben, (1990), whilst GT has not changed substantively since its conception, the specifics of its procedures have been developed in greater details as the theory evolved. They later departed from the perspective of entering the research field without having done the literature review and argued that it was unrealistic to undertake research

without being somewhat aware of the literature in the field. This researcher has accepted this new development and employed it in the research. The following are basic tenets of Grounded Theory which are important issues in light of this investigation:

- Direct observation of the field to know what is really happening
- Relevance of theory grounded in the data for the development of a discipline and as a basis of social action.
- The complexity and variability of phenomena and of human action.
- The belief that persons are actors who take an active role in responding to problematic situations.
- The realisation that persons act on the basis of meaning.
- The understanding of that meaning is defined and redefined through interaction.
- Sensitivity to the evolving and unfolding nature of events (process).
- An awareness of the interrelationships among conditions (structures), actions (process) and the consequences (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Grounded Theory was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, since GT is both an analytical tool and research strategy (Punch, 2009) it supports the advancement of theoretical explanations which corresponds closely to the context being researched and thus having more utility to the participants being researched. This gives them the opportunity to give feedback and make amendments (Turner, 1981). There is a shortage of research activity in general and particularly in the area of SEN in Jamaica. Therefore, an analysis of the data that emerges from using GT in this research helps to guard against the emergent theory being deemed as 'foreign' by research participants.

3.5 Research Sample and Sampling Strategy

Having addressed research theory in the forgoing sections, research sample and sampling strategy will now be discussed. One of the realities of doing research is the fact that it is rarely possible to access every 'element' within a given population (Denscombe, 1998). Multiple sampling strategies were utilised in this research. In the case study convenient sampling was used. Permission was sought from the MOE in Jamaica by the medium of a letter of request to carry out research in primary shift schools. Access was granted by the Permanent Secretary of education to access these schools by means formal letters which were addressed to Principals (see Appendix1). Since the national election in Jamaica was planned for 2007, extra care regarding the selection of the research site was critical since there were emerging incidents of

political unrest. From the letters received, MMPS was selected as the case school since it was located further afield to the politically volatile areas and also based on its locality to the researcher (The issue of access will further developed in Section 3.8.1). Having chosen the case school the selection of the elements with-in the case study was governed by theoretical sampling as directed by GT (will be further developed in Section 4.3.3).

In the Survey purposive sampling was utilised. The MOE&Y has a directory of all the public educational institutions in operation in Jamaica (www.moec.gov.jm); this was used as the primary sampling frame. In order to identify the population as is directed by the Research Question in Section 1.10, the researcher used the primary sampling frame to create a secondary sampling frame listing all 27 primary schools whose school day is organised on a shift basis. In total, a convenient sample of 10 shift primary schools took part in this research. The case school was located in the Eastern county of Surrey and the parish of St Andrew. All other schools are located in the middle county of Middlesex. Seven schools were located in St Catherine (the largest parish in Jamaica) and the other two from St Ann. The map of Jamaica in Figure 2.1 will provide a layout of the parishes in the country. There were no schools included in the research project from the Western county of Cornwall. This was due to the difficulty for the researcher to commute from the eastern end of the island to the Western part using the public transportation system which would have proven very expensive, time-consuming and strategically difficult. It should be noted that the researcher made attempts to gain access to a school in Kingston to participate in the survey but permission was not granted by the Principal. A case description will be done of MMPS in Chapter Four which explains contextual features which will act as a backdrop of the ensuing data analysis.

3.5.1 Research Participants

The research took place in Jamaica and data were collected from the following sources utilising the specified methods as identified in Figure 3.2

Research Participants	Research Methods
MOE Personnel	Interview
Administrators (Principal, Vice Principals)	Observation , Questionnaires, Interviews
Teachers	Observation , Questionnaires, Interviews
Guidance Counsellors	Observation , Questionnaires, Interviews
Teaching Assistants	Observation , Interviews
Parents	Interviews
Pupils	Observation , Interviews

Figure 3.2: Research Participants and Research Methods

3.6 Research Design and Phases

Research design is not only affected by theoretical orientation but also practical issues (McDonnell et al, 2000). The research design and research timeline are reflected in Figures 3.3. and 3.4 respectively. The fieldwork spanned from April 2007 to February 2008.

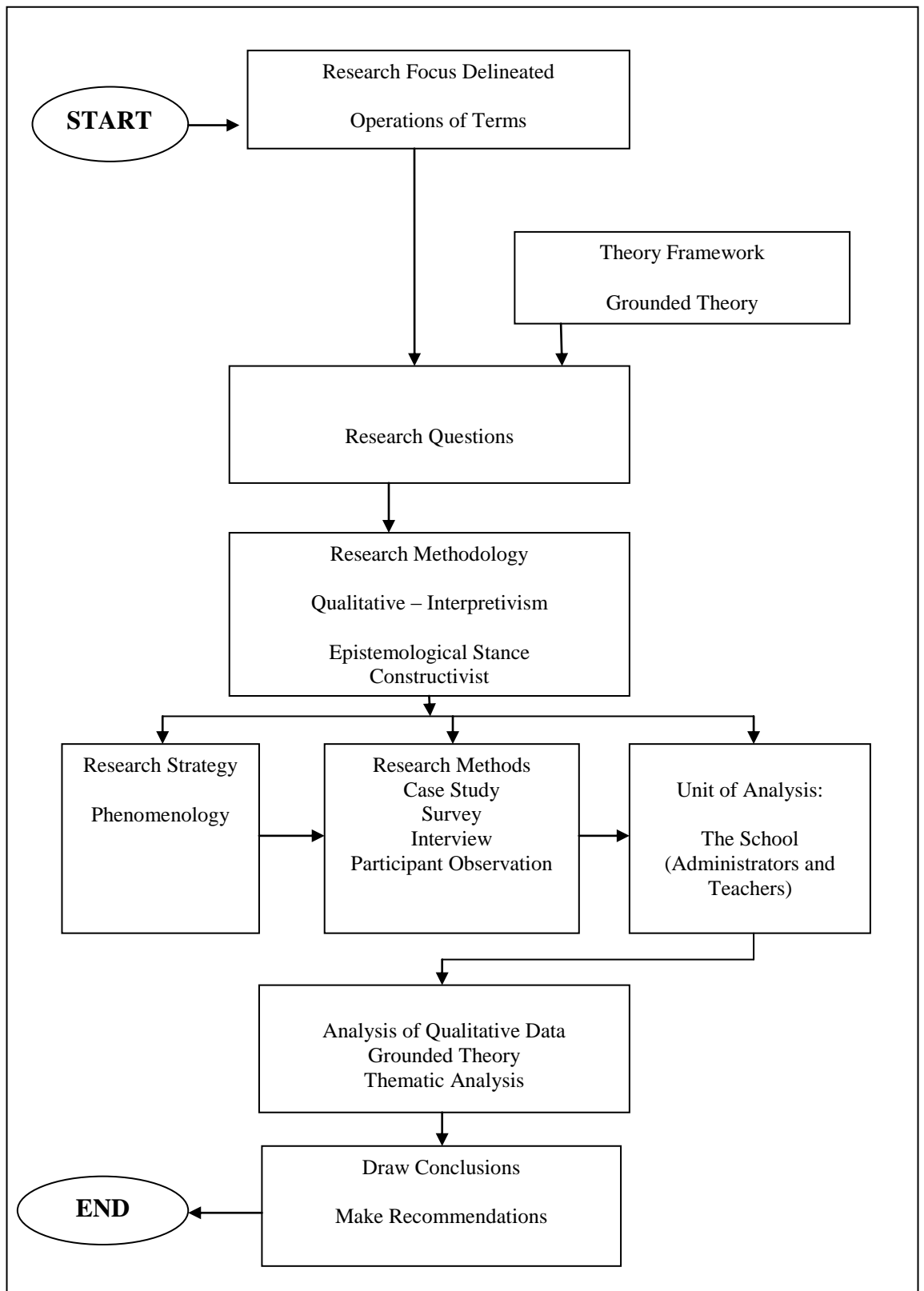


Figure 3.3: Research Design

(Adopted from Ebrahim, 2005)

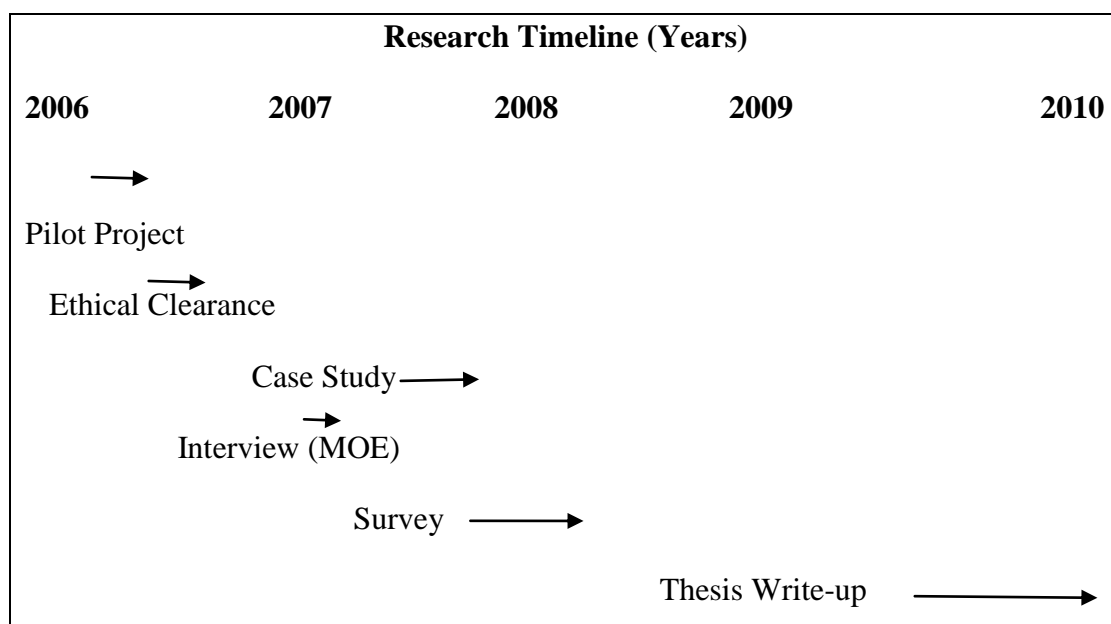


Figure 3.4: Research Timeline

3.6.1 Foundation Phase

It is critical to get ‘a feel’ of the situations and context of research (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). Therefore, participant observation was done in 6 schools (5 primary and 1 All/ Age- grades 1-6 which offer primary education) in Jamaica from April to May 2006. This was done to redefine the initial research focus, question and design. These schools were selected using the opportunity sampling method. Two schools were selected from each of three parishes, namely St Catherine, St Ann and Kingston.

In addition to undertaking observations in these schools, informal interviews were done with 2 Principals, 2 Vice Principals, 2 teachers and 2 Guidance Councillors to ascertain their views on inclusion. Importantly, a pilot study was carried out with principals and teachers to test the rigours of the research design and instrument (questionnaire). The analysis of the pilot study led to a refocusing and refining of the research question, aims and objectives. However, this initial investigation unearthed several critical research-changing issues. Firstly, the concept of inclusion was not in operation in these Jamaican schools. Secondly, (possibly because of the former) a significant number of administrators and teachers were not cognisant of the phenomenon of inclusion. Thirdly, of the six schools that were visited, four were shift schools. These factors (especially the first and the third) influenced the researcher to make significant changes in terminologies used in the questionnaire as well as to

identify a niche of the educational practice of shift schools and determine where this research can help to provide insights. Ethical clearance procured from the university (see Appendix 11).

3.6.2 Phase One: Case study

A case study was chosen because it can employ research methods that can yield rich and complex data. A primary school that is organised on a shift basis was chosen to gather data that will shed light and give insight into the phenomenon under consideration as is stated in the research questions (Section 1.10). However, it is not the researcher's intention to engage in generalizations, rather to gain an insight into the management of pupils with SEN in a specific shift primary school in Jamaica. It is critical to note that the issue of generalizability is not a part of phenomenology nor the wider interpretive paradigm.

3.6.3 Phase Two: Survey

A large-scale survey using questionnaires was done in ten primary schools in three parishes across Jamaica. The construction, content and administration of the questionnaire will be extensively addressed in Sections 3.7.1.4.1 to 3.7.4.1.3. The survey provided an opportunity for the researcher to 'hear other voices' of teachers and administrators supplying data in answering the research question (See Section 1.10) and illuminated issues that surfaced in the case study. The section which follows will explain the research methodology used in this research.

3.7 Research Methodology

According to Silverman (2001) 'methodology' concerns the overall approach to undertake a research whilst 'methods' refer to the particular techniques. In essence, methodology relates to the ideology which underpins the whole research project and the 'methods' refer to the procedures employed to carry out the research. Sikes (2004) states that methodology refers to

the theory of getting knowledge, to the consideration of the best ways, methods or procedures, by which data that will provide the evidence basis for the construction of knowledge about whatever it is that is being researched, is obtained (p. 16)

Some research methods are juxtaposed to some methodologies and overarching epistemologies. Strauss and Corbin (1998) provide an interesting way of clarifying the subject under discussion; methodology supply ‘vision’ – ‘where does the research go?’ whilst the methods provide the ‘means’ for actualising the vision. Sikes (2004) posits that, in research, there are several factors that influence the selection of a particular given methodology. The methodology used to undertake this research is phenomenology. Phenomenology has a philosophical base. Its objective is to present a description of an experience; a lived phenomenon (Ehrich, 2003). Importantly, events and phenomenon will be seen from the perspectives of the participants (Mertens, 1998). It lends itself to the greatest opportunity of unearthing the nature of the educational practices with regards to the education of pupils with SEN in primary schools in a ‘shift’ context in Jamaica.

3.7.1 Research Methods

The question may be asked ‘how does one decide on the methods to collect data for a research?’ As was aforementioned, the chosen methodology has a significant impact on this decision. The soundness of a research method is dependent on the research question and the purpose of the research (Loche, 1989 as cited in Seidman, 2006). Research methods need to be congruent and coherent with the research ideology and methodology. In addition, there are contextual issues that influence this decision; such as what is allowed or not allowed by gatekeepers. The upcoming section will discuss and justify the methods used in this research.

3.7.1.1 Case Study

There is no consensus about case study with regards to its definition or understanding (Berg, 2009). Ezenne (2003) purports that a ‘case’ is an example of a phenomenon which may be a situation, person or an event. It can either be complex or simple and the time spent in the field can be short or long. In contrast, according to Neustadt and Fineberg (2004), case studies usually involve a significant amount of time, therefore, the selection procedure should be thorough to minimise the possibility of wasting time. One of the appeals for selecting case study was that it is in sync with the constructivist assumptions (Stake, 2000). Case studies have extensive usage across many disciplines such as medicine, business, education (Berg, 2009). A case study can be carried out at three levels- macro, meso and micro. Whilst the three levels were in operation in this

case of MMPS, the focus was on the meso level. It is worth noting that case studies may be carried out with different rationales. Firstly, it may lay the foundation of a survey in which important issues are identified and further explored. Secondly, it may add further depth to a survey and thirdly, it may be a standalone research activity (Bell, 2005). In this research the third rationale is in operation. Contextual details are a critical accompanying feature in order for readers to comprehend the phenomenon being depicted (Ezenne, 2003). The school was selected as the unit of analysis because in this research the overarching concern was about how the shift primary school addressed the subject of meeting the SEN of its pupils. This is supported by Stake (2000) who states that

researchers use the method of case works that they actually use to learn enough about their cases to encapsulate complex meanings into finite reports- and thus to describe the cases in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can vicariously experience these happenings and draw conclusions (which may differ from those of the researchers') p. 439

Yin (2003) states that there are three types of case study designs; namely exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. Thick descriptive case study provides an excellent opportunity of unearthing deep levels of understanding of events, people, phenomenon, or organisation (Berg, 2009). Case study has versatility which adds to its wide usage. Stake (2000) asserts that in case study the researcher is keen on 'seeing' what is commonplace and interesting (although the end result is usually the uncommon) by noting the following:

- The nature of the case
- Historical background
- Physical setting
- Other contexts (economic, political , aesthetic and legal)
- Other cases through which this case is recognised
- Informants through which the case can be known

In this research both the commonplace and the interesting were duly noted to provide a rich 'contextual tapestry' for the readers, thus providing a backdrop from which the research findings can be understood (see Chapter Four for case description).

It is frequently stated that the 'n' in case study is usually small and critics often use this as a basis to contend about its inability to be generalised and that it is not representative (Allison and Zelikow, 2004, Ying, 2003 and Bell, 2005). This criticism is based on a faulty premise and it presumes the aim of case studies is to generalise its

findings. A large sample does not necessarily solve the issue of generalisability. This is not a weakness; case studies are not intended to make generalisation. In fact, where case study is being criticised repeatedly misses the point. It is not intended to function in that capacity. A case study presents a ‘snapshot’ of a situation in that point in time. Sometime later this reality may have changed. Its purpose is to capture the multiplicities of a phenomenon that is transient. It may or may not have any applicability to a school in the neighbouring parish or even the same school ten years later (which may have different staffing, mission and vision in operation, school site changes, different pupil population and impacting social, economical and political environments). Rather, what a case study does is to provide an opportunity to explore the internal workings, dynamics and character of the research context at that point in time. Therefore, the belaboured point of lack of generalisability is irrelevant. Instead, Allison and Zelikow, (2004) advise that a case study should be situated within an appropriate theoretical framework because this represents a more useful tool. Interview is another important and useful research method. This will be discussed in the next section.

3.7.1.2 Interviews

A popular means of documenting educational interaction and practices is by interviewing (Freebody, 2003). An interview may be defined as an interchange of viewpoints between two persons on a topic that is of interest to them (Kvale, 1996). There are usually three approaches to conducting interviews, namely: structured and semi structured and open-ended. This categorisation is formulated with reference to the degree of flexibility given to the interviewees and the level of control of the interviewer. Structured interviews are most restrictive and open-ended have little control (except for a few overarching questions); the interviewees have full latitude in responding. Semi-structured interviews falls between the two ends on the interview continuum (Freebody, 2003). In what Freebody (2003, p 133) calls the ‘naïve treatment (an oversimplification) of interview materials’, he cautioned that there is deceptive complexity with regards to the art of interviewing and analysis of the produced material. In spite of the complexity cited, it remains a frequently used method in both quantitative and qualitative research (Silverman, 2001) but especially by researchers from qualitative genre (Hammersley, 2008). One reason for its frequent use in qualitative research is that there is a shift in accessing knowledge from human beings in an experimental and external design, rather they have a ‘story’ to be told through conversation (Kvale, 1996). Cohen et al (2007) strengthen this view by opining that interview is not just a collection of information

about life; it is rather a segment of life itself. In this research, the interviews were not conducted according to a strict list of questions, rather the interviewees were allowed to tell their 'stories' being guided by a few overarching issues related to the research objectives.

Although interview is a frequently used research method there are weaknesses identified; in fact much controversy surrounds it (Schrank, 2006). The stability of interviewees' perspectives is questioned contending if they can be treated as reliable informants about situations (Hammersley, 2008). However, one of the hallmarks of qualitative research is that researcher seeks to know the reality as purported by the participants. Therefore, this criticism is significantly nullified because participants' 'stories' whilst not taken at face value, are taken as reliable accounts of their truths.

Table 3.1 identifies the breakdown for the interviews done in this research. Permission was sought from the interviewees to tape record the interviews with the view in order to preserve accuracy and to give the interviewer the scope to focus on the dynamics of the interchange. Interviews were recorded for those who granted permission. Some participants refused to be audio-taped on the grounds of uncertainty of how it will be used (for example, one parent declined on the basis that she may appear on the news on the television). Notes were taken for those who did not consent to being audio-taped. Various reasons were cited by parents for the refusing to be audio-taped. The researcher read the notes taken back to the interviewees for verification. Where necessary, amendments were made to capture more accurately their views. The corrected versions of the interview notes were then read to the respective interviewees who then signed and dated the transcript. It was necessary for the researcher to carry out this process because many of the parents who were interviewed expressed an inability to read. A similar procedure was used when interviewing pupils for same reasons. In the few cases where illiteracy was not a problem interviewees read the notes themselves then signed and dated them.

Table 3.1: Interview Participants

Research Participants	Numbers
MOE Personnel	1
Administrators	3
Teachers Including 2 Guidance Counsellor	6
Teaching Assistants	2
Parents	8
Pupils	8

3.7.1.3 Participant Observation

Having discussed interviews in the previous section, participant observation will be addressed. Observation allows a researcher to collect information firsthand concerning social processes in a setting that is ‘naturally occurring’ (Silverman, 2001). Corbetta (2003) posits that observation is watching and listening. On the other hand, with participant observation, it is the ‘participation’ of the researcher that adds another dimension to the process. Not only does the researcher ‘observe’ but also fully ‘participate’ in the lives of participants. This full participation, he explains, provides what he describes as a ‘*vision from within*’ (p.236) which he accords as the requirement to understanding; which is the very objective of qualitative research. Participant observation is premised on two main beliefs. Firstly, complete social awareness is only possible through comprehending the participants’ perspectives. Secondly, this association is achieved only through complete immersion in the participants’ lives (Corbetta 2003).

According to Rose and Grosvenor (2001) using observation in educational research has several advantages. It is a direct method which provides a firsthand contact with the subject being studied and is an excellent tool to get an insight into an occurrence. On the other hand, there are also several limitations in using observation to collect data in research. One of the difficulties is the amount of time required to do effective observation. They further opine that time is not only required to do the actual research observation, but that time may also be required for pre-observational getting to know participants. One of the critical issues that need to be addressed when doing observation is whether or not to participate. In the participant observation the researcher becomes fully immersed in the activities taking place. On the other hand in the non-

participant observation the researcher tries to be as inconspicuous as is possible (ibid.).

For this research, the researcher embarked on the research project at MMPS in June 2007 and withdrew in February 2008. The shift system was unfamiliar to the researcher because there was no firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon. As was previously mentioned, the novel aspect of the research is investigating SEN within a shift context. This research method suitably lends itself to unearthing the unknown. The researcher did observations on both the morning (Shift X) and afternoon (Shift Y) shift. Classes were observed in all six grade levels but more time was spent in classes which consisted of pupils deemed by the school as having SEN (grades 2-5, D and Special and in grade 6, C streams) which was in keeping with the research questions. It is argued by Miller and Bell (2002) that consent needs to be ongoing and renegotiated for the entire research project. Therefore, although access was granted by the Principal, the researcher requested permission from the teachers whose classes were selected to be observed. They would give a date and time that were convenient to them. The teacher would normally introduce the researcher to the class as a means of explaining the presence of another adult in their class (although after spending some time at the research site, some teachers bypassed this formality). The researcher would observe the delivery of the content and make notes of relevant information such as the number of pupils (gender composition noted), the subject being taught differentiation (if any), and anything that warranted follow-up questions for clarity. When pupils were given tasks to do the researcher would sometimes interact with the pupils who experienced difficulties in undertaking giving tasks. There were times when teachers would initiate conversations asking questions and seeking advice regarding some of the difficulties they were having in addressing the SEN of their pupils or just general teaching and learning situations. The researcher engaged in participant observation in other areas of school life such breakfast club, club rehearsals, and devotions (assembly). It is worth noting, however, that for school activities such as PTA and staff meetings, the role of non-participant observer was adopted. This was done because a more discrete presence showed respect for sensitive nature of some of these meetings.

There is also another nuance to 'participation' as is suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1998) who advise that when participation facilitates acceptance, this should be being cognisant of the boundaries. The researcher can identify more with serving in the capacity of 'extra hands' rather than using participation as a currency for acceptance. For example, the researcher sometimes served breakfast to the pupils at the breakfast club at the school. Generally, there was overwhelming acceptance to the researcher's

presence. The method of questionnaire as used in this research will be discussed in the upcoming section.

3.7.1.4 Questionnaires

According to Hopkins (2002, p. 117) questionnaires ask specific questions about a subject matter. He describes it as a ‘quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich information’. However, the term ‘quick and simple’ is highly debatable. This description belies the technicality involved in constructing high quality questionnaires. Munn and Drever (1999) confirm that much skill is required to produce and administer an effective questionnaire especially when the piloting and redrafting phases are considered.

3.7.1.4.1 Construction and Piloting the Research Instrument

A pilot study is used to test techniques and procedures (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). Researchers agree that it is critical to carry out a pilot study especially when undertaking a large-scale research. Opie (2004) also states that piloting research instruments is also a vital process in their design. The pilot process is used to identify any aspect of the research design and instruments that need adjustments and in extreme cases, redesign. In this research, observations and interviews were done in the foundation phase and the research design and instruments were piloted. The responses were analysed and the questions refined and ambiguities removed. Adjustments such as rephrasing questions, substituting more familiar terminologies for unfamiliar jargons (such as ‘inclusion’) and reordering questions were done as appropriate.

3.7.1.4.2 Questionnaire Content

The researcher spent nine months in MMPS conducting a case study. Several observations were made and views noted amongst teachers and administrators with regards to how they manage the SEN of pupils. Some of these factors were fed into the content of the questionnaires that were distributed. For example, the researcher was told and observed how pupils with SEN impacted classes at MMPS. For example, this observation was factored in Question 15 of the teachers’ questionnaire which solicited their views about how their classes were affected by the SEN displayed by their pupils. See Appendices 8 and 9 for teachers’ and administrators’ questionnaires respectively.

One of the opportunities open to researchers is using a combination of data collected, that is, qualitative and quantitative data (Burton et al, 2008). This option was

utilised because it capitalises on the strengths of both domains although admittedly it presents difficulties too. The questionnaires were primarily qualitative reflecting the orientation of the research. It contains 3 sections. Section 1 collected demographic data of the respondents with regards to gender, teaching experience (both generally and in specifically in a shift school), qualification and school's students grouping strategy. In Section 2, qualitative data was required about respondents' conceptualisation of SEN. In the third section, questions solicited information regarding the facilities and strategies which were used to meet the pupils' SEN. Every questionnaire had a cover page that introduced the researcher, the research, offers the promise of confidentiality and solicited respondents' co-operation (see Appendix 7).

3.7.4.1.3 Administration of Questionnaires

Leeuw and Hox (2008) posit that it is the norm for school research to use self-administered questionnaires. In a self-administered questionnaire the process is wholly self-administered – there is no researcher to administer the survey, ask questions or record answers. However, they also bring to the fore that there are nuances involved in the administering of 'self-administered' as is revealed in the following statement:

In an effort to combine the advantages of interviews administered and self-administered data collection techniques, various forms of interviewer initiated self administered surveys have been developed which differ in the amount of interviewer involvement (p.256).

In three schools (Tulip Grove, Sycamore and Daisy Queen*) the researcher was instructed to deliver the questionnaires and they were administered by the schools' administration (Principal and Vice Principals). They were later collected by the researcher. However, in all the other schools the researcher was granted permission to administer the questionnaires. In the latter case, some participants took the questionnaires and agreed to complete them by themselves at their own pace and convenience. Some respondents were only willing to complete the questionnaire on the condition that the researcher recorded their responses. It is worth noting that of the 231 questionnaires, only 47 (20%) were completed by the 'interviewer-assisted' method (see Table 3.2). One may argue that what was done in the latter case was structured interviews rather than questionnaires. This assessment would be inaccurate since the critical features of an interview of probing and cross-checks (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998) were not applied. In this case, the researcher simply acted in the capacity of 'amanuensis'- a scribe in a non-interventionist manner in order to overcome the time

constraints experienced by the respondents in the afore-mentioned ‘time pressurised’ environment of shift schools.

Table 3.2: Distribution Methods of Questionnaires

Schools	Admin Q'naires	Distribution Method	Teachers' Q'naires	Distribution Methods	Total
Maple Meadows	4	4= SA	56	50= SA 6= IA	60
Scarlet Ibis	3	3= SA	27	15= SA 12= IA	30
English Oak	5	5= SA	23	13= SA 10= IA	28
Sycamore	5	5=SA	21	20=SA 1-IA	26
Falcon Crest	0	0	18	13=SA 5=IA	18
Violet Rose	2	2=SA	10	7=SA 3=IA	12
Lilly Bell	1	1=SA	15	9=SA 6=IA	16
Orchid Vale	3	3= SA	15	13=SA 2=IA	18
Daisy Queen	1	1=SA	8	6=SA 2=IA	9
Tulip Grove	2	2=SA	12	12= SA	14
OVERALL TOTALS	26	26=SA	205	158=SA 47=IA	231

*Codes: SA= Self-administered and IA= Interviewer-assisted

3.7.4.1.4 Response Rate

In addition to MMPS, (the case school) nine other schools participated in the survey. One of the limitations of utilising questionnaire as a method of data collection is that of non-response. Lynn (2008) posits that response rates are important and therefore should be documented explicitly. This will be reflected in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Response Rate for Questionnaires

Schools	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate in %
Maple Meadows	80	60	75
English Oak	40	28	70
Sycamore	50	26	54
Scarlet Ibis	50	30	60
Pine Grove	30	18	60
Orchid Vale	40	18	38
Violet Rose	35	12	40
Lilly Bell	40	16	44
Daisy Queen	38	9	32
Tulip Grove	40	14	35
Total	443	231	Overall Response Rate 52.1

Table 3.1 shows the response rate of the questionnaires. This was in keeping with the norm in that some questionnaires were not returned and some had significant missing fields.

The following were done to minimise the non-response rate:

1. Gate keepers Requirements

The researcher was keen in operating in compliance with the distribution timing and strategies stated by each school; hence gaining the gate keepers (Principals and Vice Principals) support and cooperation.

2. Distribution Timing

Not only was the distribution timing from the schools' perspective considered, but also the researcher was strategic in her decision with regards to timing. The researcher decided to administer the questionnaires in the second term of the school year when teachers are likely to be more familiar with the learning needs of their pupils and would have begun to develop strategies to address these needs. Therefore the questionnaires were administered in January and February, 2008.

3. The researcher underscored the need for undertaking the research, hence their participation would be invaluable.

4. The design and content of the questionnaire

The researcher made much effort in making the appearance of the questionnaire as attractive and ‘respondent friendly’ as possible. Named sections (Section 1: Demographic Data, Section 2: Conceptualisation of SEN and Section 3: Facilities/Strategies used to manage SEN) were used to divide the questionnaire and to help with respondents to focus their thoughts.

5. The researcher acted in the capacity of ‘amanuensis’ to facilitate those respondents that needed the service.

6. When necessary, the researcher made several voyages to the schools to collect questionnaires other than the arranged dates of collection.

3.7.1.4.5 Questionnaire Analysis

The questionnaires were manually analysed at multi levels. The demographic data were done for all schools and graphically presented. The open-ended questions were tabulated using the following headings: the questionnaires’ unique numbers, the essence of the respondents’ answers and special comments. This allowed for easier and more accurate analysis and for the researchers to highlight data which could be considered unique, odd, interesting and which were worth revisiting.

The second level of analysis, entailed entering the data on the into an Excel spread sheet under the identified headings. Each response, which appeared to be expressing essentially similar views on the matter being addressed, would be ticked off. Response table is double checked for accuracy. This was done to maintain high integrity data output. After this phase the responses were calculated. Again, at this stage duplications and faulty categorisation of headings were checked for and adjustments made as deemed necessary. In a few cases a re-working from the second level of analysis had to be done in order to make amendments. Teachers and administrators data analysis were done separately.

3.7.1.4.6 Limitations of Questionnaires

Munn and Drever (1999) have cited as three key limitations of using questionnaire instruments as follows:

1. The work needed to produce high quality questionnaire is frequently taken lightly and as such ineffective questionnaires are produced
2. Data can be superficial
3. The data gathered usually describes rather than explains

The limitations identified by Munn and Drever (1999) in 1 above subsume the ones in 2 and 3. In fact, the limitation cited in 3 is not necessarily a limitation. Importantly, it goes back to the function of the instrument and the type of data the researcher wants the instrument to generate. Measures were taken to safeguard against these limitations.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

A researcher occupies a complex position. Consequently, in order that the researcher's pursuit of knowledge is not compromised during the entire research process and participants are protected; several ethical issues were taken into account. The ethical issues involved in research are frequently multifaceted and can be contradictory. As in every research, ethical dilemmas were encountered but every effort was made to resolve them and/or to reduce their impacts. Figure 3.5 itemises the ethical considerations which were taken into account in this research.

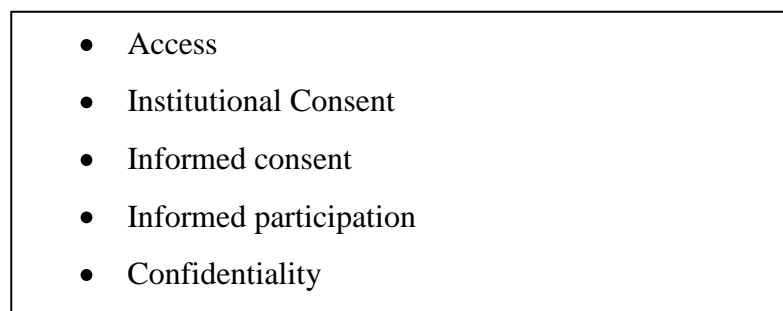
- 
- Access
 - Institutional Consent
 - Informed consent
 - Informed participation
 - Confidentiality

Figure 3.5: Ethical Considerations

3.8.1 Access

One of the first hurdles to surmount in the fieldwork aspect of research is the issue of access (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Informed consent lays the foundation to gain access to research site especially if the researcher's presence will be over an extended period of time. Before a researcher can be granted permission to operate within a given space, gatekeepers ought to be sufficiently informed about the research. Firstly, permission was sought from the MOE in Jamaica to carry out research in public educational institutions. Letters were prepared for each director of the Educational Zones. However, access granted by the Permanent Secretary of education was sufficient to be able to access all schools throughout the island. Permission for access was granted on a staggered basis through formal letters which were addressed to Principals (see Appendix1). From the letters received, MMPS was selected as the case school based on its location to the researcher and it being situated further afield to the politically volatile

areas. The national election in Jamaica was slated for 2007 hence, careful selection of the research site was crucial since there were emerging incidents of political unrest.

3.8.2 Institutional Consent

Having received selected MMPS as the case school, the researcher made telephone contact with the Principal and agreed a mutually convenient date and time for a meeting. At the meeting, the researcher's credentials were verified using copies of letters from the university, researcher supervisor, and Ethics Committee. After receiving the Principal's clearance, the researcher was later introduced to the school's Vice Principals. A letter to the general staff introducing the researcher and the aims of research project was also given to the Principal to be read at the then upcoming staff meeting (see Appendix 2). The researcher was later formally introduced to the school's PTA, which gave further legitimacy to the researcher's presence in the school.

Gaining access to the research site signalled the start of a researcher's affiliation that, by necessity required further nurturing and development (Roth, 2005). This was especially since the researcher would have been operating in the research field for an extended period of time where issues of trust and harmonious interactions would have been crucial to the success of the research. As was previously mentioned, the researcher did not take for granted access to teachers' classrooms. As was aforementioned, in order to gain access to their classroom spaces to observe lessons, the researcher approached teachers individually and each encounter was treated as acts of re-negotiation. Staff and PTA meetings were also observed.

Researchers sometimes act as a participant in the research site (Roth, 2005). The researcher can associate with this in that the school benefited from the available extra pair of hands. It is worth noting that whilst this was the case, even when assisting in the day-to-day realities of the school she wore her 'researcher's hat' in order to safeguard the purpose and integrity of the research project. Importantly, being an active participant offered invaluable way of 'seeing and experiencing' the realities of the phenomenon being enquired.

3.8.3 Informed Consent

One of the critical issues involved in research is informed consent. This refers to the act of giving prospective participants the opportunity to accept or decline to engage in the research with full information regarding the function, aims, objectives and potential

harm that such an involvement may have (Bulmer, 2001). There are two critical aspects to that which constitutes 'informed consent'. Firstly, there is the need for participants to understand and secondly to voluntarily agree to the research and their role of participation in it (Isreal and Hay, 2006). The participants' right to freedom and self-determination is the premise on which informed consent rests. They also have the right to withdraw even after consent has been given. Critically, informed consent can only be seen as such only after all the relevant information has been given to participants that would impact their decision to participate or not (Johnson and Christensen, 2008 and Cohen et al, 2000).

The researcher came into direct contact with children greater precautions were taken to uphold high ethical integrity of the research process. With specific regards to the interviews with children with SEN the researcher got written consent from both the pupils with SEN and their parents (see Appendix 6). The researcher tried not to be alone with pupils. However, to achieve this, compromise had to be made in the area of privacy, since one of the realities of shift schools is space constraint where having a private area and simultaneously having an adult available was sometimes impossible. Therefore, the decision was made to do the interviews where another adult was present but this was not always in a totally private area due to existing constraints.

3.8.4 Confidentiality

In this research participants were assured that the information that supplied would have been treated with the strict confidentiality. To achieve this, information in note books were stored safely and contents were not revealed to other parties. In addition, information that was word-processed was stored using security coded password to further protect data. The researcher was also aware that there are restrictions to the promise of confidentiality if terms of legal issues (Denscome, 2002) especially since children were involved in the research. Fortunately, there was no occurrence that warranted an over-riding of the principle of confidentiality.

3.8.5 Anonymity

Oliver (2003) posits that anonymity is the 'cornerstone' of research ethics, which is, offering participants the chance to have their identity concealed. It is usually good practice that research material is presented in such a manner that the identity of participants (whether by name or role) is undiscoverable. However, exceptions can be

made to this convention. In such a case the researcher needs to be absolutely certain that participants are in agreement with their identity being exposed and as such permission should be secured in writing (Denscome, 2002) and preferably witnessed too. Pseudonyms were used for all research participants and schools involved in the research so that they cannot be traced.

3.8.6 Power

The issue of power in the research process is generally accepted as a fact; it is more a question of how much rather than if it does. According to Kinchele and Berry (2004, p. 2) research is a “power-driven act”. In essence, a researcher exercises the power to evaluate circumstances and construct an account of what is actually happening, that is, defining what is accepted as reality (Schostak and Schostak, 2008). Therefore, researchers should be aware of this and put measures in place to manage this influence that comes with operating in a research space. A researcher’s attributes (age, gender, class and race) and attitudes affect research activities (O’Leary, 2004). Not only should participants be informed in both a written and verbal manner about their rights to withdraw from the research process, but also the researcher should eliminate (as much as it is possible) any pressure that makes it appear to the contrary. The researcher should in no manner exert pressure on participants that can minimise their perception that their right to withdraw is indeed genuine (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). The researcher’s experience has been one of being in a position where her opinions were valued by virtue of level and place of education. Therefore, care was taken not to abuse the sphere of influence. The next section will explain the measures that were taken to authenticate and verify research activities.

3.9 Authentication and Verification Process

Several verification procedures were employed; member checking and detailed records of data collection. Interviewees’ accounts were compared with observations and school documents. Interview transcripts and case school description (see Chapter four) were returned to the interviewees and school Principal for validation. This research will have utility (Paechter, 2003). Many authors have been critical of educational research. However, whilst some of the criticisms have merit, the researcher contends that without educational research the practice of education would be poorer without it. It is therefore, essential that educational researchers take on board the plausible criticisms and improve the process and product of research.

3.10 Research Reflections

In every research project researchers encounter dilemmas which relates to the practical issues of undertaking research in its natural environments (McDonnell et al, 2000) that has the element of unpredictability and issues beyond the control of the researcher. Scott (2000) raises the criticism that research reports have a rather make-belief quality that hides from the reader the real makings of the research process. In fact, Ryen (2004, p. 219) describes the data gathering as ‘more colourful and challenging’ than the majority of published research material. In heeding the implicit advice in this criticism, the researcher has decided to be as ‘research transparent’ as is possible in sharing a few aspects of the research project that presented a dilemma. Without doubt, research is an iterative process. This research journey was riddled with making steps forward and backwards. From the outset of this research, the question that was grappled with was ‘what theoretical underpinning to use?’ This was rather perplexing as numerous theories were investigated had areas of appeal but did not quite ‘fit’. After some time the decision was taken to use The General System Theory that the researcher used in her Masters dissertation. However, there was still an unease concerning this decision. After further search of the literature relating to theories, Situated Learning was selected. Still after further reading especially in a more contextualised thinking of doing qualitative research, the researcher chose to take an emergent theory approach and to let the data collected ‘drive’ the theory selection process and as such the final decision was taken to employ Grounded Theory (as was previously mentioned) in what the researcher calls the ‘theory quagmire’.

On my return from Jamaica in May 2006 having undertaken the foundation phase of the research previously mentioned, the researcher was euphoric only shortly to be plunged into an intellectual quandary as the data and literature acquired were catalogued and analysed. Whilst the researcher was aware that there would be the need to redefine, restate and even adapt new focus, the almost complete unravelling of the ‘research threads’ was unexpected. It appeared that the researcher’s voyage left more questions than answers. In Phase 2 (Section 3.9.4.6) of the research, the major dilemmas presented were the distribution of the questionnaires to administrators and teachers. The manner in which the researcher handled this dilemma has been already addressed in Section 3.10.4.5.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology and methods utilised in the research. It presented the strengths and limitations of the three methods used to produce data required to answer the research question. Crucially, the ethical guidelines followed to safeguard the high standard of the research in keeping with gatekeeper requirement were explained. The researcher also reflected on some the challenges experienced during the research process.

Chapter Four: Findings and Results

Case Study

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined the research methodology and methods which were employed in this research project in order to produce a specific kind of data in relation to the Research Question. As part of this it described the purpose and procedure of the case study (see Section 3.9). This chapter will now present the salient findings and results from the case study. The results and findings will be presented in two sections. In Section One, the case description and critical contextual information will be presented. The emerging themes from the case study data will be presented in Section Two. The multifaceted layers of school will be peeled back with a view to uncover how it addresses the needs of those pupils it deems as having SEN. The discussion of the findings and results will be presented in the next chapter.

4.2 Section One

4.2.1 Context Staging

In order to set the contextual framework for this case, the researcher undertook two informal interviews; one with the first Principal of the school (Mr Reid*) and the other with a resident of the community that had been living there for over forty years (Mrs Jones*). This provided important scaffolding to assist in positioning the school in its context; which is critical in qualitative research.

4.2.2 Characteristics of Maple Meadows Primary School (MMPS)

It is critical that the physical setting of research be examined since physical features are reflected in social features and it creates a background to activities of the research that assist in readers' understanding (Corbetta, 2003). Corbin and Strauss (2008) content that explaining the environment in which something occurs is equally as vital as arriving at

the ‘correct’ concept. Context anchors concept and reduces the likelihood of twisting and distortion of proposed meanings. The Jamaican education system organises primary schools with variations in several features such as school organisation (whole day or shift), size (schools are classified from 1 to 5 based on the pupil population; with five being the largest schools), locale, (whether urban, rural or remote), enrolment, pupil/teacher ratio. This case study was undertaken in one specific school, from henceforth being referred to as Maple Meadows Primary School* (MMPS) and its contextual profile will be described under the subheadings represented in Figure 4.1.

- Context Staging
- Characteristics of MMPS
- School’s Profile
- History and Pupils’ Background
- School’s classification
- School Day Organisation- shift system
- School Accommodation
- Pupils’ Admission and Placement
- Academic Staff
- Attrition of Specialist Teachers
- Teachers Aids
- School Buildings and other Resources
- Language of Communication
- Community Partnership

Figure 4.1: Elements addressed in the Profile of the MMPS

4.2.2.1 School’s Profile

For the academic year 2006/7 MMPS produced the boy with the highest GSAT scores throughout the entire country. This had a ricochet effect on the entire school community in striving to repeat this outstanding feat again. The school also excelled in the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) annual competitions and won some medals. It created media interest and highlighted the school in the public’s focus. It was a time of euphoria and of great expectation from both the pupils and teachers- it was a sense of ‘we have done it before and we can do it again’ mantra.

4.2.2.2 History and Pupils' Background

The community, Maple Wood Gardens*, in which MMPS is situated was originally swamps and farmlands that were converted into a housing scheme. The community started out as a middle-income community inhabited mainly by professionals. Most of the original occupants have now migrated to other communities. Crime and violence along with the influx of rural immigrants have helped to fuel this migration. With this migration the demographics of the community have changed and it is currently chiefly occupied by the working class with some sections entering the ghetto status.

The school was born out of the dire need to provide educational provision in this new community devoid of educational and other facilities. The MMPS was the first school in the area. It began in the mid 1960's with an enrolment of 780 pupils being taught by 17 teachers. Notably, this co-educational institution at its inception was organised on the whole day basis which continued for a decade. Not long after its opening, the enrolment increased to over a thousand, which resulted in the employment of 25 more teachers. Students' enrolment burgeoned which precipitated the introduction of the shift system in the mid 1970's. The need for school places was not adequately solved even with the implementation of the shift system. Therefore, the MOE constructed a two-storey building which housed more classrooms. The school's 'holding area' was built almost 25 years after its inception (History of MMPS School Document). A very noticeable feature of this school is that it has an overtly Christian ethos; a reflection of the country's majority religious practice and (more contextually influenced) a large percentage of staff members are Christians. From the inception the school maintained high academic achievements and have produced several government scholarships awardees.

With the introduction of the shift system some pupils were withdrawn from the school which resulted in the decline in government scholarships because the students who were more academically inclined were now being sent to non-shift (whole day) schools in the neighbouring communities and parishes. With this change in enrolment patterns, students from Inner City communities have inundated the school, which is a continuing trend to date. Most of the parents have limited educational backgrounds and a significant number of them are unemployed. Consequently, the majority of the pupils attending the school are from the lower socio-economic background. Geographical boundaries and or school attendance boundaries usually determine schools' communities. However, due to the pursuit of a desired quality education and ease of

commuting, boundaries are becoming blurred. Therefore, school communities are becoming extended and dispersed (Ezenne, 2003).

The official language of instruction in the school is Standard English. However, there is a profound presence of the use of 'patois' the Creole language in use because this is the language being used in most households. The presence of this unofficial language is frequently corrected by schools officials and is reported as a hindrance to the pupils effectively communicating in the official language of instruction. The stratification of the school will be addressed in the next section.

4.2.2.3 School's Classification

The MOE has classified the MMPS as having the capacity to accommodate just fewer than 1300 students on a whole day school basis. It currently accommodates over 2000 pupils on a shift basis without the doubling of resources. In Jamaica, schools are situated in a wider framework, thus belonging to one of the six Regions as was aforementioned in Section 2.4.1. It is a coeducational institution offering only primary education and is grouped in Region F*. This region has 166 schools, 14 of which operate on the shift basis with 7 of them offering primary education. Maple Meadows Primary School is a large shift school located in the Metropolitan area outside the capital of the country. Hence, the MOE classifies it as an urban school. It is situated alongside a main road (this close proximity sometimes produces the negative effect of noise pollution) and within walking distance to a commercial zone with supermarket, petrol station, banking service and others. It accommodates from grade 1 to 6 and caters for the age cohort of 6 to 11years olds. It is worth noting that the average attendance at the whole day primary school in the same geographical location is 94% as opposed to 86% for MMPS based on the pertinent statistics supplied by the MOEY&C (MOEYC, 2001-2002) It is a trend that primary schools which are organised on the whole day basis, have attendance rates in the 90's percentage whilst shift ones are in the 80's and lower. In fact only 3 of the 27 shift primary schools in the entire country have attendance rates in the 90's. It must be acknowledged that some whole day primary schools have attendance rates in the 80's too. In order to satisfy the MOE curricula requirements, five subjects are timetabled on a daily basis with each subject session spanning 50 minutes. The critical element of the shift system will be explained in the upcoming section.

4.2.2.4 School Day Organisation

The MMPS is organised on the shift basis in which two sets of students are taught in the same school building for the school day. Shift X begins at 7 am and ends at 12 pm. To expedite time there is an overlapping 15 minutes and as such this second Shift Y, commences at 11:45 am and dismisses at 5pm. It is worth noting that the school day for specialist teachers is organised differently as opposed to regular class teachers. They commence at 9am and ends at 2:30pm (this closely resembles the times in whole day schools). Extra lessons are convened for Shift X and Shift Y from 12 pm and 10:30 am respectively. There is one scheduled lunch break for each shift for 15 minutes at 10:30 am and 2:30 pm respectively (see Figure 4.2).

In addition, one of the unique features of MMPS is that it convenes an Evening Institute which provides adult education which targets parents of the pupils whose education needs improvement. Therefore, in a technical sense, MMPS is really a multi-shift school, offering three shifts (see Bray's shift categorisations, 2000). X and Y shifts offer primary education, whilst the Evening Institute offers adult education. However, for the purpose of this research and critically to be consistent with the MOE classification system, it will be considered as a double-shift school, which is simply known as shift school in the Jamaican context. MMPS is one of two shift schools (the other at the secondary level) operating in its community.

07:00AM	7:00 to 7:15AM	7:15 to 10:30AM	09:30AM	10:30 to 10:45AM	10:45 to 11:45AM	11:45AM to 12:00PM	12:00 PM	12:00 to 2:30PM	2:30 PM	2:30 to 2:45PM	2:45 to 5:00PM	5:00 PM	5:30 to 7:00PM
Shift X and Breakfast Club commence	Devotion	Lessons	Specialist Teachers Commence	Shift X - Lunch Break	Lessons	Shift Y Arrival & Devotion	Shift X Dismissal	Lessons	Specialist Teachers End	Shift Y - Lunch Break	Lessons	Shift X Dismissal	Evening Institute
Shifts Transition													

Figure 4.2: Maple Meadows Primary School's Timetable

4.2.2.5 School Buildings and other Resources

Having addressed the shift system in the previous section, this section will discuss the school buildings and other resources. In Jamaica, many private and public buildings including schools are not accessible to individual with disabilities (Patrick, 2002).

MMPS is housed in 3 flat buildings and one two-storey building. The buildings are not all linked; hence one has to go in the open to get from one block to the other. In bad weather this proves to be somewhat problematic. The school yard has uneven surfaces. Like the typical mainstream Jamaican primary school they are no lifts, ramps nor rails. Consequently, this school site would not accommodate a wheel chair user or those that are blind and visually impaired. The playfield is partly covered with grass and the rest is dirt. When it rains water settles in this area and hence it cannot be accessed by pupils. When it is extremely dry too it is a source of dust nuisance. There are neither interactive nor educationally stimulating gadgets nor infrastructure in this play area.

A pupils' sick bay is present at the school. However, the school does not have a nurse; again teachers act in this role for minor accidents and illnesses. A banking service is offered by the school in collaboration with a local bank with an aim to encourage pupils to develop the orientation of positive financial stewardship at an early age.

There is canteen and breakfast room which are used for the preparation of cooked lunch and breakfast respectively. A tuck shop is also available which sells snacks and school equipment such as exercise books, pen and pencil. It is worth noting too that there is a thriving vending which takes place at the school's gate which caters for pupils as they congregate in this area waiting for their school shift to start. The school population has exhausted the school's capacity to provide both snacks and cooked lunches so pupils use the vending services at the gate extensively. The admission and placement of pupils will be explained in the section that will follow.

4.2.2.6 Admission and Placement of Pupils

There are some the school which screen pupils in core subjects as is determined by the school before admitting them. Pupils who fail to demonstrate the schools' prescribed level of academic competence are not admitted. However, MMPS does not screen its pupil. The screening process creates a higher academic baseline for the schools that screen as opposed to those schools which do not screen. On the whole, children who were denied admittance to primary schools that administer a screening process; they then seek admission to those schools that do not.

On being admitted to MMPS pupils are given school-based diagnostic tests in the core subjects (Mathematics and English). Pupils are streamed based on academic ability with the exception of the Grade 1 classes. Pupils in Grade 1 are placed randomly in classes which are named based on the initial letter of the teachers' surnames (for

example, Mr Valentino's* grade 1 class would be called 1V). If more than one teacher has the same surname initial then the difference is designated by numbers (1V1 and 1V2). At the grade levels where pupils are streamed, the first four letters of the alphabet denotes the streams with the pupils with the highest academic ability being denoted by A, and the second level B and so on. Notably, stream D is assigned for the class for pupils determined as having SEN. Importantly, in Grade 6, the year in which pupils do the GSAT, there is no stream D. This is done in an attempt to alleviate the stigma pupils experience from being placed in the D streams. Rather, multilevel streaming occurs, that is, 6A1, 6A2, 6B1, 6B2 and 6C1 and 6C2. At this level, pupils determined as having SEN are placed in C1 and C2. In addition, in Grade 5, there is a class called 5S, the S denoting 'Special'. Pupils in this class, are deemed as having pronounced SEN. The class size ranges from a low of 20 and high of 43. On the whole, the lower streams have smaller numbers to facilitate the greater demand for individual attention.

4.2.2.7 Academic Staff

Having discussed the admission and placement of pupils in the previous section, this section will present a description of the academic staff. At MMPS each shift has its own teachers with the exception of the specialist teachers who go across both shifts. The academic staff consists of 1 Principal which serves the two shifts. Each shift has 1 Vice Principal, 64 class teachers, four Guidance Counsellors, and the service of six specialist teachers. These specialist teachers are Computer Studies, Physical Education, Library Studies, Music, Reading, and Spanish. In essence, the academic staff has a total of 75 members. Notably, males account only 8% (n=6) percentage of the academic staff. One of the outstanding features of the school is that there is no pre-trained teachers are on staff. All but three academic staff members has the baseline qualification, that is, a diploma in teaching, as stipulated by the MOE. In addition, quite a number of the teachers were engaging in CPD at both local and 'off shore' degree granting institutions.

As was previously mentioned, the Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC) directs the teaching content of Jamaican primary schools. However, at MMPS there are two subjects which were being taught to pupils that went beyond the requirement of the curriculum, that is, Spanish and Computer Science. There was only one teacher for each of these subjects. Therefore, these subjects were offered on a restricted basis, that is, from grades 4-6. To be computer illiterate is to be illiterate. Therefore, the teaching of

computer studies is making is a step in the way forward. The next section will explain the attrition of specialist teacher from the MMPS.

4.2.2.8 Attrition of Specialist Teachers

In the last eight to ten years MMPS has suffered from serious attrition rate of their specialist teachers to overseas educational institutions due to poor salaries and working conditions. This loss of these teachers has affected the delivery of the critical areas of the curriculum. The Principal reported having lost all the special education teachers, and most of the Science, Mathematics, Reading and English teachers. The Principal describes the shift school “as a holding area for children in order to provide school places”. The penultimate section which follows will discuss the resource of teachers’ assistants.

4.2.2.9 Teachers’ Assistants

In developed countries, it is the norm that teachers’ assistants (TAs) are present in classroom, especially those in which pupils with SEN are taught. It is worth noting that the use of teachers’ assistants is not a regular feature of the Jamaican public school system both at the primary and secondary levels. However, at MMPS there are a few assigned at various grade levels. Teachers’ assistants are managed by their respective Grade Coordinator. This feature is a consequence of the creativity, forward thinking and hard work of the administrators and staff at the school, not a strategy used by the MOE. In fact, their salaries are paid through fund raising efforts within the school. It is reported that there were larger numbers of TAs present at the school but due to financial constraints this feature had to be significantly downsized.

4.2.2.10 Community Partnership

This final section will discuss how the MMPS engage with the community in which it operates. Once school buildings were single-use facilities, however, more and more community activities are being convened at schools sites (LaVada, 2003). Community partnership is critical to the development of any school. At MMPS efforts were being made to engage with the community. The community uses the school site and facilities extensively. Many of the churches in the area had their beginnings at the school premises. Political entities also use the school site for meetings and election activities.

An active PTA is critical to the education of children; through this medium caregivers are made aware of the needs of their children in the school. A positive community school partnership has the potential to engender pupils' interest in their school and inspire them (Ezenne, 2003). There are general and grade levels PTAs. The month of November is celebrated as Parents' Month. It is marked by several activities seeking to foster a stronger community relationship. The PTA at the school needs strengthening the percentage attendance needs much to be desired. It is worth noting, that the parents of pupils in the lower streams reflect the lowest attendance pattern at both general and grade level PTAs.

4.2.3 Section Summary

The foregoing section gives an overall description of MMPS. The school's pertinent opportunities and constraints were explained in light of the research question. It sought to highlight its unique features thus setting the stage in Section One so that the results and findings of the case study (Section Two) will be better understood. This section will follow next.

4.3 Section Two

4.3.1 Case Study Data Source

Before presenting the themes which have emerged from the case study data, a brief recap of the source of the data, methods of collection and procedure for analysis will be done (see Chapter Three for greater details). As was previously mentioned in the Figure 3.3 the data for the case study aspect of the research were collected during a nine-month period from June 2007 to February 2008. The main sources of data for the case study were hand-written descriptions of observed occurrences and conversations that occurred in the school throughout the period of the case study. The more varied the activities observed the more likelihood the accuracy of interpretation (Attride-Sterling, 2001). As such the researcher attempted to capture many facets of school life by engaging in participant observation and examination of the following (See Research Log, Appendix 10):

1. Lessons (both shifts, different streams, subjects and teachers)
2. Devotion (assemblies)
3. Meetings – P.T.A, staff and grade
4. Rehearsals (graduation, choir and dance)
5. Church service
6. Evening Institute- observing parents in lessons
7. Breakfast club
8. Extra lessons
9. School banquet
10. Lunch time operation (Canteen and tuck shop)
11. Administration of examinations (internal and external)
12. School documents
13. Research reflections (Research Journal and memos)

4.3.2 Semi Structured Interviews

Data from semi structured interview include views of administrators, teachers, TAs, parents and pupils which related to their experiences of teaching, sending their children to and learning in a shift school and interfacing with SEN respectively. As was previously mentioned some interviews were audio-tape and for others hand-written notes were made in order to comply with direct requests and or to accommodate limitations (primarily illiteracy) whether of parents or pupils. In addition, one officer of the MOE was interviewed to get a panoramic view on the operation of educating pupils with SEN in Jamaica. Interview transcripts were verified to authenticate interview account (see Sections 3.7.1.2).

4.3.3 Procedure for Data Analysis

If researchers fail to make explicit what procedures that they used for their data analysis and the underpinning assumptions, it makes it difficult to assess the worth of the research and to make comparisons and contrasts for similar research topics (Attride-Sterling, 2001). Therefore, in this research every attempt was made to make the research process explicit. A GT orientation was used to guide the interpretation of the school's and its attendant participants' perceptions and experience of managing the SEN of pupils within a shift school context. It is being acknowledged that within the GT orientation, the research tool of thematic analysis was used to extrapolate themes from the research data (see Figure 4.3). The thematic analysis is "*a method for identifying,*

analysing and reporting patterns themes within data” (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 79). In keeping with the epistemological orientation of the research, that is, constructionist framework (where meanings and experiences are socially constructed - produced and reproduced), Thematic Analysis was suitably in sync with this framework. The Thematic Analysis was focussed on theorising the socio-cultural context and social conditions that underlay the participants’ account. One of the advantages of Thematic Analysis is its wide range of flexibility and its compatibility with both essentialist and constructionist frameworks. Due to its theoretical non-allegiance it has proved to be a rather useful tool in unpacking vast and complex data set (Braun and Clark, 2006).

Theme Analysis is a qualitative research method which is discovery-oriented in nature having the ability to identify main themes (Meier et al, 2008) from textual data set at different degrees of conceptualisation (Attride-Sterling, 2001). Meier et al (2008, p.291) further articulate that theme-analysis “combines both a theme-oriented approach and a phase-oriented approach”. In keeping with the phenomenological orientation of this research, the following were done to the data set (interview transcripts, research memos, and observation notes) (Giorgi, 194 as cited by Meier et al, 2008):

1. Detailed description of the phenomenon of how MMPS attempted to meet pupils’ SEN in its shift context; allowing the important and constant features to come through. This task was governed by the orientation of GT in theoretically sampling ‘events’ in chartering the way forward in the research and also the attempt to ‘bracket’ as much as was possible. In addition, contextual features were underscored to provide a backdrop for the analysis (see Sections 4.2.2 – 4.2.2.10).
2. Dissecting the dense text into units of understanding.
3. The formation of themes.

The dissecting of the text was directed by open, axial and selective coding of Grounded Theory. Firstly, open coding identifies the important codes. It ‘breaks open’ the data, hence the term ‘open coding’. It required a keen examination of the data set (at least the portion selected) highlighting the categories of concepts contained within. This stage sets the foundation for theoretical potentials. Secondly, the key categories identified at the open coding stage were interconnected. In essence, this level of coding puts as it were an axis through the previously labelled codes. The aim at this stage was to find interrelationships amongst the categories (Punch, 2009). For example, ‘cause and effect’ strategy was frequently used to find the link amongst the categories

especially concerning categories related to the ‘time element’ in the data. Thirdly, selective coding, as the name suggests, at this stage the researcher purposefully chooses a core category, and focuses on it. It should be noted that GT analysis process involves constant comparisons- looking for similarities and differences (ibid).

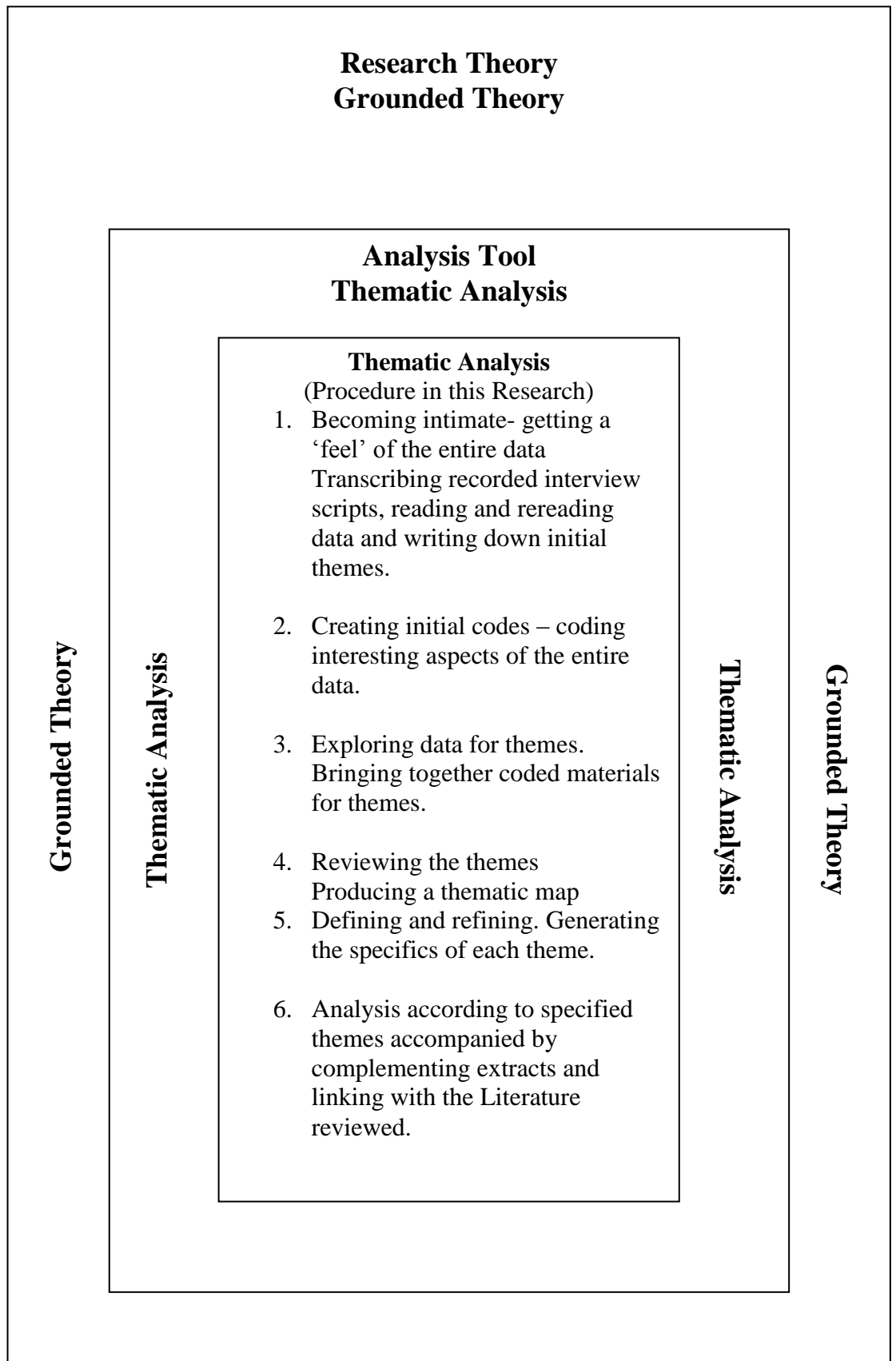


Figure 4.3: Research Data Analysis Procedure
(Adopted from Braun and Clarke, 2006)

4.3.4 Emergent Themes

4.3.4.1 Theme One: The Time Factor

One of the features that typify the shift school system is the issue of the scarcity of time. Therefore, it was unsurprising that ‘time’ was a prominent factor running consistently throughout the case study data. This theme provides a contextual framework in which other school elements are situated. The reduced teacher/pupil contact time is experienced by all learners; however, the impact is more acute on the experience of those pupils having SEN.

One may ask what has given rise to the time constraint? In a shift school the day is comprised of only five hours which is approximately 2 1/2 to 3 hours less than the time spent in a whole day school. The shift system is a significant contributing factor that has given rise to the above mentioned time pressure environment. In MMPS there is a melting pot of views relating to the shift system. Stakeholders have conflicting views on the subject. This sub-theme ‘shift system’ will present stakeholders, views about it.

4.3.4.1.1 The shift System

4.3.4.1.1.1 Administrators

There was a general a consensus amongst administrators with regards to their views of the shift system. They perceived the shift system in a strongly negative term; one which does not facilitate the education of pupils in general and especially of those who have SEN. Administrators were of the view that the MOE had reneged on its responsibility of adequately resourcing the school to make the shift system workable. Ironically, administrators maintain that despite the presence of the shift system, with its time constraints, the school was comparable to whole day primary schools in terms of its academic performance.

4.3.4.1.1.2 Teachers

Teachers’ views of the shift system were polarised. On one hand, there were those who felt strongly that the shift system impedes the education of pupils especially those with SEN. In fact, some teachers opined that the shift system was a significant contributing factor to the underachievement in the school especially with regards to pupils’ ability to read. On the other hand, it appears that teachers who wanted to and who were engaging in what is known locally as ‘moon lighting’ (having a second job) and those who were studying tended see the positives in the shift system since it facilitates their personal

activities. The system's weaknesses were also admitted to, but to a far less extent. However, it should also be acknowledged that there were some teachers who were neutral in their views.

4.3.4.1.1.3 Pupils

In contrast to the administrators and some teachers, pupils were on the whole satisfied with the shift system with only a few preferring being in a whole day school. Some expressed gratitude to be attending the school. Some of the incentives mentioned were being able to sleep in late in the mornings, having more time to do homework and being able to see their friends. On the whole pupils felt that their learning needs and particularly their SEN were being met. A few cited improvement in their Reading and Mathematics skills.

4.3.4.1.1. 4. Parents

The majority of the parents were not in favour of the shift system initially. They expressed a strong preference for their children to be able to attend a whole day school. However, some stated that MMPS had 'earned' their respect with regards to their liking the school although not the shift system per se. Admittedly, some parents were totally converted to the shift system as well. Some parents expressed a sense of gratitude about the shift system because they did not have any other options in finding alternative school choices for their children; especially premium school which is whole day school. There was a minority that expressed very negative views about the shift system and that it did not facilitate their children's SEN being met. The upcoming subsections will outline how the time constraint was manifested in the school.

4.3.4.1.2 Time Constraint in MMPS

4.3.4.1.2.1 Incomplete delivery of the Curriculum Content

As was previously mentioned, the RPC directs the learning which takes place in Jamaican primary schools. It is based on this curriculum content that pupils are assessed both internally and in national examinations. Effectively, what the time constraint has done is to reduce (in some instances significantly so) the quantity of the curriculum content that can be delivered. Consequently, lesson objectives are often not completed within the stipulated timeframe for lessons. This typical day-to-day occurrence has a knock-on effect and is handled by teachers in different ways. Some teachers ascribe

more importance to pupils understanding the lesson objectives and coming to a ‘natural’ conclusion of their learning process. Others place more value on being able to complete the stipulated number of subjects to be taught in a given day.

- For some teachers they are not able to teach the number of subjects as is timetabled for a given day.
- Other teachers discontinue the lesson being taught at the end of a given session, with a view that they will continue teaching the lesson when next the subject is timetabled. In some cases the unfinished portion of the lesson is given for home work.
- As class teachers experience the ‘time crunch’ it has led to a knock-on effect of a ‘specialist time squeeze’, whereby specialist teachers are sometimes required to give up their time. This is done for reasons such as to complete lessons or to do tests.

4.3.4.1.2.2 Teacher Stress

People's environment directly impacts their well-being and behaviour. The time limitation is evident in the quality of the lives that teachers are able to have at school. There is an optimal space in which individuals are to function in order for them to have well-being and consequently (usually) maximum production. Some teachers revealed that they frequently do not have time to eat and in extreme cases find it difficult to get the time even to take needed comfort breaks. There were those who asserted that this had negative effects on their health.

4.3.4.1.2.3 Curtailment of Pupils’ Play

One of the most profound manifestations of the ‘time crunch’ on pupils is the lack of opportunity for them to engage in unstructured play. Of the 5 hours that pupils spent in school, only one 15 minutes break was scheduled (see Figure 4.2). In theory, these 15 minutes should be used for eating lunch, a comfort break and play. In reality 15 minutes is not enough time to adequately address these issues. Eating and comfort break can be accommodated at the discretion of teachers in various ways. However, play has been squeezed out of the equation. Although there is such a scarcity of time at MMPS as a direct result of the shift system, there were several areas of school life that may be identified as misuse or weak use of time which are outlined below:

4.3.4.1.2.4 Disruption of Instructional Time

- Meetings held too frequently
- Devotions overrunning its scheduled time
- Repeated late distribution of lunches which eroded instruction time
- Parents coming in to talk to teachers at odd times during the already limited contact time (even though there is a set time slated for them for such meetings)
- Unpunctuality and absences of staff
- Time lost in addressing excessive disciplinary problems
- High rate of non-instructional time spent on tasks. Teachers' excessive administrative workload which further erodes the teaching and learning time e.g. preparing lunch lists, distributing lunches and filling out forms for the MOE
- Pupils engaging in high rates non-instructional use of their time for activities such as distributing books and ancillary type duties (sweeping and wiping classroom floors).
- Excessive number of committees (15). It appeared as if some teachers were in too many committees which placed a heavy time demand on them. These committees sometimes had meeting during times that teachers should be actively engaged in the teaching and learning process.
- Breakfast programme starting too late generally at 7am, the same time as the start of school.
- The MOE sometimes uses school as pilot project which made a demand on the school's time.
- Special days (when all or a portion of the school day is used for unusual activities and the focus of teachers and pupils is not on instructional time (Smith 2000).

4.3.4.2 Theme Two: School's Leadership and Culture

The previous theme presented in great details the findings concerning the time constraint which were in operation within the school. This theme will now discuss school leadership and culture that impacted on the meeting of pupils' SEN. Leadership is critical in the effective management of any organisation including schools. There are several leadership styles practised in primary schools; autocratic, democratic and distributed (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005 and Avila de Lima, 2008). Distributed leadership was practised in MMPS. The Principal calls the Vice Principals 'lieutenants' on whom he relies heavily and delegate significantly. The Principal can be frequently heard to say let the staff "*do their thing*" which was taken to mean that they should go

ahead and work on their assigned task without unnecessary interference. This disposition seemed to communicate a sense of confidence in staff members who often embraced the challenge.

The primary vehicle through which leadership is dispersed in MMPS is through committees, and to a lesser extent, Grade Coordinators. Teaching staff was given the responsibility of 'owning' aspects of school development and is overtly encouraged to pursue personal development. Allowances were given to teachers to facilitate the latter; for example being allowed to leave earlier than the dismissal time and given discretionary study days. It should be noted that there is a culture of acknowledging staff members' contributions to school development and personal achievements. Staff and PTA meetings were the usual places where acknowledgements were made.

Although leadership was distributed, it was the school's pursuit of academic excellence and its profiling which took precedence. The resources available at MMPS were inadequate for optimal teaching and learning. However, one of the administrative tasks of school leaders is that of managing and distributing resources (Huber, 2004). Where they are inadequate resources it becomes even more necessary for its distribution to be congruent with the aims and objectives of the organisation. Maple Meadows Primary School has been located within a performance-oriented paradigm. Consequently, the management and distribution of resources within the school reflects the wider philosophical orientation of examination success focussed. Notably, none of fifteen committees has any specific remit as it relates to pupils with SEN. In MMPS the welfare and affairs of pupils with SEN is secondary to that of examination excellence and consequentially the school's image. The next theme will discuss the school's policies and procedures.

4.3.4.3 Theme Three: School Policies and Procedures

Educational policies and clearly defined procedures are critical for effective school leadership. At MMPS there were no visibly articulated school mission nor vision statements. However, school rules were available but they too were often not visible. There was no evidence of documented school policies including which explains the functioning of the school including how pupils with SEN are managed and or supported. Only a list of rules was provided on request for documentation. The researcher made inquiries to discover that there was a first draft of school mission and vision statement in existence. Due to the nonexistence of policies there limited cohesion amongst teachers and other stakeholders regarding the management of behavioural and

other issues that arise from pupils with SEN. For example, there was no clear policy with regards to corporal punishment- it was ad hoc, some did and some did not. The upcoming theme will describe the teaching and learning environment in which teachers and pupils operate.

4.3.4.4 Theme Four: Teaching and Learning Environment

4.3.4.4.1 Classroom Spaces

One of the features of MMPS is a disparity in classrooms infrastructure. The calendar year of 2007/8 was very challenging for the school due to space constraints exacerbated by refurbishment works that was being done to school buildings. Several classes were displaced and these major refurbishments caused disruption in the teaching and learning process. Teachers and pupils moved out of their classes and were accommodated in temporary tents. Being the summer term, the weather was very hot and temporary accommodation proved unsatisfactory and the conditions were not conducive to effective teaching and learning. This also negatively impacted on the health of teachers. The tents were abandoned and classes were held in the 'holding area' which also proved difficult to cope with. Afterwards classes were removed from this area and placed alongside other classes at different grade levels, often having only an invisible line of partitioning, in areas that were already sharing class spaces.

Up until mid October in the academic year 2007/2008, 21 (67.7%) classes were accommodated in shared class spaces. When the refurbishment project was completed, 14 (45%) classes had their own individual classroom spaces. In this sense, sharing means that several classes are in the same location (which is usually a big room) which is separated only by movable chalkboards used as partitions (see Figure 2.10). Of note is the fact that most of the self-contained classrooms were assigned to A streams for the more able students, C, D and Special classes which comprised of the less able were generally placed in shared classroom spaces. In shared classroom spaces learning is even more difficult for pupils with SEN who already experience challenges in learning. The next subsection will address the cause of the hot weather in which teachers and pupils function.

4.3.4.4.2 High Temperatures

Jamaica is a tropical country and as such experiences soaring temperatures during summer months highlighted in the Literature Review (see Section 2.3). This condition made teaching and learning rather difficult at specific times of the day. Due to the architectural design and possibly to financial constraints the school buildings are not air-conditioned (with the exception of the computer room). Therefore, it was not unusual for both teachers and pupils to be seen profusely perspiring and fanning in an attempt to stay cool and comfortable. A few classrooms had fans (usually done by teachers' initiative) but the majority of the classroom had none. Teaching and learning would have been negatively impacted because users were uncomfortable.

4.3.4.4.3 High Noise Levels

Classroom noise at school may be caused by electronic or mechanical gadgets, noise from outside the classroom, and from pupils (Manlove et al, 2001). Since MMPS made limited use of technology in lessons, there was little noise created by gadgets. The noise being discussed here is the one made by pupils. It is worth noting that the service of supply teacher is not an element of the Jamaican school system. Therefore, when teachers were absent their classes were sometimes left unsupervised for prolonged periods of time which contributed to a noisy school environment and pupils missing out on the content of the NC. Teacher absences occurred on two levels. One was when teachers were absent from school and the other more subtle type, 'in school' absenteeism. This is, when teachers were at school but for different reasons, were absent from classes. In some cases, work was given to pupils and some level of supervision left in place for example the neighbouring class teacher or the class monitor. In other, cases pupils are made to wait for their teachers without any work being given.

This theme is linked to the elements cited as factors (other than the shift system) that is exacerbating the 'time crunch' as was identified in Theme One. The following factors were observed to be contributing to the high noise levels experienced in classes especially those classes that were designated for pupils with SEN. (This should not be taken to mean that only the pupils with SEN are responsible for the noise levels in the school in general):

1. Pupils not being able to manage their behaviours and consequently behaving in inappropriate manners.
2. Pupils being off task.
3. Neighbouring classes ‘noise bleed’ especially in those classrooms having chalkboard partition rather than permanent walls.
4. Off-shift pupil noise

In addition to noise made by pupils, a source of external noise especially in urban schools is road traffic (Dockrell and Shield, 2006). This was found to be the case at MMPS because it is situated near a major road and noise from vehicular traffic is a negative consequence; especially to the classes which are at the north side of the school. These are some of the contributing factors to the regular high noise levels in the school.

4.3.4.4 Sparse Use of Technology

It is the norm that teaching and learning spaces are marked by the presence and use of technology. However, this is not the case at MMPS. Whilst there is a general lack of resources, there is a pronounced inadequacy in the use of technology throughout the school. There are no computers in the classrooms. In addition, only four were in the library and at the time there was no Internet access. This observation is not peculiar to MMPS, rather it is situated within a wider context in which the education system in Jamaica is road-blocked by financial constraint which impedes a wider use of technology especially at the primary level. This limitation needs to be urgently addressed because the societal needs are dictating the trends and schools need to be responsive to them. The prolific use of technology is one such trend.

4.3.4.5 Theme Five: Incidences and Prevalence of Pupils’ SEN

The previous themes provided a backdrop for the themes that will follow. This theme brings into focus the SEN of pupils. There were multiple SEN manifested by learners at MMPS. The majority of those pupils with presenting SEN had learning disabilities. In particular, the two most prominent SEN displayed in order of prevalence of occurrence were reading and behavioural difficulties. Very few pupils have SEN of a sensory nature. Only one boy had a noticeable physical disability. Teachers reported that there were pupils who needed to have their vision tested. In a few classes it was observed that there were particular pupils who had to be specially seated towards the front in order to be able to see. For example, a teacher had to improvise by placing a green

plastic film over a pupil's work for it to be properly seen. Some teachers reported having advised parents to get their children's eyes tested, but for some children there was no follow-up done by their parents.

Of the 2,075 pupils who were enrolled for the academic year 2007/8 a significant number of boys are categorised as having SEN and as such are placed in special classes and low ability streams. This stark gender imbalance is evidenced in Table 4.2 reflecting an overall percentage of 68.2 and 63.8 for X and Y shifts respectively.

Table 4.1 Number of Pupils in Lower Ability Classes across the Shifts

Shift X			Shift Y		
Grades	Boys	Girls	Grades	Boys	Girls
2	49	17	2	39	24
3	33	15	3	38	21
4	35	11	4	25	20
5	34	21	5	34	14
6	25	18	6	30	15
Totals	176	82	Totals	166	94
Totals in %	68.2	31.8	Totals in %	63.8	36.2

Note* Grade 1 pupils were not streamed

4.3.4.5.1 Reading Difficulties

There was a chronic reading problem in MMPS. Reading was the only curriculum area for which the school provides a specialist subject teacher to supplement the teaching of reading that is already done by the regular class teachers. Administrators acknowledge that the school was encountering a severe case of reading problems amongst its pupil population. In keeping with administrators' views, teachers (especially those class teachers of the middle to low ability groups) reported that a significant portion of the pupils in their classes were reading at one or two levels below the age appropriate reading levels. There were teachers that stated that some of their pupils were actually pre-primers (reading below a first grade reading level) in their reading abilities.

4.3.4.5.2 Behavioural Difficulties

Behavioural difficulties amongst pupils were a major problem experienced at MMPS. There were frequent fights and quarrels involving pupils who were experiencing difficulties in managing the behaviours. In keeping with the trend this was more prominent amongst the boys. Behaviour difficulties have a negative impact on their ability to stay on task which frequently led them to being punished. The researcher noted that there were some pupils from low ability classes who were frequent occupants of the bench outside the Principal's office waiting to be addressed for disciplinary reasons. Another impact of this persistent behavioural problem was the frequency with which lessons had to be interrupted to deal with disciplinary problems. This further reduced the already limited instruction time. In addition, when pupils fought it almost always resulted in them being expelled (parallel to exclusions in the UK). Often, the time for pupils to return to school after being expelled was sometimes contingent on their parents'/caregivers' ability to attend a meeting with their children's class teachers and or administrators. Some parents refused to attend while others found it difficult to attend arranged meetings so their children were sometimes expelled or longer periods than was necessary. This caused these pupils to miss out on even more learning time. This produces a cyclical effect of more boys manifested in learning difficulties because of the reduced time they spend in engaging with their learning. By implication the education, due to behavioural difficulties, was even more impaired. In addition, repeat offenders for behavioural problems are sometimes 'written off' by teachers who were frustrated by the challenges and who sometimes verbalised that they did not know what else to do. The upcoming theme will explain how the MMPS responded to pupils' SEN as was discussed in this theme.

4.3.4.6 Theme Six: School's Response to Pupils' SEN

As was previously mentioned and there is no formal assessment of children's SEN in Jamaican schools. Schools employ their own strategies of how they construct and manage pupils' SEN. Maple Meadows Primary School utilises multiple strategies in its attempt to meet the SEN of its pupils. However, before these intervention strategies are explained, the deployment of the teaching staff and teachers' assistants will be examined. It is essential that the allocation of human resources dovetails with the implementation of strategies so that pupils' SEN can be effectively met.

4.3.4.6.1 Deployment of Teaching Staff

There were only 3 teachers at MMPS who had a certificate only and there were no pre-trained teachers. The majority had the minimum requirement of a teaching diploma (n= 50) required by the MOE. Eleven teachers had first degrees and four had postgraduate degrees. Of note, several teachers were studying at the time of the data collection. On the whole, teachers were comparable in terms of their qualification in light of the stream in which they are placed. However, the more experienced teaching staff members are placed in the classes that will be sitting external examinations- grades three, four, and six. These teachers often have longer years of service and have demonstrated their competence over time in terms of examination success. The teachers assigned to teach the classes with the pupils deemed as having SEN are usually newly qualified teachers or teaching for less number of years than their A stream counterparts. This is not to say that there are not any teachers who are assigned low ability classes with extensive years of teaching experience and competent. However, the prevailing trend is that the less competent teaching staff was assigned to lower ability streams.

4.3.4.6.2 Deployment of Teachers' Assistants

Teachers' assistants (TAs) are managed by the Grade Coordinator at the grade level at which they work. The understanding of and the execution of the role of TAs is fragmented throughout the school. This reduces its potential in general and particularly as a potential tool for making positive inputs in the education of pupils with SEN. Primarily, there needs to be a clear thinking of the purpose of their presence. In essence, what are their roles and functions? Are they supposed to have a direct input in facilitating pupils' learning (especially those with SEN) or they to function primarily in the capacity of reducing teachers workload, so that they in turn will have more contact time with students (which could be a function of improved performance)?

4.3.4.6.3 Special Educational Need Intervention Strategies

In Jamaican primary schools they are diverse strategies to cope with meet the learning needs of pupils with SEN. There are no government special unit or resource centres attached to MMPS; neither is multiclass teaching used. However, a significant number of strategies were in operation in this school and are outlined as follows:

4.3.4.6.3.1 Targeted Grouping of Pupils with SEN

More demand is being placed on schools to increase standards and to meet the educational needs of all pupils through the delivery of the curriculum; pupil grouping being a strategy used to achieve this (Davies et al, 2003). Like was previously mentioned, streaming is practised in MMPS as a means of pupils receiving targeted teaching and resourcing based on their abilities and needs.

4.3.4.6.3.2 Low Ability Streams

At MMPS streaming is an integral part of pupil grouping. As was previously mentioned in the case description (see Section 4.2.7) all grades with the exception of Grade 1 pupils are streamed according to ability. Maths and English are the keys subject use in the assessment of pupils. However, the overall poor performance on End of Year examinations is a critical deciding factor in pupils' placement along the streaming continuum. The class teachers place pupils into streams in what is referred to as promotions meetings. It should be noted that the classes according to streams in which pupils are placed in the promotions meetings for the upcoming academic year (or at the point of the admission for new pupils) is relatively fixed for that year. There is very little pupil movement across stream during the year.

4.3.4.6.3.3 Special Classes

Maple Meadows Primary School makes provision for special classes or those pupils who failed to meet the standards of mastery for the national Grade Four Literacy Test. This provision is directed by the MOE with a maximum stipulated teacher/pupil ratio of 1:15. The literacy special classes are one-off SEN strategy with a targeted teaching approach and content with a view for pupils to be successful in the re-sit of the examination. For the academic year 2006/7, 103 pupils failed the examination across both shifts. There were 309 pupils enrolled in the Grade Four. Therefore, a third of those who potentially did the examination failed. It is worth noting that if pupils' absences are factored in for the day the examination, the failure rate may even be slightly higher than a third.

4.3.4.6.3.4 Reading Programme

As a response to the previously highlighted chronic reading problem at the school in Section 4.10.1, the school has implemented a reading programme in an attempt to help address it. A sub-set of pupils with severe reading difficulties is taught by the reading

specialist. Only those pupils who were considered priority cases were accommodated in the programme due to the small scale of it. It is serviced by on one teacher who acts in the capacity of specialist teacher for the two shifts spanning from 9 am to 2:30 pm, which is inadequate considering the magnitude of the reading problem in the school.

4.3.4.6.3.5 After-school Lessons

Another strategy that is employed by some teachers at MMPS is afterschool lesson support. However, it is critical to note that the strategy is not a whole school approach. It is left up to the teachers' choice; totally dependent on the teachers' willingness and or availability to engage in this type of support. It could be impacted by factors such as the shift teachers work on (if it is on Shift X fewer teachers would be able to do it since Shift Y is waiting to use the school site and there is a pronounced space shortage). Even if there is willingness it may not be possible. This strategy is more feasible for the second shift since there would be adequate number of classroom spaces available after school is dismissed. Although the late time of day and coupled with poor transportation services may be prohibitive factors.

4.3.4.6.3.6 Special Kids Club

As was highlighted in Section 4.10.2, there is a high incidence of pupils who may be considered behaviourally challenged at the MMPS. On Shift X, 116 pupils from grades 1 to 6 were identified as being most challenged behaviourally. (The researcher was unable to acquire a figure for Shift Y). To address this pronounced need, the school formed a Special Kids Club with supporting groups of mentors and coaches. This club was formulated towards the ending of the researcher's time at MMPS. Therefore, its effectiveness cannot be ascertained.

4.3.4.6.3.7 Grade Repetition

Generally, automatic class promotion is practised at MMPS except for severe cases of underperformance or when it used as a strategy to meet pupils' SEN. In essence, it is practised, but on a limited basis due to space constraints. For example, a few pupils from low ability classes in grade 6 were repeated to give them 'another chance'. Grade 6 pupils who do not achieve average or above average grades in the GSAT examination tend to be placed in none traditional secondary schools which are not generally known for their high academic performance. Consequently, a few parents tend to prefer their

children to repeat an academic year if it gives them the chance to gain a place in a more prestigious secondary school.

4.3.4.6.3.8 Punishment

Punishment included corporal punishment. Although corporal punishment is controversial it is still being used as a form of discipline in schools with the aim of changing pupils' behaviour (Northington, 2007). In a cultural context whereby punishment is seen as necessary, there are some teachers who employed this strategy as a means of encouraging pupils to stay on task and or as a consequence of misdemeanours. It was more frequently used in the low ability streams. In keeping with the trend of boys displaying more behavioural difficulties, it was observed that boys tended to be the main recipients of punishment.

4.3.4.6.3.9 Guidance Counsellor

The service of Guidance Counsellor is heavily relied upon in the handling of pupils' SEN at MMPS by both administrators and teachers. It is the norm that when teachers encounter cases of SEN of pupils which is they consider being beyond their professional repertoire to manage on their own, pupils were usually referred to a Guidance Counsellor. A meeting with the teacher (and in severe cases pupils' parents/caregivers) would be planned to discuss the concerns raised about the pupil and teachers were given advice on how to help them. Frequently, one of the outcomes of these meetings would be to recommend that the child concerned to be taken to Mico CARE Centre to be assessed. Parents/caregivers responses ranged from total cooperation to denial.

4.3.4.6.3.10 Mico CARE Centre

Maple Meadows Primary School relied heavily upon the service of the Mico CARE Centre in its attempt to address the SEN of its pupils. Like was previously mentioned Mico CARE Centre caters primarily for the diagnosis and therapeutic intervention of children with special educational needs (Mico College CARE Centre, 2005). With the attrition of special educators from the school, general teachers often find it difficult to diagnose and to respond pupils' manifested SEN. Therefore, parents are asked to get their children officially diagnosed and where possible, helped.

4.3.4.6.3.11 Reduced Class Sizes

Large class size is a typical feature of Jamaican primary schools. The range of class sizes at MMPS is from a high of 43 to a low of 20. All six grade levels have five classes with the exception of Grade 6 which has six. In essence, the school has 62 classes in total. The pupil population of Shift X and Y are 1,062 and 1,013 respectively (grand total being 2,075). Thus the average class size is 33.5. As a strategy the school made attempts to reduce the class size of special and low stream classes as a SEN strategy. It achieved the objective from grades 4 to 6 that these classes ranged from mid to low 20's with the exception of grade 5 on the Y shift (26 and 29). It should be noted that at grades 2 and 3 the D streams at these grade levels the mode of the class sizes is 33.

4.3.4.6.3.12 Differentiation

Some teachers practised the skill of differentiation excellently. However, for the majority it was a teaching skill not practised. Pupils on the whole tend to get the same class tasks. Although streaming is practised in the school and therefore classes (in theory) should be of similar abilities, there were sufficient differences which warranted greater use of this strategy. As pupils are taught with little to no differentiation, so are they evaluated. The limited use of differentiation by teachers could be an issue influenced by the quality of teacher training and resources available.

4.3.4.7 Theme Seven: Teacher Efficacy and Meeting Pupils' SEN

Having presented the school's response to pupils' SEN in the previous theme, this one will put forward teachers' belief in themselves to meet the SEN of their pupils. "If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you are right", this popular quotation by Henry Ford aptly sums it up. On the whole, teachers of classes for pupils with SEN at MMPS displayed low teacher efficacy. A recurrent factor relating to this is that there are insufficient resources and thus their job is made even more difficult in the attempt to meet pupils' SEN. The penultimate theme will present an examination of the critical element of parental support of their children with SEN.

4.3.4.7.1 Teacher Training and SEN

As was aforementioned in the case description one of the outstanding characteristics of MMPS is the level of qualification that the academic staff has. All but three teachers have at least the basic teacher training certification as is stipulated by the MOE (see Section 4.2.8). As was previously mentioned, low teacher efficacy was displayed

especially by some teachers of those of D and C streams and Special classes. This was so despite the school's sterling corporate qualification repertoire. Some of the issues mentioned were that their teacher training did not prepare them to address the needs of pupils with SEN. It is important to note that whilst there were no special educators practising in the school, three of the D stream teachers were doing CPD courses in this specialist field. One teacher was doing a Masters and the others were doing their bachelors in special education from an American offshore University which operates in Jamaica. Studying in the field appeared to have positively impacted their sense of competence and attitude.

4.3.4.8 Theme Eight: Parental Support for Pupils with SEN

Parental involvement refers to parents providing essential resources for their children- both tangibles and the intangibles (Pomerantz et al, 2005). The case study data was replete with administrators, teachers and even some parents highlighting the dire need for greater parental involvement in the education of pupils, especially those with SEN; where there is a greater deficiency.

The MOE in collaboration with international assistance has textbook scheme for the main subjects of Mathematics, Literacy and Science. However, all other textbooks, school equipment and tools are provided by the children's parents or caregiver. It was observed that there was more parental support at the higher streams than at the lower end of the streaming spectrum. Pupils in the higher streams tend to have their school tools and equipment for learning. The number of parents and carers attending PTA, shift and grade meetings are significantly lower at the lower streams and in some cases almost none existent. This is important to note however that administrators do not agree on the level of parental support; views ranged from adequate to woefully inadequate.

Another area of school where there is an evident disparity in parental support is in the area of pupil attendance. There is a pattern of greater pupil attendance in the higher streams in contrast to the lower ones. Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 give examples of school attendance along the lines of streams; higher versus lower streams. Admittedly, in Table 4.2 there was an inclement weather pattern on this day, suffice it to say the weather condition affected everyone - note the impact on the attendance.

Table 4.2: Pupils' Attendance Patterns by Streams (Grade 2)

Streams	Enrolled Pupil Numbers	Number of pupils in Attendance	Percentage Attendance
2A	38	34	89.4
B	35	25	71.4
C	36	18	50
D1	35	22	62.8
D2	31	8	25.8

Two grades attendance result (done Friday November 30th 2007) without the inclement weather factor

Table 4.3: Pupils' Attendance Patterns by Streams (Grade 3)

Streams	Enrolled Pupil Numbers	Number of pupils in attendance	Percentage Attendance
3A	39	32	82.1
B	40	30	75
C1	36	20	55.5
C2	25	16	64
D	23	10	43.4

Table 4.4: Pupils' Attendance Patterns by Streams (Grade 6)

Streams	Enrolled Pupil Numbers	Numbers of pupils in Attendance	Percentage in Attendance
6A1	40	33	82.5
A2	36	28	77.7
B1	36	28	77.7
B2	29	17	58.6
C1	23	13	56.5
C2	20	7	35

Consistently pupils from the higher stream had better attendance rates. Another area in which parental support is inadequate is attendance to school activities such as PTA and grade meetings, collecting reports and parents' day. A critical area that teachers have highlighted was parents' lack of support in assisting pupils with their home work. This,

they asserted put more pressure on the limited amount of class time because tasks that should have been accomplished at home had to be done as class activities. This further impedes the pace at which the NC content can be delivered.

4.3.4.9 Theme Nine: Special Educational Needs and Pupils' Self-concept

This final theme will present pupils' experience of having SEN; especially its impact on their self-esteem. Being a pupil with SEN at MMPS means being placed the lowest ability classes (streams D, C1 and C2 or Special). Low self-esteem and or impaired self-concept were evident in some pupils in these classes. This was manifested in their general speech and attitude. There were observed incidences of teasing, name-calling and what could be interpreted as bullying which was confirmed by some of them in their interviews. This was an area of concern for some teachers and in particular guidance counsellors.

4.4 Chapter Conclusions

- The shift system has a major influence on the operations of the school. It produced a 'time crunch' which had a domino effect on the school as both a product and process. There are mixed views with regards to the shift system from administrators, teachers, parents and pupils. Surprisingly, pupils had the most positive views towards it although they are the ones affected by it the most.
- They are some school operational factors which had negatively impacted on the use of the limited time available which are within its scope of the school to change.
- There was attendant competition amongst the NC subject areas for the use of time. The subject area of reading appeared to have been the biggest casualty in this competition.
- The leadership style is distributed. However, the culture of the school is still significantly influenced by the leadership's orientation toward examination success.
- Maple Meadows Primary School had a strong examination culture. This orientation influences several processes such as timetabling and allocation of resources (such as teachers, TAs and classroom spaces). The learning needs of pupils with SEN were not sufficiently prioritised in this context. In fact, to some

extent they are viewed as negatively impacting the academic performance of the school.

- There is a pronounced lack of human and nonhuman resources at MMPS which impedes the meeting of pupils' learning needs in general and particularly those with SEN.
- Specifically, there is limited use of technology in the teaching and learning process. There are areas of the school's operation which could be improved and time saved if there was a more targeted approach of the use of technology. Potentially, this could reduce teachers' heavy work load and its resultant stress.
- In keeping with global trends there is a significant gender imbalance against boys with regards to the school's identification of pupils as having SEN.
- Reading and behavioural difficulties were the most prominent SEN amongst pupils.
- Maple Meadows Primary School used a plethora of responses in its attempt to meet the SEN of pupils. However, some of the strategies were more effective than others. Streaming was the most embedded, far-reaching and somewhat contested SEN strategy that was employed in the school. It is worth noting that not all pupils who required the use of a strategy/service could have access to it because of the limited scope of the service being offered, for example, the reading programme.
- Some pupils are negatively affected in terms of their self esteem by the experience of being placed in low ability streams.
- The allocation of classroom spaces for a low ability classes can have an impact on their ability to concentrate and to access the curriculum.
- Generally, the teachers who were assigned low ability classes did not feel confident in meeting pupils' SEN. Inadequate teacher training may be linked to this low teacher efficacy.
- Inadequate parental support was manifested in multiple areas of pupils' lives. This was more marked in the low ability streams.
- An opportunity for pupils to participate in unsupervised play is almost non-existent in the school.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter depicted the case study conducted at MMPS over the nine-month period as was outlined in the research timeline. The research data sources produced a rich and complex findings and results. The case study data was analysed using GT orientation and was ably assisted by the tool of Thematic Analysis which produced nine overarching themes along with their accompanying sub-themes. There are several explanations and implication for these observations they will be discussed in details in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Case Study Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a thorough discussion of the findings and results of the case study which were presented in Chapter Four. The discussion will follow the general format of the themes as is listed in Figure 5.1. One of the ethical principles that governed this research was the promise of confidentiality to research participants (see Section 3.10.4), and as such, to guard against the identification of participants, in some cases pseudo-names will be used and administrators and will be referred as Administrator 1, 2 and Guidance Counsellors as 1, 2 and so on.

- Theme One: Time Factor
- Theme Two: School Leadership and Culture
- Theme Three: School Policies
- Theme Four: Teaching and Learning Environment
- Theme Five: Incidences and Prevalence of Pupils' SEN
- Theme Six: School's Response to Pupils' SEN
- Theme Seven: Inadequate Home Support for Pupils with SEN
- Theme Eight: Teacher Efficacy and Pupils' SEN
- Theme Nine: Special Education Need and Pupils' Self Concept

Figure 5.1: Case Study Emergent Themes

5.2 Emergent Themes

5.2.1 Theme One: Time Factor

The interest in this theme is its criticality. It brings to the forefront the time pressure which exists in the case school, MMPS, and is to a large extent the overarching theme which provides a situated context in which to understand the operations at MMPS. This dominant feature of the school's experience is brought about primarily by the shift system (although other factors contributed to it). This shift system is not peculiar to this school and the conditions that lead to the shift system in general in Jamaican schools have been discussed in great details in the literature review. The time constraint is a profoundly limiting feature that impinges on the entire organisation. This constraint has significant implications. Schools whose school day is organised on a shift basis (as opposed to the whole day), experience severe limitations in having time to adequately address the learning needs of pupils in general and with particular reference to the SEN of pupils. In the case of those pupils with learning difficulty the issue of 'pace' versus the available time became even more evident.

Evans (1988) in a research *Project for the Strengthening of Secondary Education* carried out in All-Age schools in five parishes in Jamaica, she confirms that the schools organised on a shift basis experienced even greater difficulty due to time and other constraints with regards to timetabling and other activities. Therefore, in schools organised on the shift basis the 'time factor' should be given even closer attention so that the use of this scarce commodity is purpose-driven and deliberate. The shift system is a concern for a wide cross section of participants in the research as is discussed below.

5.2.1.1 The Shift System: views

5.2.1.1.1 Administrators

Generally, administrators were rather expressive in their strong views against the shift system. It is plausible that since the leadership responsibility concerning the success or failure of the school rests squarely on the shoulders of administrators they might have disliked the added pressure that the shift system clearly brings. This, in their estimation, does not facilitate the education of pupils in general and especially that of those who have SEN. Some argued that the MOE had reneged on its responsibility of putting the promised preconditions (see Sections 2.8.11 and 2.8.1.2) to make the shift system

effective. In this stark comment the Administrator 1 referred to the shift system as a “*holding area for children, to provide [school] space[s]... the government created a monster*”. As was previously stated, a holding area is a space provided in shift schools for off-shift pupils to stay (usually for safekeeping and so as not to disrupt the shift in progress) until it is time for them to start their shift or after their shift has ended. It is worth taking note of this Administrator’s pun in viewing the entire shift system as a holding area. This suggests that the shift system is not working as an effective site for education, rather, it is just a system “[the] holding area” where the MOE simply placed children to keep them safe (a possible strategy used to ‘tick the box’ for the achievement of universal primary education). The term “monster” suggests that the shift system is perceived in really negative terms, in essence, one which does not work.

Although administrators in general berate the shift system, they simultaneously assert that the school’s performance was comparable to whole day primary schools. How would this apparent paradox be accounted for? It is critical to note that performance is only one element by which a school may be evaluated. In fact, there are those that will argue that the thrust of education goes much deeper than academic achievement. Therefore, if it is the only frontier on which the school is comparable, it may not be necessarily painting a picture of success. High performance does not necessitate that all is well academically in the school. In fact, pupils with SEN may be falling through the cracks which are not captured by performance statistics. Kane and Staiger (2001, 2002a as cited by Chay et al, 2005) confirm schools’ ranking based on test scores for a given year can be misleading and not to be reflective of a school’s factual performance. In MMPS, it may be argued that this high performance came at a high cost; this may be so because of the discriminatory allocation of the limited resources in favour of the more academically capable pupils at the expense of those that have SEN. Herein lies the possible contradiction of comparability: “*there are constraints of time and space which have adverse effects on students [they] can’t learn adequately, sometimes very little learning takes place*” (Administrator 3). If performance is usually predicated on learning and if “very little learning takes place” how can the overall performance then be comparable with other whole day schools, with the assumption being made that whole day schools gain higher academic outcomes than shift schools? Dilemmas and tensions clearly exist.

It may be that one of the reasons that administrators hold such negative views against the shift system is that they may feel like ‘sacrificial lambs’ called to make the system which is inherently riddled with challenges work. They may further believe that

in the final analysis every primary school has been compared and ranked on equal footing. This may have been the philosophy or assumption behind the overtly examination focus of the school so as to compensate for the perceived deficit caused by the shift system.

5.2.1.1.2 Teachers

for you to be effective, you have to have enough time and the shift system does not lend itself to that and therefore when you are doing counselling with a particular child the time you would want to spend at any one time you have to for the most parts cut it, so as to facilitate others. (Guidance Counsellor 1)

The only thing [difficulty is] with slow learners, if it was full day school I could take 15 minutes of their lunchtime to help them. The only drawback I found that the shift system [has] like for the slow learners it does not allow reinforcement and completion of task. But if you plan your lessons and utilise the time you can get your work done and children cooperate. (Teacher)

The experiences of these teachers focus on the shortage of time and how the constraint affects them. It is being explained above and is even more pronounced in D and Special classes (lowest ability streams) because of the consistent report of the “slow pace” at which these pupils work. Some teachers expressed their frustrations that the pupils with SEN are still expected to write the same End of Topic, End of Term and End of Year examinations even though they have covered far less curriculum content than the other stream moving at a faster pace. When teachers ‘drag’ these pupils at a quicker pace (in the attempt to keep on par with the curriculum covered in the high ability streams), it negates against them sufficiently focusing on meeting pupils’ SEN- the very reason for which they were placed in these ‘specialist’ classes. For example, in the post-test special literacy programme established for those who failed the National Grade 4 Literacy Test, pupils had to work through the lunch break because the examination started late and so there was inadequate time in which to complete it. Miss Stewart* (a low ability stream teacher), in her interview opined that

Lesson[s] don't coincide with the lesson plan that was planned for because of their reading challenges. Hence you [are] moving at a slower pace than teachers teaching the upper stream in the same grade. When you do give test they are at a vast disadvantage because the test items are more challenging to them, that is, lower stream while the upper streams find it to be easy.

Specialist teacher Mr Robinson* states that “time is so short I can't get enough time to do as much practical with students. There needs to be a balance between theory and practical”. Herein was revealed the content delivery competition that teachers of the

lower streams teachers inadvertently find themselves in. Teachers are forced to make a choice.

In an interesting study Smith (2000) argues that an erosion of time allocation can cause difficulties in gains in pupils' achievement and overall school effectiveness in urban schools. She showed how perceptions about efficiency, classroom and school management, programmes, testing and general administration of the school system erode and splinter significant portion of annual school instructional time. She is certain that features of urban schools exacerbate this problem and that there is an urgent need to rethink instructional time. The research was carried out over a three-years period in nine selected Chicago public urban elementary schools (all serving large percentages of poor and minority pupils aiming to improve pupil outcomes). Data was gathered using observation for different subject areas and repeated visits for the same teachers. Two of the conclusions made from the research were as follows:

1. There was a significant disparity between allocated instructional time (time officially scheduled for daily and annual instruction) and enacted instructional time (time actually spent for curriculum).
2. Identification of the 'special' and 'bad' days phenomenon impacting on instructional time, that is, the loss of learning time due to planned and unplanned activities.

One way to proceed is to think of life in schools as made up of "good", "special" and "bad" days. Good days proceed according to schedule and provide an opportunity to tackle meaningful work... we found that Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays were more often viewed as good days. Good days are in serious short supply in urban schools because they are increasingly squeezed out by special and bad days. (Smith, 2000, p. 664)

Since shift school is an urban phenomenon, operations in relation to instructional time in MMPS closely resemble that which is portrayed by Smith (2000) above. In addition, some teachers revealed that they were constantly missing their lunches during the school day and in extreme cases find it difficult to get the time even to take comfort breaks. Such is the experience for many teachers in the shift school context. Ms Shields* said that *"teaching in a shift school is stressful. When you get to certain time of the day you begin to feel stressed. It is usually hard to find the time to eat and even go to the toilet"*. For example, a teacher from the morning shift was seen eating her lunch at 2.30 pm, she said that if she missed breakfast she would eat her lunch at 10:30am but was usually pressed for time to eat and also confirmed having to

forego comfort breaks. The shift system having a negative impact on teachers' health is parallel to one of the elements of investigation - impact on pupils' health - in Leo Rhynie's (1981) seminal work. Without question, prolonged missing of lunch combined with feeling stressed can have negative effects on teachers' health which may lead to increased teacher absenteeism. The impact of teacher absenteeism on the meeting the SEN of pupils will be elaborated on.

5.2.1.1.3 Pupils

In contrast to the administrators and some teachers, pupils were on the whole satisfied with the shift system with only a few preferring be in a whole day school. Some expressed gratitude to be attending the school

*Being in a shift school gives me more time to study for other subjects. It is large and still it can't hold all the children because the parents choose the school because it is one of the most brightest school in Kingston. In terms of bright, we have many trophies and certificates gained in participating in a lot of competition[s]. I like my school. People here are very nice. Bob**

When Bob was probed to find out which shift he preferred, in an unexpected turn he said

*I like and hate both shifts. I like to come home early in the morning [midday when Shift 1 ends), but I do not like to wake up early in the mornings. I like to wake up in the 7 o'clock times. But I hate to go home late. Bob**

On the whole pupils felt like their SEN were being attended to by the school. Pupils were more opposed to being placed in low ability streams than they had with regards to attending a shift school.

The question can be asked, 'why do such a proportion of pupils view the shift system favourably?' The following may be some of the possible explanations:

1. Pupils that have never attended a whole day school do not know firsthand how it would compare.
2. Some pupils were simply very happy to be accepted in a school, any school, after having been denied entry to other schools.
3. Some pupils may not have the capacity to appreciate the implications of having 2-3 hours less contact time and the possible impact it may have on their learning.
4. Some pupils use their off-shift time to play, which is a scarce opportunity in shift schools.

5. For some pupils this is an opportunity to do odd jobs to earn to supplement the family income.

5.2.1.1.4 Parents

Generally, parents had a preference for whole day schools to shift ones and would have desired their children to be in attendance there. However, some parents stated that MMPS ‘grew’ on them and they eventually liked the school even though they preferred whole day ones. Some parents expressed a sense of gratitude about the shift system because they were not able to find alternative school places for their children; especially premium schools which are whole day schools by their definition. On the other hand, there were some parents who were rather negative about the shift system and its ability to adequately addressing the learning needs of their children. Here are comments reflecting the range of views:

Positive

I like the shift school. The shift thing for me is better I can get to do things for them in the mornings so it helps in their development Parent of an A stream child

“one time mi wud a seh shift school nu learn nutten but a lie, mi nu have a problem with a shift school”(translation)[there was a time when I would say that pupils in shift schools do not learn anything but this is not true. I do not have a problem of shift schools] (Interview Extract Parent)

Negative

not enough is done for my child by the school. The teacher says she is doing her part... I tried to get him in Mico. You know he has been for assessment and [I] am now waiting for them to call me back. A [it is a] good while now and mi nuh hear dem call mi back [they have not contacted me] (Interview Extract, Parent)

The time is too short in the shift school, as you drop them off for school and you turn around, school is over and it is time to go home. Parent

Mixed Views

Interview 1: Maybe other people think that the time is too short for him if he was attending an 8 – 2.30 school but with the shift I get extra time with him. Those parents who have a problem with the shift system are those who did not get their children into other school [whole day] and this was the last option and they have to work. Interview 2: The shift school system helps because when they get home there is enough time for you to help with homework and reading. The mother said it is costly for her children to attend shift school in terms of added child care cost and transportation. She said a whole day school would be better if you were employed Mary (Parent)*

It can be noted that embedded in parents' views is whether or not they see their children attending a shift school as an opportunity or a disadvantage. Parents' perspectives on the issue has the potential to either cushion the limitations of the shift system by maximising their children's off shift time and using it as part of their development or seen as a dilemma which they are unable to address. The possibility exists that parents' views on the shift system is linked somewhat to the level of parental involvement. It should also be acknowledged that parents' views may be influenced by their employment status. That is, some parents found the shift system satisfactory because they were currently unemployed and hence they were at home during their children's off-shift times to make a positive input in the lives of their children. On the other hand, it may be that some parents (even though they may be supportive of their children) because they are in fulltime employment they may not have been available for their children during the off-shift times. In these cases, parents may have been concerned about their children's safety if they were unsupervised. Another premise of parents' views concerning the shift system may be predicated on questioning the quality of education received in shift schools. For example, Monica* who had a child in a special class made this comment when she was asked if she felt that her child's SEN were being met at the school:

No, mi nuh si him a du any work [I do not see him doing any work]. I think he has a special needs. The Guidance Counsellor was talking about him going to the Mico CARE, that is all. I prefer the whole day school 'cause right now mi a look school fi move him [because right now I am trying to get him in a different school] . Teacher not interested, him nuh [he is not] interested. Everything just [is] done for him ya su [here] (Interview Extract, Parent)

As can be seen, there were multiple viewpoints with regards to the shift system for equally diverse reasons. There exists great tension because of the conflicts amongst the likes and dislikes. Notably, even some of the parents who are positive about the shift school stated the need for more work to be done at home to complement the quantity that can be accomplished in the limited contact hours at school.

5.2.1.1.5 Shift Impact on Pupils

As was highlighted in the findings and results, only a meagre 15 minutes are allocated for pupils (and staff) to get a break during their school day (see Figure 4.2). Therefore, play has been relegated to the periphery of the school's operation because there is no time in the school day for pupils to engage in positive unstructured play. According to Eyler et al (2008) chances for children to be physically active during the school day are

becoming limited. He further states that schools are increasingly reducing or leaving out recess due to pressure to increase academic requirements. There are some teachers who are concerned about the almost non-existent playtime as is revealed in this comment:

“I don't go to most of the meetings, I don't remember them. Time is the biggest issue. Children can't get time to play which is important, everything is rush rush [repeated by teacher]” (A Stream teacher). A teacher in addressing a group of pupils said *“all this playing that you are doing you are tired and sweaty”*. It is possible that it is partly because of the ‘time-pressured’ shift environment why play is frequently viewed by some teachers and parents in a negative manner. In appreciating the time constraints in this context, much creativity and a well-thought out approach to play, there needs to be a ‘school language’ with regards to play, so that teachers do not simply react to the time-pressure of the moment. The practice of reflexive teaching could help in creating a focused positive attitude and response to this right of the child. Even if the child cannot get to play at a given time, based on the response given they do not get a negative view of play. There needs to be some time in children’s school experience for the week whereby they know they can engage in approved play. For example, on Friday when the school day ends half hour earlier, it could be a time for approved play; especially since some pupils live in volatile communities which offer limited opportunities of safe unstructured play. On the matter of providing safe supervision of those who want to stay to play, volunteers could be sought from the PTA. Trainee teachers who major in PE could be targeted when teaching placements are offered.

Like teachers, pupils do not have adequate time in which to eat during the school day. This can have a negative impact on their health, their ability to learn and their emotional wellbeing. The limited time to facilitate the nurturing of emotional wellbeing at MMPS is demonstrated in Mr Bell's* commentary:

there should be a time before the start of the day for a rapport [with pupils]. [For] example, ‘how was your day?’ etc. But as they drop [arrive at school] they have to start work. They need time to express themselves they are not in a first world country their environment is not the same e.g. those children who live in inner city communities that experience gun shots and other violence need time so that they express themselves before learning takes place.

For a significant number of young people, school remains the safest place for them to be in (Morrison, 2003). Mr Bell's* discourse highlights this other necessary facet of the use of time in the lives of pupils at the school. This is confirmed by Spratt et al (2006) who assert that part of schools’ responsibility is for the well-being of their

pupils including their mental health (of which health emotional development is a part). As was stated in Section 1 in the case description, a significant percentage of pupils that attend MMPS live in inner city communities which are frequently besotted by the crime and violence. For example, two pupils had intimate encounter with violence on the weekend of the 4th of December 2007; one actually heard a close relative being shot and for the other a family member was murdered. Therefore, it is critical that the school factors in the emotional health of pupils. This takes time for teachers to build rapport with all their pupils but especially those with SEN who may be simultaneously affected by the negative social living situations. According to Hsin (2007) time is a critical resource and the manner in which children utilise it can have significant impact on their educational achievement and by extension their emotional wellbeing since achievement is linked to one's self worth.

Whilst the shift system is the primary cause for the time constraint that is experienced in MMPS, with regards to expeditious time management, the findings in this research confirm Smith's (2000) research conclusions relating to the erosion of instructional time. This will be addressed in the upcoming section.

5.2.1.1.6 School's Use of Time

In a school system or any organisation, it is sometimes easy to allocate blame to the obvious. In this case of MMPS, the shift system would be the element readily identified as the cause for the time constraint. Whilst the shift system carries with it what could be deemed an inherent structural 'tight spot' and as such is the primary cause, a critical look at the school as a whole will reveal that there are other areas of time management which are 'system produced' difficulties. The various factors in the school which disrupted instructional time (see Section 4.3.4.1.2.4) have serious implications for the overall reduction of the time spent on the teaching and learning process. These occurrences have the potential of having grave effects. Therefore, the school needs collaborative solutions on how to tackle these problems efficiently and effectively.

One of the practices observed in MMPS is that there are frequent meetings during contact time. In addition, there are fifteen committees in operation in the school which make a heavy time demand on teachers. This is also a contributory factor to the in-school absences, that is, teachers are in school but for several reasons are not teaching at the scheduled times. This was illustrated in a comment made by a class teacher:

I can't deal with no more of the meeting meeting [repetition made by teacher], because at the end of the day you are the one being blamed. The meetings are important but I mean it's the time of the meetings. The children don't like it either when I'm away.

Inherent in this comment is what can be interpreted as fear of not performing. In Jamaican schools, like others, teachers are judged to a large extent by the performance of their pupils. If pupils fail, teachers are criticised, and in extreme cases their competence may be questioned. If pupils excel academically, teachers' competence is lauded and rewarded. It may be argued that the academic performance of pupils is one of the factors which contribute the teachers' sense of efficacy or the lack thereof. The time spent away from the instructional process impact negatively on pupils' education as well put teachers at a disadvantage in that they are judged and categorised as having failed. Technology could be used to reduce both the frequency and duration of staff and other meetings. Some information could be disseminated via school-based e-mail accounts. Other strategies could also be the increased use of bulletins and notice boards which could be placed in each of the two staff rooms at the school. 'Pupil runners' from the shift that is not in session could be used to carry messages to teachers so that they don't have to leave their classes unsupervised to attend meetings that may be unnecessary and or too long. When it is critical, staff meetings should be highly focussed to conserve time and be as concise as possible.

In an environment characterised by such pronounced limitations of time, thinking outside the box as it relates to time management is critical. It should be acknowledged that it is not being suggested that the above observations made in Section 4.3.4.1.2.4 are not peculiar to shift schools, the effects in this context, are more pronounced. Factors which may have adverse effects in whole day schools may have a more negative ricochet in shift school due to the aforementioned marked time disparity between the two organisations of the school day.

Another area of school life that can be changed to facilitate general well being, health and critically, efficient time management, is lunch time. Fifteen minutes, even if well managed, at best is inadequate for a lunch break. With a pupil population size of 1,062 and 1,017 for X and Y shifts respectively, plus 31 class teachers and other staff members; if everybody gets 15 minutes lunch break at the same start times (10:30 am and 2:30pm) with everyone attempting to access the services of a tuck shop and a canteen with a staff of 2 and 3 respectively (along with a few volunteers on some days). No matter how efficient these staff members are, it is simply impossible to meet the

lunch needs of everyone at these break times. Even when the service of the vendors at the school gate is factored in, the food services at lunch time are just overstretched. The comment below revealed an administrator's concern about the impact of late lunches is having on the operation of the school:

I think we have [the school has] too short a break time and as a result of that- especially from the cooked lunch side of it we don't get it on time, because of that [it] causes the lunch to go into learning time because they have to eat so that it is one of the big weaknesses... (Administrator 2)

When a school's lunch system is faulty, there will be inevitable wasting of learning time with whole or partial classes waiting for their lunches. In some cases when pupils eventually get their lunches they cannot eat them because teachers choose to carry on teaching due to the time constraint. Some pupils in general and especially those with SEN may find it difficult to concentrate and accomplish given tasks when hungry. There is merit in considering the idea of putting lunch breaks on a rota basis; grades 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6 in that order. For example, grades 1 and 2 would get their break at 9:30 am – 9:45 am; grades 3 and 4 would get their break at 9:50 am -10:05 am and grades 5 and 6 would get theirs at 10:10 – 10:25am. Take note of the 5 minutes intervals between lunch breaks to facilitate smooth transitions and to cushion the effect of possible overruns.

The breakfast programme and the school day commence at the same time, that is, 7am. Although the primary function of the breakfast programme is for the improvement of the nutritional status of the pupils; it has also been used as a tool to improve attendance (Cueto, 2001) particularly the punctuality of pupils. With the limited time in a shift school the punctuality of pupil is critical as was expressed by Administrator 2, "*you will find that we have children coming in late, so they will probably loose the first half an hour [of their learning time]*". Therefore, not using the breakfast programme as a strategy to improve pupils' punctuality by commencing it earlier than the start of the school day, is an unutilised opportunity.

Pupils too engage in high rates non-instructional use of their time for activities such as distributing books and carrying messaging to teachers. Another area of school life that reduces pupils' direct learning time is pupil executing ancillary type tasks such as sweeping and wiping classroom floors. Understandably, since Shift Y uses the school site on the 'heel' of Shift X's dismissal and there needs to be a clean classroom space (since there are 31 classes there would not be enough ancillary worker to do every classroom for the next shift even if there was the funding to do it), the frequency and

length of time these ancillary-type tasks utilise, is a cause for much concern. For example, in a Language Arts lesson which began at 7:35 am there were two students who were engaged in the chore of sweeping and wiping the classroom floor. At 8:05 am the teacher instructed the pupils to stop the activity. However, only one discontinued and the other carried on until 8:40 am. It is important to note that the teacher was not in support of the length of time it took them to complete the task. It was observed on several occasions when pupils were finding their work difficult they picked up a broom and started 'sweeping' at the most inappropriate times to avoid the challenge of the task at hand. This is in keeping with the finding of task avoidance identified by Van der Aalsvoort et al (2004). There needs to be proper management of the 'ancillary role' carried out by pupils, so that it does not further erode their learning time. In fact, this management should be from a whole school perspective. For example, no pupils should be engaged in this function before 11:45 am and 4:45 pm for X and Y Shifts respectively (unless there is an emergency). A significant number of parents and guardians are unemployed. This could be an opportunity for the school (through the medium of the PTA) to solicit their help in volunteering to help the school in areas of taking over pupils' 'ancillary role', doing lunch lists and giving back change and administering the MOE school feeding programme (that is, distributing the free food items provided throughout the school). This will expedite the teachers' and pupils' time and energy to focus on the teaching and learning process.

The ability of pupils with learning disability to keep up to the pace of their other classmates is one of the critical issues which surround successful mainstreaming (Bryan et al, 2001). In the case of MMPS (with the exception of grade 1 that is not streamed), the issue of pupils' pace became a largely 'between streams' function especially in light of the fact that all pupils took the same internal and external examinations. It is critical to note that the single best indicator of achievement amongst pupils with educational disabilities is the amount of time they spend actively engaged in the learning tasks (O'melia and Rosenberg, 1994 as cited by Bryan et al, 2001). With regards to maximising the limited contact time there needs to be critical analysis about how 'school is done'. No school in these demanding and changing times can afford the luxury of operating schools in a taken for granted mode. It therefore means all stakeholders in MMPS should guard the time of pupils especially those with SEN as precious because it is on this resource that their academic success largely depends. The next theme will discuss the school's leadership and culture.

5.2.2 Theme Two: School's Leadership and Culture

The leadership of any organisation is like the rudder to a ship. School leadership has received significant attention in the research domain for the past decades. One of the findings is that the traditional peak hierarchy, leadership style with power being concentrated at the top in the hands of 'the few' is inadequate and no longer meet the needs of schools in changing times (Rutherford, 2006). The multifaceted face of leadership includes achieving school excellence, instructional and community leaders and the day-to-day oversight of the organisation which often is very complex (ibid.). The school leadership within a shift school context appears to be more complex in nature. In a technical sense, it is one person being the Principal for two schools which spans from 7 am to 5 pm. As was mentioned in the case findings the leadership style used in MMPS is distributed. Vice Principals, senior teachers and grade coordinators are used in the distribution of leadership. It has also used the vehicle of committees as a major medium for leadership distribution. However, the time available is juxtaposed for the effective operations of these committees. Although leadership style is distributed there is a common thread of achievement-orientation that runs throughout the school even at the committee level. Although the message of excellence and achievement is embedded generally through the school, it is the excellence in examinations that was given primacy at MMPS.

Schools do not operate in a vacuum, rather it is contextually designed and defined. There are internal and external factors that bring to bear on the emphasis and priority placed on the elements in its operation. The philosophy which guides many schools is one of academic achievement and an entrenched orientation toward examination excellence. At MMPS, pupils with SEN sometimes were not given priority on the agenda in the learning environment. Luth (2001) argues that tension exists for educators in catering for pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms and simultaneously fulfilling the public's expectation for increased academic performance. Below is an administrator's view with regards to the impact of pupils with SEN on the school's examination performance:

Children that straight day schools do not want we [the school] take them and make them perform. But when you take so many of these children, hundreds of them in the school and they perform, they may not perform at the desired level that will create a national appeal but you know too many of them will affect your average when you compare your school average with the national average. For example, GSAT if you have too many of these children which sometimes happen, they reduce the average. We have to get the brighter students to perform at a higher level so that they can cover for the lower average (Interview extract Administrator 1)

The leadership and culture of a school have far reaching implications and help in the construction of the teaching and learning space. These directly influenced how staff is deployed and how other resources are allocated. It is so crucial because everything else hinges on it. A clear definition of the school's culture is therefore necessary and should dovetail with its stated vision and mission statements below:

Vision Statement:

is determined to achieve positive changes, growth and achievement in the lives of students by providing the requisites, skills, resources and strategies and by collaborating with agencies and stakeholders to achieve academic excellence and quality education as prescribed by the Ministry of Education and to meet the needs of the nation.

Mission Statement:

working with stakeholders to provide a positive learning environment that will cater to the holistic development for our students and at the same time facilitating the growth of all players in the process

Whilst a part of the school's mission statement is academic excellence, its manifestation was out of balance and skewed significantly towards pupils of a higher academic competence. It is the "all" in the school's mission statement that is relegated to the fringes of school's operations (whether deliberately or inadvertently) due to constraints and philosophical orientation. Maple Meadows Primary School has committed itself to providing "a positive learning environment" and "facilitating the growth of all players". These commitments include those pupils with SEN. Therefore, the definition of the school should be all-encompassing with every pupil and subset of pupils having a place. In addition, in an overarching goal as is cited in the Kendal Report on Education, Jamaica (p. 4) one of the national aims of education is "to fit our schools to the needs and capacities of the children ... rather than to fit the children to our school". This stance should not be in words only but in action.

One of the conditions which have produced the 'exam-centric' focus is a wider performance culture in education. The labelling and categorisation of school has given

rise (in part) to the viewing of education as just another merchandise to be purchased. Whereby, packaging, school name brand and image are important sale tools which are often given primacy. The ‘bottom line’ (a concept usually associated to business) in education is performance- grades speak. The facilitation of development should be aimed at ‘all’, not particularly on those who are deemed to possess academic prowess to pitch the school positively for ratings. The integration of ‘all’ is a matter of principle which take account of every learner; including those with SEN. In an interview extract below a gradual paradigm shift is revealed as the performance pressure took effect:

well initially I had brought a lot of focus to bear on helping children with special needs we try to make [the]school as inclusive as possible not just for children who are physically and mentally not well, but those with learning difficulties- Special Education programme going on. In fact one of the designations was five special classes where we have trained special education teachers but over the years the American school system has attracted these teachers. Right now we don't have [specialist teachers] the children are again left in the doldrums, they are neglected. Some of the teachers that we have now are not capable of meeting these needs so we are at a disadvantage. In fact we are not happy we don't have the where-with-all to meet the needs to bring about inclusivity and the Ministry [of Education] – the government itself does very little, its attempts are theoretical, its more argument than substance and we are at the bottom especially shift system ... We do not have the where-with-all to address these serious problems. As I said before where you have a large cohort of slow learners in the grade six's it brings down your GSAT [Grade Six Assessment Test] averages (Administrator 1)

In the UK schools are placed in league tables based on examination results which feeds into schools' ratings and consequently school images are at stake. In responding to this competition schools are often more concerned for high achievers than any other entity of pupils (Boaler, 1997). Schools are embedded in their country's educational system and communities which are in turn implanted in society (Huber, 2004). Consequently, schools and their leaders have positioned themselves to respond to the wider societal expectations. The societal impact on a school is reflected in this comment below:

In Jamaica the emphasis is really on the academics and if your school is not doing well academically you are in trouble. We feel encouraged even with the recent GSAT passes and to know that we have gotten the top boy in the country, but we know all along that we were doing very well, quite well academically and in many subjects in areas but because it is a shift school it is being stigmatised, you know shift schools are stigmatised as being bad schools (Administrator 2)

What are the conditions that may have given rise to the MMPS being so examination focused? The following may be some of the reasons which have led to this:

1. Administrators were largely strongly against the shift system and as such may view the school as being at a disadvantage and were of the view that its abolishment would be of benefit to the school system. Therefore, the strong examination orientation may be the school's response of compensating for this perceived disadvantage.
2. It may also be that the standards set by the MOE have put pressure on schools to perform so this is how the school “pays for its pound of flesh” as asserted by Administrator 1.
3. As was previously mentioned, shift schools in Jamaica do not enjoy a high status. Therefore, MMPS may be using outstanding standing examination passes as its currency of ‘buying’ prestige and simultaneously earning the respect of parents. Thus, making the school one of choice even though its school day is organised on shift basis.
4. It could also be that the school having an overtly Christian ethos the stakeholders may have a sense responsibility to give its pupils a chance to succeed and to aspire for excellence.

It appears as if pressure was brought to bear from the expectations of the wider society and even the MOE on the school. Hence the question is, ‘how does it respond?’. Does it join in the performance competition which consequentially put pupils with SEN at a lower priority or do does it strive for a balance and allocate the resources to complement this? It appeared as if it was the former path that MMPS was taken.

5.2.3 Theme Three: Policies and Procedures

The former theme addressed school leadership and culture. This theme will discuss the policies and procedures of the case school. There was an obvious lack of school policies in the MMPS. It was the absence that was rather telling. Very little was in place in terms of whole school clearly documented approach to school operations. Without policies, schools will find themselves in a situation aptly described by the poet Chinua Achebe “*things fall apart, the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world*”. In this context the word ‘world’ can be substituted for ‘school’. Undoubtedly, without policies, which inform rules, there is likely to be anarchy. There has been much research evidence which support the view that a whole school approach to school operations

yield the best outcomes; such as a whole school approach to Literacy (Beverton and Sewell, 2002), a nurturing school (Doyle, 2003), guidance counselling (Hui, 2000) and behaviour (Jones and Smith, 2004). For example, Hui (2000) reported that guidance services offered in Hong Kong schools initially targeted chiefly problem pupils. The services were thereby reactive and corrective in nature. This was later changed to a whole school approach to guidance after evaluations were made which highlighted the negative consequences of the individual casework model. This evaluation led to a refocusing from treatment orientation to that of prevention. For the curriculum to be profitable to all learners, regardless of their difficulties, it requires consistency throughout the school as a reflection of a whole school policy (Greenhalgh, 1994 as cited by Doyle, 2003). This view is strengthened by research finding of Cooley-Nichols (2004) in which pre-service teachers identified consistency to be a critical element of behavioural change when they sought to identify the impact of research based practices in relationship to the education of pupils with EBD as part of special education teacher training programme. Not only do policies give cohesion to adults' behaviours in schools to assist them in speaking and acting with 'one voice', but they also give security and predictability to pupils' educational experiences. Without this critical scaffolding in place, pupils may be confused in terms of what is acceptable and what is not. This is particularly important for pupils with SEN especially those who are having difficulty managing their emotions and behaviours.

One of the ways in which the lack of policy and procedure is manifested in MMPS is the ad hoc manner in which the school manages pupils' behaviour (this will be further elaborated on in Section 5.2.5.2). With specific regards to the prevalent difficulties in reading and behaviour experienced by pupils at MMPS, a shift to a whole school approach concerning these challenges would be the way forward as opposed to the more teacher-determined approach. For example, Miss Stewart* on the first day in her class told her pupils about the manner in which she enforced discipline as opposed to their previous class teacher's way of correcting them by flogging. She wanted them to be able to decipher her tone and volume of her voice and associate them with a specific kind of behaviour expectations. This behavioural strategy is likely to be totally misplaced on some pupils especially those that find it difficult to read social cues and make correct interpretation of body language and vocal tones. Indeed, a whole school behavioural policy would negate against this disconnect whereby pupils have to make significant adjustments for teachers' randomly chosen disciplinary ideologies and strategies. Rules help to control and regulate pupils' behaviour (Thornberg, 2006).

There were written rules at MMPS. However, it would be helpful if these rules were displayed within all classroom spaces and were consistently used by teachers. These rules could provide a common language for behaviour and a useful reference point for refocusing inappropriate behaviours. The rules could be used as core ones and class teachers could incorporate pupils' input to make these generic rules into more class specific ones. This process of hearing the voice of pupils about the rules that will govern their behaviour is likely to give them a sense of ownership and as such the likelihood of their compliance may be increased. In fact, all school stakeholders should have an input in the formation of the behavioural and other policies such as school boards, administrators, teachers, pupils, parents and where possible other professionals. For example, Smith et al (2004) in their research to address the behavioural problems at a particular school that was in special measures primarily because of disruptive behaviours, even the dinner ladies were included in addressing the difficult behaviours in a whole school approach. Without school policies and there may be chaos which may eventually lead to a systemic failure of the school system which will threaten the education of everyone, particularly those with SEN. The next theme will focus on the teaching and learning environment.

5.2.4 Theme Four: Teaching and Learning Environment

5.2.4.1 Classroom Spaces

At MMPS there are essentially two types of classroom spaces; self-contained and partitioned. Most of the self-contained classrooms are assigned to A streams as opposed the low ability streams are generally placed in shared classroom spaces; whereby only a chalkboard is used as a partition. In shared classrooms, learning was even more difficult for pupils with SEN as is expressed in the comment below:

you can't have students with SEN and have them in a parted classroom. They should be in their own classroom, a conducive environment. It may work for other student but [is] too difficult for them, because attention span and sense of responsibility is not like others. (Teacher)

Adverse conditions of time and space appear to have negatively impacted the teaching and learning process. According to Administrator 1 “*sometimes very little learning takes place*”. As was previously mentioned, an entire grade block of classrooms were out of commission for almost a calendar year due to major architectural defects. The school community felt that the MOE did not act expeditiously. It provided tents as a temporary solution; however it did not prove to be workable interim solution due to dust

and poor ventilation. In the end, this was abandoned and classes had to be placed alongside other grade level classes scattered around the school, which was not learner friendly.

Now we have to just put them [classes] in areas, we are really trying our best. Where they are very hot- if you know that the interiors are very hot we tried yesterday to put a fan in two classes in there. I don't know how that helps, but we tried. It is really a problem now. It is a really impacting negatively. The children do not have the own classrooms and because of that, where they are, it is noisy. You know, they are too close to each other so the least little thing they will have a problem with each other. (Administrator 2)

The above comment has brought to the fore not only the issue of inadequate classroom space, but also the intensity and the impact of it which impinges on pupils' personal space which fuels conflict occurrences. According Walters and Castle (1967) in their description of Caribbean classrooms in the late 60's as being simply one or more large rooms usually with heavy narrow and awkward benches with several pupils being taught alongside each other. Based on observation not much has changed in over 40 years, Walters and Castle's description is still befitting some of the classrooms (see Figure 2. 10). They also state that a significant number of teachers were untrained, however, this aspect of the educational landscape has experienced major improvement; for example at MMPS this is not the case, teachers are suitably qualified. Agreeably, class sizes are still much larger than desired. The 'chalk and talk' method as is cited by Walters and Castle (1967) was prevalent in MMPS due to the scarcity of the use of technology in the classrooms (this will be further developed in Section 5.2.4.4).

5.2.4.2 High Temperatures

School buildings can be of different construction materials, style and ages (Bartlett et al, 2004). School is the most important indoor environment for children, apart from the home (Smedje et al, 1997). The significance of school environment has been well recognised in terms of its impact on children's educational performance and health. As was mentioned before, Jamaica has a tropical climate having temperatures on average of 21-33⁰C (<http://www.metservice.gov.jm./rainfall.asp>, 2010). The summer term is especially hot in the classrooms at MMPS. The sweltering conditions made teaching and learning really difficult. It was a common occurrence to see pupils and teachers takings measures just to try and stay as cool as possible; using books and paper to fan them. Few classrooms had fans. For example, on the 26th June 2007 (Y Shift at 1:55pm) in a Language Arts in which the teacher was visibly hot and sweaty and was fanning in

an attempt to remain comfortably cool. Comfortable classroom temperatures would be more conducive to learning, especially needed for the warmest months, June to August (<http://www.metservice.gov.jm./rainfall.asp>, 2010). Otherwise, pupils with SEN that impair their concentration and other such debilitating conditions will find it hard to focus on their class tasks and to optimally achieve. It is plausible that the physical structures of some of the classrooms (especially those which are partitioned by chalkboards) made it difficult for a general system to be implemented to cool them.

5.2.4.3 High Noise Levels

Classrooms can be very noisy spaces (Manlove et al, 2001). Therefore, excessive classroom noise is a cause for concern since it can be a distraction and annoyance for both teachers and pupils (Dockrell and Shield, 2006) which can be detrimental to speech and language development in young children and those with hearing impairment (Manlove et al, 2001). Classroom existence is directed by a number of rules, whether explicit or implicit; one of which is the rule of low noise or silence (Thornburg, 2006).

One of the resultant features of having significant number of pupils with behavioural difficulties in a school is frequent bouts of high noise levels. As was mentioned before that the service of supply teacher is not a feature of the Jamaican school system. Therefore, teachers absenteeism (whether from school or ‘in-school absenteeism) sometimes contributed to the high noise levels in the school. Supervisions of these classes are often unavailable. For example,

In a low ability class on 01.11.07 the teacher did not arrive in class until 7:40am because the teacher was working at the breakfast club. Although Language Arts work was left for pupils very few pupils did it, they simply wandered around and was rather noisy (Researcher Observation)

In the classroom spaces where pupils and teachers are competing for auditory attention amongst shouting and screaming and excessive load talking, in an environmental can border on being uncomfortable. In essence, this teaching and learning environment is unkind on the ears and can cause stress. Again, learning condition is particularly difficult for pupils with SEN in this environment.

5.2.4.4 Sparse Use of Technology

Undoubtedly, people's lives are being changed both personally and professionally due to technology (Caillier and Riordon, 2009). In most developed countries computers in classrooms have long been taken as given and what is currently in vogue is the interactive whiteboard (Beauchamp, 2004, Bennett and Lockyer, 2008). Henrich and Sieber (2009) assert that teaching and learning are often supported by electronic communication which can be in complex interactive learning contexts. For Maple Meadows Primary School this was not the case, it was a technologically sparse environment. This is coupled with the fact that some pupils have limited access to library facilities in their communities and also do not live in technology-rich homes. The absence of technology as an integral teaching and learning tool makes the learners more dependent on teachers, thus making teachers in this context the proverbial 'fountain of all knowledge'. There are limited opportunities for pupils to explore for information for themselves because of the lack of resources; technological and otherwise. As it relates to pupils with SEN teachers' capacity to engage in adequate one to one interaction becomes even more juxtaposed to the realities of operating in this environment which do not have adequate technological gadgets. These gadgets, could, in a sense, free up some of the teachers' time for it to be used in a more focused manner with the aim of meeting pupils' learning needs. This has significant implications on the teaching and learning process as it becomes more teacher-centred due to the limited presence and use of technology. In light of this, it is likely that pupils were not sufficiently prepared to function in a highly technological world. Additionally, teachers do not benefit from employing the tremendous potential technology has in contributing to the meeting of the learning needs in general and particularly pupils' SEN. In addition, the absence of technology is likely to mean (for both teachers and pupils) insufficient competence to utilise them. This would have implications for teacher training and development.

The limited use of technology brings into sharper focus the 'time factor' which was discussed in Theme One. For example, one of the guidance counsellors informed the researcher that every two months the Ministry of Social Security requests that the attendance of pupils which are on the PATH Programme; it being one of the criteria for eligibility. The reality of the potential of technology was captured by this statement: "*work would be lessened in there was a school database [to check the attendance]. Work is hampered and creates more work for the guidance counsellors*" (Guidance Counsellor 2). The use of technology can significantly reduce the time it takes to do

tasks manually. Technology has the potential to release some time (which is a scarce commodity in a shift school context) for other much-needed purposes.

There is much evidence that the use of ICT resources has the potential to positively impact on children's achievements in the core subject areas of mathematics and English and science (Beauchamp, 2004). As was noted before that one of the predominant SEN manifested by pupils at MMPS is behavioural difficulties; there is scope for technology to be used in supporting them. Holt (1998 as cited by Sherwood, 2005) asserts that information technology can be used to support pupils with EBD before schools resort to measures of exclusion (suspension in the Jamaican context), which are often drastic and unnecessary. He further argues that there is much value in the use of IT especially with the pupils with EBD who do not pose an overt challenge to the school system by engaging in disruptive behaviours. Luth (2001 as cited by Sherwood, 2005) confirms that there is much benefit in the use of ICT with pupils with EBD. He states that behaviour, learning and achievement are interrelated. The computer and other such resources are viewed as therapeutic tools for pupils which are important for developing positive self-concept and confidence, which are major boosts to self-efficacy. The achievement of technological skills can also boost pupils' self-esteem by developing an added area of competence; an area which pupils (especially those streamed in low ability classes) were in need of much assistance for development. There is value in targeting an increased use of technology as a part of the school's five years development plan as an objective and with specific intention to use it as a possible intervention strategy for pupils who are behaviourally and otherwise challenged due to SEN. Teaching and learning context have far reaching effects, according to Baker-Henningham (2007) pupils in primary schools underperform because of poor learning opportunities and inferior teaching and learning environment.

5.2.5 Theme Five: Incidences and Prevalence of Pupils' SEN

The previous themes painted the background for the themes that will follow. This theme will bring into spotlight the SEN of pupils in MMPS. Very few pupils' SEN impairment was of a sensory and or a physical nature. In fact, only one boy had a physical disability. The mother of the boy with physical disability stated that she found coping with this physical disability stressful. However, she said the accompanying learning disability was even more stressful. This result is in keeping with Baker-Henningham (2007, p. 102) who state in her research report that:

very few children with learning difficulties have vision problems, hearing problems or mild mental retardation. The vast majority of children with learning difficulties do not have a significant impairment but are underperforming because of poor learning opportunities in early childhood and poor teaching and learning environment in primary school

In MMPS a significant number of boys were classified as having SEN and as such were placed in special classes and low ability streams. Table 4.1 presents this pronounced gender imbalance which reflected an overall percentage of 68.2 and 63.8 for X and Y shifts respectively. According to Hyde and Durik (2005) when gender is treated as a stimulus variable as opposed to person variable, people's gender influences the response they receive from others; which may in turn affect their self efficacy and motivation. With regards to the high numbers boys categorised and streamed by the school as having SEN it could be that because boys develop later than girl in the cognitive domain which is usually the means by which pupils are grouped in schools. According to Mustapha (2007) education statistics in the Caribbean show that boys are at a disadvantage. This is particularly so in the Jamaican case, Patrick (2002, p. 34-35) in a research concerning the *Demographic and Social Characteristics of persons with Disabilities* for the PIOJ, Jamaica (2001), states that boys are more prone to having disabilities of which cognitive ones are most prevalent. She further asserts that “*children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to neglect, abandonment and abuse, which often leads to isolation, denial of opportunity, ridicule and physical abuse...there is neglect of needs*”.

There is value in the idea that from the standpoint of the MOE and to the day-to-day running of schools that some of the intervention strategies boys specifically target boys to redress this pronounced imbalance. This imbalance has significant implications not only for school systems but for the Jamaican society in general. In MMPS it was reported by guidance counsellors that the pupils that will engage in misdemeanours the most tended to be from classes of low abilities deemed as having SEN.

In addition, one of the distinctive features of the Caribbean family life is the matriarchal family structure. Jeynes (2005 as cited by Lee, 2007) asserts that family structure is most significant forecaster of achievement. The resultant lack of the father figures and male role models could be a possible explanation to some of the behaviour difficulties and aggression experienced by many primary school aged boys. The absence of male role models in the home is further compounded by the predominantly female teaching workforce present in Jamaica (see Section 2. 4.7). The predominantly female

teacher workforce could have an impact on the delivery and style of the curriculum and possibly boys at that age and stage of development may find it difficult to access the curriculum in terms of their learning style. Consequently, there is a multiplicity of needs presented in boys that may need nurturing from a male's perspective from which they can relate. Therefore, for the immediate and long-term benefits it is crucial that this trend is broken and the disadvantages towards boys within the school systems be ameliorated.

5.2.5.1 Reading Difficulties

Reading is one of the skills which are essential to children's development, one of life's critical achievement (Pomerantz et al, 2005). The chronic reading problem identified at MMPS is not an unusual observation. According to Jennings (2000) the majority of Caribbean primary school children attain two or three grade levels below standard in Literacy. This is in keeping with the recognised reading problem in Jamaican schools highlighted by Baker-Henningham (2007) in a research. It was stated by Administrator 1 and some teachers that the integrated national RPC (which no longer offers Reading as a discrete subject) as a causative factor for the pronounced reading problem in the school. The time teachers were able 'snatch' to address pupils' reading needs was reportedly significantly inadequate. This was a serious reading problem which needed specific, well-resourced and consistent remedial reading input; for any marked amelioration to occur. Notably, without the skill of reading it is usual that the pupils will find it tremendously difficult to access other areas of the curriculum which may lead to general underachievement.

Another situation which may have led to this pronounced problem is that based on the socioeconomic background of a significant proportion of pupils (as indicated by the number of pupils accessing the PATH Programme (N=182; 8%), this figure is by no means a true reflection, it is much higher). For example, although unemployment is rife in the Caribbean region (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2001) and specifically Jamaica (PIOJ, 2003), it appears that a higher percentage than norm of the parents interviewed were unemployed. Of the parents interviewed, only 2 parents reported being in employment. This may be related to the already mentioned catchment area for pupils typically attending shift schools, that is, inner city communities. This is in accordance with the view that the *“schools with higher percentage of students from high-SES family backgrounds may provide a more favourable peer culture and effective learning environments, which in turn leads to a higher school achievement”* (Yang-

Hassan, 2008 p. 522). Some pupils may not live in a print rich environment which may be further complicated by some experiencing Standard English in print like a second language (since their primary language of communication at home is Jamaican Creole, Patois). According to D'Angiulli et al (2004) children from low-income families are more susceptible to having low standards of reading achievements and their literacy deficit not making improvements trans-generationally. While this can be contested because they are accounts of pupils from this kind of background who do not have reading problems; much is dependent on the family's values towards education. Some families experience poverty yet it is for the same reason why family members are motivated to pass on a richer educational legacy to the next generation; including that of reading. Despite this, however, SES does impact educational achievement.

It is important to note that reading difficulty is often an indicator of a learning difficulty (Smart et al, 2001). A percentage of children from social and economic disadvantageous backgrounds are less developed than their more advantaged peers (Myers and Botting, 2008). Reading is one of the media through which language is acquired. Therefore, it would appear that if children's environments do not foster reading, it is likely that it would negatively impact their language acquisition. When these children attend school one of the overwhelming challenges that teachers encounter is providing correctly pitched curricular material for below average readers at their correct reading levels (McCabe et al, 2001). If teachers do not succeed at this task, pupils are likely to be frustrated and reading problem may be exacerbated. Reading and behavioural difficulties are sometimes linked. The latter will be addressed in the upcoming subsection.

5.2.5.2 Behavioural Difficulties

The interference to schools' performance (and by extension image) due to behavioural difficulties has been a concern and challenge for educators for a long time (Killu, 2008). The effective or non-effective management of the behaviour of pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties in mainstream schools has an acute influence on pupils' achievement throughout the school (Luth, 2001). The question may be asked as to what are the conditions that are likely to have given rise to marked behavioural difficulties amongst pupils in MMPS? There are several possible explanations. Firstly, a significant percentage of pupils attending the school are from impaired family structures as was highlighted by Guidance Counsellors. Secondly, it is often said that "children live what they learn", many of them were domiciled in garrison communities where political and

domestic violence are part of the tapestry of their existence; it was not unusual for some of them to choose to manifest similar behaviours in their school context. Some of the pupils in the school have even been eyewitnesses to family and community members being murdered or seriously injured. Thirdly, it could be that these pupils were lashing out because of the label of SEN that they were made to wear and it could be the method of handling the stigma, bullying, teasing and frustration experienced by being in the lower streams. Fourthly, in-school factors such as having to stand out in the sun at the school gate prior to the start of their shift, late or missed lunch, punishment to name a few, may be some of the contextual features which contributed to some of the manifestations of negative behaviours in pupils. It is important to note, however, that these explanations do not suggest that children from broken families, volatile communities will necessarily display behavioural difficulties. However, with these experiences the likelihood may be increased. It should be taken into account too that a significant proportion of inappropriate behaviours is the consequence of pupils having a skill deficit as opposed to performance deficit- pupils do not have an alternative manner of behaviour, that is, the appropriate response (Killu, 2008). It is therefore critical that schools would not only short-sightedly focus on removing pupils negative behaviour; but this should be coupled with teaching them how to behave appropriately in a given context, that is, enriching their skill set. According to Hallam et al (2004) behaviour is an important factor relating to pupils grouping (with in class with an aim to achieving good behaviour).

...the students in the lower streams are more problematic so these persons are sent to be counselled more regularly and when you check the background you will see some of the reasons why the children behave in a particular way. Some of them are under pressure at home because they are looked at as dunce as it were and they are affected by that... and when things are not going as they want it to in respect to what the teacher does in the class, they become frustrated and acted out in an undisciplined way (Guidance Counsellor)

In addition, Cross (1999) asserts that communication problems could cause behavioural problems. As was previously mentioned the dominant language of communication in many Jamaican homes is Patois as opposed to Standard English used in schools. This discrepancy can cause some pupils with SEN to become very anxious, embarrassed and self-conscious as they seek and are forced to communicate in a language that is foreign to them. Some pupils may resort to behave inappropriately as a cover-up for the real cause of their frustration. It may be that some pupils are technically experiencing having English as a second language in an English-speaking country. It is

possible that the high incidences of behavioural problems may have been a manifestation of this language dilemma. This warrants further research exploration. Another underlying factor for pupils' negative behaviour is in-school stressors which create frustrations and they respond to them in inappropriate ways. Therefore, schools need to be cognisant of this possibility and do everything within its power to remove all obstacles to the likelihood of appropriate behaviour but especially those with SEN.

There needs to be an urgent re-conceptualisation of behavioural difficulties being perceived as a SEN in order for pupils to be given the support that they need so that their academic and social progresses are not hindered. Importantly too, if this SEN is acknowledged and addressed it is highly likely that there would be an improvement in the teaching and learning environment and possibly teacher stress, time used to deal with negative behaviours will be reduced, pupils being suspended (excluded in the UK context) may be reduced. Therefore, pupils will not miss as much of their already limited learning time due to absences from school and class (when they are sent to administrators for disciplinary actions). In essence, if pupils' behavioural difficulties are addressed there may likely to be an overall benefit to the school. The school climate would be more positive therefore those who work and learn in it would feel safer and likely to achieve more.

5.2.6 Theme Six: School's Response to Pupils' SEN

5.2.6.1 Allocation of Resources

Having examined pupils' SEN in the previous theme, this one will now discuss the school's response to them and others in general. In every organisation the distribution of resources (whether adequate or limited) is guided by an underlying principle whether conscious or unconscious. Rosenbusch (1997, as cited in Huber, 2004, p. 674) posits that leader should strive to be "more resource-oriented than deficiency-oriented". A close examination on the interview extracts (particularly those used in Themes Two and Six) will reveal that administrators were of a deficiency-oriented approach. They discussed the inadequacy of resources such as the attrition of special needs teachers and as such they concluded that the resources are not available to meet the SEN of pupils. However, in keeping with the suggested a resource-oriented perspective the possibility exists that the resources available (albeit limited) could be used in a more efficient and goal-directed manner. Leadership's thinking should be, 'how can the school creatively use the available resources to meet pupils learning in general and SEN in particular?' In

the case of MMPS it was the academically more able pupils which were provided for at the expense of those who had SEN.

In a research carried out Wood and Olivier (2008, p.151) in Motherwell, South Africa in which they addressed teachers working in close collaboration with the community in an attempt to raise health standards in the contextual features paralleled to a large extent features in Jamaica disadvantaged communities. It was marked by poverty and unemployment. They state that

feelings of helplessness and hopelessness among teachers at their inability to cope with and overcome what they perceive as insurmountable problems have contributed to low motivation, lack of job satisfaction, low levels of commitment and weak self-efficacy beliefs.

In Jamaican primary schools coupled with the shift system, economic constraints frequently manifested in adequate resources, the question may be asked about ‘what could be the composite outcome of the school environment in terms of its impact on those who teach and learn in it?’ It is possible that teachers may feel overwhelmed, unequipped, feeling hopeless and helpless to overcome these challenges which may have manifested in low teacher efficacy. Efficacy amongst teachers will be addressed in greater details in Theme Seven.

5.2.6.2 Deployment of Teaching Staff

There was a pronounced presence of positive discrimination towards high ability classes with regards the deployment of teaching staff at MMPS. As was mentioned before the school has a distinctive feature in terms of having suitably qualified teaching staff. However, with specific reference to those who felt competent to teach pupils with SEN, several teachers did not able to cope with this challenge. This was confirmed by Administrator 1 who stated that “*some teachers are [were] below average and because of the large numbers of pupils with SEN it has affect[ed] the overall performance of the school*”. On close examination of this statement it will reveal that the administrator was concerned about some teachers’ inability to effectively teach pupils with SEN and its impact.

On several occasions the researcher visiting low ability classes which were taught by teachers who stated that they would prefer not to be teaching those classes and admitted that they were out of their depth in terms of their professional competence. For example, in the class 3X*, in which there were pupils with severe reading difficulties and very challenging behaviours and in keeping with the trend in the school, this class

comprised of mainly boys. The teacher vented her frustrations verbally to the researcher, stating that nothing in her teacher training nor experience equipped her to cope with the demands of the class she had on a daily basis. In an Integrated Science lesson with an overall topic of 'Healthy Body' and with a subtopic of 'Go, Grow and Glow Foods'; outlined below is an example of differences in teaching abilities of teachers who were teaching the same topic:

1. Stream D (pupils with lowest ability)

The teacher presented the difference between 'Go, Grow and Glow' foods. After which, pupils were instructed to draw examples of 'Glow' foods. Not surprising the majority of them found it really difficult, consequently they could not do the task.

2. Stream C (pupils with average or just below average ability)

Similar to the teacher stream D above, the lesson content was presented. However, this teacher had pictures of different foods (from the 'Grow' category) and pupils were asked to identify them as food from animals and those which were not. The pupils were then asked to paste the pictures of the foods in the respective columns on the chalkboard. Pupils were later asked to draw foods from the 'Grow' category in the books. This, the majority were able to do.

3. Stream A (pupils with highest ability)

Like the other teachers, lesson content was presented. However, this teacher had examples of actual foods from all three each categories. This class was given more challenging task which the majority was able to do.

This Integrated Science lesson provided a classic example of teacher' abilities on display. The D stream class which needed the most scaffolding for their learning did not receive any. The teacher was asking of them to process (for some of them) abstract concepts of foods and to be able to draw pictures from a specific food group. Pupils' inability to do the task did not come as a surprise. The teacher from stream C had pupil looking at, handling pictures and actively manipulating them which made learning more interesting and more lasting because it engaged multiple senses. It was the stream with the most capable pupils (A) which got direct purposeful experience of having the actual foods themselves and experiencing them.

Although there was a marked shortage of resources at MMPS, in some instances the absence of relevant resources may be a case of teachers not utilising existing

ones. Some of the SEN of pupils may be aggravated by what can be called ‘teaching disability’, it is a teacher issue. Sometimes of the debilitating effects of pupils’ SEN is further compounded by this. The root of the problem may be inferior teacher training and or practise. Excellent teaching strategies for pupils with SEN are also good practice for the general pupil population.

5.2.6.3 Deployment of Teachers’ Assistants

The fragmented use of TAs in MMPS created tensions, possibly areas of conflicts and most importantly an inefficient use of the resource. Examine the stark disparity between TAs’ understandings of their remit.

Basically what I do here is help with the slow students, the students will come in and can't read and write. But what I mostly do, I help out but if a teacher is not here I take the entire grade... this term I have not spent much time with the slower ones but I still accomplish[ed] something... TA1

Contrast this job description as offered by TA2:

Whenever a teacher does not come to school I sit in with the class but I am on a roster. D stream is normally supported on a Friday. Occasionally when another grade needs help too, I assist. I mark books and if a teacher is not here I teach. If a teacher is there, I will mark the books.

Whereas both TAs function in the capacity of ‘substitute teacher’ in the absence of regular teachers, there is a significant difference in their operations. It would appear that the overarching responsibility for TA1 is helping to meet the learning needs of pupils with deemed as being slow, that is, having SEN. Notwithstanding, it was admitted that the primary responsibility was sidelined in order to carry out the more secondary function of teaching whole classes in teachers’ absences. On the other hand, in the case of TA2, it seems as if the focus was on helping class teachers with their work load with activities such as marking books. It is worth noting that D stream was scheduled for Friday on the roster of TA2. This may be interpreted as a relegation of priority as it relates to the meeting the SEN of pupils. As was previously highlighted, D streams are those pupils that the school deems as having SEN; the stream that needs the most educational support based on their SEN is on the roster on Fridays, the end of the school week. It is worth noting that the reading specialist support was scheduled to give support to two low ability classes on a Friday too. As was previously mentioned Friday is the shortest school day at MMPS (by half an hour to facilitate teacher planning). In addition, it also tended to have the most disruptions to normal teaching schedules on

Fridays thus being frequently used as ‘special days’ according to Smith (2000). Although these special activities are necessary in pupils’ education, they still represent essentially a reduction of the learning of curriculum contents. This is important especially in light of the fact that there was no differentiation in tests and examinations for the lower streams. In essence, the length of the school day for Fridays and its propensity to being chosen as the day for celebrations, competitions and other such school activities, allocating Friday to lower ability classes to receive extra support is not the giving the maximum support to learners with SEN. Not only is there a significant disparity between TAs understanding of their roles, but even administrators’ description of the role does not dovetail with the TAs. Administrator 1 described the role of a TA as being “*very secondary role to help the teacher to take up lunch order[s], supervise children and where they are bright [intellectually astute] they can help mark books*”. He also stated that each of the TAs in terms of qualification has at least two subjects and that he encourages and recommends them to go to teachers college. However, recommending TAs to go to teachers’ college could be interpreted as seeing the role of TAs as a ‘pit stop’ on route to becoming a teacher. His description of their role being “very secondary” may be a reflection of mindset of seeing the TAs’ role as transitory. Qualified and well trained TAs could add much value as part of the educational provision at the school targeting pupils with SEN. Being qualified and trained should not be viewed as a route to what is deemed to be a higher position of being a teacher as was implied by Administrator 1, rather a critical job on its own right. Unlike the strong emphasis on meeting the SEN of pupils by TA1, Administrator 1 did not mention the use of TAs as a strategy of meeting the SEN of pupils. Teachers too do not seem to have a common understanding of the function of TAs. Below is Miss Jones’* paraphrased view on the function of TAs.

Although she is grateful for the support of TA she finds TA to be more work than help. She found them annoying and do not conduct themselves well in class and can be a source of distraction with the students. She preferred to mark her own students’ books so she can make comments. Notably, she felt that they should not be left unsupervised alone with pupils. (Teacher)

This was in direct contrast to Mr Bell’s* view.

23 in class it would still be good if there was a teacher aid. The needs vary so it would be helpful if an assistant teacher was provided. The TAs are not paid [by the MOE] and not trained. Some form of informal training [is necessary]. It not about helping me to mark books and help with class control, rather it’s helping the learning of pupils. (Teacher)

Notably, none of the teachers was keen in having TAs mark pupils' books. From the deliberation of Mr Bell* it would appear that he is of understanding that the role of a TA is essentially to promote the learning of pupils. Interestingly, this understanding is juxtaposed to TA2's understanding of her own role. Teacher 1 perceives the presence of TA in her classroom as increasing her workload rather than being of much help. This lack of clarity with regards to the role of TAs is not uncommon has been highlighted by some research (Russel et al, 2005). This possibly could cause tension and conflict as teachers and TAs do not share a common understanding of the role of TAs. Having examined the deployment of teachers and TAS in MMPS, the intervention strategies used to meet the SEN of pupils will be explained in the upcoming sub-theme.

5.2.6.4 Special Educational Need Intervention Strategies

Maple Meadows Primary School employs a plethora of strategies in its quest to address the SEN of its pupil population as is represented in Figure 5.2. In the ensuing discussion special emphasis will be placed on the strategy of streaming and other forms of pupil grouping with SEN since it is the most universal and the most ingrained in the life of the school.

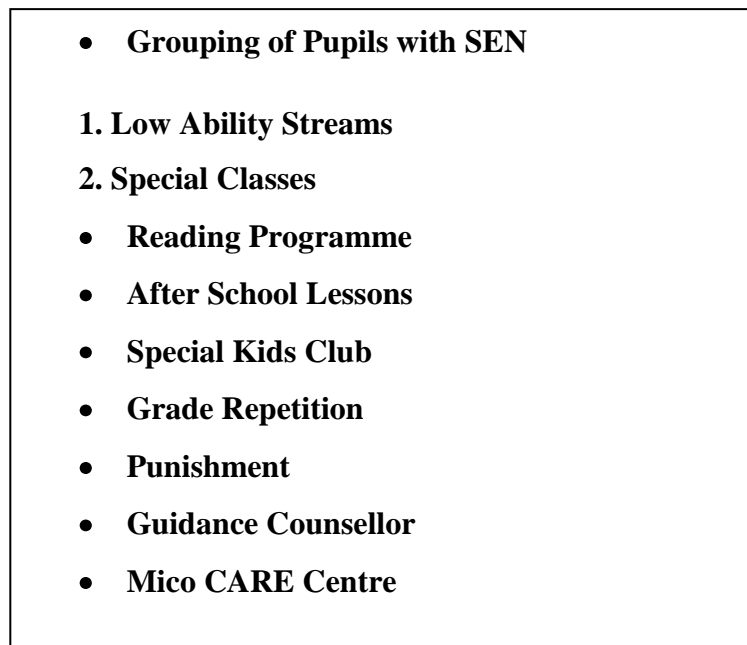
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- **Grouping of Pupils with SEN**
 1. **Low Ability Streams**
 2. **Special Classes**
 - **Reading Programme**
 - **After School Lessons**
 - **Special Kids Club**
 - **Grade Repetition**
 - **Punishment**
 - **Guidance Counsellor**
 - **Mico CARE Centre**

Figure 5.2: SEN Intervention Strategies used in MMPS

5.2.6.4.1 Low Ability Streams

More demand is being placed on schools to increase standards and to meet the educational needs of all pupils through the delivery of the curriculum; pupil grouping being a strategy used to achieve this (Davies et al, 2003). The streaming practice at MMPS is filled with dilemmas and there is no consensus on the matter. Some teachers were in favour of the practice while others strongly opposed it. Here are a few examples which show the disparity of opinions on the matter. A teacher in speaking about a desire to give individual attention but simply not being able to cope said *“if I had a mixed ability class it would be much better. You could have a monitor to supervise”*. Another D stream teacher expressed similar sentiments, *“I am strongly against streaming, mixed ability classes would give the opportunity for peer tutoring”* Some teachers of the lower ability streams have admitted to being inexperienced and in some cases frustrated in attempting to meet the SEN of their pupils. This is due in part to the aforementioned attrition of special education teachers from the school. For example, not all parents agree with the school's SEN labelling and the consequential placement in low ability streams of their children. *“I don't feel that Bryan* has a reading difficulty, him don't [he does not] have a learning disability”* (Parent Interview Extract). It is therefore critical that class placements for pupils with SEN include input from parents, teachers and children (at whatever level possible). The school's construction of SEN and its resultant placement should be a collective effort as much as is possible. It should not be a case of the school telling the parents about their children. Rather, it should be a collaborative definition and strategy selection. This is likely to engender more corporation from parents and may have the side effect of nurturing a stronger parent network with the school.

Hallam et al (2004) (some of the more prolific researcher on pupil grouping) in a research carried out in six primary schools which used different combinations of pupil grouping such as setting, streaming, within class ability and mixed ability opening. Six Key Stage 2 pupils of mixed gender having high, moderate and low abilities (a pair of each) were interviewed in each school. The primary advantage perceived of setting was that class work was pitched to a suitable level (stated by 27% of pupils). If the main advantage is in the class work matches pupils' ability; in the case of MMPS, why then are pupils being examined internally and externally at the same level like the higher streams since they receive different volume and in some cases type of NC content? This is a recipe for underachievement for the pupils having SEN since they usually do not gain the standards set (usually criterion referenced reference tests). One of research

findings amongst pupils in lower ability streams at MMPS was that many pupils had encountered negative experiences for being in the special classes; being teased and or bullied by schoolmates. This is in keeping with Hallam et al's (2004) research which reported the stigmatising of pupils in the lower ability sets. One of people's innate needs is to be perceived and experience themselves as competent (Elliott and Dweck, 2005). It is possible that pupils view their placement in low ability streams as an evaluation of their incompetence rather their competence. This has implications for their self esteem which will be addressed in the final theme.

The method of helping children to strive towards achievement is parental involvement; especially if it involves providing a framework for children's learning (Pomerantz et al et al, 2005). As it relates to the issue of parental involvement in supporting their children in the lower streams in their attendance it should be acknowledged that in some cases less than average attendance is because of medical reasons. For example, Tim* (who has a physical disability and learning disability) was absent for a 13 days the equivalent of 26 school. Another possibility that negatively affect the attendance of pupils in special and D stream classes was that some of them are referred to external agencies and so they have to take days off from school to get their assessments done especially if it involves multiple visits for assessment. There is merit in the school adopting a system whereby the school attendance register is coded so that the reasons for absences can be distinguished.

Finally, a critical element that is frequently missing from schools' attempt at streaming pupils is that of monitoring. At MMPS there was little or no in-school monitoring of pupils stream placements except for the early part of the academic year (September to the beginning of October) when diagnostic baseline assessment tests were administered. There was no systematic ongoing monitoring in place. Special educational needs placement require consistent review; it ought to be a transitory arrangement not a permanent one. There seemed to be fixity of placement amongst pupil with SEN in low ability streams. Davies (2003, p. 58) confirms that learners can become "stuck" in groups because of the difficulty in moving due to structural features of school. Admittedly, a contrasting view was expressed by a teacher who said that "*pupils are not stuck in a group, opportunities are made for them to move up [to a higher stream]*". A pupil in a special stream voiced in an interview "*I want to go to 3A next year*". Herein is revealed a pupil's aspiration to break out the mould of being in the lowest stream. It is the

responsibility of teachers and the school to make this aspiration a real possibility. If not, pupils may be frustrated.

If the school truly has the culture of pupils with SEN making improvement, it ought to be manifested in the deployment of its staff. What is the rationale of the deployments of teachers? If a school is examination-orientated and as such chooses to deploy their best teachers for classes of the more able pupils who are more likely to get good examination scores to boost of their markings. The streams of lower abilities generally got the least experienced and competent teachers then the likelihood of this pupils aspirations becoming a reality is reduced. It needs a whole school approach and philosophy that will impact on frontiers such as deployment of staff, allocation of resources, time tabling to increase the academic achievement and management of pupils having SEN.

The fact is that we lose our best teachers. Now the streaming if you have ability grouping then you can place the best teachers- brighter motivated strong teachers with the stronger children. Sad to say one would argue that you should put them [the with the weaker children], but the Ministry [of Education] is demanding its pound of flesh nearest to the heart and if your school is not doing well ... So when we are forced to make a decision which is in the best interest of our school in terms of our own name and performance because of the Ministry [of Education] we [the school] take in a lot of non-functioning children – nobody wants them, so they end up here...The Ministry is not looking to see how far you have taken these children from and making them perform. (Interview Extract Administrator 1)

The school's examination orientation is revealed in Administrator 2 comment below. Note too that there is also concern to place suitable teachers at the lower ability:

we had a teacher in Grade Two and I believe that she was doing very well and I thought that if she is put at grade four because of the grade Four Literacy Test, I think she would positively impact on the students there, so I think, so that was suggested and she was placed there. We look at the teachers that we have and you will also have to look at the teachers that are patient for those students, you have to. You know if you are not patient with them they are not going to get it, so we try to look at the teachers who are patient. (Administrator 2)

5.2.6.4.2 Special Classes

For the academic year 2006/7, 103 pupils failed the examination across both shifts. The researcher made the following observations during the administration of the Grade Four Literacy Post Test:

- The examination began late because the MOE did not have the scripts ready. This may have caused anxiety for the pupils who had to wait for the start of the test. Consequently, pupils had to work through their lunch break.

- Some pupils were not adequately prepared for the tests, they did not have the relevant equipment.
- Pupils complained of being hot and hungry.
- The majority of the pupils could not access the language of the test; they simply could not read the script. There were neither readers provided nor extra time given for the test.
- Pupils started getting restless towards the ending of the test.
- The graduation practice was a source of noise distraction with singing being done in the neighbouring Holding Area.

The conditions highlighted above were clearly not conducive to pupils' maximum concentration and thereby a good test outcome. These pupils had taken the examination before and had failed it and so they may have had increased aversion towards it. The school needed to have made extra effort in eliminating or reducing these negative test conditions, in light of the fact that these pupils usually have limited coping and concentration strategies. For example, a few fans and drinking water would have been helpful to help to combat soaring temperatures and thirst respectively.

5.2.6.4.3 Reduced Class Sizes

In conjunction with the low ability and special classes MMPS aimed to make these class numbers smaller. Large class size was consistently lamented amongst teachers. Therefore, smaller classes would lend themselves to less teacher frustration with the likelihood that it would be of some benefit for teacher and pupils alike. As a strategy the school made attempts to reduce the class size of special and lower stream classes. It achieved the objective from grades 4 to 6 and these classes ranged from mid to low 20's with the exception of grade 5 on the Y shift (26 and 29). At grades 2 and 3, the D streams at these grade levels the mode of the class sizes was 33. It should be noted that classes with SEN pupils which ranged from 20-33 represent an improvement on what exists throughout the school in general classrooms; they still are unwieldy figures to try to adequately address the SEN of pupils. This strategy should be understood in the context is that it is the norm for teachers to be the only adults in the classrooms (only two TAs serve the school). Even the most efficient deployment of the service will still see D streams in special classes without the regular TA support. Therefore, when these

figures are taken at face value and even more so in the contextual framework, these classes are still large.

There is still debate with regards to the relationship between small class size and increased learning. According to Ayers (2006) smaller classes or groups would be an advantage to pupils with learning difficulties. As was previously mentioned, simply reducing class sizes will not magically be a panacea without dealing with the critical issues such as teacher training, increased use of technology, providing adequately other resources, fostering adequate parental support, improved school conditions to foster pupils' self-esteem and an overall improvement of the school environment to effectively meet the SEN of pupils.

5.2.6.4.4 Reading Programme

“The school have [has] a major problem with reading” (Martha, Parent)*

This observation made by a parent. Indeed the school had a grave reading problem. The service of the reading specialist as an SEN intervention strategy is invaluable. However, the programme is manned by only one person. This person admitted to not being a reading specialist per se, rather having done reading as only an aspect of the first degree programme undertaken. Therefore, from the viewpoint of being a specialist the reading programme being offered by the school does not have that input. It is therefore possible that the reading skills and strategies being used were not the most effective. It could be too that the diagnostic element of reading difficulties for pupils was not most accurate.

In addition, the space constraint that existed in the school had a significant negative impact on the reading programme during the first term of the academic year 2007/8. The reading room had to be relocated several times in a short space of time. At one point it was convened in the corridor outside of the library. The reading specialist opined that it was totally pointless as pupils would be distracted by people going by the front of the school. It is important to note that the initial site of relocation for the reading programme was to the guidance room. However, it had to relocate to give the space to the GSAT class for extra lessons. Once again the examination focus was being prioritised by the school as opposed to addressing the colossal problem of poor readers. It is likely that with such a grave reading problem in the school it means that these pupils may have had difficulty in accessing other areas of the curriculum, which potentially would impact on their overall level of achievement.

5.2.6.4.5 After-school Lessons

After-school lessons are those lessons taught by class teachers, whether before or after shift, to deliver extra portions of the NC or the portion not understood of that which was taught in the class lessons. On the whole, extra lessons is a paid for service. One of the key questions that can be asked here is, ‘is the after-school programme reaching its target group?’ In fact, a more basic question could be, ‘what is the school's primary target group for the afterschool lessons?’ Based on the researcher's observation it was the pupils of GSAT classes that seemed to be the ones to more likely access this service and that teachers of these classes that consistently offered them. The pupils with SEN who may have had the greatest need for extra support were the ones who accessed it least. Below is a teacher’s comment that underscored the pupil group who utilised this medium of support in the school.

A lot of the students want to do netball and football but because of extra lessons... so because of extra lessons the type of students we get are the ones who don't pick up [that is, understand] quickly. When you get someone from the A group [stream] you tell them to get the ball then step, you get them to do it; but with the slow stream they don't play and think... if the school was more sports oriented, if you had that support it would be better... Grade 6 children's parents don't want them to get involved [in sports] until after the GSAT they want them to pass for traditional high schools... (Teacher)

It worth noting that a significant number of teachers at MMPS were engaging in CPD which would put pressure on their time and capacity to offer after-school lesson support to pupils who had SEN. In essence, although some teachers do use this strategy it is not feasible as a whole school approach and there are several factors that militate against teacher using it. It is biased against the morning shift and it excludes some pupils who may need to access the service. Thus, it does not fit well as a general strategy for pupils with SEN.

5.2.6.4.6 Special Kids Club

This club was formulated towards the ending of the researcher’s time in the research field. Consequently, the researcher did not get an insight into its operation nor impact. Miss Bloomfield, a D stream teacher stated in her interview that “*sometimes the behaviour gets really bad ... sometimes the aggression comes out*” The behavioural problems experienced by the school concerned some parents. *Martha** in her interview stated that “*some parents [are] not pleased with the discipline and express[ed] this at PTA*”. As was highlighted before there was a major behavioural problem being

experienced by the school. There is scope for this club and it has the potential to address a critical need in the life of the school.

5.2.6.4.7 Grade Repetition

It is worth noting that on the whole automatic class promotion is practised in Jamaican schools aside from exceptional cases (Miller, 1992). This practice could mask the reality of pupils not achieving academically. In light of the space constraints, limited resources, coupled with low teacher efficacy it is not surprising that this SEN strategy is not highly utilised at MMPS. It is worth noting that some teachers reported that this strategy was not effective on the whole because there is no significant improvement in pupils' academic performance. It is not surprising that teachers give it little ratings in terms of its effectiveness. If pupils repeat in a learning context in which the learning context has not experienced significant positive changes with specific reference to improving the education of those pupils with SEN, grade repetition would indeed do very little if anything, in terms of improvement. It is worth noting that teachers tended to highlight that it was the negative attitude of pupils that sometimes prevent them from maximising potential rewards of this strategy. In addition, repeaters' as they are frequently referred to, may be considered by teachers as a drain on the already limited resources. If they are still in the class for the second year and they were still displaying negative behaviours and work attitude very little can be achieved in terms of academic achievement.

5.2.6.4.8 Punishment

The influence of culture impacts school discipline practices (Northington, 2000 as cited in (Northington, 2007). It is the tendency of schools to reflect the values of the society and dominant culture in which children live (Novak and Pelaez, 2004). It is plausible to think that some of the misdemeanours displayed by some pupils are a direct result of pupils' difficulty in coping with their SEN. For example, it is also possible that some of these pupils, especially the boys, may be experiencing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and consequently may be finding it difficult to carry out the given task, hard to stay on task, not blurting out and to concentrate. One of the realities that teachers and administrators have to live with at the school (like all other schools in Jamaica) is that there is no formal diagnosis for children's SEN. Therefore, in many cases they are not cognisant of pupils' conditions. Hence, intervention strategies were sometimes of a 'hit and miss' nature and sometimes may have been simply a direct

response to the frustration that they may be feeling in the quest to adequately meet the SEN of pupils. In addition, since corporal punishment is a typical feature of most Jamaican families (Smith and Mosby, 2003) some of the pupils at MMPS would be from family backgrounds that may use punishment as their main method of disciplining them (Northington, 2007). Therefore, they would have become accustomed to this method of discipline and may tend not to respond to others. Could it be argued that the disciplinary style used in the school was consistent with the authoritarian parenting style which is dominant in the Caribbean (Smith and Mosby, 2003) and in Jamaica in particular (Steely and Rohner, 2006)? In Brown and Johnson (2008, p.34) research concerning childrearing and participation in Jamaican families, children found it difficult to appreciate the experience of receiving corporal punishment by their parents and being given reason such as "... so you learn and behave". Consequently, since schools are embedded in cultures, punishment is therefore in sync with the family approach and the wider cultural orientation. One teacher felt corporal punishment was not effective she stated that *"they [pupils] are not ready for school, their readiness level is not up to scratch. Hitting them does not help"* (Teacher interview extract).

Northington, (2007) argues that pupils from low socio-economic background receive corporal punishment more often than their peers. Could it be that this offers a plausible explanation why pupils in preparatory schools in Jamaica are not flogged? Is it because those pupils are usually from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and the fact that they are paying for their education, is this why there is no flogging in these schools? Finally, the inconsistent use and questionable effectiveness of punishment are clear indicators that there is need for a whole school behavioural policy (as was highlighted in Theme Three).

5.2.6.4.9 Guidance Counsellor

From the point of view of the MOE, guidance counsellors are employed in schools to effectively use the facilities available to foster the total development of pupils, thus giving them the capacity to lead more fulfilling and productive lives (MOE, 2010). However, it is important to note that the service of guidance counsellors at MMPS were highly regarded and used as an intervention strategy in managing and providing for the SEN of pupils. In effect the school was requiring guidance counsellors to act largely in the capacity of special educators. There are several implications for guidance counsellors functioning in this highly specialist manner:

- Guidance counsellors were being required to operate outside the scope of their remit and more importantly highly likely their professional training. A redefined role and function of guidance counsellor in schools should be reflected in their training.
- As a consequent of the above, guidance counsellors may be, by default, be neglecting the rightful scope of remit given by the MOE as was previously stated. Therefore, the general school population may not be able to access the corporate and individualised service of the guidance counsellor due to their functioning as special educators. This possibility would have been more acute when there were only two guidance counsellors serving a population of over 2000 pupils in addition to simultaneously functioning as a SEN specialist.
- The question may be asked ‘how did this situation come about?’ Several factors may have led to this. However, the one that may have been most significant is that it was largely a system-induced issue. In the Jamaican educational context there is no diagnosis and planned provisions for pupils’ SEN and there is inadequate number of special education teachers and other supporting professionals (such as nurses, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and educational psychologists). Consequently, schools are forced to ‘make do’ with the inadequate human and nonhuman resources available. In this case it has led to a redefinition and reconstruction of the role and function of guidance counsellors within MMPS.

5.2.6.4.10 Mico CARE Centre

As was previously mentioned there is dearth special educational facilities in Jamaica. Mico CARE centre is viewed as the pioneer in special educational facilities, and as such its service is usually in high demand. In fact, it is usually oversubscribed. In a recent lead news item in *The Gleaner* (Jamaica) in an article entitled “Special needs children’s long wait for care”, it highlighted the plight that a large number of children with learning disabilities “*are being left behind by an inadequate education system that spews out illiterates ... the system not only fails to identify special needs children, but expects them to compete without systematic intervention*” (Reid, 2010, *The Gleaner*). The essence of the article is that the education of pupils with SEN is essentially substandard and those who are referred to external agencies (Mico CARE centre being the primary one) have major backlogs of children waiting to be assessed. These children

are therefore essentially falling through the cracks of the Jamaican education system.

The following comment made by a parent corroborates with the claim in this article:

not enough is done for my child by the school. The teacher says she is doing her part... I tried to get him in Mico you know. He has been for assessment and am now waiting for them to call me back. A good while now and mi nuh hear dem call mi back [it has been a while now and they have not contacted me]. (Interview Extract, Parent)

McDonald (2002) asserts that the long wait for assessment has been long standing and that in the end many children do not get to benefit from the service. Therefore, heavy reliance on Mico CARE centre, in a sense does not provide any remedy due to prolonged delay involved in school age children getting assessed. This is especially critical since those who are referred are usually the children with severe cases of SEN. It is likely that these pupils are forced to just get by until the service for appraisal is available. However, one may question how effective this strategy is in terms of an immediate to short-term benefit since there is an acknowledged long waiting list just for assessment, let alone a school placement at Mico CARE Centre.

In spite of the plethora SEN intervention strategies that were employed by the school, there are a few basic things that can be done that had been overlooked by the school in supporting pupils with SEN. For example, when End of Year examinations are given to low ability streams it is often the case that no reading is done for them to scaffold for their reading difficulty. On numerous occasions the researcher observed learners struggling just to decipher the reading material let alone being able to actually answer the questions. In fact, no reading is done for pupils with reading difficulty when they are doing external examinations such as the GSAT and Grade Four Literacy. Without a doubt this will negatively impact on their achievement in these examinations. Teachers' sense of efficacy in relation to coping with pupils' SEN will be examined in the upcoming theme.

5.2.7 Theme Seven: Teacher Efficacy and Pupils' SEN

The fundamental premise directing this theme is that teacher's views of their abilities significantly influence their professional competence in general and particularly their ability to cope with the demanding task of meeting the SEN of pupils. Bandura's (1977, 1986) Theory of Self Efficacy (developed within the parameter of Social Cognitive Theory), is a useful tool in unpacking teachers' evaluation of their ability to adequately handle this challenge. Bandura (1977, p. 79) states that "an efficacy expectation is a

conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes". In a more detailed description he purports that "*efficacy involves a generative capability in which cognitive, social and behavioural sub-skills must be organised into integrated courses of action to serve innumerable purposes*" (Bandura, 1986, p.391). People's ability to deal with difficult situations is determined by the potency of the convictions in their own efficacy. Bandura's (1997) asserts that perception of efficacy in an area will influence the level of effort that is expended in the achievement of specific outcome. According to Bandura (1977) there are four sources of efficacy expectations: 1) performance accomplishments 2) the vicarious experience 3) verbal persuasion and 4) emotional arousal. Teachers with high teaching self-efficacy think that they can inspire all pupils to learn, including those with disabilities (Martinez, 2003). In a research involving 139 teachers from 17 mainstream elementary schools in Israel investigating teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of pupils with SEN, one of the results of the research is that self efficacy was the most significant factor influencing teachers' attitudes (Weisel and Dror, 2006). In the context of teachers attempting to meet the SEN of their pupils it is critical to note that, performance accomplishments (which is built on personal experience) is the most dependable of the four sources of efficacy. Since successes increase mastery or efficacy expectations and vice versa (Bandura, 1977) every effort should be made by schools to provide conducive environments and adequate resources that will provide the necessary context in which teachers in general and particularly those that are teaching pupils with SEN to feel efficacious. An important point to note is that with the attrition of special education teachers from MMPS, compounded by the deployment of the most experienced teachers to the more able streams, it creates a context in which there is limited vicarious experience being modelled in this school environment that will inspire teachers of pupils with SEN with a sense of 'if others can do it, I can do it too' belief.

In a research carried out by Baker-Henningham (2007) in which she sought to investigate Jamaican teachers' confidence in teaching pupils with learning difficulty and to identify the strategies they utilise, one of the critical results was that more than half (55%) reported having low self confidence in effectively teaching pupils with learning difficulties. The pronounced lack of self efficacy, to use Bandura's terminology identified in the case study data, parallels the finding low self confidence highlighted by Baker-Henningham (2007). This was rather telling with regards to the extent to which teachers feel that they can effectively teach pupils with SEN.

One of the strategies employed by the MOE and MMPS to help teachers manage the SEN of their pupils is seminars and workshops in which skills, advice and encouragement are given with a view to improve their practice and confidence. However, according to Bandura (1977, p. 82) ‘verbal persuasion’ are usually not strong and are rather short-lived. He asserts that “research attest to the weakness of verbal persuasion that creates expectations without an authentic experiential base for them”. In ‘emotional arousal’ it is people's physiological state that directly impacts their chances of succeeding or failing at that task. Therefore, the most effective approach in attempting to increase teachers’ sense of efficacy in relation to teaching pupils with SEN, would be to target teachers’ likelihood and exposure to successful performance accomplishments and positive vicarious experience respectively. Personal perception of efficacy and relevant skill set are required for competent functioning (Bandura, 1986). Hence, not only should there be strategies and a whole school culture that is positive towards teachers meeting the SEN of their pupils, but critically too, the issue of teacher training that would teach skills and competencies is an essential element in the equation of workable teacher efficacy. Practical teacher efficacy that is likely to have an impact on the education of pupils should therefore be balanced. On the one hand confident belief in one's competency and on the other an adequate skill set in order to get the task accomplished. One without the other amounts to little more than false bravado.

There are implications to having low teacher efficacy. It can spiral out of control and can lead to a negative professional attitude whereby teachers’ morale is so crushed under the sheer weight and frustration of having to do a job that they are not equipped for, nor want to do. For example, a teacher publicly told a pupil that she is unable to help him and that he needs to attend a special school. However, this teacher a few moments later differentiated a task very well on realising that a boy was experiencing difficulty, she also gave others one-to-one attention. It is possible that teachers will give emotional responses when they feel that they are being pushed beyond their level of competence. This can lead to incidences of breached professional conduct.

In addition, if teacher efficacy is viewed in the context where there are gross inadequate human and non-human resources catering for pupils’ SEN, it is not surprising therefore that in MMPS (and possibly others) such low teacher efficacy relating to executing this task existed. For example, Miss Jones*, a teacher of a D stream reported being so fed up she does not want to continue teaching and wants to find another job. Here are some more comments from several teachers reflecting their sense of efficacy:

it's not fair to come here and to be stressed out to teach them [pupils with SEN] and they still don't get it. Then you are blamed by some parents and hierarchy. What the MOE requires the curriculum is loaded but too much for this class. At the end of the year I am judged as not performing because the students are not performing, which is not fair (D Stream Teacher)

Sometimes I wish I had the answer and knew how to help. I advanced in Social Studies [I] never did anything in Special Education. [I am] using strategies I have learnt along the way (Special Class Teacher)

I feel I am not reaching my students no matter how I try. I personally give up, it is not easy. The fact that I am trying to reach them and it is not working. I try being nice, I try being rough, nutten [nothing] I try works with them (C Stream Teacher)

The above comments made by lower ability streams and Special class teachers bring to the fore that there are multiple reasons for teachers' low sense of efficacy. There were issues such as teacher stress, inadequate teacher training and being judged based on pupils' performance. Another plausible explanation for some teachers' frustration is the material with which they have to work. For example, one of the teachers was of the view that the requirements of the NC was too heavy; it needs to be modified by the MOE for the pupils with SEN (the class teacher brought the Science text books for the researcher to examine them). The teaching skill of differentiation would be applicable here. However, could it be that because pupils' learning materials were not appropriate it exacerbates teachers' low efficacy?

According to Bandura (1997) past performance accomplishments are the most powerful and long-lasting source of self efficacy beliefs. Therefore, the comments made by the D stream teacher in which she says nothing works which suggests she has had little to no experience of successful accomplishments in her attempt of meeting the SEN of pupils. It is not surprising therefore that self efficacy in these teachers would be low. In conversations with two teachers regarding pupils with SEN having left the school because of the severity of their learning needs.

[the pupil] gave much trouble but became dear. [I] miss her presence. [I] have double feelings; but happy that she is somewhere where she can get help because I could not give her the help. There was no way I could help. Helping her would mean that the class is being left behind. She could not be left on her own needed scaffolding all the way through. It amazes me how these children get into the system...child needs more help than I can give them (Special Class Teacher, a follow-up conversation)

Another pupil with profound SEN left the school too. Here is that teacher's view:

Impact on class [was] minimal. I was just concerned for him. He had behavioural and academic problems. He was not ready for Grade X (grade was identified). I think we could tolerate him. There are other students here [who are] more disruptive. Do you know John? It made me sad when he left. He could have gotten help based on some of those who are here and those who have passed through the system. Believe me I was sad he was not given enough scope in which to be helped sufficiently by the system... I thought that the guidance counselling department would be able to help him. He now attends another primary school (Class Teacher)*

The first teacher was convinced that she could not meet the pupil's SEN. On the other hand, the second teacher was equally convinced that the child could have been helped if only she was not given the chance to do so. The second teacher's comment also picked upon a collective sense of efficacy as is posited by Feltz et al (2008). Therein was revealed the divergence of teachers' sense of efficacy:

Setting goals is a critical strategy for enhancing efficacy by providing criteria for accessing skill development (Bandura, 1997) which should be specific, measurable, action oriented, realistic and time bound (Feltz,2008). Research is required in the area of teacher self efficacy and what are factors influencing high and low self-efficacy and how teacher training programs can assist (Schunk and Pajares, 2005) with particular reference to the teaching of pupils with SEN. It should be acknowledged that efficacy is a highly contextual concept.

Importantly, not only should there be a personal sense of efficacy, but they should also be collective efficacy. In a research conducted by chase et al (as cited by Feltz et al, 2008) in which they tested the four sources of efficacy information stated by Bandura, 1977) both as personal and collective constructs of efficacy in three teams of female basketball players. The research revealed that self efficacy was more impacted by external factors to basketball as opposed to collective efficacy. In the context of a school in attempting to meet the SEN of pupils, awareness of this could add a valuable dimension in the schools' attempt to increase a sense of efficacy amongst teachers in relation to their ability to meet the SEN of their pupils. Since personal and collective efficacy are influenced by somewhat different factors; this distinction may be beneficial to the school as it targets specific areas for intervention, since one without the other will be limited in its effectiveness. In a sense a school is a team. Therefore, every attempt should be made to raise both areas of efficacies.

5.2.7.1 Teacher Training and Special Educational Needs

Almost all the academic staff was suitably qualified yet there was a profound sense of ‘I cannot meet the learning needs for pupils with SEN’. It is plausible that one of the explanations for the general low teacher efficacy amongst those teaching low ability streams in MMPS related to the deficiencies in their teacher training where there is little or no content specifically equipping them to deal with the rigour and challenge of teaching pupils with SEN. This was expressed in this comment: *In the training I did a course when I was doing my degree it was not an intensive course just an introductory one [special needs course]* (D Stream Teacher) The criticism has been raised that the schools of education have not been very responsive to a changing world. Teacher education must change if it is going to be effective in its role of changing schools (Caillier and Riordan, 2009). However, schools having identified the gap in teacher training programmes in relations to equipping them to effectively teaching pupils with SEN. It would be beneficial for school to organise supplemental training to offset the deficit existing in teachers’ competencies. The next theme will develop the discourse with regards to parental support of pupils with SEN.

5.2.8 Theme Eight: Parental Support for Pupils with SEN

Parents are key figures in the lives of most children. Therefore, home support is crucial in all childhood phases of education. Parents have the potential to have a significant effect on children's views towards achievement (Pomerantz et al, 2005). At MMPS parental involvement is critical element in the provision of intervention strategies for pupils with SEN. This is particularly so in those cases deemed as severe, since the way forward usually involves external agencies. At this juncture therefore parental involvement becomes even more critical. Whilst the school seeks to bring on board the essential element of the home input, it is sometimes the cause of much frustration for the following reasons:

- Parents /caregivers refuse to respond to the school's request of attending a meeting with regards to their children's SEN.
- Parents are in denial about their children possibly having SEN.
- Some parents reported being embarrassed about their children's SEN.

There is general agreement concerning the need to increase family participation in the educational process, although it continues to reflect a less than desired level of involvement (Garcia, 2004). Numerous studies demonstrate the direct relationship

between academic achievement and home support (Bailey, 2006 and Bryan et al, 2001). However, due to the situated learning context of shift school where there is the element of time pressure its need is even more critical since children in this environment have reduced contact time with teachers. Home support is not only critical in general for pupils having SEN but also supplemental in nature in terms of making up the time deficit of this shortened shift school day.

One of the observations made by the researcher is that overall there was more parental support of pupils in the higher streams than in the lower ones. Pupils in the higher streams tend to have the school tools and equipment for learning and better attendance (re attendance see Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4) as opposed to pupils in the lower streams. This observation was confirmed by an A Stream teacher who opined that “*the students who do better tend to have more supportive parents*”. In addition, the number of parents and caregivers in attendance to the general PTA, and grade meetings are significantly lower for pupils in the lower streams. A teacher of a D stream stated that “*9 out of 33 parents came to parents’ day [from her class] which was good; I normally don’t get so many. Although most of them are the ones I see all the while*”. When one considers that this teacher considers just over 25% of parents in attendance to a parents day to be “good” it really begs the question what the regular attendance would have been like. The importance of home support was also acknowledged and embraced by a parent in her interview

I help him at home [referring to her child with SEN]. The parents need to put effort in helping their children –those who want to learn will learn. Teachers du fi dem part and wi du fi wi [teachers do their part and we do ours]. Teachers alone is not enough. Remember one class has a lot of children so the teacher can’t go through all the children especially some classes are slow so the teacher need[s] the help. (Parent)

However, in the context of the shift school, where many of the parents and caregivers are unemployed and are from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, could it be that instead of the school looking at parental support from a largely unilateral perspective (simply put, that they are not supporting their children enough), could it be that a more multifaceted take on the matter may reveal that some of these parents do not possess the skills and other resources with which to support their children? (This is a worthwhile research prospect). This possibility was captured by Lois*, a teacher, “*for most of them their parents cannot read*”. As was previously mentioned an Evening Institute is held at MMPS to facilitate the educational improvement of parents. Is this facility an acknowledgement by the school that in order to help its pupils; the parents have to be

included in the framework? In some cases when parents are told that their children may have SEN, parents sometimes give up on their children because they are not empowered to help. For example, one parent said that ‘she did not feel badly when your child was placed in D stream because she was also in D stream when she was at school and that she is still just like her child’ (paraphrased interview extract, parent). If pupils are unable to read and write which are basic tools for accessing the rest of the curriculum; and they are given home work and they go home to parents of similar competence, then there is none to help the other. It is possible too, that some of these parents have low parental self-esteem or efficacy which refers to the extent to which parents viewed themselves as effective in their parenting responsibility (Hassall et al, 2005). Therefore, it should be acknowledged that some parents are simply not refusing to help their children, but they are unable to do so or they do not perceive themselves as being able to do.

Teachers and administrators expect parents to come to their territory of the school for meetings. However, school may connote quite deep emotive responses for some of these parents who are expected to come to school when they are invited to. For some of them school may have been where they failed and as a consequent of which, they may feel very uncomfortable and even antipathetic towards going to school for their children. Therefore, the school system needs to find creative ways to get parents to be able engage with the school in the lives of their children. Garcia (2004, p. 2 91) posits that:

Building successful home-school and community partnerships involves the integration of a number of players with vested interest. The responsibility for initiating and maintaining these initiatives in schools is not solely the role of selected individuals but must be perceived as a collective shared process

One of the guidance counsellors stated “lack of parental guidance, especially of the fathers” was one of the weaknesses experienced by the school. At a special Parents Evening during a month long parents’ celebration held by the school only 10 fathers were in attendance. Their poor attendance was noticeable. In addition, some homes do not have the resources “as simple as plain paper cannot be sourced in some homes, let alone Encyclopaedia” (D stream Teacher, conversation). The PE teacher said, “the further down [the class streams] the less pupils with PE gears”. In 7D only 2 or 3[pupils] have [their] gears”. Similarly, a D stream GSAT teacher said “out of 22 [pupils] approximately 3 have their text books”. She went on to say that for her to cope she borrowed text books from pupils in other classes. On the contrary, one of the*

administrators is of the view that the majority of parents were demonstrating adequate support.

I tell you these parents they really put in their bit [contribution] to make sure that these students get what they are supposed to get ... [simultaneously stating that the opposite view] I can tell you straight off, you see with these children usually we don't see the parents. Yes, most of the times you do not see the parents for those children, so what happens is the Guidance Counsellor, depending on where they live too, because there are some places I would not advise my guidance Counsellors to go in at all; but if it is an area where the guidance Counsellor can go, then they would go and bring the parents out (Administrator 3).

The seeming contradiction in the above comment appeared to be that the first comment may have been in reference to the general pupil population and the second part of the comment was with regards to those with SEN. Essentially, pupils with SEN (where the greater needs usually exist) on the whole receive much less home support regarding their learning. What could be possible causes for this? Could it be that the placement of pupils with SEN into low ability streams, may have had an unintentional negative effect? It may have been that when pupils were placed in these classes their parents or caregiver may have felt that there was little point in making the sacrifice to support their children's learning because they have been wasting their efforts. It could also be that pupils' placement in lower ability classes serves as a reinforcement of some parents' already negative perception of their children and thus it provides the proverbial "final nail in the coffin". It is possible therefore that the school based on their pupil placement strategy, is a contributing factor to the inadequate parental support pupils with SEN receive. The school, therefore, needs to take a critical holistic approach to pupil placement. As was mentioned before, the critical stakeholder of parents should have a voice in the school's pupil grouping practice. There needs to be clear guidelines drafted as a policy with regards pupils' class placement in the school. This would serve as a forum in which parents, pupils, teachers, administrators, and schools board members could have their voices heard. This process has the potential to yield insightful corporative thinking; whereby the class placement of pupils with SEN would better serve their needs, reduce the likelihood of teasing and name-calling and lend itself to a more equitable use of teacher resources.

Extensive evidence suggests that parental support is a precursor to pupils' increased achievement (Pomerantz et al, 2005). Since parental involvement is such a critical factor in pupil's academic achievement and especially for those with SEN, schools should strive to be much more than just an adjudicator; making the

pronouncements of the prevailing condition of lack of parental support. Rather they should strive to be facilitators; being creative in formulating strategies to cultivate greater parental involvement and overcome barriers that impede this critical home/school dynamics. The upcoming theme will discuss pupils' self-concept in relation to their SEN.

5.2.9 Theme Nine: Special Educational Needs and Pupils' Self-concept

Emotions and behaviours occur in context. West and Currie (2008, p.242) argue that “*certain structural features of inequalities in term of access and outcome and they themselves have an impact on overall welfare*”. Being a member of the lowest ability classes is by no means a neutral activity or experience. Streaming may represent a double whammy for pupils who did not get a place at the preferred a whole day schools and to be further screened into streams may have significant implications. It cannot be said that ‘one class is just like another’ in many regards. Possessing SEN and being made to acknowledge and ‘live’ it with such public labelling and categorisation can be a source of stress and a dent to one’s self concept. Zimmerman (1995, p. 202) in his description of children's development and pursuit of academic competencies contends that:

it is public, competitive and self-defining ... within this educational crucible, children acquired their self-conceptions of academic agency. It is their growing sense of self-efficacy and purpose that serve as major personal influences in their ultimate level of accomplishment.

The practice of streaming by MMPS in effect locks pupils in a single dimensional definition of pupils' achievement as opposed to a multi-dimensional one. With setting, pupils are taught in different groups based on their attainment in different subjects, with streaming their placement is basically fixed for all subjects. In the latter case it is quite possible that pupils' potential is not maximised because the areas of their strength may not have been the subjects which were taken into account when their streaming was done. Inadvertently, the school would not provide adequate scope for pupils to find their academic niche and potentially a path to excellence in spite of the challenges of their SEN. This may lead to some pupils being frustrated and consequentially demotivated. In the long term this has implications for employment status. Previous achievements influence efficacy beliefs (Zimmerman, 1995). Therefore, school systems and processes should endeavour to give pupils, inclusive of those with SEN, opportunities at which they can succeed no matter what their abilities are. When a

panoramic view is taken of pupils with SEN within the context of MMPS with their placement in the low ability streams; their chances of experiencing success is much lower than those pupils are placed in A streams. This is so because A stream classes are usually better resourced in terms of more experienced teachers, parental support, educational tools and equipment, classroom spaces and positive feedback from peers and others. One's sense of 'self' and identity is bound up in and impacted by this occurrence. Being placed in low ability classes adds another layer of complexity and stigma (repeatedly reported in conversations and interviews) and the experience can be socially demeaning.

According to Davis (2002) people's identity is explained in terms of their identification with others. He further states that another way of understanding identity is in the sense of how individuals are different from others. Difference, in the sense of possessing SEN in MMPS is further underscored by being in these low ability classes. The experience of streaming based on a school-made diagnosis of possessing SEN can be a confidence denting experience to their sense of efficacy. Here is an example of a pupil's experience from a low ability class:

I feel nervous sometimes. Sometimes [my] classmates teased and slapped me I felt sad when I realise that I was going in 5Special. Miss I did not want to go in no more Ds [classes] (D Stream Pupil)

Here is a mother's lament for her child in a Special class.

Mi feel bad still. More time him a cry him nu waa come a school a don't know why. Mi nu waa stop him mi waa him fi learn more times him just get down sick. Children get sick more time yu know, yea man, they get stressed (Interview Extract, Parent) (Translation of this extract will immediately follow)

[I feel badly still. Often he cries and do not want to go to school. I don't know why. I do not want to stop him from school. I want him to learn. He often feels down and sick. Children often get stressed you know, yes, they get stressed]

In contrast here is a pupil's reaction to being placed in a D stream "nice, because the teacher was nice to me". Cambra and Silvestre (2003, p. 197) assert that "schools generally tend to place priority on the acquisition of academic knowledge but rarely make provision for activities designed to foster socio-affective development of special needs students". They carried out a research carried out in a private integrated school in Spain in which they evaluated the self-concept of pupils with SEN which was done using a Self-concept Scale specially adapted to meet the practicalities of different groups of pupils with SEN. Ninety-seven pupils participated in the research, 29 of

which have SEN. One of the outcomes of this research is that the self-concept and social status of pupils with SEN was lower than their peers without SEN, although theirs was positive. Another finding highlighted by the research was that the construction of pupils with SEN is interconnected with peer group perception. Below is a Guidance counsellor's opinion on streaming as practised in MMPS:

...streaming is something in the school that I am not satisfied in the way it is done because you find that the students you put in 'D' classes which cause them to feel sometimes that they are less than because they are not able to do as well as others. Which I don't think is true because you know it does not matter what class they are in you can do well, but the fact that you are in D there is a stigma that is going around to say D children is dunce... I will give you an example, I remember some time ago I was teaching a B class and I went to the D [stream], to visit ... I saw two students who seems very focused and I watched them over time, then I just asked the teacher if she would just give them to me to take them to my class and she obliged ...one passed for Calabar and the other for Wolmers [2 prestigious all boys high schools in Jamaica] ... Well what we do from time to time we try to get them to understand that 'D' does not mean that they are dunce and that they still have abilities to move on and we try to provide opportunities for them...

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy draw attention to the importance of the contribution critical socialising agents some of the primary ones are teachers, parents and peers (Hyde and Durik, 2005). Streaming, therefore, has the potential to unintentionally lower pupils' sense of their own efficacy. Thus, a cyclical effect may be set in motion in terms of pupils demonstrating their inability to perform a task as opposed to those pupils be labelled as being able to do a task. Streaming also may be viewed as 'feedback' which is a critical area of efficacy definition and identity formation. It is therefore crucial that schools in their attempt to group pupils should adopt a multifaceted approach which offers sufficient account for pupils' developmental, social, physical and moral development. Schools' choices of grouping therefore should go much further than what is more convenient for teachers (in terms of their planning) and the school's quest to appear in the upper stratum of ranking tables. Rather, it should be a child-focused process.

If the preceding theme of inadequate home support is brought into the picture we can see some details being filled in; some pupils having inadequate family support, living in violent and deprived circumstances, dealing with the impact of streaming and in some cases the experience of inadequate nutrition. This makes for a childhood experience that may be described as harsh. Notwithstanding, there are tensions and dilemmas.

5.3 Chapter Conclusions and Summary

- In general, administrators were of the view that the shift system has a negative impact on the school system's ability to effectively meet the SEN of pupils. Teachers and parents were of mixed views with regards to the shift context in relationship to meeting the SEN of pupils. Pupils were more of a positive view on the matter although some preferred whole day schools.
- On the whole the shift system had negative effect on the school experiences for both teachers and pupils. For example, not being able to eat and for pupils to play.
- Streaming can have a negative effect on pupils' self concept and self efficacy. Pupils reported having negative experiences as a result of being placed in low ability stream.
- Some teachers and especially guidance counsellors expressed strong views about negative outcome on pupils because of the practice of streaming.
- Inadequate resources were a significant factor which impeded the meeting of pupils' SEN in areas such as inadequate use of technology and lack of special educators.
- Pupils with SEN tend to get less parental support than their peers who were in higher streamed classes.
- There were certain school-factors which negatively impacted the meeting of pupils' SEN such as space constraint, how staffs were deployed and the school examination culture.
- Maple Meadows Primary school used many intervention strategies in its attempt to address the needs of pupils with SEN. However some strategies did not appear to be effective (such as punishment) while for the purpose of recapping, others were more effective. The school heavily relied on the service of the guidance counsellors for help.
- Reading and behavioural difficulties were the most prominent SEN amongst pupils.
- Teachers of pupils with SEN expressed low efficacy in their competence to effectively address the SEN of their pupils. This has brought to the fore the dire need for teacher training programme to be more specific in equipping teachers to handle this challenge.

- Maple Meadows Primary school lacked whole school policies in general and specifically with regards to meeting the SEN of pupils.

Throughout, there were contradictions and tensions both within and amongst themes. Overall, the data showed that the performance agenda took precedence over the welfare of those pupils with SEN. Importantly too, the lack of resources and with a performance oriented distribution of the limited resources available had a marked impact on the school experience and possible outcome of these pupils. This gives evidence to the complexities in operation in MMPS with all its constraints, school orientation and how they conceptualised and provide intervention strategies for its pupils with SEN. Without doubt the educational provision for pupils with SEN was inadequate during the research period.

Chapter Six- Findings and Results

Survey

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the significant findings and results from the survey done. Some of the data will be accompanied by graphs and tables. The results and findings will be presented in three sections. Section One will put forward the overall demographical data for both administrators and teachers. Sections Two and Three will present the data from the administrators and teachers respectively. Administrators and teachers in 10 shift primary schools were given questionnaires to further explore some of the issues picked up on in the case study with the same focus. Two hundred and thirty one respondents in total participated in the survey (N=231) which was conducted using questionnaires which is a reflection of an overall response rate of 52%. The presented data will be analysed and discussed in the next chapter.

6.2 Section One: Phase 2- Survey (Linked Questionnaires)

This section focuses on the demographic data gathered from the survey. It will be presented in the following subsections as is outlined in Figure 6.1.

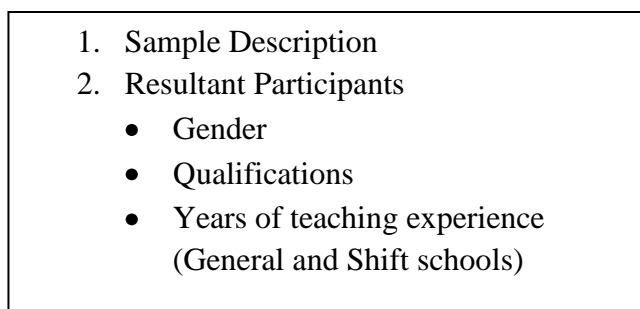
- 
1. Sample Description
 2. Resultant Participants
 - Gender
 - Qualifications
 - Years of teaching experience
(General and Shift schools)

Figure 6.1: Subsections of Demographic Data

6.2.1 Sample Description

For the purpose of reiterating, ten mainstream shift Jamaican primary schools (including the case school) (N=10) participated in this survey completing questionnaires in the capacities of teachers and administrators. Jamaica is divided into three counties and 14 parishes. Seven schools which participated in this research were located in the county of Middlesex in the central portion of the island and all from the parish of St Catherine. This is in keeping with the fact that this parish has the highest population density and shift schools in the country (see Figure 2.6). Two schools were situated in the rural parish of St Ann and located in the county of Middlesex. Only one school was located in the county of Surrey in the East from the parish of St Andrew. Due to the long distance of commuting, no school from the Western county of Cornwall participated in this research. It should be noted that although most schools were from the parish of St Catherine they were scattered across the parish capturing its urban and rural dichotomy. (For more details of the layout of the parishes refer to the map of Jamaica in Figure 2.1). However, according to the classification system of the MOE, all schools which participated in this research are considered to be 'urban'. This is in accordance with the fact that shift school is an urban phenomenon (Bray, 2000). All the schools were also co-educational institutions. Importantly too, Jamaican primary schools are classified from size one to five for the purpose of enrolment (with five being the largest schools with over 1200 pupils and one the smallest with less than 250 pupils). Of the 10 schools which participated in this research eight were classified as being size five and the others as four. In addition, every school with the exception of one had attendance rates in the 80s; the exception being in the 60s.

6.2.2 Resultant Participants

From the ten schools in the sample, 231 respondents participated in the survey. Respondents were in two groups- administrators (N=26) and teachers (N=205). Teachers accounted for 88.7% of the respondents of which 91.7% (n= 188) were female and 18 (8.3%) were male. Almost three quarters of the administrators were females (n=18, 69.2%) and males accounting for 30.8% (n=8). Figure 6.2 contains the gender distribution of the respondents. There are 25,015 fulltime teachers in public government maintained school in Jamaica (MOE Statistics, 2008/9). The female to male ratio stands at 9:1; with female accounting to 79% (n=19,774). Notably, although female teachers account for such an overwhelming majority, only 6% of them function in administrator roles (principals, vice principals and other senior management) when compared with 9% males. Therefore, the respondents in this survey is a reflection of the disproportionate female gender composition of the teaching profession in Jamaica and elsewhere in the world; for example, UK (DfES, 2005) and Israel (Rich and Iluz, 2003). The implications of this gender imbalance will be explored in the next chapter.

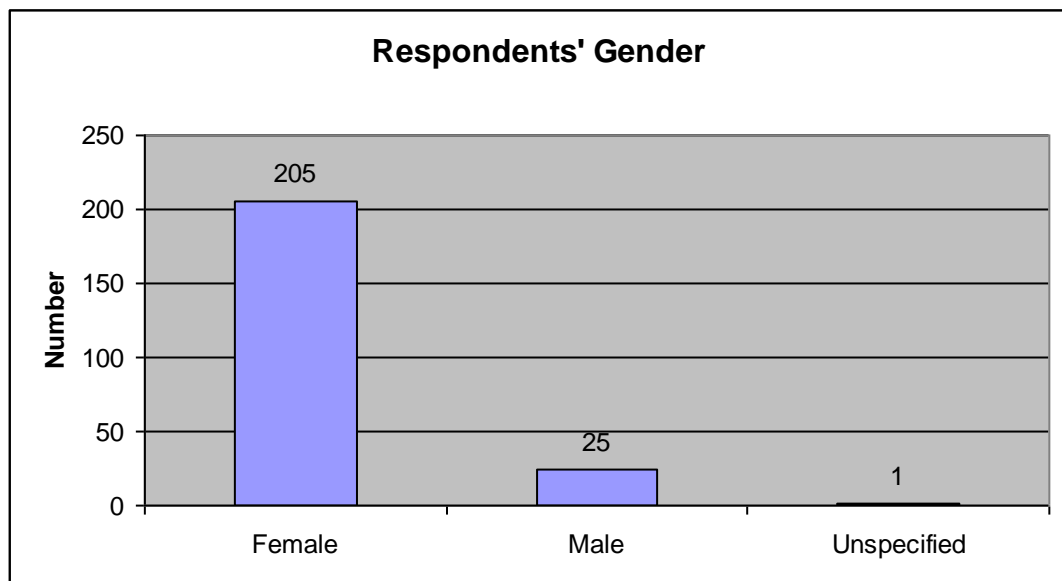


Figure 6.2: Respondents' Gender

6.2.3 Respondents' Qualifications

As was previously mentioned in the Literature Review the general baseline for entering the teaching profession in Jamaica is a Diploma in Teaching. Figure 6.3 outlines qualifications of the respondents which participated in the survey. Just under half of the respondents (n=111, 48%) had this basic requirement. Of the 231 survey respondents only one (0.4%) was pre-trained and 20 (8.6%) having Certificates in Teaching. In essence, 21 respondents (9%) do not meet the prerequisite qualification for teaching. Ninety-nine respondents have graduate and postgraduate degrees, that is, 90 with first degree (38.9%), Masters (n=7, 3%) and doctorates (n=2, 0.8%). This represents a major improvement in the professional landscape considering that at one point in the trajectory of the Jamaica's teaching profession a significant number of entrants were pre-trained (Walters and Castle, 1967). Importantly too, the majority of respondents were trained primary school teachers.

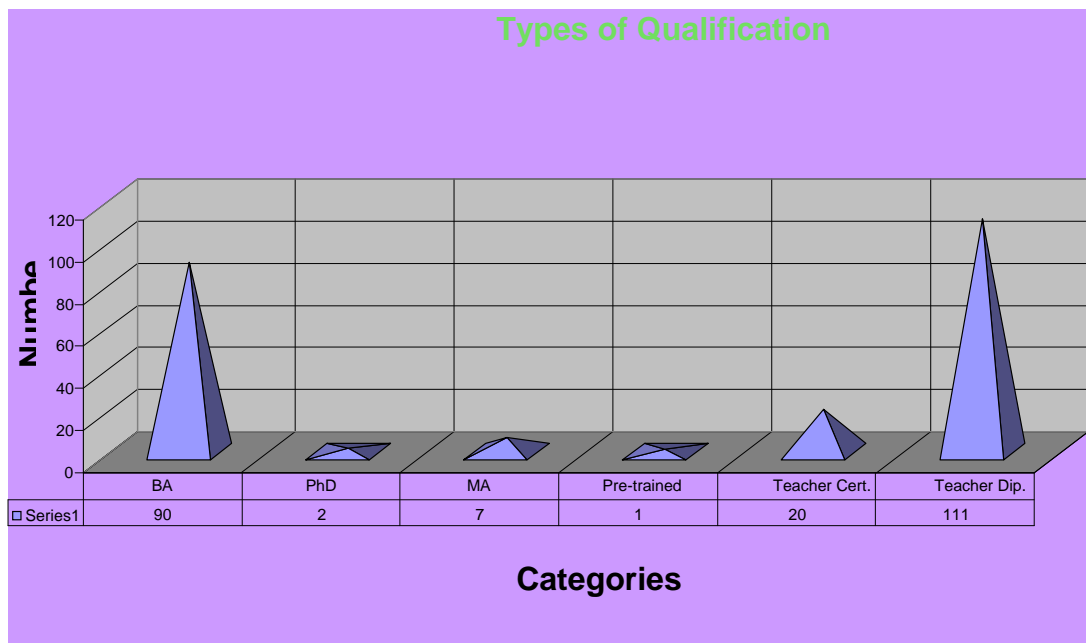


Figure 6.3: Qualifications of Respondents

It is worth noting that more than three quarters of the respondents (n= 176, 76%) were engaging in further studies as is reflected in Figure 6.4. Of the 21 respondents whose qualifications do not conform to the prerequisite for practising in Jamaican classrooms, eight were engaged in further studies (three of whom were not trained primary school teachers). Four respondents specified that they were reading for their bachelors and one indicated that the field was in special education. Notably, all the

respondents without adequate qualification are females and none was an administrator and almost 50% (n=10) of them had 1-5 years of teaching experience. The one pre-trained respondent has been teaching for over 21 years and was not one of those who were studying.

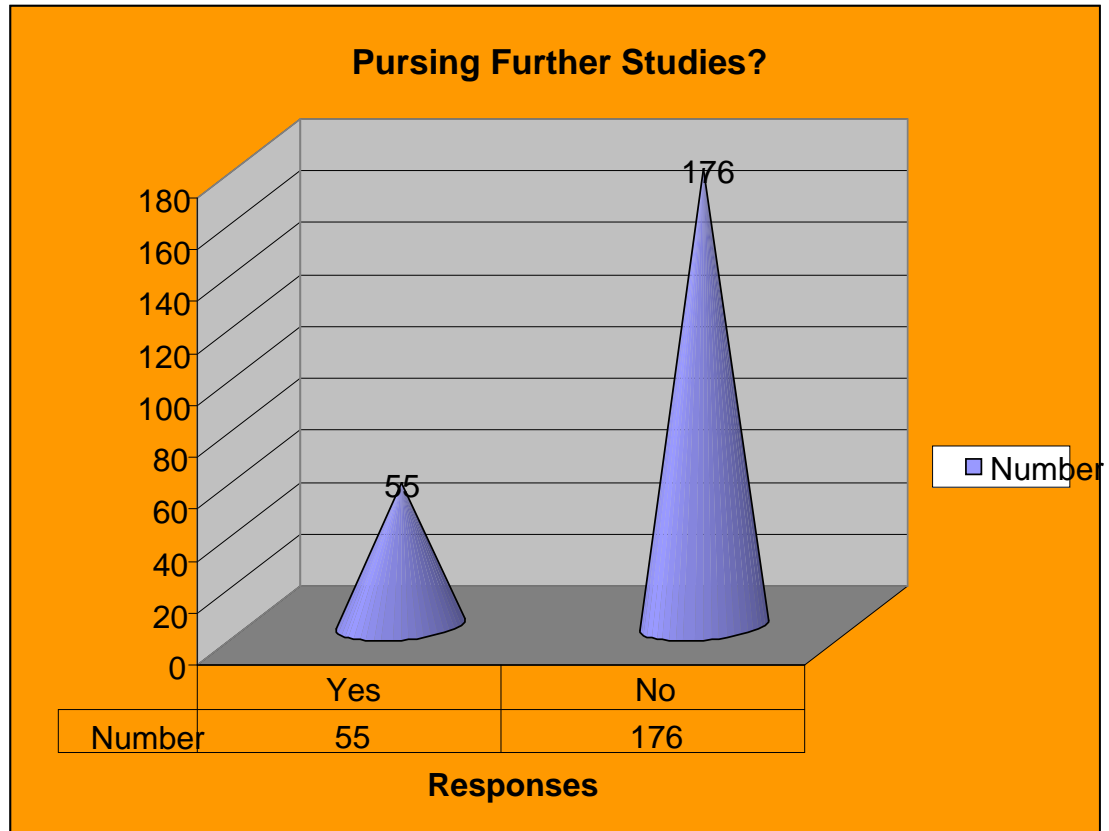


Figure 6.4: Respondents’ Engaging in Further Studies

6.2.4 Teaching Experience of Respondents

The teaching experience of the respondents was addressed in question 2 for both the teachers’ and administrators’ questionnaires and is presented in Figure 6.5. The data reflect that almost 40% (n=92) of the respondents had over 21 years of teaching experience. Over a fifth (n=50, 21.6%) of the respondents had the least teaching experience (1-5 years). This was followed by those respondents having 6-10 years teaching experience (n=41, 17.7%). Twenty-five (10.8%) respondents had 11-15 and 22 (9.5%) had 16-20 years of teaching experience. See Figures 6.5 and 6.6 for more details.

Teaching Experience in Years

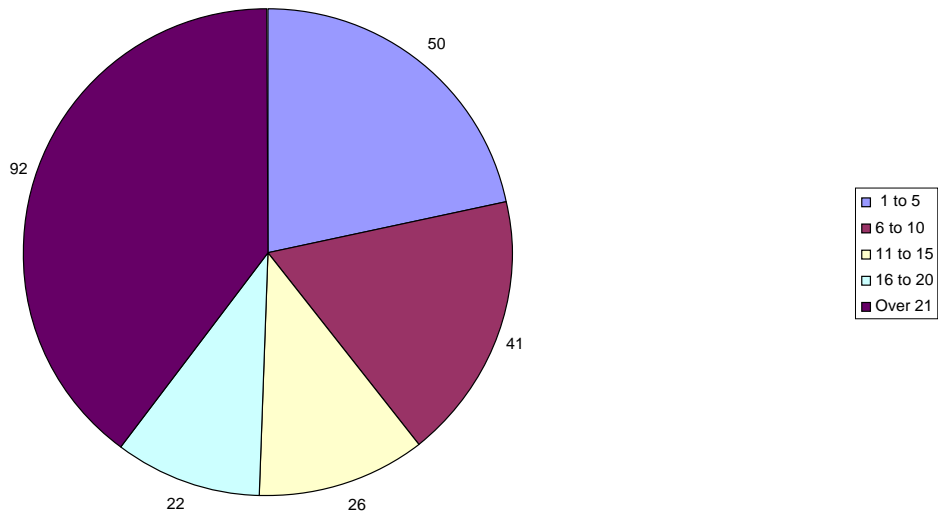


Figure 6.5: Respondents' Teaching Experience

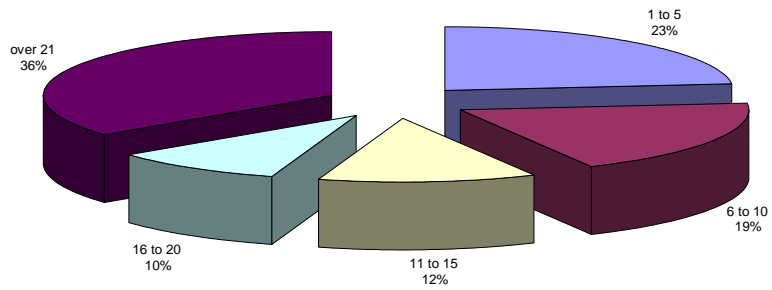


Figure 6.6: Teachers' Teaching Experience

6.2.5 Shift School Teaching Experience

Figure 6.7 below specifically reflects teachers' teaching experience in the context of shift schools. The majority of teachers were relatively inexperienced with regards to teaching in shift schools with the majority having taught for 1-5 years (n=75, 36.5%). Teachers who taught in shift school for 6-10 years (n=62, 26.8%) followed. Those who taught for 16-20 years accounted for 10.2% (n=21). Almost 15% (n=28) of the teachers had over 21 years.

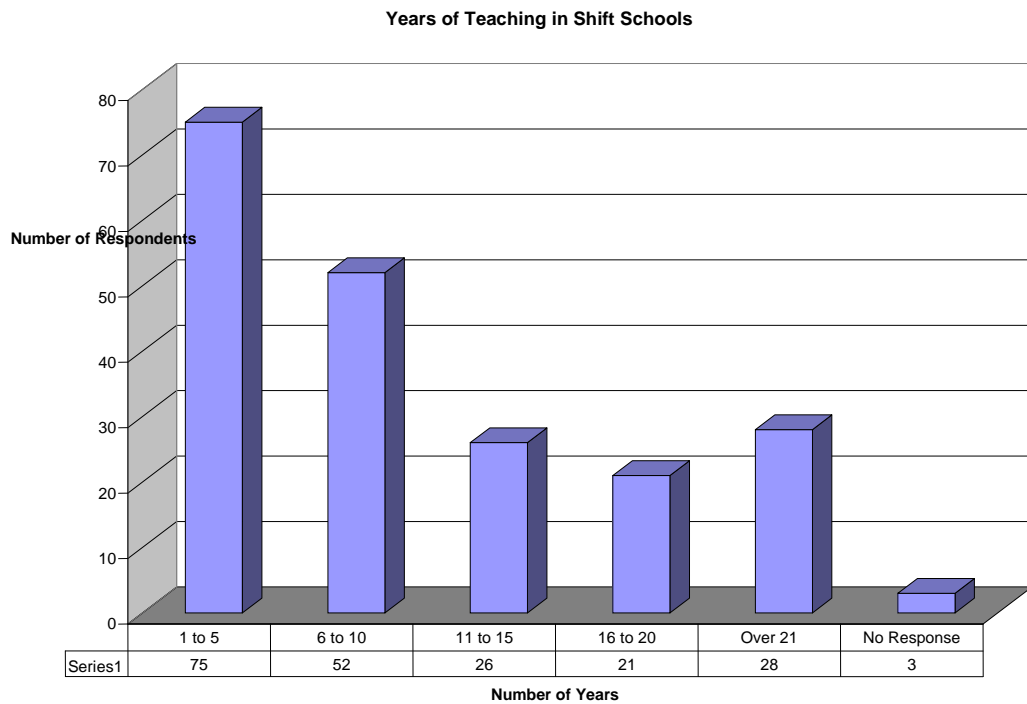


Figure 6.7: Teachers' Teaching Experience in Shift Schools

6.3 Section Two: Administrators' Qualitative Data

6.3.1 Administrators' Understandings of the Term SEN

The overall quantitative data for both administrators and teachers were presented in the previous section. This section will put forward the qualitative data for administrators. Administrators were asked about their understandings of the term SEN which captured data as is reflected below in Figure 6. 8. Of the responses received, the majority of them defined SEN in terms of pupils having difficulties. Difficulties identified were learning (n=9, 21%), mental (n=7, 16%), physical (n=6, 14%), emotional (n=2, 5%) social deprivation (n=1, 2%) and psychological problems (n=1, 2%). Some administrators viewed SEN in terms of how it affected the NC (n=1, 2%) and going beyond the scope of the school (n=3, 7%). Special educational needs was also explained in terms of the intervention strategies which were needed to benefit pupils (n=3, 7%) and the resources required (n=2, 5%). In addition, administrators explained SEN specifically as disruptive (n=2, 5%) and gifted pupils (n=6, 14%).

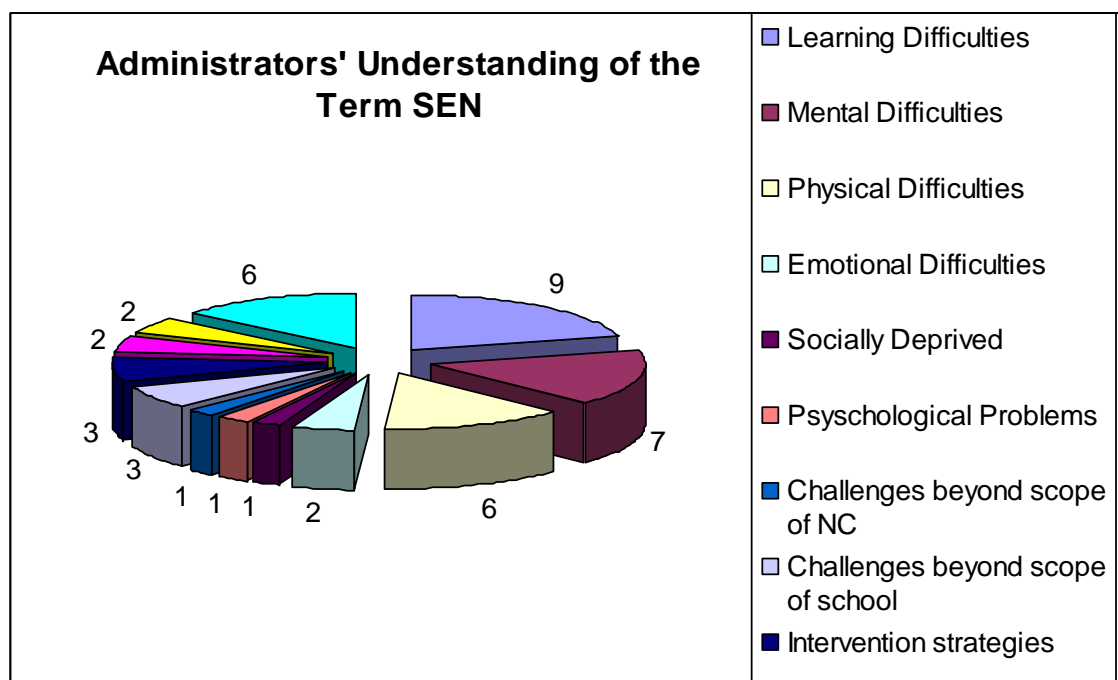


Figure 6.8: Administrators' Understanding of SEN

6.3.2 Most Frequently Displayed SEN by Pupils in Administrators' Schools

Reading difficulties were cited as the most commonly manifested SEN amongst pupils by half of the administrators (n= 13, 50%). This was followed by behavioural difficulties which accounted for 26.9% (n= 7). Learning difficulties were identified by 5 respondents (12%). Mental retardation and mathematical difficulties were each named by 2 respondents (7.6%). Emotional and comprehension difficulties and ADHD were each named by only 1 administrator (3.8%). Notably, issues such as financial and nutritional problems, single parent family, migration, lack of instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms and insufficient training for teachers were also identified as SEN by administrators. Particularly, the two most commonly manifested SEN identified by administrators reflected the prominent ones identified in the case study data. Figure 6.9 gives all the details.

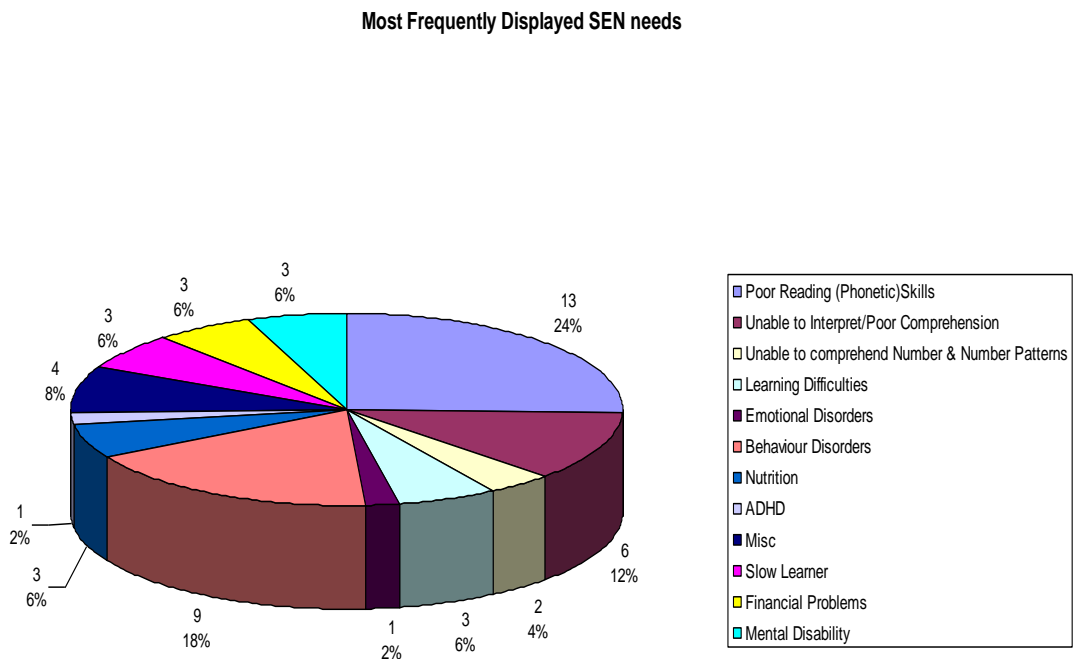


Figure 6.9: Frequently Displayed SEN in Schools

6.3.3 Remit of Specialist Teachers

When administrators were asked if the teaching of pupils with SEN should be the primary responsibility of specialist teachers the overwhelming majority said “no” (n=23, 88.5%). Administrators were emphatic in their comments that the education of pupils with SEN should be the concern of all the stakeholders in the school community. Only a few (n=3, 11.5) had contrasting views.

6.3.4 Impact of Pupils’ SEN on Schools

The impact of pupils with SEN on schools was examined in question 15 and the responses are reflected in Figure 6.10 above. Half of the administrators (n=13, 30%) cited behavioural disturbance and low academic performance as the two most significant impact on their schools. Interestingly, 5% (n= 2) were of the view that pupils’ presenting SEN had no impact on their schools.

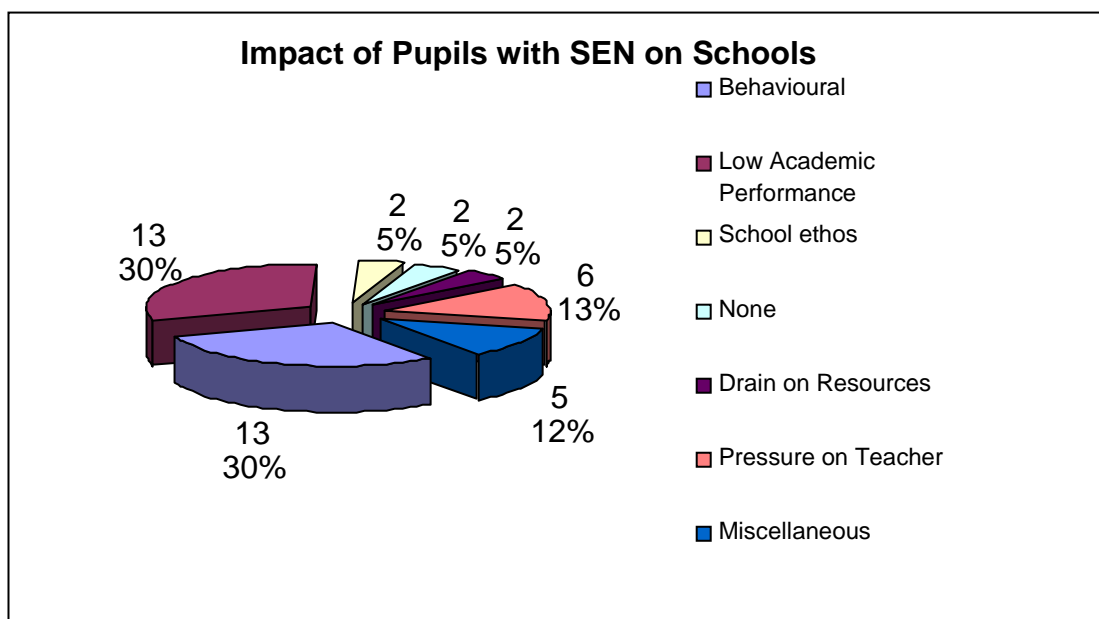


Figure 6.10: Impact of Pupils’ SEN on Schools

6.3.5 Challenges Faced by Schools

When administrators were asked about the challenges they encountered in meeting the SEN of the pupils in their schools, the shift system topped the response list (n=12, 46%). The next challenge to follow was time constraint at 34.6% (n=9). If the shift system and time constraint should be viewed as synonyms, the shift system would have accounted for 80.7% in total. Space constraints and other limited resources both had 19.2% (n=5). Just over 10% (n=3) stated that the difficulties they encountered was the disruption the attempt to meet the SEN of the pupils caused that was the challenge. One respondent (3.8%) identified lack of specialist as the challenge encountered. Surprisingly, a few of the administrators (n=2, 7.6%) claimed they did not face any challenge in their attempt to meet pupils' SEN.

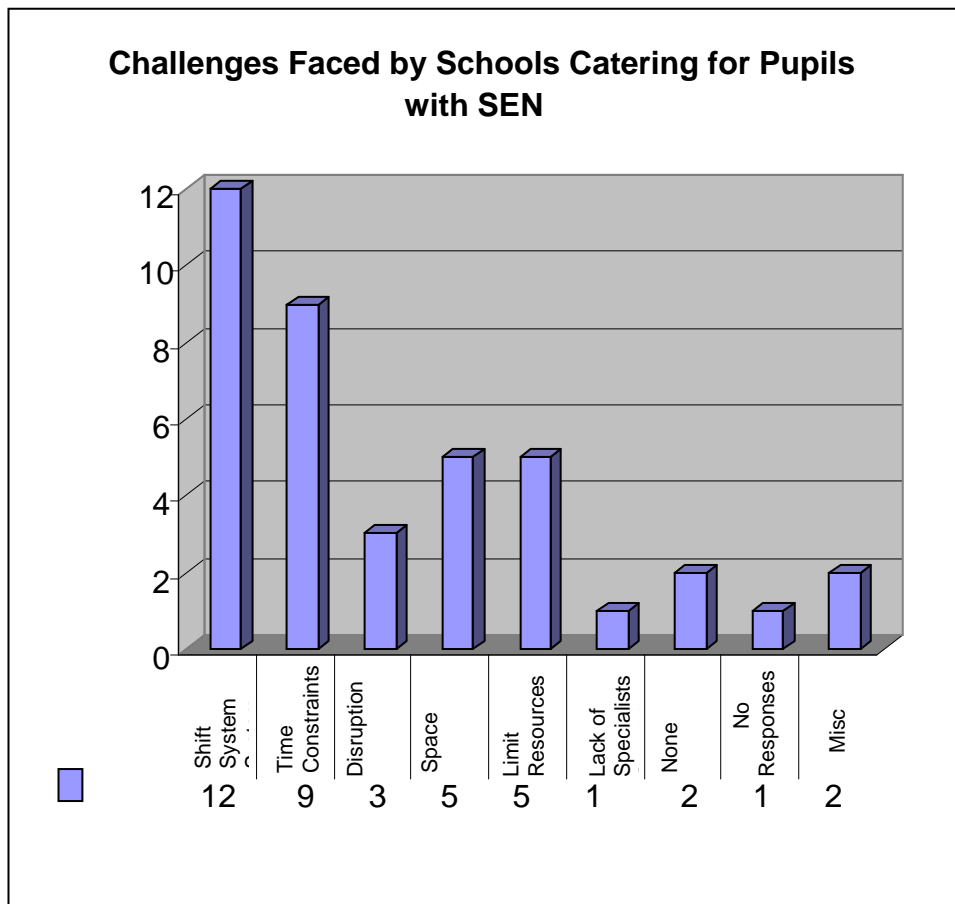


Figure 6.11: Challenges Faced by Schools

6.3.6 Sources of Help Sought by Administrators

Administrators had a wide range of source from which they solicited help in addressing the SEN of their pupils. The source which topped the list was Mico CARE Centre. Fifty percent (n=13) of them solicited its service. Government Support Agencies and the MOE followed at 30.7% (n=8) and 23% (n=6) respectively. Five administrators sought help from the Private Sector Organisations of Jamaica which accounted for almost 20%. Parents, and Child Guidance Clinic was each selected by 4 administrators (15.3%). Each of the following was selected by 3 administrators (n= 11.5%) - Guidance Counselling Department, medical practitioners and experienced teachers. Church organisations, Internet, literacy specialists, resource teachers, Special Education Units and workshops and seminars each accounted for 7.6% (n=2). Finally, few administrators chose schools' PTA, the library, books and external specialists each getting 3.8% (n=1).

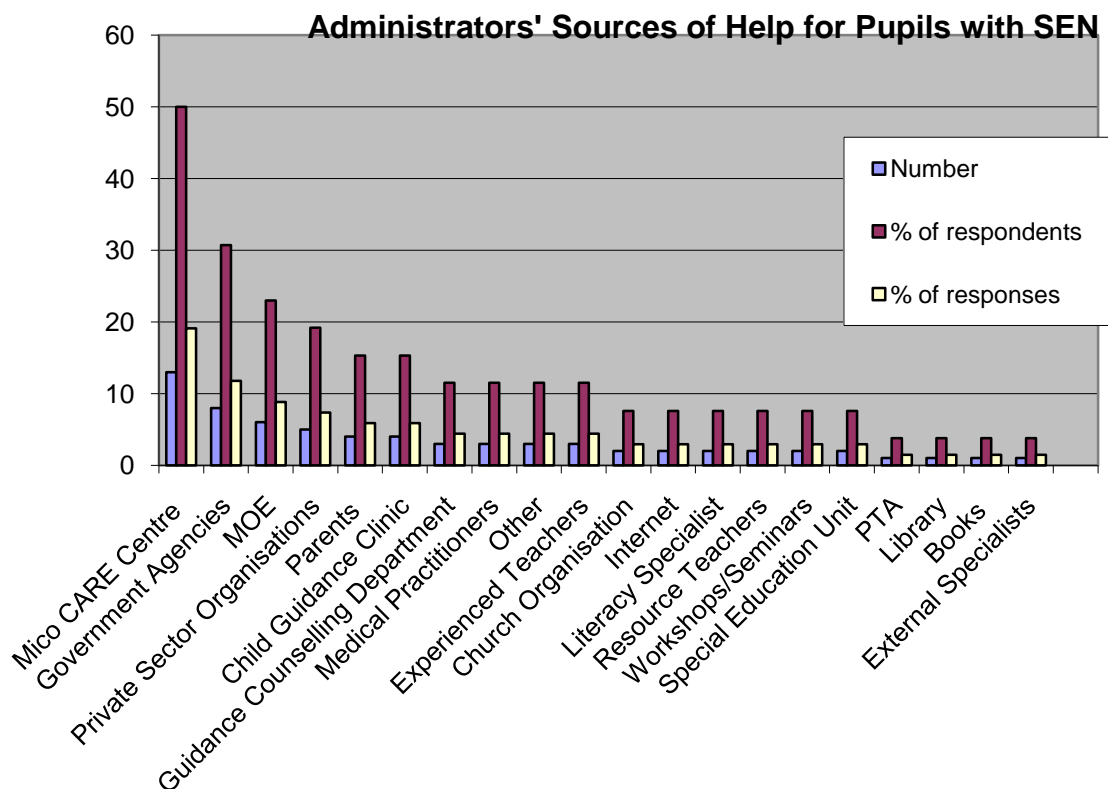


Figure 6.12: Administrators' Sources of Help

Table 6.1: Support Required to Cater for Pupils with SEN (Question 19)

Support Required (Administrators)	Number	Percentage
Adequate Resources	12	46.1
Special Education Teachers	9	31
Computer and other Technologies	7	26.9
Parental Support	6	23
Continued Training for Regular Teachers	5	19.2
Reduction in Class Size	4	15.3
Other Professional Services	4	15.3
Government Special Unit	3	11.5
Extra Classrooms Space	3	11.5
Compulsory Assessment	2	7.6
Teachers Assistants	2	7.6
Reading Specialists	2	7.6
Funding	2	7.6
Special Classrooms	1	3.8
Classes for Illiterate Parents	1	3.8
Greater Information	1	3.8
Nutritional Support	1	3.8

6.3.7 Support Required by Administrators

In an education system where there are many constraints, when administrators were asked to identify areas in which they needed extra support in order to meet the SEN of pupils, the request which topped the list by almost half of the administrators (n=12, 46.1%) was the need for adequate resources. Nearly a third of the administrators (n= 9, 31%) expressed a need for adequately trained special education teachers and over a quarter (n=7, 26.9) requested for more computers and other technological gadgets. Increased parental support was requested by almost a quarter of the administrators (n= 6, 23%) which was followed by the need for continued training of regular teachers in handling pupils' SEN. Reduction in class size and the use of other professional services were both requested by 15.3% of the administrators (n= 4). Over 10% of the administrators identified government special unit and extra classroom spaces (n=3). Compulsory Assessment, teachers assistants, reading specialists and special funding were all requested by 7.6% (n= 2) of the administrators. Finally, a few (3.8%)

expressed the need for special classrooms, classes for illiterate parents and greater information (see Table 6.1). The next section will present the qualitative data for teachers.

6.4 Section Three: Teachers' Qualitative Data

6.4.1 Teachers' Understanding of SEN

Teachers presented a myriad of responses which went along several broad paths when they were asked about their understanding of the term SEN (see Table 6.13). The majority of teachers defined SEN in terms of specifically identified challenges or advantages of pupils. Special educational needs were perceived as both slow learners and learning difficulties by a little over a quarter of the respondents (n= 59, 28.8% and N=54, 26.3% respectively). Twenty two percent (n= 45) of teachers identified exceptional or gifted pupils. Specific disabilities (n= 13, 6.3%), reading and behavioural difficulties were both cited by 7 respondents (3.4%). Special educational needs were also defined as it relates to teachers' training (n=4, 2%) and as the function of the school in the sense of having to implement intervention strategies (n=21, 10.2%) and special programmes (n=4, 2%) pupils who cannot function in normal schools (n=11, 5.4%), resources which are required and needs of pupils going beyond the NC (n=1, 0.5%). There were a few teachers who viewed SEN along what could be considered a social terms such as social challenges (n=3, 1.5%), economical constraints (n=2, 1%) and home issues (n=1, 0.5%). There was a teacher who perceive SEN as the pupils themselves (n=1, 0.5%) and another who admitted to being ignorant of term (n=1, 0.5%).

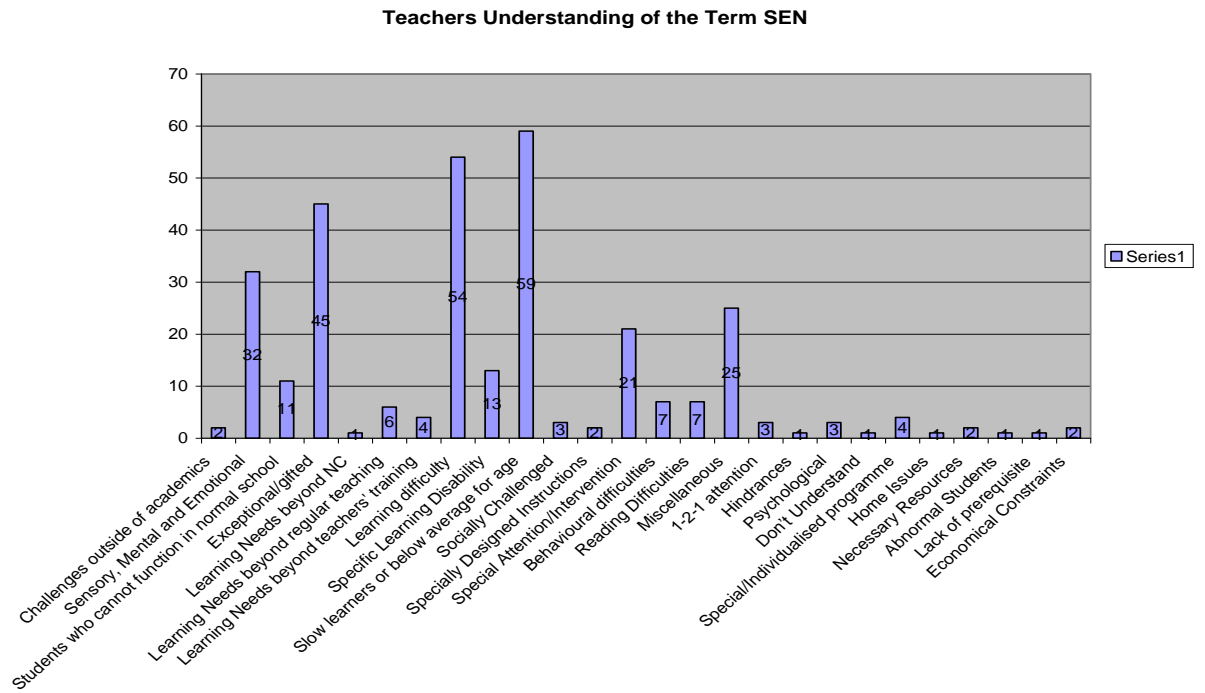


Figure 6.13: Teachers’ Understanding of the term SEN

6.4.2 Teachers’ Most Frequently Identified SEN

Teachers presented a wide range of responses when they were asked to identify their pupils most commonly displayed SEN. Almost half of the teachers cited in reading difficulties as the most commonly expressed form of SEN (n= 99, 48.3%). This was followed by poor comprehension and Literacy skills which accounted for 16.1% (n= 33). Behavioural difficulties was next at 10.7% (n= 22). Numeracy problems trailed at 9.8% (n= 20). This was followed by ADHD which accounted for 8.8% (n= 18). Short attention span and slow learners both had 7.8% (n= 16). Mental disability/disorder was next with 4.4% (n=9). Phonetic problems and writing difficulties trailed at 3.9% and 3.4% respectively (n= 8 and 7). Emotional disorder followed at 2% (n= 4). Memory/retention problems and poor communication skills were next at 1.5% (n=3), depression, and withdrawal trailed at 1% (n=1). Some of the unexpected SEN which were considered to be commonly displayed SEN by pupils were parental neglect, having no SEN and laziness (n=4, 2%), socially challenged (n= 3, 1.5%), poor nutrition and not being ready for learning (n= 2, 1%), poor attendance, being a great reader and inability to work independently (n=1, 0.5%). It is worth noting that only 0.5% (n=1) of the teachers considered the gifted as the most commonly occurring SEN.

Table 6.2: Most Frequently Identified SEN

Manifested SEN	Number	%
Reading Difficulties	99	48.3
Numeracy Problems	20	9.8
Learning Difficulties/Disabilities	13	6.3
Poor Comprehension/Literacy Skills	33	16.1
Phonetic	8	3.9
Writing	7	3.4
Mental Disabilities/Disorders	9	4.4
ADD/ADHD	18	8.8
Physical Impairment	10	4.9
Socially Challenged	3	1.5
Parent Neglect	4	2.0
Memory/Retention Problems	3	1.5
Multiple Disorders	2	1.0
Cannot Function/Work independently	1	0.5
Poor Communication	3	1.5
Short Attention Span	16	7.8
Poor Attendance	1	0.5
Lazy	4	2.0
No Response	3	1.5
No Problems	4	2.0
Slow Learner	16	7.8
Nutrition	2	1.0
Emotional Disorders	4	2.0
Not Ready	2	1.0
Gifted	1	0.5
Disruptive Behaviour	22	10.7
Withdrawn	2	1.0
Need for one to one attention	2	1.0
Unintelligible Response	5	2.4
Depression	2	1.0
Great Readers	1	0.5

6.4.3 Teachers' Views on the Remit of Specialist Teachers

Teachers had a more mixed views when there were asked if the teaching of pupils with SEN should be the primary responsibility of specialist teachers in the field. A little over 50% (n= 112) of teachers said “no” and 40% (N = 82) were of the affirmative. Similar to the administrators, the primary reason given for the latter is that specialists have pertinent expertise knowledge and as such were better equipped to adequately meet the SEN of pupils. It should be noted too, that less than 5% (n=10) give combined responses rather than making a decisive choice.

6.4.4 Impact of Pupils' SEN

When teachers were asked about the impact of having pupils with SEN in their classes they offered a myriad of responses. Disruptive behaviour was cited by over a third of the teachers (n= 68, 33.2%) to be the most significant impact. Almost 15% (n=32) of the teachers stated that pupils with SEN slowed down the pace at which class activities can be accomplished while others felt that they wasted the class time (n=28, 13.7%). Some teachers opined that having pupils with SEN in the classes put the more capable pupils at a disadvantage (n= 23, 11.2%). In contrast, almost 10% (n= 18) of teachers were of the view that pupils with SEN had little or no impact on the class operations. Fifteen teachers (7.3%) stated that pupils with SEN were a source of distraction to other pupils. Interestingly, almost 6% (n= 12) stated that the learning needs of pupils with SEN were not met. Ten (4.9%) teachers stated that they had a negative impact on the delivery of the NC. Unmet lesson objectives, negative peer interactions and teacher frustration was each identified by nine teachers (4.4% each) to be the manner of impact. Few teachers (n=7, 3.4%) were concerned that pupils without SEN became disruptive during lessons. Accounting for 2.4 % (n=5) were teachers having to do more detailed lesson preparation and pupils not doing well in examination. Omission of certain activities, lack of resources and assistance, the more capable pupils assisting those with SEN, little to no work done, Need extra supervision 1-1, all accounted for 1.5% each (n= 3). Two teachers (1 %) felt that pupils with SEN were both burdensome to other pupils and that they were withdrawn. Inadequate home support with home work, having a limiting effect on teachers, the more capable pupils doing all the work, poor reading and poor school attendance were each named by only one teacher; each accounting for 0.5%. These myriad of issues and their implications will be unpacked in the next chapter.

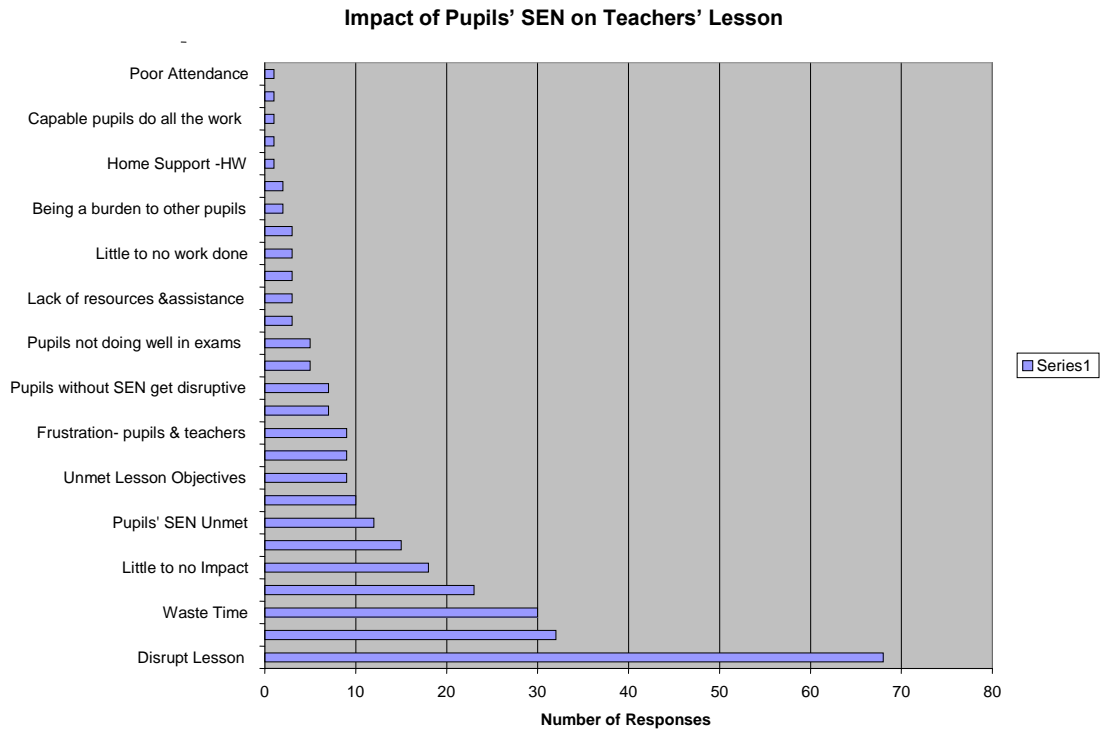


Figure 6.14: Impact of pupils' SEN on Teachers' Lessons

6.4.5 Challenges Faced by Teachers in Meeting Pupils' SEN

Disruptive behaviour was considered to be the primary difficulty encountered by teachers in their attempt to address the SEN of pupils in the classroom (n= 31, 15%). This was trailed by the constraint of limited resources (n=29, 14%) followed by the low self-esteem of pupils with SEN and the shift system with its resultant time constraint (n= 6 2.9%), slow pace at which pupils did classroom activities were cited by teachers (n= 19, 9.3% and n= 17, 8.3% respectively). Teachers were of the view that pupils with SEN used up too much of class time (n= 15, 7.3%). Pupils' inability to comprehend and their limited attention span (easily distracted) were also each cited by 5.9% of teachers (n= 12). Teachers reported that the presence of pupils with SEN in their classroom impacted on them in the following ways: increased stress (n= 10, 4.9%), increased lesson planning (n= 8, 3.9%), that they brought to the fore their lack of expertise (n= 4, 2%), their inability to give 1 to 1 attention (n= 7, 3.4), pupils inability to read (n= 9, 4.4%), poor attendance (n= 4, 2%) and lack of interest and motivation (n=8. 3.9). Teachers named the more competent pupils being at disadvantage and large Classes (n= 8, 3.9%), and space constraint (n= 5, 2.4%) as being problematic. The following were each cited by three teachers- pupils' inability to complete task, being left behind, the

lesson objectives not being met and SEN pupils being withdrawn (n=3, 1.5%). Pupils resisted being labelled as having SEN, the unsuitability of the NC, selfishness amongst pupils without SEN, working below acceptable standard and their distracting other pupils all accounted for 1% each (n= 2). Although the following was each cited by only one teacher (0.5%) the following were named as having a negative impact: inadequate specialist, not having patience to cope, pupils not having adequate school resources, pupils' communication difficulties, homework not being done, shared classrooms, the practice of streaming, lack of break time to relax and GSAT examination pressure (1, 0.5%). In contrast, to the plethora of difficulties cited by teachers there were those (n= 15, 7.3%) who felt that pupils' SEN had little or no impact on their classes.

Table 6.3: Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Meeting Pupils' SEN

Challenges	Numbers	Percentage
Pupils' disruptive behaviours	31	15
Limited Resources	29	14
Poor socialising/ low self esteem	19	9.3
Takes up too much time	18	8.7
Slow pace	17	7.3
No difficulties	15	7.3
Shift system/ time constraint	15	7.3
Distracted/ limited attention span	12	5.9
Pupils' inability to comprehend	12	5.9
Teacher Stress/ frustration	10	4.9
Inability to read	9	4.4
Increased teachers planning	8	3.9
More able pupils at disadvantage	8	3.9
Large classes	8	3.9
Lack of interest/ motivation	8	3.9
Not being able to give 1 to 1	7	3.4
Inadequate parental support	7	3.4
No response	6	2.9
Space constraint	5	2.4
Poor attendance	4	2
Teachers' lack of expertise	4	2
Unable to complete task	3	1.5
Left behind	3	1.5
unmet lesson objectives	3	1.5
SEN pupils are withdrawn	3	1.5
Pupils resist being labelled SEN	2	1
Unsuitable National Curriculum	2	1
Selfishness amongst non SEN pupils	2	1
Work below standard	2	1
Distract other pupils	2	1
Inadequate specialists	1	0.5
Teachers' impatience	1	0.5
Pupils not having resources	1	0.5
Communication difficulties	1	0.5
Home work not done	1	0.5
Shared classrooms	1	0.5
Streaming	1	0.5
Lack of break time	1	0.5
GSAT examination pressure	1	0.5

6.4.6 Sources of Help Sought by Teachers re Pupils' SEN

Over a third of the teachers requested help from the guidance counsellors in their schools. Just over a fifth of them used the Internet (n= 45, 22%) and consulted with the more experienced colleagues (n = 21, 20%). Textbooks and administrators followed accounting for 18% (n= 37) and 14% (n= 30) respectively. Twenty-eight teachers sought help from Mico CARE centre which was trailed by 27 (13.2%) of them solicited their reading specialists. Teachers also consulted with pupils' parents (n= 20, 9.8%), resource person (n=17, 8.3%), special educators (n= 12, 5.9%) and attended workshops and seminars (n= 11, 5.4%). Some teachers did not seek any help as opposed to those who used the library (n=9, 4.4%) and those who carry out research (n=8, 3.9%) and use their own expertise (n=7, 3.4%). There were several sources from which assistance was sought all of which accounted for less than 3%. Amongst them were trial and error, teachers who were studying (hence helping themselves), teachers' own counselling skills, and even the pupils themselves. See Figure 6.14 for more details.

Teachers' Sources of Assistance for Pupils with SEN

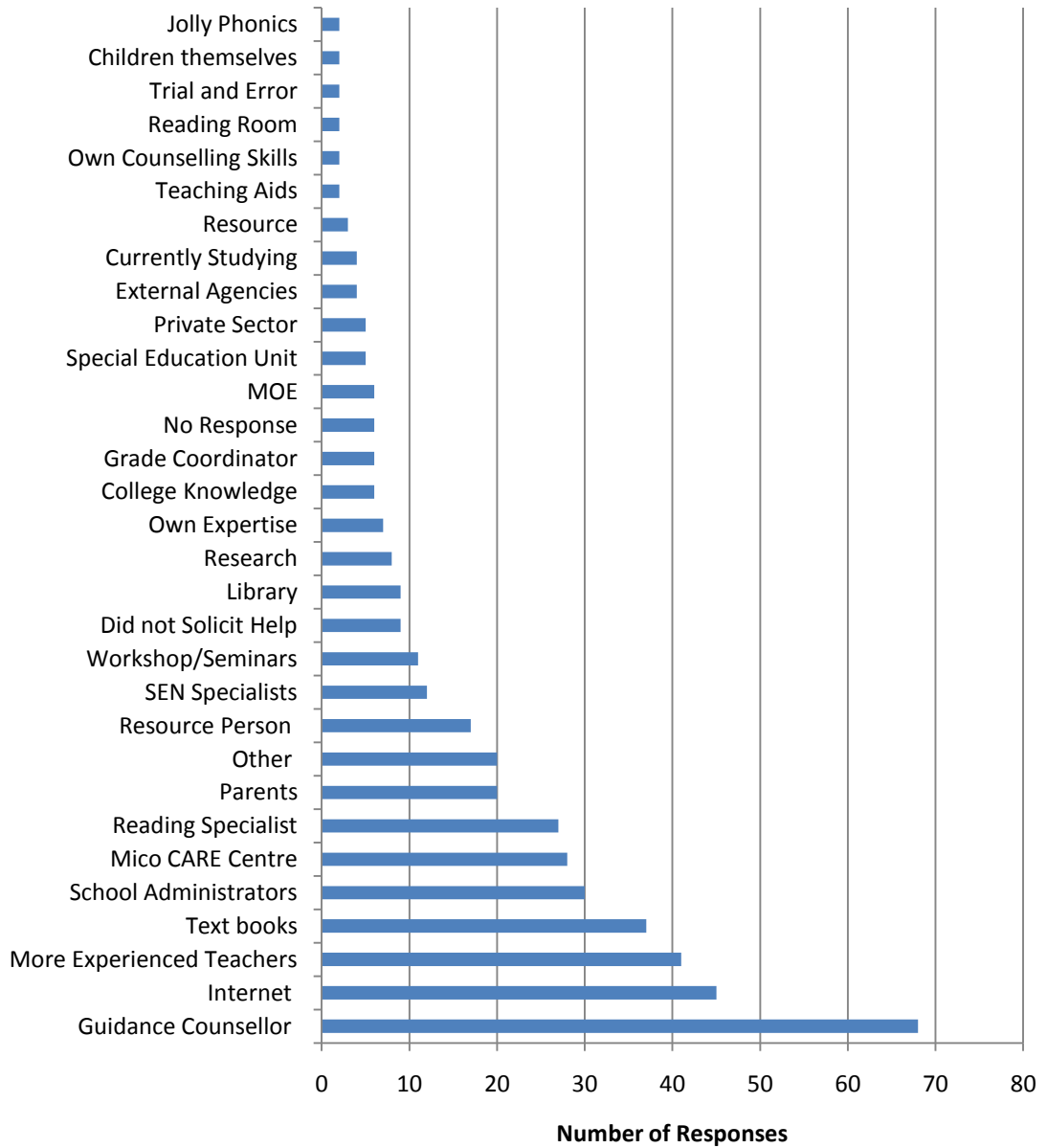


Figure 6.15: Teachers' Sources of Help for Pupils with SEN

Table 6.4: Support Required to Cater for Pupils with SEN (Question 19)

Support Required (Teachers)	Numbers	Percentage
Assessment and planned intervention	17	8.2
Computers & other technology	44	21.4
Reduced class size	30	14.6
Teacher assistant	25	12.1
SEN Teachers	68	33.1
Resource teachers	7	3.4
Adequate resources	69	33.6
Special classroom facilities	9	4.3
Special unit /extra room	19	9.2
Special education unit	5	2.4
Seminars and workshop	20	9.7
Abolish the shift system	8	3.9
Appropriate streaming	9	4.3
Parental/home support	16	7.8
Reading specialist	3	1.4
Reading programme	6	2.9
No response	6	2.9
conducive learning environment	5	2.4
nutrition	4	1.9
more space	7	3.4
other professionals	7	3.4
adaptable curriculum	4	1.9

6.4.7 Additional Support Required by Teachers

When teachers were asked to identify additional support that they wanted to effectively meet the SEN of their pupils, adequate resources was identified as the most critical need by over a third of the teachers (n= 69, 33.6%). The need for specialist teachers was also highlighted as one of the most severe needs. Over a third of the teachers (n=68, 33.1%) cited that support from special education teachers would enhance the quality of the provision for these pupils. Over a fifth of the teachers (n=41) thought that the needs of pupils with SEN would be better met if computers and other technological devices were used to support them in the learning process. Class size surfaced as a significant factor in this survey. Almost 15% of teachers (n=34) were of the opinion that overcrowded

classrooms were impacting negatively on pupils, hence a reduction in class size would be of benefit. Almost 10% (n=20) of teachers expressed the desire for more training (CPD) in the form of regular seminars and workshops. The service of TAs were requested by just over 12% of teachers (n= 20). Just over 9% (n=19) of the teachers thought that the introduction of special rooms or units for the sole purpose of addressing the needs of pupils with SEN would be useful. The need for increased parental support was cited by 7.8% (n= 16) teachers. Both special classroom facilities and appropriate streaming were identified by 9 teachers which accounted for 4.3%. Notably only 8 teachers (3.9%) were of the view that an abolishment of the shift system would facilitate the meeting of pupils SEN. More space and the input from other professionals were requested by 7 teachers (3.4%). Surprisingly only a meagre 1.4% (n=3) and 2.9% (n=6) expressed the desire for reading specialists and reading programme respectively. Both government special education unit and conducive learning environment were identified by 5 teachers (n=2.4%). Finally, a few teachers (n=4, 1.9%) felt that an adaptable curriculum and pupil being assisted with their nutrition would be useful.

6.5 Chapter Conclusion and Summary

In Section One, the ten schools in the sample reflected a combination of rural and urban parishes. The schools were large (sizes IV and V) and were all classified as urban by the MOE. These are in keeping with the fact that the shift phenomenon is usually used to reduce overcrowding which is typical of high density population urban areas. The 231 respondents resulting from the sample represented both administrators (n=26) and teachers (n=205). The respondents were largely female which accounted for 88.7% (n=205). This is in keeping with teaching being a female dominated profession. From a Jamaican standpoint the qualifications of the respondents was noteworthy. Over 90% (n=210) of the respondents had the required teaching qualification. This ranged from the basic requirement of teaching diploma (n=111, 48%) up to postgraduate degrees (two of which were doctoral degrees). Not only were the majority of the respondents suitably qualified, but they were specifically trained in primary education. In addition, another marked feature of the respondents was that almost a quarter of them were engaging in CPD. Most of the respondents had over 21 years of teaching experience. In contrast to teaching in a shift school context the majority had 1-5 teaching experience.

In Section Two, administrators' qualitative results and findings were presented. Administrators' understandings of the term SEN were defused. However, most of them explained SEN of pupils having difficulties, the primary one being learning difficulty

and the least mention were emotional difficulties. Poor reading and behavioural difficulties were identified as the most commonly manifested SEN in administrators' schools. It should be noted that financial and nutritional problems were cited by a few of them which may be an offshoot of the constraints experienced in the Jamaican context. This will be unpacked in the next chapter. With regards to the impact that pupils with SEN have on schools, behavioural disturbance and low academic performance were cited as the major effects. It should be noted that some administrators felt that the presence of these pupils had no impact. The shift system (41.6%) and time constraints (34.6%) were the most significant challenges administrators encountered in the attempt to meet the SEN of their pupils. The Mico CARE centre was the most sought after source from which administrators requested assistance in their attempt to meet the SEN of pupils. In order to improve in their attempts; adequate resources, special educators and increased use of technology were the areas administrators cited that needed the greatest improvement.

Teachers' qualitative results and findings were presented in Section Three. The primary manner in which are teachers expressed their understanding of the SEN is that of pupils having learning difficulties or being slow learner. These were followed by definitions identifying the gifted learner. Teachers identified reading difficulties as the most commonly manifested SEN by pupils followed by poor comprehension and literacy skills. If these were taken together an even more graphic picture would be painted as it relates to the reading problem being experienced in Jamaican primary shift schools. Disruptive behaviour and inadequate resources were considered by teachers to be the main difficulties they encountered as they tried to meet the SEN of pupils. It is worth noting that low self esteem amongst pupils with SEN and the slow pace at which they execute given task also proved to be problematic. The main impact pupils' SEN had on teachers' classes was the disruptive effect it had on their lessons. Teachers were also concerned about the effect that pupils with SEN were having on the use of class time and on those pupils without SEN. Teachers reported to have relied on schools' guidance counsellors, Internet and their more experience colleagues most (in the order of occurrence) to gain needed assistance in their quest to address pupils' SEN. The most notable support requested by teachers in their bid to be better able to meet these needs was adequate resources. They were sharply followed by the need for trained special education teachers.

The survey generated some interesting data. Some of the results and findings were in keeping with the information found in the literature review and other research

outcomes, while others were unexpected. The phenomenon of meeting pupils' SEN in shift schools in a Jamaican context will be unpacked from these data and they will be elucidated in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven: Survey Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter Six the main findings and results from the survey were presented. This chapter will unpack these findings to illuminate them. To help this analysis, respondents' excerpts will be used to further points being made. The data analysis will be done surrounding the emerging theme as is outlined in Figure 7.1. Like for the other analysis carried out on the case study data, the tool of thematic analysis with a grounded theory orientation will be utilised in the analysis of the data produced in the survey. For the purpose of the discussion of findings and results, analysis will be done within the categories of administrators and teachers discreetly and later between them.

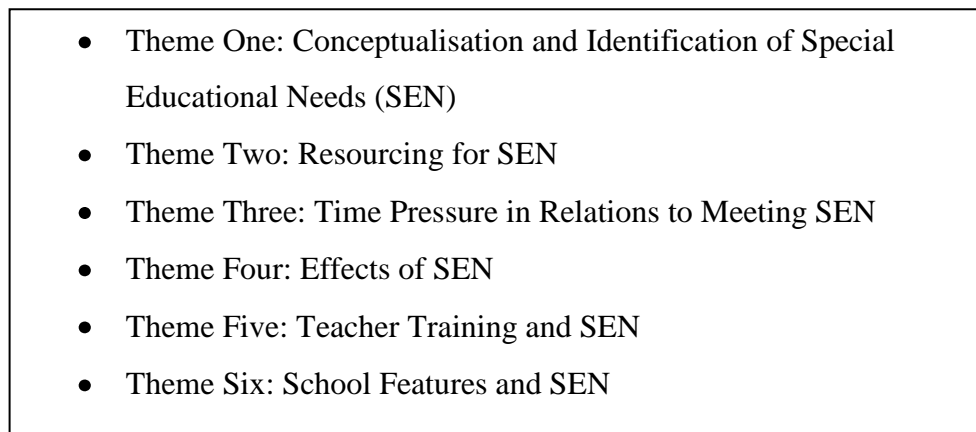
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- Theme One: Conceptualisation and Identification of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
 - Theme Two: Resourcing for SEN
 - Theme Three: Time Pressure in Relations to Meeting SEN
 - Theme Four: Effects of SEN
 - Theme Five: Teacher Training and SEN
 - Theme Six: School Features and SEN

Figure 7.1: Survey Emerging Themes

With regards to the aforementioned two modalities of the administration of the questionnaires (see Section 3.9.4.6) the observation that was made by the researcher was that those respondents who did the self administered questionnaires almost always used Standard English as their means of communication. On the other hand, some of the researcher-assisted questionnaires chose to communicate using the Jamaican Patios. For example, Respondent 161 in response to the question “what support is provided by the school/ MOE to enable teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational

needs?” answered that “*Ministry nu do nutten, talk till yu throat drop out, tell you to try to find resources*” which would have been more likely to be expressed as ‘the MOE is doing nothing no matter how you ask... [the rest of the comment is already stated in Standard English]. In addition, to the higher than usual use of Patios in the interviewer-assisted questionnaires, the sentence syntax was also different. The sentence structure was shorter, expressed more in phrases than complete sentences; but content was basically the same. For example, Respondent160 state that “children who need extra attention, eg. reading, just extra help”. Therefore, there was no need for a separate analysis of the questionnaires for which the researcher acted in the capacity of a scribe, simply writing what was said by the respondents.

7.2 Emerging Themes

7.2.1 Theme One: Conceptualisation and Identification of Special Educational Needs

The criticality of the conceptualisation of the term ‘special educational needs’ (SEN), should not be underestimated. According to Norwich (2004) the very future of SEN is dependent on how it is conceptualised. Notwithstanding the term is in widespread use in the educational sphere and literature. However, its prevalent usage does little to disguise glaring inconsistencies in its conceptual understandings. The manner in which this concept is understood has far-reaching effects in areas such as pupil groupings, allocation of resources, educational processes, examination possibilities and intervention strategies used. In essence, conceptualisation is by no means neutral endeavour. The understandings that main stakeholders in schools attribute to this concept will determine to a large extent the fate of pupils having SEN.

They were similarities and stark differences between how administrators and teachers explained their understanding of what constitutes SEN. The data presented in Section 6.3.1 and 6.4.1 reveal that there is not a clear operational understanding of the meaning of the term SEN. The majority of the administrators put forward definitions of SEN in light of pupils’ difficulties of which learning difficulties had the highest citing followed by physical impairment. Notably, some administrators explained SEN in terms of pupils presenting challenges which impact on schools’ ability to deliver the NC and which go beyond their capacity to address. For example, Respondent 58 opines that SEN are “*Social, economic, physical, emotional, psychological and environmental*

[factors] which impact the delivery of the school curriculum". In addition, there were those administrators with definitions which targeted specific groups of pupil for example disruptive, gifted or otherwise.

It should be acknowledged that the term 'special needs' is in operation in the Jamaican context as a synonym for SEN. It could be the reason some issues were raised as 'SEN' fell outside the albeit unspecific boundaries of what is usually deemed as SEN. It is worth noting that some of the needs referred to by respondents are not SEN rather they are special needs which pupils have such as parental neglect and irregular attendance. Like was previously mentioned, these needs may or may not lead to SEN but essentially they are not SEN. However, this begs the question as to whether or not SEN may be defined based on contextual realities and not on prescribed notion of what it is.

Teachers had a wider repertoire for the explanation of SEN than did administrators. Similarly, teachers explained SEN in terms of challenges or advantages possessed by pupils. Slow learning and learning difficulties were notably highlighted. In the school context where behavioural problems seem to feature highly it was not surprising that teachers will have more in daily encounter with pupils with SEN would proffer definitions that would underscore this reality. In addition, it is worth noting that some teachers understanding of SEN was seen as a function on their teacher training. In essence, as difficulties presented by pupils that exceed the boundaries of the competencies of their teacher training, would therefore be considered as SEN. This has significant implications for classroom practice in terms of teacher pupil relationship, teaching methodologies, to name a few. For example, Respondent 38 held the view that SEN refers to "*needs requiring special training to be able to teach them*". Respondent 49 puts it more bluntly stating that "*these needs speak to students who have educational needs which goes beyond the training [of teachers]*". These explanations underscore the idea that teachers' understandings of SEN is shaped by their training. Teachers' expressions were essentially whether or not they can meet the demands of teaching pupils with SEN in light of their training. For example, Respondent 46 states that "*Special needs that cannot be met by conventional way of teaching*".

Special educational needs was also seen in term of its impact on the delivery of the NC, if it impedes it, it is then considered to be SEN. Critically too, this perspective of SEN lies at the heart of teacher training which has significant implications for developers and executers of teacher training education. This will be addressed in greater details in the third theme. A significant portion of the explanations of SEN that were put

forward by both administrators and teachers were more an identification of specific SEN rather than an explanation of the understanding of what would constitute SEN.

7.2.1.1 Identification of Pupils' SEN

In keeping with the high rates of illiteracy which characterises the Jamaican education system (Hall, 1999), almost half of the teachers identified reading difficulties as the most commonly expressed form of SEN (n= 99, 48.3). This was followed by poor comprehension and Literacy skills which accounted for 16.1% (n= 33). If these categories are taken as a whole on the basis that comprehension and literacy skills are components of effective reading, a combination of the figures (n=132, 64.3%) would reveal an even more pronounced reading problem being experienced by Jamaican primary school learners. Considering that the ability to read provides a foundational skill with which pupils are able to access all areas of the NC, the astronomical figure of almost two thirds is grave cause for concern for the education system which will need to strategise to alleviate with intent to eradicate this problem.

Similarly, reading difficulties were cited as the most commonly manifested SEN amongst pupils by half of the administrators (n= 13, 50%). Administrators also named behavioural difficulties as being one of the commonly manifested SEN which accounted for 26.9% (n= 7). Pupils' behavioural difficulties will be addressed in much greater details in Theme Four. If there are difficulties with the conceptualisation the term SEN, it is likely to follow that there will be difficulties with identification. In essence, if administrators and teachers do not know what SEN are, it often follows that there will be some difficulties correctly recognise what would be deemed as SEN. It should be noted that issues such as financial and nutritional problems, single parent family, migration, lack of instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms and insufficient training for teachers were also identified as SEN by administrators. Without proper identification it is highly likely that pupils' SEN will either be unidentified or will be labelled wrongly. These pupils will be left without provisions of care or given misaligned intervention strategies. It must be acknowledged that since no formal identification is done for Jamaican pupils and by overwhelming report from teachers they had little to no training nor experience in relation to specifically teaching pupils with SEN. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that some struggle to make this value judgement of identifying pupils' SEN. This has raised the need for the MOE to implement a process whereby pupils' SEN can be officially identified with the view of meeting pupils' needs. The next theme will discuss the resourcing for pupils' SEN.

7.2.2 Theme Two: Resourcing For Pupils' SEN

The criticality of adequately resourcing the education of those deemed as having SEN has been highlighted in numerous research. The lack of appropriate resources to effectively facilitate learning among pupils with SEN was identified as a major concern by the teachers in the survey. One-third of them saw this need as grave and was of the view that their job and the educational advancement of pupils would be greatly enhanced with greater resourcing. One of the consistent requests for additional support that would enable administrators and teachers to effectively cater for the SEN of pupils is consistent with previous research finding which indicate that adequate resourcing is a critical requirement for the successful implementation of integration. It is plausible to believe that it is a necessary ingredient for successful integration as is being practised in Jamaican schools. The following comment from Respondent 58 captures succinctly the possible outcomes that inadequate resources may have on the education of pupils with SEN; *"I can only try to assist students, but fail many times, because I do not have the proper tools"*. Undeniably, resourcing of learning materials have significant impact on learning outcomes based on the quality of teaching. In addition, this request may also be taken as an indication of a call for better working conditions and basic tools since one of the conditions of the Jamaican classrooms is inadequate resources.

It is critical to note that the MOE by its own definition states that special education *"caters to children who find it difficult to learn in the regular school setting without specialised support services"* (MOE, Education Statistics, 2008/9). The MOE has embraced the orientation of the 'least restrictive environment' as the positioning with regards to the education of pupils with SEN. Therefore, it means that special education will be offered to some pupils at the site of the ordinary classrooms with *'specialised support services'*. The data produced by the survey was replete from both administrators and teachers perspectives of the severe need for adequate resourcing. Where are the *'specialised support services'* which the MOE has admitted that pupils with SEN would find it difficult without? Respondent 5 was of the view that some pupils with SEN were *"... just floating through the system because they are not provided for"*.

The need for Specialists teachers was highlighted as one of the most severe needs. Teachers felt unqualified and incapable of effectively implementing the NC to meet the needs and learning styles of pupils with SEN. It is evident from the large percentage of teachers (33.1%) who expressed the view that the provision of specialist

teachers in the classroom would make a significant difference to the educational experience and would enhance the quality of the provision for the pupils with SEN, that they may be of the view that specialist knowledge would be the answer (since the scope of the situation goes beyond their general teacher training).

Over a fifth of the teachers (n =44) named increased use of computers and other technological gadgets to be a much-needed requirement in terms of resources. Since the use of audio, visual and hands-on technological devices have been known to make a marked difference to learners in general, it is vital that pupils with SEN, even more so, are exposed to these kinds of learning gadgets. Investments in computers, relevant softwares and other electronic learning equipment are needed to help provide stimulating audio-visual and hands-on materials to provide inspiring experiences for pupils with SEN. These will help teachers to better cater to the needs of the pupils who will then find the learning experiences stimulating and possibly fun-filled.

As was highlighted in the Literature Review, Jamaica does not have a buoyant economy. Consequently, this constraint is manifested in the educational practice and more specifically as it relates to those having SEN. Since there is no mandatory SEN policy which makes it a legal requirement for the MOE and schools to deliver certain provision, the reality is, there is not a targeted approach to providing for these pupils. It was unexpected that compulsory diagnosis and assessment of pupils with SEN did not feature among a larger proportion of teachers as a major concern, there were only 8% of participants that considered it important. To ascertain the specific needs of pupils, appropriate assessment, relevant planning and interventions are crucial. Early intervention is likely to have a positive impact on pupils' ability to access the curriculum and possibly reduce the extent to which some pupils' SEN have deteriorated over time. If an examination of the requests made by both administrators and teachers with regards to the support they required to be better able to cater for the SEN of pupils, they were primarily asking for more resources - whether it is human or nonhuman. Special education, according to Armstrong (2005, p. 135) is a "resource-hungry" field. Without question, meeting the SEN of pupils makes a significant resource demands on schools and other significant players within the system.

7.2.3 Theme Three: Time Pressure and SEN

Having examined resourcing for meeting the SEN of pupils in the previous theme, this one will address meeting pupils' SEN within the context of the time pressure administrators and teachers face. Time pressure was a consistent factor throughout the survey data. Teachers in response to enquiries of the difficulties they encountered in seeking to address the SEN of pupils, repeatedly referred to the time constraints. It is critical that teachers' nuanced approach to time be addressed. Firstly, 15 teachers (7.3%) cited the limited time as a direct result of the shift system and the pressure it creates as they attempt to meet the learning needs of pupils with SEN. For example, respondent 32 stated that the *"class is slowed down because more time is being spent on these children"*. On the other hand, a greater percentage of teachers (8.7%) expressed their frustration at the sheer volume of the already limited time pupils with SEN consume in order to have their needs met, some of whom further stated that this was done to the detriment of the more capable learners. For example, Respondent 75 said that *"[there is] not enough time to deal with the slow learners even though I try I can't give enough to them, if I do I lose the faster ones"*. In addition, Respondent 120 asserted that *"the shift system doesn't allow much time, those trying to cater to special needs often affect the teaching learning outcome negatively"*. In addition, almost 10% (n=17) of the teachers referred to the slow pace at which pupils with SEN accomplished given tasks. It is possible that this issue with pace is stemmed from the time pressure under which teachers and learners operate; at least in part. This was revealed in a comment made by Respondent 41- *"they are usually slower than the other streams but I work with them to get them at a level where they can read and understand at the grade level. They take a longer time to finish a topic"*. In a research conducted with 155 Greek teachers drawn from 30 mainstream primary schools (some with integration unit and others without), 'limited time' was cited as an obstacle to successful inclusive education (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). It is plausible to think that this would pose problematic to successful integration too, as is practised in Jamaica.

There were several unexpected outcomes with regards to how administrators and teachers responded to the question concerning the additional support required for the effective meeting of the SEN of pupils. None of the administrators voiced a request for the abolishment of the shift system. Similarly, only a meagre 3.9% of the teachers made the request. However, the few teachers who voiced it, did so strongly. For

example, Respondent 205 opined that in order to adequately meet the needs of pupils with SEN that “[the MOE should] first get rid of the shift system. The shift system is one of the worst system[s] that happened to education. The children are short-changed and indiscipline. It does no good, only that it uses one school to house two [sets of pupils], too much pressure”. This view was strengthened by Respondent 183 who asserted that “the shift system is one of the different [differences] to addressing SEN. So this needs to be removed before the school can do much”. However, it should be acknowledged that there were a few teachers that was in favour of shift schools and did not want the abolishment of the shift system. This was stated emphatically by Respondent 141:

Shift school is more settled than whole day. Students have too much time to play. People are looking day care centre for their children. The shift system works- when students know that time is short they will work. The shift system should not be cut out... I get good passes. I don't want it cut out, I want to be able to study. The system will work, it is working

The call for the abolishment of the shift system in the survey stands in stark contrast to the findings of the case study in which there was an overwhelming demand especially amongst administrators for its abolishment. The upcoming theme will address the impact of pupils' SEN have on schools in general and specifically on teachers' lessons.

7.2.4 Theme Four: Effects of Pupils' SEN

This theme will discuss the effects pupils' SEN have on schools, teachers and administrators and pupils without SEN. It is important to note that the difficulties teachers have put forward which negates against them meeting the educational needs of pupils with SEN may be put into two categories broadly speaking; within pupils (Isaksson et al, 2007) and within school.

7.2.4.1 Pupils' Behaviour

Behavioural difficulty accounted for over a fifth (N=48, 20.78%) of the identified SEN. It is the second most frequently identified SEN in direct contrast to the fact that the MOE did not mention it as part of its definition of SEN. It is of interest that when teachers were asked to identify commonly occurring SEN of pupils, behavioural

difficulties was cited by a meagre 10.7% (n= 22). This is in sharp contrast to when they were asked about the effect of pupils SEN on their classes, 'disrupted lessons' was the greatest impact identified by over a third of the teachers. In addition, when administrators were asked to account for the impact of pupils with SEN on their schools, 30% cited behavioural disturbances.

Jones et al (1999) undertook research with primary (N=89) and special school (N=93) teachers in Singapore into their professional development requirements (with specific reference to their classroom management behavioural problems). When these teachers were asked to identify the 'most disruptive behaviour', primary and special school teachers identified 'disturbing other children' at 21.3% and 30.1% respectively. Of note, 14.6% of our school teachers did not identify any behaviour as 'particularly destructive'. Similarly, 8.8% of teachers opined that pupils with SEN had little to no impact on their lessons. It should be noted that the figures of administrators, teachers and special school teachers (the third in Jones' research) of 30%, 33.2% and 30.1% in order of occurrence were almost identical. Of interest is the school site of the results; the first two from an ordinary primary school and the third from a special school. The result from the teachers from the mainstream primary school was 21.3% which is over 10% more.

In the context of the data of this survey, it is critical to note that disruptive behaviour is frequently associated with the SEN called emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) (Jull, 2008). The data highlights the behavioural difficulties experienced by many pupils. However, Kyriacou (2003) contends that it is crucial that the difference be duly noted between emotional and behavioural difficulties. He went on to say that emotional problems include problems such as extreme withdrawal, phobia and anxieties. On the other hand behavioural problems include antisocial behaviour, stealing and in extremely difficult cases, conduct disorder. Indeed, without the distinction being made, a real risk is presented that stakeholders within school systems focus on the more overt challenge of the two, which is behavioural and relegate emotional difficulties to the sidelines. Due to the possibility of this relegation, pupils with emotional problems may suffer in silence without their learning needs being met. Kyriacou's concern for pupils with emotional disabilities is captured in the following teachers' views:

Respondent 156 stated that "*those children who are performing at their grade level tend to overshadow and bully those with special needs causing them to feel inferior*"

Respondent 33 explicitly asserted that *“students sometimes deride the slower performing students, which result[s] in these students being withdrawn and bring low self esteem”*

Respondent 119 *“they [pupils without SEN] complain about how they [pupils with SEN] are hard to learn. Those with SEN are ridiculed and become withdrawn”*

Respondent 13 state that *“they [pupils with SEN] tend to be confused and lack confidence when interacting with other pupils”*.

Respondent 10 stated that *“our children resent them, tease them, conflicts arise and more disorder occur as these children retaliate”*.

It is worth taking note that pupils' behaviour does not occur in a vacuum, rather within a given context. There are different views for the causes of behavioural problems which are usually based on one's interests, knowledge, experiential background and theoretical orientation (Jones et al, 1999). However, according to Ainscow (1993, cited by Jones et al, 1999) not much thought is given to the notion that problems can happen because of insignificant and irrelevant classroom experiences. Therefore, pupils' negative behaviour should not only be seen in a one-dimensional way rather multi-dimensionally. The questions should be raised about the ways in which schools contribute to pupils' negative behaviours in areas such as behaviour management strategies, pupil groupings, the school routines to name a few. This is confirmed by Respondent 111 who stated that *“teachers when we don't have the requisite skills to address the needs [of pupils with SEN], [they] become impatient and frustrate the children”*.

Castle and Parsons (1997) contend that 'within child' explanation is an unsuitable way to account for pupils' unacceptable behaviours. Instead, pupils' school context, personal situations and the wider societal features are to different extent contributory factors. It should not be overlooked that almost 6% (n=12) of the teachers expressed the view that the impact of pupils with SEN on their lessons is that paradoxically their own needs are unmet. Therefore, the impact is not only on other pupils, school and teachers but on the pupils themselves with the presenting SEN.

In addition, when pupils' behavioural difficulties are left unaddressed it can spiral out of control and can have significant negative repercussions beyond the boundaries of their schools. Behavioural disturbances sometimes leak into the public domain whereby over time schools develop a negative reputation with regards to their pupils' behaviour. This poses a threat to these institutions as it relates to their being schools of choice for teachers, parents and even the pupils themselves.

7.2.4.2 School's Performance

Not only was the disruption resulting from pupils with SEN a cause concern for respondents, but also lowered school performance. This was a significant interest for administrators (n=13, 30%) and a few teachers (n=5, 2.4%) expressed concern for pupils underperforming in examinations. On the other hand, it must also be acknowledged that some teachers were rather concerned about the pupils with SEN and appeared to have prioritised the meeting of their needs. For example, when asked about the impact of pupils SEN on the class, Respondent 177 said that she had to “*teach at a slower pace. [I] cannot cover [the] syllabus. Can't go fast, I am not really teaching syllabus, I am teaching children*”. Administrator 143 opined that “*students with dyslexia will lower the mastery level of the school in all areas. It also puts a strain on teachers as special reading programmes has to be put in place*”. Should the concern be school performance and teacher strain primarily or should it also be on meeting the SEN of pupils? According to Farrell et al (2007) mainstream schools should not be concerned about their lowered academic achievement due to the integration of pupils with SEN because such claims are not supported by research evidence. However, whether or not this perception is unfounded, the ricochet effect of such a perception has far-reaching consequences. For example, if the administrators in a school subscribe to the notion of the presence of pupils with SEN having a negative impact on school performance, it will, without question, influence a number of school processes, such as the allocation of resources in general, the deployment of staff in particular and timetabling matters.

7.2.4.3 Teachers' Stress

Since teachers are the chief school personnel to cater to the learning needs of pupils with SEN, their well-being in attempting to execute this task is crucial. Therefore, when teachers assert to being frustrated and stressed it is usually a matter of concern. Respondent 162 stated that “*...[I] go home with headache, negative effects on health-high blood pressure*”. Respondent 93 felt that meeting pupils SEN “*... is time consuming and somehow puts extra stress on the teacher to prepare separate lessons and attend to students 1 to 1*”. The latter comment accentuates the need for a teacher training programme which encompasses adequate training and experience in teaching of pupils with SEN. There is no need for the preparation of separate lessons rather lessons need to be sufficiently differentiated. Respondent 158 asserted that “*more time is spent*

in preparation for lesson to go down to their level [pupils with SEN]. Anything I teach I have to teach from scratch". Here is a comment from again underscoring the issue of teacher stress Respondents 201 stated that *"most of the children with special needs are very taxing on the nerve. This causes more stress for the teacher. The specially trained teacher will be better able to manage these children"*. This perceived teacher stress in relation to meeting pupils' SEN corroborates with the finding in the case study, in which teachers reported being stressed to the extent where it negatively impacted on their health. There is a need for schools to put systems in place to guard against this negative repercussion. For example, a scheme of 'partner class' can be implemented whereby if a pupil is having immediate difficulty in a teachers' class, the pupil can be sent to the partner class (it would be helpful if the pupil has an input in selecting a partner class) for a respite, in order for the pupil to refocus. Strict record should be kept with regards to frequency, time of day and possible trigger so that the produced data can be useful, with a view for improvement in pupils' behaviour.

7.2.4.4 Pupils without Special Educational Needs

One of the concerns shared by both administrators and teachers was the impact of pupils' SEN on the education of their peers. As was previously mentioned, 33.2% (n= 68) of teachers felt that the primary impact of pupils with SEN had on their lessons, was the disruption of them. In addition, some teachers (n= 23, 11.2%) explicitly stated their concern for the more academically competent pupils being at a disadvantage because of the negative impact of pupil with SEN. Rooney (2002) asserts that disruptive pupils impede the learning of others. For example, one of the primary manifestations of pupils with EBD is their inability to stay on task. Given their propensity of being 'between tasks', they then use this time to engage in inappropriate behaviours and ultimately distract others. Jull (2008, p. 13) argues that

disruptive behaviours represent a unique dilemma...[it] interrupts academic progress, impede social functioning, and destabilises positive, safe school environments not only for the child itself but also for those students and teachers witnessed to or on the receiving end of the said behaviour... it is difficult to ignore the negative effects of these behaviours can have on the teaching and learning environment

He goes on further to posit that these pupils present a very high risk of being excluded from school systems as a direct consequence of their manifested SEN or even if they are not identified as having an identifiable SEN but also for those who display

disruptive behaviours. Respondent 6 said that *“it is difficult for learning to take place as these special students sometimes have a negative impact on other students and distract them. They are sometimes very disruptive and on many occasions disrupt the lesson”*.

Paradoxically, there were a few teachers who highlighted that one of the impacts of pupils with SEN, is that, pupils without SEN get disruptive. The primary reason stated for this was that teachers were spending excessive amounts of time with pupils having SEN and those pupils without started feeling neglected, and as such was ‘acting up’. Disruptive behaviour is therefore not the preserve of pupils with SEN, but indeed is a construction of the context. Respondent 138 was of the view that *“the faster ones too get in the aggressive mould because they are interacting with the SEN [pupils with SEN] and Respondent 131 “when you are attending to the needs of the [pupils with] SEN those who can manage become disruptive”*.

Contrastingly, although only a few teachers (n=3, 1.5%) mentioned that pupils with SEN had positive impact on their lessons, it is worth emphasising that for some teachers their lessons were impacted positively in the sense that the more academically able children helped pupils with SEN. Not only is this a refreshing change, but it also underscores the possibilities which exist. Viewing pupils with SEN in a positive manner necessitates it becoming a whole school project, with all the stakeholders having positive attitudes and working together as a team. In the same way that unacceptable behaviours are largely contextually stimulated (Castle and Parsons, 1997) it is plausible to believe that the principle holds true for acceptable behaviours. The penultimate theme will present an examination of the critical element of teacher training in relation to meeting the SEN of pupils.

7.2.5 Theme Five: Teacher Training and Special Educational Needs

The achievement of educational goals significantly depends on teachers (Turner, 2001). The training of teachers with specific regards to teaching pupils with SEN is important to the improvement of teachers’ attitudes (Avramidis and Norwich, 2004). According to Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) inadequate knowledge of the field of special education is obstacle to successfully teaching pupils with SEN in mainstream context. Cain and Brown (1998) state that newly qualified teachers in the UK did not feel they were sufficiently prepared to handle pupils’ SEN in the classroom. The

survey data have brought to the fore that Jamaican teachers (even experienced ones) were facing a similar plight. Forbes (2007) in addressing the Australian perspective on transition towards inclusion, argue that inclusion has necessitated specialist knowledge in regular education which was not being addressed. This, she opines puts impractical demands on teachers, many of whom have little to no knowledge of teaching pupils with SEN. Whilst the Jamaican education system does not subscribe to the philosophical orientation of inclusion, it remains a reality that significant numbers of pupils with SEN are being educated (albeit by default) in general classrooms. The resultant pressure is equally applicable. The challenging nature for special education teachers and even more so the general ones is confirmed by Mercer and Mercer (2001). Without question, the presence of pupils with SEN in regular classrooms has made a significant demand on teachers' levels of competence and skill set. According to Dew-Hughes and Brayton (1997) new teachers are recognising that their teacher training does not adequately prepare them for the complex and challenging task of teaching a wide cross section of pupils with SEN. This reality is confirmed by the following comments by respondents:

Respondent 188 *“general classroom teachers are not trained to deal with them [pupils with SEN]. We do try our best but we don't have the needed strategies to deal with them”*

Respondents 201 stated that *“most of the children with special needs are very taxing on the nerve. This causes more stress for the teacher. The specially trained teacher will be better able to manage these children”*.

Respondent 142 felt that all pupils can be taught in mainstream classrooms however, *“teachers must be trained and for some pupils class size [need to be] small[er], resources and support staff available.*

With specific reference to the respondents in this survey with regards to their qualification which was generally in compliance with the requirement for teaching in Jamaican classrooms (over 90%). However, this standard of teachers' qualification appears to be in regards to teaching the general population and not a reflection of their competence to meet the needs of pupils with SEN. It is worth considering that almost 10% (n=21) of the respondents in the survey do not possess adequate qualification for teaching in general, let alone teaching pupils with SEN. If those who were sufficiently qualified expressed their incompetence in relation to meeting the SEN of pupils, it is highly likely that those without adequate qualification would have an even more difficult task. Respondent 71 stated that

“children would gain more because [general] teachers are trained for average children not special children”. However, it should be noted that when teachers were asked to identify the difficulties they encounter in adequately meeting the SEN of pupils only 4 (2%) of them admitted that their only lack of expertise was a problem.

Some administrators expressed the view that it is the specialists in the field of Special Education which have the remit to meet SEN of pupils. It could be that the content of the teacher training curriculum need restructuring to meet the needs of a society that is now acknowledging their responsibility in not only educating the children deemed as ‘normal’ but also those with SEN. General teacher training by necessity should include not just a token module focusing on special needs which amounts to a few hours per term, and in extreme cases nothing that prepares teachers to face the challenge and opportunity of teaching pupils having needs that deviate from is considered to be those of normal learners. The following respondents underscored the need for adequate teacher training in their comments respectively: Respondent 73 *“regular class teachers can adequately teach these children [with SEN] if they have done a course in special education. If not, students should be taught by those who are qualified to do so”*

Respondent 172 *“some children have serious psychological, mental and cognitive barriers which are not suitable for a regular classroom. Some teachers are not equipped to teach these children”*

Over a third of the teachers (n=68, 33.1%) felt that the support of special needs teachers would enhance the quality of education given to pupils with SEN. However, reliance on specialist teachers should not be seen as a panacea to meeting the needs of pupils with SEN, because it is not practical for every teacher to be a trained special needs teacher. It could be argued that every teacher is a teacher of SEN. Excessive reliance on specialist teachers could be an indicator of that the teacher training provided is inadequate to meet the challenges to successfully teach pupils having SEN. This is supported by Respondent 78 state that *“all teachers should be trained to deal with special children. There will never be enough specialists. This should be implemented at the teachers colleges in [the] curriculum”*. Respondent 78 made a significant point which could inform future education policy in Jamaica, which would make those leaving teaching programmes equipped to meet the challenges of teaching pupils with SEN. The issue of up-skilling teachers who are already practising could be undertaken

using seminars, workshops and CPD programmes as a strategies to develop their skill to be able to meet the needs of pupils with SEN. Almost 20% (n=5) of administrators requested continuous training in the area of SEN for regular class teachers as a strategy that would assist schools in catering for the pupils in consideration.

Teachers in an attempt redress the deficit with regards to their competencies in successfully teaching pupils with SEN, used several sources of help of which the major ones were guidance counsellors (33.2%), the Internet (22%) and more experienced teachers (20%). The high use of the role of the guidance counsellor as a buffer when teachers encounter complex cases relating to pupils with SEN was identified in the findings and results of the case study and is now been confirmed. For extensive discussion of the use of guidance counsellors in schools in relation to meeting pupils' SEN with regards to its significance and implications consult Section 5.2.6.4.8.

In light of the growing trend of teachers using the internet as a source of getting information in helping them handle pupils' SEN. Given the international power of the internet, there is potential for a funded website commissioned by the MOE, with online material providing teachers with trust worthy information on SEN in general and specific areas of SEN. This would give teachers an opportunity to use it in a targeted manner as a supplement for them in this area. An aspect of this website could be where teachers could ask questions and present cases (without any identifying features) and get their queries addressed within the specific context of the Jamaican context in terms of the availabilities of human and nonhuman resources. This would also support the limited number of specialists in the field of SEN. According to Forbes (2007, 67) here is a description of schools that will chart the way forward as it relates to the education of pupils with SEN,

School of the future will be required to have teachers with adequate training in disabilities and special needs at an undergraduate level. All systems will also need to ensure that they have enough teachers and principals/teachers who have highly specialized skills relevant to the needs of students with special needs and disabilities

In respect to the commitment that the MOE made concerning the provision for pupils with SEN in mainstreams schools, trained teachers is one of the critical elements if this commitment is to be honoured. The final theme will address school features and its relation to pupils' SEN.

7.2.6 Theme Six: School Features and SEN

7.2.6.1 Attitudes toward the Presence of Pupils with SEN

Teachers' attitudes towards the teaching pupils with SEN in mainstream schools are crucial to effective learning (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) and such attitudes vary widely (Kniveton, 2004). The integration of children having SEN has been receiving interest for the last several decades. However, the term inclusion has now taken over both in its usage and practice. Integration is mainly placing pupils in the 'least restrictive environment' (Avramidis et al, 2000) and removing the hindrances to pupils' learning. Here is a teachers' view regarding inclusion "*educators recommend that they do [teach all pupils irrespective of their SEN]. However, in the education system as [it] stands it will cause havoc if inclusive measures are taken*" (Respondent 175).

The manner in which some teachers spoke about the use of class time appears to be a reflection of a negative attitude towards meeting the SEN of pupils. Respondent 78 said that "*time that could be used to devote to these cases could be used more productively*". The reference to pupils with SEN as "these cases" and the view that addressing their learning needs is an unproductive use of time were rather telling. In contrast, an affirming attitude was demonstrated by the comment made by Respondent 144 - "*children are encourage[d] to accept each other for who they are, kindness and empathy are instilled and demonstration from teacher, makes life easier for child[ren] with SEN*". These teachers' attitudes have the potential to be the deciding factor between pupils with SEN experiencing educational success or failure. The type and severity of pupils' disabling SEN strongly influenced teachers' attitudes (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). This was borne out by some of the responses given when teachers were asked if all pupils with SEN can be taught in regular classes: Administrator 179 said that "*our students cannot be taught in regular classes because all students needs vary according to severity. Those children with mild problems can be included/integrated into regular classroom programme*".

It is the usual trend amongst teachers that the further their associations are away from the particular SEN of pupils, the more inclined they are to be positive (Garver-Pinhas and Scmelkin, 1989 as cited by Kniveton, 2004). Critically, according to Avramidis and Norwich (2002) the availability of resources consistently influenced

teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. In light of the paucity of resources in Jamaican primary schools in general and more so for pupils with SEN, it is highly likely that teachers find it difficult teaching pupils with SEN in this context. This may be a platform for teachers forming an unenthusiastic mindset towards teaching pupils with SEN in this context. According to Avramidis et al (2000), professional development is integral to the acquisition of a positive attitude towards inclusion. This would also be applicable to integration. When learners present with difficulties in their learning it is teachers' responsibility to identify strategies that will help them (Florian, 2008). Inclusion (and integration) carries with the tremendous implications for school systems in areas such as "organisation, teaching styles, curriculum, assessment, staff development and community links" (Rouse and Florian, 1997, p. 323).

7.2.6.2 Large Classes

When teachers were asked to identify the difficulties that they encountered in the attempt to teaching pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms, a myriad of issues were raised, including large class size. This impeding factor was identified by only eight teachers (3.9%) in response to this specific question. However when they were asked about their views if pupils can be taught in mainstream classrooms irrespective of their SEN, a significant proportion of teachers cited in large classrooms as a reason for their dissent. There has been much contestation with regards to the class size and its impact (Pedder, 2006 and Blatchford et al, 2001). The function of adults in groups in a class is critical especially in relationship to effective classroom management (Blatchford et al, 1999 as cited by Blatchford et al, 2001). Given the context of Jamaican primary schools whereby the role of a TA is not the norm, therefore, the larger the class (and with the class teacher being the only adult), the more challenging the teaching and learning process. Based on the teachers from the survey data it appears that the larger the class size the more difficult it is for teachers to target pupils with SEN with a view to meeting their needs. Respondent 135 stated that "*some students need 1 to 1 everyday help from both parents and teachers and [it] can't be done in the shift context and large classes*". This was confirmed by Respondent 154 who said that "*class is too large (50 pupils) and [class] space too small*". Respondent number 153 continues with this trend but also cites alarming consequences; "*because of the number of students in the class (45) and the limited number of time (less than five hours) allotted, most times these students are ignored*".

Almost 15% (n=34) of the teachers were of the opinion that overcrowded classrooms negatively impacted the extent to which pupils were able to effectively address the needs of pupils with SEN. Respondent 7 felt that “*because of the large class and the variety of needs, children are not really dealt with on an individual basis because of the time and the number of students*”. As was aforementioned, in the Jamaican context, the primary level has the most pronounced the level of overcrowding due to the compulsory universal education. According to the MOE teachers’ statistics (2008/9) the teacher pupil ratio at the primary level is currently 1:27. In reality as was identified by some of the respondents some class sizes are 100% (or near so) in excess of the stated figure given by the MOE. One of the recommendations given by the Task Force on Educational Reform, Jamaica (2004) is to reduce the teacher/ pupil ratio at the primary level to 1:25. Although the shift system ought to have helped to address the problem of overcrowding, large class sizes still remains a grave issue.

Several factors may have led to these large classes. Firstly, since the shift school is an urban phenomenon (Bray, 2000), shift schools may still be oversubscribed and as such classes are large. Secondly, schools pupils grouping strategies may have exacerbated the existing condition. What are the implications of large classes? Pedder (2006) posits that class size is an essential factor which influences the scope of what pupils and teachers can do to facilitate learning. In addition, in large classes each pupil gets less physical space in which to operate in (in a technical sense) and as such with the aforementioned behavioural difficulties being experienced by some pupils, it may worsen the situation. Large class sizes coupled with small class spaces make the difficulty even more pronounced. Space constraint will be discussed in the next subsection.

7.2.6.3 Space Constraint

Teacher and learning in schools are affected by its physical environment (McGregor, 2004). Therefore, inadequate classroom space has far-reaching effects on the teaching and learning process. For both administrators and teachers inadequate space was an issue. In fact, equal numbers (n=5) felt that the lack of adequate space was proving problematic for the meeting of pupils’ SEN. It was surprising however that so few administrators and teachers highlighted the limitation in classroom space as a debilitating factor. In shift schools is the norm for teachers to share classroom spaces. Therefore, the space constraint can be manifested in several ways. For example, one

teacher identified having to share classroom as a challenge. One of the realities of shift schools is that at the end of the first shift another set of pupils is waiting to use the classroom space. Therefore, if pupils on the morning shift have not completed their work or require further explanation from the teachers it is usually rather difficult to find a space within the school to facilitate this. This situation was confirmed by Respondent 159 who stated that “[I] try to give individual attention although it is very very[repetition done by teacher] stressful, you have to get out of the room due to the shift system so you don't get to do it all the time”. In addition, administrators find it difficult to find a space within schools to earmark primarily for pupils having SEN. According to Taylor (2008) traditional classrooms impede active learning. She also suggests that classroom spaces influence teachers’ pedagogical styles. In the Jamaican situation some large classes are sometimes ‘squeezed’ into cramped spaces some of which are demarcated only by chalkboards as is reflected in Figure 2.9. Consequently, space constraints in schools potentially impact the learning outcomes of pupils in general and particularly those with SEN. With so many pupils having behavioural difficulties there is usually no ‘space’ in which they can have some time to be away from the stressor and to calm themselves down which can lead to escalation of the problems. Without question, the space constraints in shift primary schools have significant effect on the teaching and learning process and school operations in general.

7.3 Chapter Conclusions

- Administrators and teachers did not have a clear understanding of SEN. Administrators mainly put forward definitions in light of the difference difficulties faced by pupils. The main difficulty cited was learning difficulty. In addition, explanations for SEN were made in relations to the extent to which pupils’ learning needs impacted on the NC. There were those administrators and teachers who identified categories of pupils as definitions. Importantly, some teachers proffered definitions of SEN as a function of their teacher training. In essence, SEN is what their teacher training did not prepare them to cope with, what they were not trained to do.
- Reading difficulty was identified by both administrators and teachers as the most commonly manifested SEN amongst pupils. This outcome did not come as a surprise and was in keeping with the high literacy rate as presented in the

Jamaican education system. In addition to the reading difficulty, behavioural difficulties were also identified.

- Both administrators and teachers (one third) identified a chronic shortage of resources to specifically cater for the learning needs of pupils with SEN. Some of the specific shortages identified were special educators and inadequate use of technology. Identification of inadequate specialist teachers was in keeping with the definitions teachers offered of SEN as needs that went beyond the scope of their teacher training.
- The shift system and its resultant time constraint was a pronounced inhibitor to meeting the SEN of pupils. This time constraint appeared to have shaped some of the teachers' negative attitudes to having pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms. Some viewed having to invest time in the meeting of pupils' SEN as an inappropriate use of time. Some felt that it placed the more competent learners at a disadvantage. The inability of pupils with SEN to move at a faster pace in their learning was seen as an area of frustration, and again, wasting of the limited time. On the other hand, there were few teachers who were positive in the attitudes towards having pupils with SEN their classes.
- Surprisingly, although there was much pressure faced by teachers due to the time constraint, not many of them (N=8, %) requested for the abolishment of the shift system.
- The presence of pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms appeared to be having significant effects on schools and in teachers' lessons. Over a third of the teachers identified pupils' disruptive behaviour as the most significant impact on their lessons. A few reported having to do more detailed lesson preparation. Some even reported feeling frustrated and stressed.
- Teachers were of the view that the more academically competent pupils are being put at a disadvantage because of pupils' SEN. Some felt that these pupils were being distracted by those with SEN.
- The need for adequate teacher training with specific regards to meeting the learning needs of pupils with SEN was a strong theme emerging from the survey data as it was highlighted by teachers and administrators. Adequate teacher training will undoubtedly be a source to inspire higher teacher efficacy in the teaching of pupils with SEN.

- Teachers and administrators have relied heavily on the service of the guidance counsellors in schools, internet and textbook as sources of help in coping with meeting the SEN of pupils.
- The survey data have brought to the fore that there were school-factors which exacerbated pupils' SEN and made it difficult for both administrators and teachers to cater for their learning needs. These schools factors included large classes, negative attitudes towards pupils with SEN (from teachers and pupils without SEN) and space constraint.

7.4 Chapter Summary

The survey data produced from complex and interwoven findings and results. Similar to the analytical strategy used for the case study, that is, anchored in Grounded Theory and assisted with thematic analysis, this chapter produced six major themes as is itemised in Figure 7.1., along with their accompanying subthemes. There were dilemmas and tensions both within and amongst presenting the themes. The next chapter will examine the findings and discuss the themes from the interview with the officer from the MOE.

Chapter Eight: Findings and Discussion

Interview with the Ministry of Education Official

8.1 Introduction

The last two preceding Chapters Six and Seven presented the survey findings and the discussion of them respectively. Schools' operations are usually guided by the directives of a governing body usually the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the respective country. This is so in the case of Jamaica. As is directed by the research question (see Section 1.10), the researcher interviewed one of the personnel from the MOE with a remit for Special Education. This was done to seek to establish what is the conceptualisation and administration of the meeting of the SEN of pupils in Jamaican primary schools. Therefore, this contextualising chapter will present the salient findings and results from the interview done. Critically too, the discussion of the findings and results will be done simultaneously as they are being presented, and not as discreet chapters. This is so because the findings and results of this interview lend themselves to natural outflow of discussion which provides continuity and greater linkage. The findings and discussion will be presented as emerging themes.

It should be noted that the researcher made numerous attempts to interview other personnel from the MOE in the services of core curriculum (Revised Primary curriculum) and Technical Services (architectural designs of school); how they relate to the SEN of pupils, but it proved futile. As was previously mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, the interview was audio taped and later transcribed verbatim. The interview was read in its entirety several times so that the researcher was intimately familiar with its content. The interview data was analysed thematically used in the same procedure it was utilised in the case study and survey. Importantly, a pseudo name will be used throughout the presentation and discussion of findings in order that the person cannot be identified in keeping with the commitment of confidentiality and anonymity.

8.2 Emerging Themes

8.2.1 Theme One: Overarching Philosophical Orientation

8.2.1.1 Inclusion versus Least Restrictive Environment

It is critical to note that one of the guiding principles that inform the construction of educational practice in Jamaica from the point of view of the MOE is that “*every child can learn and every child must*”. The word ‘every’ suggests that the MOE accepted ownership of the responsibility of educating pupils with disabilities and educational difficulties. Having accepted its responsibility the question now becomes a matter of ‘location’. Where would pupils with disabilities and difficulties be educated? Mr Thomas* asserted that the guiding philosophy in relation to meeting the SEN of children in Jamaica is placing them in the ‘least restrictive environment’.

As the Ministry [of Education] we believe that children should be educated in the least restrictive environment and with that in mind it means therefore that not every child is going to be in the mainstream because if we do not think that the mainstream is the best and most appropriate way of doing it then we are not going to place them in the mainstream

The concept of the ‘least restrictive environment’ (LRE) was the driving force behind the practice of special education in the 1980s and 90s. Least restrictive environment may be taken to mean that children be educated in regular classrooms as much as is possible. They should not be removed from this context only if it facilitates optimal educational benefits (Gallagher, 1997). It should be noted that LRE should not be understood to mean that all children with disabilities may be educated in a regular classroom since this may not be the best context of learning (ibid.). Rather wherever pupils are placed it should be appropriate and individualised for their needs (Rueda et al, 2000). For example, Mr Thomas opined that educational segregation is part of educational provision supported by the MOE.

Thomas (1997 as cited by Avramidis, 2000) asserts that with integration the educational space is basically unchanged, it is the children who must change to suit the environment and not the other way around. This posited description of integration is debatable because its success is contingent on the educational sphere making the necessary adjustments to facilitate meeting the SEN of pupils. Mr Thomas was categorical in informing the researcher that the Jamaican educational system does not subscribe on a wholesale basis to the idea of inclusion in light of its economical status (see Section 2.4.9.1) and cultural norms. However, he states that, where feasible, it subscribes to some elements of it.

You see where inclusion is concerned, where it can work, we [MOE] will make it work, ok. Where it cannot work we are not going to force it to work. Because as I said we have a social, economic and cultural context within which we operate. And I tell you the deaf don't want to be included, they want their own culture. They resist opening up their schools to other children with disabilities...they resist being integrated into regular schools. They will go to the schools for the deaf and they are happy with that.

In fact he was somewhat cynical concerning those countries that in his estimation are paying lip service to inclusion, being a claim, not to the reality.

England is not integrating their blind people they have so many schools for the blind and they talk of language of inclusion than anybody else. So what is the hypocrisy?

In essence, he asserts that school age of pupils are placed in the least restrictive environment in a child-centred manner, the child needs will determine the kind of service and placement that is provided. However, he admitted that the system is operating below its ideal. He stated that “*granted we [MOE] are mindful that we are operating with limitations but this is the philosophy*”. This admittance of weakness could be viewed as biased, in the sense that, it is called “weakness” in the Jamaican system but “hypocrisy” (in his evaluation of) for the British education system. In both cases practice does not totally reflect stated philosophy.

As was previously mentioned, the MOE having rejected the ideology of inclusion (in a wholesale manner) but rather has embraced LRE. The combination of some of the principles of inclusion with the ideology of LRE could be an indication of ambivalence. In fact, Mr Thomas asserted that one of the educational aims is “*I would want most of my schools more inclusive with personnel, resources and with structure so that children can be educated in regular facilities as far as possible and develop to their maximum.*”

In addition, there were a few research participants whose standard of operation with regards to meeting the SEN of pupils is inclusion, not integration. For example, Administrator 1 from case study was of the view that

... where inclusion becomes a guiding concept because inclusion would be preparing the environment to receive all students and persons operating in there and if the schools had the proper ramps and rails and lighting and all, then any students would find himself or herself into the school without any difficulty and that would make it more inclusive.

There needs to be a consensus amongst the education system regarding the ideological framework that will govern thinking and school operations- whether inclusion or integration. Florian (1998, p.105) asserts that “many educators have serious reservations about supporting the widespread placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools”. However, there is merit in expanding its conceptual boundaries in order to offer children with disabilities an improved provision. The conceptualisation of Rueda et al (2000, p. 70) offers an idea in this prospect. They argue that rather than thinking of LRE in terms location rather to view it more in terms of the context. They further argue that particular place “can either be facilitating or restrictive” as opposed to be conceptualising LRE viewing the individual in relation to the context. There is merit in this thinking in that LRE is not a static definition of a place or location, rather how the different factors within a particular space facilitate or hinder pupils’ educational progress. In the sub-theme that will follow, the available school spaces for the Jamaican context will be outlined.

8.2.1.2 Definition of School Spaces

Mr Thomas was very particular in identifying ‘school spaces’ in relation to the meeting of pupils SEN. It was highlighted that the severity of pupils SEN is directly linked to the ‘school space’ which can meet their needs. Notably, the idea of choice; whether pupils’ and or parents’, was not brought into the picture. It was stressed that the mainstream school space is meant to cater for only mild form of learning disabilities. Beyond this point on the SEN spectrum, pupils’ SEN are best met in special schools. Segregated schools space is meant to cater for pupils with moderate, severe and profound SEN. In addition, to these there are also community based services that pupils with disabilities (usually severe to profound) can access. The MOE makes financial contribution to community based establishments since they do not fall under the remit of the MOE. However, the question is what is the sphere of activity of this educational space and how much of the NC is offered in this context? What were the possible conditions that lend themselves to the MOE choosing to align itself to the ideology of LRE as opposed to inclusion?

- One of the critical practical elements of inclusion is the identification of pupils’ SEN. To provide educational service for pupils, they will first need to be identified.
- There are significant financial and other implications for embarking on inclusion and it appears as if the Jamaica’s economy is not in a position to undertake

major systematic changes. This thinking was expressed in the following comment:

...the trouble with inclusion is, it is a matter of being proactive preparing to receive children with special needs. Now we have to look at inclusion within the context of economies. America, England and Canada talk inclusion but they themselves are struggling with it. So it is good to have inclusion as a buzz word, but we have to look at the reality...

- Inclusion is beset by numerous challenges (Barbas et al, 2006). These challenges may have caused some educational entities to rethink buying into the concept.
- As was noted previously, one of the ideals with inclusion is that the environment that is required to change rather than the pupils. One of the realities of Jamaican primary schools is that their current physical infrastructure would automatically exclude some categories of disabilities. For example, wheelchair users and other pupils with mobility issues, blind or visually impaired and some medical conditions would not be able to attend regular primary schools. The facilities are not available and it would take a significant amount of fiscal revenue to bring these school facilities to the standard that would make inclusion possible.
- Concept borrowing has its limitations. What is espoused in one context; (especially in developed countries), is not necessarily feasible in developing countries. Inclusion is largely renowned to be best practice in many countries but as this interview underscores, it is questioned and rejected in others.
- Some parts of the society may be resistant to being included:

...where inclusion is concerned, where it can work, we will make it work, ok. Where it cannot work we are not going to force it to work. Because as I said we have a social, economic and cultural context within which we operate. And I tell you the deaf don't want to be included, they want their own culture. They resist opening up their schools to one or other children with disabilities to go in there. They resist being integrated into regular schools. They will go to the schools for the deaf and they are happy with that.

What are the implications of the MOE in Jamaica practising LRE?

1. Jamaica may lag behind in the current conceptualisation and advocated best practice of educating pupils with SEN.
2. It is likely that pupils with SEN are receiving substandard education due to the severe constraint being experienced in this particular field of education in Jamaica.
3. Service providers of teacher training may not be using the most current ideology to inform the practise of special education.

The choice of ideological framework that governs any domain has implications and consequences. It is not a neutral activity. The next theme will present and discuss the MOE and its current status of addressing the SEN of pupils in Jamaican schools.

8.2.2 Theme Two: Current Status of Meeting Special Educational Needs

8.2.2.1 No Formal Identification

At the time of this interview (2007) the MOE had no formal means of assessment of SEN for school age children. Importantly the NAP used at the primary level (Grade One Individual Learning Profile, Grade Four Literacy Test and GSAT) were purported as having SEN function for the purpose of assessment. This is highly debatable. However, being a country of scarce resources, if much thought and development are put into these instruments from the outset they have the capacity of having a two pronged function. Therefore, issues such as content, administration, formats (such as Braille, large print, and audio) and the grades at which they are administered would be some of the areas that would require refinement. Mr Thomas stated that there are no figures for the prevalence of pupils with SEN in Jamaican schools. This is in keeping with the findings of the literature-

...the only figure that we work with are the figures that suggest for example the failing ones. With the Grade One Readiness Inventory and having difficulties at the grades four and six levels of the tests that they are doing and we are watching. You can actually do a kind of tracer study and see that a number of students- even up to CXC levels may be having problems; so you see this constant failure.

However, it is critical to note that failure of NAP tests is not necessarily an indication of the presence of SEN. As was stated before; pupils fail for a myriad of reasons; some of which are not even educational ones. Failure could be for other factors such as tests conditions, pupils being ill on the day of the tests, emotional or mental distracters to name a few.

8.2.2.2 Intervention Strategies

The MOE uses several intervention strategies with the view of equipping teachers and other professionals in the educational service on how to meet the SEN of pupils. The primary and most universal ones are special education seminars and workshops. These are usually convened at the request of the schools. Differentiation was highlighted to be an important skill being taught to teachers for meeting pupils' SEN. Regional special

education workshops and seminars were also done with a view to equip the education officers in the six Education Regions (see Section 2.2). In addition, it was stated that some primary schools have government special education units and resource rooms attached to them. Sections 2.17.4 and 2.17.5 explain the purpose for special unit and resource rooms respectively in primary schools in relation to meeting the SEN of pupils.

8.2.3 Theme Three: Resourcing for SEN

8.2.3.1 Inadequate Resources

Without adequate resources educational endeavours will not succeed. When educational objectives are not fulfilled such as the case of not having adequate resources, it is not a neutral occurrence. Rather, it intimately impacts the deliverer of the objectives and the intended recipients. It is likely that both entities will not achieve their maximum potentials.

8.2.3.2 Teacher Training

The field of special education requires a wide gamut of professional input into the lives of pupils for optimal progress to occur. One of the main service providers is teachers. Section 2.9.4.1 presented an explanation of the Jamaican economic profile and a resultant constraint on the educational system. With this backdrop, one of the major hindrances to the execution of educational ideals is inadequate resources. Without adequate teacher training, teachers will feel frustrated and incompetent in their attempt to meet the SEN of pupils for which they have limited or no skill-set to adequately cater for them. This is in keeping with the literature which says that teachers are critical to successful integration. Could it be that the reason Mr Thomas repeatedly highlighted that the Jamaican public schools can only accommodate pupils with mild forms of SEN was that there are inadequacies with regards to teachers' competencies in coping the challenges of pupils' SEN? It should be noted that he admitted that some the SEN of pupils in mainstream Jamaican classrooms fall beyond the category of being 'mild'. This without question has implication for teachers' competence and therefore, training.

8.2.3.3 Support Services

Not only is there inadequate number of competently trained teachers for pupils with SEN, but there are also a shortage of supporting personnel. This was underscored in the comment below:

...there is a limited supply of clinicians to do the assessments. So children are being identified based on anecdotal reference from teachers, from parents...we are embarking on a massive programme to get the 'child find' cracking [on stream] ... those are not going to come on stream as quickly as possible because of the shortage of personnel.

This suggests that the prospect of the Jamaican education system to be in a position to give a figure concerning the prevalence of pupils with SEN seem even more of a long-term educational goal rather than a short-term since the practitioners to undertake the assessment are not available.

8.2.4 Theme Four: Future Vision

Having discussed the Overarching Philosophical Orientation in relation to Special Education in Jamaica and given an evaluation of its current practice, this theme will focus on the way forward. What are the future projections for the education of children in Jamaica with SEN?

8.2.4.1 'Child Find'

It has always been often said "first things, first". With the MOE having no official figures with regards to the prevalence and incidences of SEN of its school children in Jamaica; the foundation course of action that was purported is a 'child find'. In essence, who are the children whose education is being impaired because of the presence of their SEN and as such requires additional support? Mr Thomas stated that "*... at one level for the 'child find' to be most effective, you need to have the personnel that will do the assessments.* Agreeably, this 'child find' idea brings to the fore a chicken and egg scenario. In an educational system with a woefully inadequate cadre of personnel to execute assessments, therefore, who will undertake this mammoth task of 'child find'? It is the trained personnel that come first then the 'child find' process.

8.2.4.2 Vision and Auditory Screening

As a follow-up to the child find process the MOE plans to embark on vision and auditory screening of pupils identified in the 'child find'. There are other aspects of screening such as psychological and serious psycho-educational weaknesses which will be undertaken at a later stage, but due to the aforementioned shortage of personnel this aspect will be delayed.

8.2.4.3 Regional Special Education Unit

An important development is that there are plans for the de-centralisation of special education. Therefore, instead of one main office in Kingston offering special education services for the entire country, each education region is now being given its own remit for special education. In theory that should make services more accessible and efficient. In the comment below Mr Thomas shared a description of the envisioned multidisciplinary team:

we want to have in each region a psychologist, social workers, special educators, language therapists, occupational therapists and so on. Then we want to have regional special education coordinators and then at the school everyone have a school based special needs coordinator who will manage what takes place in the schools, so the needs of the children can be monitored, managed and planned for...

8.2.4.4 Special Education Policy

Jamaica is a signatory to several international policies such as United Nations convention for the rights of persons with disabilities and Rights of the Child. However, there is no specific special education policy for Jamaican school children. However, at the time of the interview there was a draft policy which was signed off by the MOE to be presented to the Cabinet office. This document will govern the practice of special education in Jamaica which would be likely to address issues such as teachers' responsibilities, provisions available and children entitlement.

8.3 Chapter Conclusions

- With regards to the operation of special education, Jamaica subscribes to the ideology of LRE and not extensive inclusion. Notwithstanding, there appears to be some ambiguity concerning what governs special education practice since it has been claimed that Jamaica embraces some of the principles of inclusion.
- There are three environments which offer education to children with SEN in Jamaica; mainstream schools, special schools and community-based projects.
- There is no formal identification of school children's SEN in Jamaican school.
- The most widely used intervention strategies employed by the MOE in Jamaican schools are workshop and seminars which are geared towards equipping teachers to meet the SEN of their pupils. Some schools have Government Special Units and Resource Rooms attached to them.
- Inadequate resources negatively affect the educational provisions offered to pupils with SEN in Jamaican schools.
- Teachers are not adequately equipped to effectively teach pupils with SEN.
- There are inadequate numbers of supporting professionals in place to make the necessary input in the education of pupils with SEN.

8.4 Chapter Summary

The practice of special education in Jamaica is still in its infancy. On the whole pupils having SEN in mainstream school are essentially being integrated by default. Currently, not much is being done in a targeted approach from the perspective of the MOE in meeting their SEN. However, the MOE is aiming to implement several projects to move the practice of special education forward in Jamaica such as a 'child find' scheme, vision and auditory screening, establishing regional special education units and having a special education policy being passed as law. The final upcoming chapter will pull together the findings and results from the case study, survey and interview with MOE personnel.

Chapter Nine: Research Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will draw together the results, findings and discussions from the case study, survey and interview from the official from the MOE. A brief overview of the research process will be undertaken. The main findings of the research will be presented in answering the research questions. An exploration of implications of the research will also be done and its contribution to knowledge will be highlighted. The chapter will end with an explanation of the limitations of the research and an identification of further research which may be undertaken as a result of this research.

9.2 Overview of the Research Process

The foundation phase of the research was carried out in six primary education granting institutions. This was undertaken with a view to re-define and focus the initial research question and design. It was at this stage that the niche of shift school was identified (see Section 3.6.1). A case study was undertaken in one shift primary school with overarching aim of investigating how the SEN of pupils were managed in this specific school context. In the second phase of the research, 10 mainstream shift Jamaican primary schools (including the case school) (N=10) participated in a survey completing questionnaires in the capacities of teachers and administrators. From the ten schools in the sample, 231 respondents participated in the survey (N=231) which was conducted using questionnaires. This is a reflection of an overall response rate of 52%). Respondents were in two groups- administrators (N=26) and teachers (N=205). Teachers accounted for 88.7% of the respondents of which 91.7% (n= 188) were female and 18 (8.3%) were male. The survey further explored some of the issues picked up on in the case study with the same focus. The distributed questionnaires comprised of both quantitative and qualitative questions, which provided rich and interesting data; especially the latter type of questions. Some of the data generated

coincided with the information found in the literature search and case study findings while others were unexpected and contradicted the literature and other research. These findings and results were later analysed to unpack their meanings, significance and implications. The key findings of the research will be presented in answering the Research Questions in the next section.

9.3 Answering the Research Questions

This research was focused on the research questions stated in Section 1.10. It will be repeated below to refocus the readers as the answers are presented. The basic purpose of this research was to explore how the SEN of pupils are conceptualised and managed in the context of *shift* primary schools in Jamaica? This primary focus was explored by investigating the views and perceptions of main stakeholder groups and the research questions were as follows:

9.4 Synopsis of the Key Findings in light of the Research Questions

9.4.1 Research Question 1

What are the Ministry of Education views and administration of the SEN of pupils in Jamaican primary schools?

A semi-structured interview was used to gather the data for this research question. It was conducted with one of the officials from the MOE who has a remit for special education. In addition, notes from case study relates to teachers and administrators views of the MOE with regards to their catering for pupils with SEN (especially within the context of shift schools).

Research Findings:

- Although inclusion is the most current philosophical orientation of addressing the needs of pupils with SEN (especially in developed countries), the MOE in Jamaica does not subscribe to it, at least not on a wholesale basis. Instead, its philosophical orientation with regards to the meeting of pupils' SEN is placing them in the 'least restrictive environment' (LRE), depending on their needs. There appeared to be some uncertainty with regards to its choice (see Section 8.2.1.1).
- It was asserted that some pupils' needs were better served in special schools or community projects partly-funded by the MOE. Therefore, not every pupil with SEN is educated in mainstream public schools. Consequently, 'segregated

setting' is also one of provisions offered to Jamaican children. Not every people group in Jamaica embraces inclusion. Mainstream public schools are for pupils with mild SEN. Segregated settings are for pupils with severe to profound SEN (see Section 8.2.1.2).

- One of Jamaica's educational aims is that pupil placement of those with SEN into LRE is guided from a child-centred point of reference. However, acknowledgement was made that whilst LRE is the philosophical position in regards to education of pupils with SEN, there are weaknesses to its implementation.
- Identification of SEN- There is no formal identification of pupils' SEN in Jamaican public schools. The MOE is attempting to use the NAP to serve in this capacity as a temporary strategy (see Section 8.2.2.1).
- Staffing- There is an acknowledged shortage of special education personnel in Jamaican schools and at the MOE level too. This significant limitation is linked to the aforementioned lack identification of pupils' SEN from the perspective of the MOE (see Section 8.2.3.3).
- SEN intervention strategies- The most frequently used SEN strategies used by MOE were regional and school-based SEN workshops and seminars. However, this is not widespread enough and does not appear to be effective in making an impact at the classroom level. In Jamaican shift primary schools there is no targeted approach to meeting the SEN of pupils as directed by the MOE (see Section 8.2.2.2).
- Available resources- the MOE acknowledged that there were insufficient numbers of trained teachers specifically trained to meet the needs of pupils with SEN (see Section 8.2.3.2). In addition, a similar trend was identified in relations to personnel for supporting services (see Section 8.2.3.3). In the survey, this reality was confirmed by teachers and administrators who repeatedly expressed their frustrations with regards to what in their views is the meagre to nonexistence of support and resources for pupils with SEN. For example, in the case of MMPS the intervention strategies which were employed appeared to be school- directed and in some cases, implemented. Inadequate resources in general and specifically teacher training are critical inhibitors the education of pupils with SEN in Jamaican schools.

- Improvement of education of pupils with SEN: As a facilitation of the amelioration of the education of pupils with SEN, the MOE has future plans with a view to improve the current provision and support system offered to Jamaican pupils with SEN. Some of these are undertaking a major ‘child find’ project, vision and auditory screening, decentralising special education and implementing special educational policies (see Sections 8.2.4.1, 8.2.4.2, 8.2.4.3 and 8.2.4.4).

9.4.2 Research Question 2

What are the limiting and enabling factors in Jamaican shift primary schools with regards to the meeting of the special educational needs of pupils?

Research Methods used: A case study (over a nine-months period) and survey (using the linked questionnaires for administrators and teachers) were undertaken to gather the relevant data.

Research Findings:

- The shift system with its resultant pronounced time constraint represented a huge inhibitor. It represents for teachers especially a reduction of inadequate contact time in which to adequately attend pupils’ SEN (see Sections 2.3.2, 2.3.2.1.1, 2.4.9.5, 4.3.4.1.2.1, 4.3.4.1.2.4 and 7.4).
- As was aforementioned, in general teachers’ training was significantly inadequate in preparing them to deal with the complexities of teaching pupils with SEN (see Sections 5.2.7.1, 7.6 and 8.3.1).
- A compounding factor with regards to adequately trained teachers, was the inadequate number of suitably trained special educators. In addition, there is a high attrition rate of special educators from the already limited numbers from the Jamaican classrooms (see Section 4.2.2.8).
- Possibly, because of inadequate teacher training along with other school factors, there was a pronounced report of low teacher efficacy which negated against teachers feeling competent to meet the SEN of pupils (see Sections 4.11, 5.2.7 and 8.4.1).
- The disruptive behaviour of some pupils with SEN had a de-stabilising effect on the teaching and learning process. Over a third of the teachers in the survey (n=68, 33.2%) stated that disruptive behaviour negatively

impacted their lessons. which to some extent negated against their own SEN being met (see Section 4.3.4.5.2, 6.4.4 and 7.5.1).

- Some teachers have a negative attitude towards having to teach pupils with SEN (see Section 7.7.1). There were several factors which may have contributed to this. Some teachers were of the view that pupils with SEN were a ‘time drain’ on the already limited time in shift schools. Others expressed concern for the disruptive effect (already mentioned) that they have on their lessons and still other were particularly apprehensive about the impact that they had on pupils without SEN. Speculatively, these and other reasons may have fed into some teachers having negative attitudes towards the teaching of pupils with SEN.
- Some administrators were concerned about the presence of pupils with SEN lowering their schools’ performance. In addition, an examination focus of the case subjugated the meeting of pupils’ SEN lower on a priority list (see Section 7.5.2).
- The deployment of staff in MMPS was sometimes juxtaposed to the effective meeting of pupils SEN (see Sections 5.2.6.2 and 5.2.6.3).
- Some teachers reported feeling stressed and frustrated in their attempts to adequately meet the SEN of pupils (see Sections 4.4.3.2 and 7.5.3).
- The lack of school policies precluded a unified approach amongst administrators and teachers towards the meeting of pupils’ SEN (see Section 5.2.3).
- Some schools’ features such as streaming, large classes, non conducive classrooms, high noise levels, limited use of technology in the teaching and learning processes and the space constraint had negative effect on pupils with SEN having their learning needs met (see Sections 5.2.4.1-5.2.4.4 and 7.7.1 – 7.7.3).
- Lack of parental support was cited as a significantly limiting factor which negatively impacted on teachers and schools’ efforts to meet the SEN of pupils. There was a strong request for more parental support for pupils with SEN in the case study results as was highlighted in Section 5.2.8. The need for greater support in this area was confirmed by the results of the survey. Twenty-three percent of the survey administrators (n=6) and almost 10% (n=16) identified this constraint as an area which,

if improved, would enhance the education of pupils with SEN (see Tables 6.1 and 6.4).

- Due to the pronounced lack of resources some teachers demonstrated and reported having to improvise to supplement the lack of resources in order to help cater for those pupils with SEN. Lack of resources was a prominent factor identified by participants from both the case study and survey to be rather limiting impact effect to effectively
- The role of the Guidance Counsellor was heavily relied on and to a large extent being redefined to meet the SEN of pupils. In MMPS, there was a 100% increase in the number of Guidance Counsellors (from 2 to 4) which facilitated greater attention to addressing cases involving pupils with SEN in their redefined capacity. In the survey over a third of the teachers sought help from their schools' guidance counsellors. A few of the administrators also used this source of help (see Figure 6.15 in Section 6.4.6).
- Similar the service of the guidance counsellor, there was much reliance on the service of Mico CARE Centre by Jamaican shift schools. Fifty percent of the administrators (n=13) and over 10% (n=28) of the teachers in the survey reported using this service to seek help for their pupils. Notably, the service offered is often delayed because it is overly subscribed which results in children having long waiting times (see Section 5.2.6.4.10, 6.3.6 and 6.4.6).
- A plethora of SEN intervention strategies were used at MMPS to cater for the SEN of pupils. Some of the strategies were more effective than others (see Sections 4.3.4.6.3.1 – 4.3.4.6.3.12).

9.4.3 Research Question 3

How do pupils with SEN account for their experiences of having their SEN being met in a shift primary school?

Research Methods used: The views of pupils were gathered using semi structured interviews and observation entries indicated in Research Log.

Research Findings:

- In MMPS, some pupils were of the view that their SEN were being met and that they do not mind attending a shift school. To a much lesser extent other pupils expressed strong preference to attending whole day schools (see Section 4.3.4.1.1.3 and 5.2.1.1.3).
- The contact time of pupils is further reduced due to school features such as administrators and teachers having frequent meetings hence high incidences of ‘in-school absenteeism’ and having late meals whether breakfast or lunch. In addition, pupils engaged in activities that further reduced their learning time by engaging in tasks such as ancillary-type duties, distributing books to name a few (see Sections 4.3.4.1.2.4 and 5.2.1.1.6).
- Many pupils reported having rather negative experiences with being put in low ability classes. However, there were high incidences of bullying, name-calling and teasing towards pupils with SEN. Consequently, some pupils displayed rather low self esteem which appeared to be related to their having SEN and more specifically the aforementioned pupil grouping which have led many to experience public humiliation from other pupils (see Sections 4.3.4.9 and 5.2.9).
- As was aforementioned, there was consistent report of inadequate parental support of pupils with SEN in the case study report. This was to a lesser degree corroborated by the findings in the survey. This is sometimes manifested in poor school attendance, inadequate school supplies and attending meetings (grade, shift or PTA) (see Section
- Based on research observations some teachers were clearly out of their depth in terms of their teaching competencies in teaching pupils with SEN. This was confirmed by some teachers reporting that they lacked the expertise in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. A few teachers even reported simply ignoring them.
- Some of these low ability classes were characterised by high noise levels due to disruptive behaviours.

It is important to take note that although the majority of the pupils interviewed were of the opinion that their SEN were being adequately met, it is plausible to suggest that there were several factors that was juxtaposed to this. There were several concerns

raised by the pupils themselves, administrators, teachers and parents that were causes for apprehension that their emotional health was not being adequately addressed (see Section 5.2.1.1.5). The issues of lack of confidence and low self esteem were highlighted repeatedly. In addition, the overall lack of approved of opportunity for pupils to play which in the words of a teacher “...*children can't get time to play which is important, everything is just rush rush*”. In addition, there was also notable erosion of instructional time (Smith, 2000) for several reasons such as frequent meetings and ‘in-school’ teacher absenteeism (see Appendix 10) the allocation of inexperienced teachers for classes for pupils with SEN and inadequate resources. The prevalent presence of the manifestation of behavioural and reading difficulties especially with the sufficient relevant resources it begs the question as to where or not these and other SEN of pupils were being tackled. When these factors are taken together it is likely that the SEN of pupils were not being optimally addressed and as such measures for amelioration are needed.

9.4.4 Research Question 4

What are the views of parents regarding their children's SEN being met in a shift primary school?

Research Methods used: The views of parents were gathered using semi structured interviews.

Research Answers:

- Based on the research findings the answer to this question is mixed. Generally, parents were extremely grateful that their children had been accepted in a school, albeit a shift school. Views concerning the shift system were polarised. There were those parents who strongly expressed the view the shift system worked, vice versa. For some parents they were initially wary towards the children attending a shift school. However, MMPS ‘won them over’ by virtue of being effective, in their estimation see Section 5.2.1.1.4.
- Given the context of the shift school system, there was a melting pot of views by parents with regards to their children's SEN being met. There were those who were of the opinion that the school was catering for their children's SEN. Some parents reported positive academic changes in the lives of their children. On the other hand, there are some parents that stated that the school was not meeting their children's SEN.

- There were a few parents that were of the opinion that the short shift day presented them with an opportunity to support their children with their academic work. For example, one parents expressed the view that teachers would find it difficult to meet all the pupils learning needs, especially those with SEN, due to large class size. Consequently, she had to do supplemental work at home with her child in order to make up for the deficit.

9.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

As is posited by Paechter (2003) research should have utility and as such influence policy and practice. Below are the identified areas in which it is hoped that this research will have utility.

9.5.1 Teacher Training

- It would be beneficial if the GOJ of Jamaica embarks on a national agenda of teacher training with special emphasis on SEN. There is a dire need for teachers colleges in Jamaica to reconstruct their existing teacher training programmes so that teachers in training are sufficiently equipped in the area of teaching pupils with SEN. Critically, this should not only be for those majoring in Special Education, but every teacher. In this sense, every teacher is a special education teacher. This is crucial to support the present thrust for the planned ‘child find’ of pupils with SEN in Jamaican public schools by the MOE.
- In addition, the MOE should foster and influence a positive attitude towards and understanding of the area of special needs. Teacher training needs to move away from the notion (whether implicit or explicit) that ‘one size fits all’. Teachers should be trained to individualise the curriculum to cater for diversity in learners especially those with SEN. Good special education practice is simply good teaching practice. Learners are diverse and with specific reference to those with SEN, this understanding should be embedded into practice and principle of teacher training. Without question the majority of the learners with SEN are being educated in mainstream schools since only a small number are enrolled in special schools (see Section 2. 4.1 and Table 2.2). Therefore, it is critical that a cadre of general and special teachers be trained to meet this dire need in the system. The importance of and the skill to differentiate should be emphasised in

the SEN teaching modules and practicum. (This skill was not widely practiced at MMPS).

- For the teachers already practising the MOE and schools need an aggressive approach to bring them up to a standard of competence in this area. In service programmes should be designed to improve teachers' understanding of SEN and also to foster and develop positive views and attitudes towards teaching pupils with SEN. This is critical since teachers are the primary agents of change in the educational system in general and in particular with regards to teaching pupils with SEN.
- Schools should give time to teachers and TAs to engage in CPD with a view to improve and or to develop professional skill set in teaching diverse learners.

9.5.2 Special Educational Policies

Without the 'weight' of policies to propel enforcement, educational practice will not improve. This is also true in the field of special education. For several countries, especially in developed ones, it was the introduction of policies that ushered in differing levels of substantial improvement and development. The SEN draft policy (Jamaica) which has been in the deliberating process for a number of years which needs to be made law with much urgency. This is most critical so that it can place responsibilities on different entities such as MOE, schools, parents and supporting agencies as with a view to adequately meeting the SEN of pupils.

9.5.3 Resourcing Pupils' SEN

There is a dire need to adequately resource the teaching and learning process specifically for those pupils with SEN. Inadequate resources without question compromise pupils education and can influence the negative attitudes of teachers towards the meeting of pupils' SEN. In addition, there needs to be significant increase and improvement of the professional personnel working in this field.

9.5.4 In-school Pupil Groupings

It would appear as if the schools were autonomous in their selection of the ways in which school pupils are grouped. It may be beneficial if the MOE have stipulated standards by which schools must comply with. In addition, parents should not be just told about their children's class groupings but they should have an active role. The

manner in which schools group pupils deemed as having SEN have tremendous impact on the academic achievement and their overall school experience. This is so because pupil grouping strongly influence staff allocation, other resourcing and even matters relating to timetable structuring.

9.6 Research Recommendations

The research which was undertaken underscored the complexity involved in schools in their quests to meet the SEN of pupils in the learning environment of Jamaican shift primary schools. Having ‘listened’ to the various research participants, what are the proposals that would promote the acquisition of education for this group of pupils in schools organised on a shift basis? The recommendations are premised on the outcomes of the day to day operation of the case of MMPS, MOE interview and linked questionnaires for teachers and administrators.

- **Distinction in SEN Operational Terms:** There is need for the MOE to make a clear distinction in its operational terms with regards to SEN as opposed to special needs. The latter is proving to be unwieldy. A more narrow and focused definition would potentially highlight the academic functioning of pupils with SEN. Operational terms affect educational practice. On the whole, administrators and teachers in the survey were not aware of the meaning of SEN. In fact, there was much confusion regarding this. There needs to be some level of consensus concerning the understanding of the term SEN amongst practitioners.
- **Early Identification and Intervention regarding SEN:** For SEN to be adequately addressed they will need to be first accurately identified. Accurate identification of pupils’ SEN is critical since intervention is premised on it with a view for pupils to go forward. Preferably, this identification of SEN should occur prior to the primary level of education. Intervention should be multi-faceted, consistent and timely. Intervention should not only be school based but should incorporate parents and wider professional circles.
- **Re-conceptualisation of Shift System:** Agreeably, there are tremendous potentials for benefit to the education system on the whole to abolish the shift system as recommended by the Jamaica Education Task Force (2004). However, in light of the financial constraint in operation in Jamaica, what is critical is a re-conceptualization of the shift system. Unique ‘infrastructure’ should be put into place to support pupils’ learning in this time pressured environment and special

consideration and support earmarked for those with SEN. When the resource becomes available, the MOE should aim to gradually de-shift primary schools since this is part of the foundation phase of education. It is this phase of education where, ideally, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy comparable with global standards should be acquired by pupils by the end of primary school as targets set by the MOE (MOE, Education Statistics 2008/9). Therefore, removing the shift system which is the primary factor for the time limitation is likely to increase the likelihood of pupils achieving these stated basic and other skills.

- **Time Management Strategies in Shift Primary Schools:** Shift schools operate with significant time constraints. Therefore, it is necessary that shift schools operations be especially characterised by time management strategies to maximise the limited time available. For example in shift schools extra numbers of clerical workers be employed to relieve teachers of some of their administrative functions so that their contact time can be focussed on making best use of the pupils' instructional time.
- **Legislation:** In light of the functions of legislation as is posited by Eleweke and Rodda (2002) in Figure 2.8, it is important that legislation with regards to the education of pupils with SEN be implemented. In addition, every school should construct a whole school SEN policy. This will give a cohesive vision towards the conceptualisation of, processes involved, identifies responsibilities and intervention strategies with regards to the welfare of pupils with SEN. It will also foster collective efficacy as is posited by Chase et al (as cited by Feltz et al, 2008).
- **Collaboration amongst the GOJ Ministries:** Closer collaboration between the GOJ Ministries of Health and the MOE with regards to identifying and treating physical disabilities and impairments of children that affect their learning. This could help with the pending 'child find'. In addition, there is great need for partnership between the MOE and the Ministration of Transport to implement specific programmes to provide access to transport for the staff and pupils of shift schools.
- **Teacher Training:** Jamaica requires a major thrust concerning teacher training and CPD with a view to adequately train, improve and retool all teachers with specific skill-set to effectively teaching pupils with SEN. To facilitate this, it is

crucial that all teacher training colleges and departments of universities curriculum contain robust SEN modules, simulated and practicum experiences in effectively teaching pupils with SEN. The MOE could add momentum to the training of special educators by providing incentives for persons to train in this area.

- **Boosting Teachers' Efficacy:** It would be beneficial if schools implement robust, relevant and consistent professional development training to foster teachers' competence and potentially boost their sense of efficacy to effectively teach pupils with SEN. This is likely to complement and or upgrade the skill-set that teachers is likely to acquire if there is major overall in the teacher training colleges and departments of universities curriculum with regards SEN training as recommended above. In addition, well resourced schools including specific whole school policies and procedures would assist in this area.
- **Multi-professional Input:** Not only is there the need for suitably trained teachers for the advancement of the education of pupils with SEN, but there is urgent need for the input of trained supporting professionals such as education psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. This need was particularly underscored by the MOE person who was interviewed. Importantly, these services should collaborate in order to provide expeditious, efficient and focussed service to families and their children (none overlapping nor contradicting the other entity).
- **Government and Non-government Agencies:** There needs to be increased contribution of government and non-government agencies towards meeting the SEN of children. Similar to the collaboration amongst supporting professionals as recommended above, so too should the services of government and non-government agencies be. Importantly, more of these agencies should aim to have service output in rural parishes since services tend to be concentrated in urban parishes of Kingston and St Andrew (Innerarity, 2002). This is likely to reduce the waiting times parents and care givers have to undergo in order to access services as in the case of Mico CARE Centre. More available services in rural parishes would also reduce the long and expensive distances people have to travel to go to urban parishes, especially when multiple visits are required for assessments.

- **Addressing Reading Difficulties:** Jamaica has an illiteracy rate of 20.1% (Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning, 2008) which is reflected in the high rates of illiteracy which typifies the Jamaican education system according to Hall (1999). Almost half of the survey teachers identified reading difficulties as the most commonly expressed form of SEN (n= 99, 48.3) which is potentially higher when other responses relating to poor comprehension and literacy skills (n= 33, 16.1%) are combined with it. This SEN was also a pronounced difficulty amongst learners in the case study and was the primary reason for them being categorised as having SEN. Undoubtedly, this warrants a strategy to tackle what appears to be a preponderance of this SEN. With the chronic literacy problems in Jamaican schools, every school should have reading specialists to deal with reading skills and to bridge the gap between pupils being placed in the SEN programme and classes. Equipping shift primary schools with Resource Rooms would also be of benefit (see Section 2.4.10.5). In addition, technology can be used to assist pupils with their academic difficulties in areas such as reading and mathematics. Again technology can be used to assist learners with various SEN. For example, the educational computer software Kurzweil Professional, is an all-inclusive reading and writing software for individuals including those with learning problems such as with reading difficulties. It allows the user to select the rate of reading, gender voice and other such features (<http://www.kurzweiled.com/kurz3000.html>).
- **Addressing Behavioural Difficulties:** Firstly, for any amelioration to occur with this specific SEN, there needs to be a re-conceptualisation in viewing behavioural difficulties as a SEN in its own right, and not simply as ill-mannered behaviour as is often the case in the Jamaican context. Secondly, school strategies should be implemented to assist pupils in managing their behaviours such as mentoring, use of technology, social stories and role play. This could be facilitated in a cross-curricular approach especially since Jamaican primary schools use an integrated curriculum.
- **Use of Technology:** Participants in both the case study and survey highlighted the dire need for the increased use of technology in the teaching and learning process relating to the meeting of pupils' SEN. Not only is technology needed to make a direct input in the process of adequately addressing the SEN of pupils, but also in an indirect manner. The later can be done by freeing up teachers'

time so that teachers' can make the most of their time to engage in pupils' education, especially those who have SEN. For example, as was previously mentioned, technology can be used to reduce both the frequency and duration of staff meetings (see Appendix 10) such as school e-mail accounts to aid in communication.

- **SEN Welfare Officers:** Every shift school should have a welfare officer to see to the needs of children with extra needs with specific remit for those pupils with SEN. This role would be comparable in some ways to the role of SEN Coordinators in English schools.
- **Trained TAs:** Suitably trained TAs should be employed in shift primary schools especially in classes deemed as having pupils of lower abilities and specifically those deemed as disruptive. These TAs should have clearly defined remit with the aim of improving the educational achievements of pupils with SEN through direct support and input into their learning.
- **Resourcing of SEN:** The MOE and schools having annual budgets would potentially be of inestimable worth in promoting the educational achievement of pupils with SEN. In addition, the deployment of school staff, timetabling priorities, teaching material and learning environment are critical areas in schools that should dovetail with the objective of meeting the SEN of pupils.
- **Reduction of Class Size:** Teachers in both case study and survey highlighted large class size as a major hindrance to their ability to meet pupils' SEN. Strategic reduction in class size is therefore crucial. Smaller classes are likely to be more conducive to pupils' SEN being met in mainstream schools.
- **School Site:** The environment in which in which teachers and pupils operate, impact learning outcomes to a large extent. Since shift schools experience twice the level of 'wear and tear' as whole day schools, it is essential that extra care be given to the equipping and upkeep of the school plant. To assist teachers and pupils cope with the high temperatures especially in the summer months.
- **Play:** The case study data revealed that the general absence of play from the school life of children in shift primary schools is an issue that require urgent redress. Creative ideas to facilitate safe approved of play is necessary. In the case of MMPS, there are several churches in close proximity to the school

which could feed into the school's community partnership (see Section 4.2.2.10) by doing collaborative work with them to provide safe play for pupils.

- **Parental Involvement:** The research highlighted the need for greater parental involvement in the educational lives of children with SEN. This is especially crucial for pupils in the lower streams in schools. Critically, the case study underscored that school educating parents to raise their efficacy or esteem (Hassall et al, 2005) may be necessary before they are able to effectively offer support to their children. The contributions of the research will be dealt with in the next section.

9.7 Contributions of the Research

This research is distinctive in that it sought the perspectives from the main stakeholders in education; the MOE, administrators, teachers and pupils and parents. It should be noted too that members of the community in which the school is located were consulted in order to help with the construction of an accurate case description. The contribution of this research will be addressed in the following areas:

1. Contribution to knowledge

To the researcher's knowledge, this research is the first to undertake a combined examination of the issue of SEN within the educational context of shift primary schools. Numerous researches have investigated SEN within general primary schools and to a much lesser extent researchers have looked at the shift school system. However, this research has found its niche in executing this examination of SEN within the unique and complex primary school organisation of the shift system. This will add a distinctive body of knowledge to the already existing repertoire of research knowledge.

This research is the first to explore the experience of meeting the SEN in a primary school organised on a shift basis; utilising research methods that enabled to voice of the school, parents and importantly the pupils deemed as having SEN to be 'heard'. The conceptualisation and management of SEN in Jamaican schools by the MOE was garnered through interview to situate the school's practice relating to meeting SEN of its pupils. It also unpacks the tensions and dilemmas that exist amongst these players. This research also brings to the forefront the necessity of implementing educational policies with specific reference to meeting the SEN of learners in Jamaican schools.

2. Significance and application in the Jamaican context

This research is the first research in the Jamaican context to undertake such an in-depth case study and large survey examining the concept of SEN in shift primary schools, which has to date, not received much research attention as other issues have. The practice of special education in Jamaica is yet to have a policy which governs the operation of practitioners and outlined the provisions pupils with SEN are entitled to. This research has the potential to bring to bear the necessity of this much overdue policy commitment and a manifestation of a SEN legislation. In addition, as was previously mentioned, this research has captured the ‘voices’ of all of the main educational stakeholders, especially that of pupils’. The use of case study and questionnaires has added much value to the research.

3. Theoretical Insight

This research used GT (assisted by thematic analysis) it has provided theoretical insights into how pupils’ SEN are met with Jamaican primary shift school context. The primary insight gained from the data concerning the Jamaican primary shift school context which is ‘resource famished’ and simultaneously ‘SEN dense’, was the far-reaching effect of time. The ‘time factor’ had a major effect on the schools operation and has significantly impacted the meeting pupils’ SEN. This factor exerted its pressure in numerous ways as was highlighted throughout the case study and survey data. This was especially emphasized in Themes one and three in the case study and survey discussions respectively. It directly impacted areas such as timetabling, teacher allocation with regards to ‘maximum effect’ decisions particularly in examination grades, participants’ attitudes towards catering to pupils SEN. In an indirect manner the ‘time factor’ affected areas such as schools’ leadership and culture. Time was experienced in the following ways:

- **Fantasy:** Stakeholders constantly opined their ‘wish’ for more time. In a sense this created a kind of ‘time fantasy’, a desire for more time and the projected view that it would make all the difference in their attempt to meet the SEN of pupils.
- **Excess:** Paradoxically, there were some players who experienced time as ‘excess’. Some parents reported not knowing what to do with the ‘off-shift’ time of their children. In reference to this concern some highlighted that their children had too much time to play.

- **Physiological Reality:** Teachers and pupils had bodily consequences of the time pressures experienced in shift schools. Teachers spoke of having to miss meals and being stressed which negatively impacted on their health. Pupils also experienced hunger because of the inadequacy of the time allotted for lunch and the absence of a break time.
- **Educational Pressure:** The reduced contact time pupils have in shift schools potentially poses a threat to their educational attainment especially those with SEN. In addition, not only did the ‘face value’ of a reduced contact time was problematic (especially in the area of having adequate time for reading) but also the system-induced time reduction which further eroded pupils’ learning time.
- **Social Constraint:** Since schools are complex social systems (Harkins and Roth, 2007), it takes time to build effective social systems. With specific reference to the meeting the SEN of pupils within a shift school context, there was little to no time for play. Play is one of the agents of social cohesion and networking for children in general, and especially for pupils with SEN which affect their social, emotional and behavioural domains. When the prevalence of behavioural difficulties which was experienced in MMPS and the disruptive behaviours highlighted by the survey data are considered, the importance of play and to socialise in general cannot be overestimated.

When issues were probed; the interpretations underscored the idea that the ‘time factor’ created a kind of ‘vortex’; creating a pulling current even on the seemingly unrelated areas and issues. The limitations of the research will be explained in the upcoming section.

9.8 Limitations of the Research

Having completed this research, in retrospect there are a few factors that limited it. Firstly, although this research is larger than the ones which have been previously done, one of the three counties, that is, Cornwall was not included in the research. An island wide picture would have increased the scope of the research.

Secondly, only one official from the MOE was interviewed. As was noted before several attempts were made to interview personnel from others departments of the MOE relating to the architectural designs of schools and ‘Curriculum and Support Services’. However, the attempts were unsuccessful.

Thirdly, with regards to the administrators’ and teachers’ questionnaires, it is being acknowledged that some of the questions on the questionnaires were

temporarily jettisoned to give way for the extensive volume of textual data produced by the case study. It is the researcher's intention to use the jettisoned questions and others as a point of reference for post-doctoral academic work.

9.9 Further Research

In the process of undertaking the research and answering the research question, it has brought to the foreground insightful research prospects that deserve research exploration.

- Factors influencing teachers' efficacy and the impact of teacher training programmes (Schunk and Pajares, 2005): A Jamaican perspective
- A longitudinal study in guidance counsellors' management of a small number of pupils with SEN throughout primary school.
- A comparative case study addressing how at least two schools construct and manage the SEN of pupils.
- To explore the impact of an implementation of a whole school SEN policy on the experience of pupils and teachers in a given primary school.
- To explore the concept of parental involvement in the achievement or non-achievement of pupils with SEN in Jamaican primary schools.
- An action research with pupils with SEN included in a particular mainstream school with a view to identifying best intervention strategies: the Jamaican context.
- The role of Mico CARE Centre in the construction of special education in Jamaica.
- Investigate the role of play in the lives of pupils with SEN with specific reference to those with behavioural difficulties.

9.10 Concluding Summary

Having undertaken this research with the theoretical orientation of GT with the use of thematic analysis into the experience of meeting the SEN of pupils with the context of shift primary schools in Jamaica has been insightful. In this research, the core category was deemed as the 'time factor'. It had a major ripple effect on the operation of the school life and its attempt to meet the SEN of its pupils. The 'time effect' also came through in the survey data, albeit to a lesser extent. It is the researcher's hope that the compilation of this thesis and the significance of providing answers for the research

questions as is outlined in Section 1.10, will be beneficial especially within the Jamaican context to policymakers, government ministries (especially the MOE, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport), education administrators, teachers, parents and pupils having provided a novel examination of meeting pupils' SEN in the context of shift primary schools.

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Appendices

- Appendix 1: MOE Letter of Access
- Appendix 2: Case School Letter
- Appendix 3: Parents' Consent Letter
- Appendix 4: Survey Schools' Consent Letter
- Appendix 5: Research Participant Information Sheet
- Appendix 6: Consent Form
- Appendix 7: Research Cover Page
- Appendix 8: Teachers' Questionnaire
- Appendix 9: Administrators' Questionnaire
- Appendix 10: Research Log (abridged)

Appendix 1: MOE Letter of Access



REPLY OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCE
TO THIS COMMUNICATION SHOULD
BE MADE TO THE PERMANENT
SECRETARY AND THE FOLLOWING
REFERENCE QUOTED:

NO.

**Ministry of Education and Youth
Region 1
2 National Heroes Circle
Kingston 4; Jamaica, West Indies
Tel: 876-922-1400 -9
www.moeyc.gov.jm**

2007-06-18

The Principal

This serves to introduce Miss Donna Sherwood who has sought permission to conduct an educational research in shift schools offering primary education and with a focus on special educational needs.

Your school was selected as one in which this will be done.

Permission is granted to Miss Sherwood to visit the New Providence Primary School and to do the research.

Thanks for your usual co-operation in facilitating her queries.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vilma Blair'.

Vilma Blair
Regional Director
Region One

Hon. Maxine Henry-Wilson, Minister • Hon. Noel Monteith, Minister of State •
Mrs. Maria Jones, Permanent Secretary

Appendix 2: Case School Letter

School Address

Dear Principal,

My name is Donna Sherwood, and I am a Jamaican teacher currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education at Brunel University in West London. In fulfilment of this course, I am required to conduct an educational research. In order to execute this task, I have chosen to engage in a case study of a primary school and also to conduct a general survey of teachers' views regarding the teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in primary shift schools.

I am therefore requesting permission to undertake the case study in your school. The tenure of this research would be from June 2007 to February 2008. The name of your school or any other identifying details will not be mentioned in the thesis. This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee at the above mentioned University. For more information about the proposed research, please see the research outline accompanying this letter. If you have any further queries please contact my research supervisor, Professor Roy Evans, Director of Research. I can be contacted at 876 974 4412, 939 5625 or 876 393 4204.

Kindly communicate your response by e-mail at dsherwood.brunel@yahoo.co.uk
Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Sherwood

Appendix 3: Parents' Consent Letter

ADDRESS

November 22, 2007

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian,

My name is Donna Sherwood, and I am a Jamaican teacher currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education at Brunel University in West London. In fulfilment of this course, I am required to conduct an educational research. In order to execute this task, I have chosen to engage in a case study of a primary school and also to conduct a general survey of teachers' views regarding the teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in shift primary schools.

I have been granted permission to undertake my case study at Maple Meadows Primary School*, which your child attends. I was introduced at the Parents' Teachers Association on June 27, 2007. I am hereby requesting your permission to interview him/her about his/her experience of attending a shift school and how his/her educational needs are being met. All information received will be held in the strictest of confidence and handled with due sensitivity.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee at the above mentioned University and has been granted permission by the Ministry of Education and Youth, Jamaica. For more information about the proposed research, please see the research outline accompanying this letter. If you have any further queries please contact my research supervisor, Professor Roy Evans, Director of Research at roy.evans@brunel.ac.uk. I am willing to answer any questions you may have relating to my research. I may be contacted at dsherwood.brunel@yahoo.co.uk or 393 4204. Kindly sign below to grant permission for your child to participate in this research.

Your assistance will be highly appreciated

Yours sincerely,

Donna Sherwood

I _____ hereby grant _____
(Parent's/ Guardian's signature) (Child's name)

permission to participate in the research.

Appendix 4: Survey Schools' Consent Letter

ADDRESS

Date

Dear Named Principal

My name is Donna Sherwood, and I am a Jamaican teacher currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education at Brunel University in West London. In fulfilment of this course, I am hereby conducting an educational research. In order to execute this task, I have chosen to conduct a survey of teachers' experience and views regarding the teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream primary shift schools.

I am therefore requesting permission to distribute questionnaires in your school. The name of your school or any other identifying details will not be mentioned in the thesis. This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee at the above mentioned University and permission has been granted by the Ministry of Education & Youth. For more information about the proposed research, please see the research outline accompanying this letter. If you have any further queries please contact my research supervisor, Professor Roy Evans, Research Convenor. I can be contacted at 876 974 4412 or 876 393 4204.

Kindly communicate your response by e-mail at dsherwood.brunel@yahoo.co.uk or in the self addressed envelope provided. Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Sherwood

Appendix 5: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

In this research project I am carrying out an investigation into how shift primary schools in Jamaica conceptualise and meet the educational needs of diverse pupils with special reference to those with special educational needs. To do this research I wish to get the views of administrators, teachers and other relevant education personnel about the topic under review. This research is non-therapeutic in nature and carries no potential harm to participants. It is expected that this research will last nine months with a possibility of follow-up enquiries.

Data will be collected by questionnaires, public documents, observations and interviews. When interviews are completed and tape recordings have been transcribed or notes taken, the interviewee will be given the opportunity view and if necessary amend his/her interview transcript. The interviewee will also be asked to verify the raw data by signing the transcript.

Any involvement in this research is on a completely voluntary basis. The data supplied will be treated in professional, considerate manner and with due confidentiality. I would be the sole person to have access to the data you provide. Your identity will not be revealed in the reporting of the research results.

I am not being paid to undertake this research project, it is borne out of professional interest and is towards obtaining a Doctor of Philosophy degree. If you wish to make further enquiries, I may be contacted at dsherwood.brunel@yahoo.co.uk and 876-393-4204.

Appendix 6: CONSENT FORM

The participant should complete the whole of this sheet by him/herself.

Please tick the appropriate box

	YES	NO
Have you read the Research Information Sheet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you received satisfactory responses to all your questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who have you spoken to?.....		
Are you aware that you will not be referred to by your name in the reporting of this study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you aware that you can withdraw from this research:		
- at any time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- without having to give a reason for your withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you agree to take part in this research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature of research Participant:.....

Name in capitals:.....

Date:.....

Witness Statement

I am satisfied that the above-name has given consent.

Witnessed by:.....

Date:.....

Name in Capitals:.....

Appendix 7: Questionnaires Cover Page

Dear Administrators/Teachers

My name is Donna M. Sherwood, a student at Brunel University, West London pursuing a PhD in Education. I am investigating how shift primary schools meet the needs of pupils with particular reference to those with Special Education and Needs. To achieve this, the following questionnaire is intended to gain information regarding teachers'/administrators conceptualization and management the special educational needs of their pupils. The information you supply will be treated with strict confidentiality; neither schools nor teachers/administrators will be identified. You do not have to state your name. Kindly respond to ALL the questions. Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your valuable time.

Appendix 8: Teacher's Questionnaire

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Donna M. Sherwood, Researcher

Instruction: This questionnaire has 3 sections. Please read each section carefully and respond as instructed.

Section 1: Demographic Data

Kindly put a tick (✓) in the brackets beside the most appropriate responses.

1. **Gender:** Male () Female ()

2. **How long have you been teaching?**

1-5 yrs () 6-10 yrs () 11-15 yrs () 16-20 yrs () over 21yrs ()

3. **How long have you been teaching in a SHIFT school ?**

1-5 yrs () 6-10 yrs () 11-15 yrs () 16-20 yrs () over 21yrs ()

4. **Present Qualification:** Pre-trained () Teacher Certificate () Teacher Diploma ()

Bachelors ()

Masters () Doctorate () Other (state) _____

5. Are you currently studying Yes () No ()

If Yes, state _____

6. **Are you trained as a primary school teacher?**

Yes () No ()

7. What stream do you teach? _____

Section 2: Conceptualisation of Special Educational Needs

Instruction: Briefly explain your responses to the following questions.

8. **What is your understanding of the term special educational needs?**

9. **What is/are the most frequently displayed special educational needs by your pupils?**

10. **How do you deal with these manifested special educational needs in your classrooms?**

11. Should the teaching of pupils with special educational need be primarily the concern of specialist teachers? Explain

12. Can all pupils be taught in regular classes irrespective of their special educational need? Explain

Section 3 Facilities/ strategies used to manage pupils with special educational needs.

Instruction: Briefly explain your responses to the following questions.

13. What are the sources from which you solicit help in order to deal with special educational needs displayed by your students?

14. What actions are taken when you go to the administrators for help?

15. How do the special educational needs displayed by pupils affect your class?

16. What strategies do you use to include pupils with special educational needs in your teaching?

17. What are the difficulties you face including pupils with special educational needs in class in the context of the shift system?

18. What are the resources available to support teachers in their teaching of pupils with special educational needs at your school?

19. What additional support would be necessary at your school to adequately meet the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs?

KINDLY REMEMBER TO ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

Any other comment you would like to share regarding meeting the special educational needs of pupils in the context of the shift system may be written here.

Appendix 9: Administrator's Questionnaire

ADMINISTRATOR'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Donna M. Sherwood, Researcher

Instruction: This questionnaire has 3 sections. Please read each section carefully and respond as instructed.

Section 1: Demographic Data

Kindly put a tick (✓) in the brackets beside the most appropriate responses.

1. **Gender:** Male () Female ()

2. **How long have you been teaching?**

1-5 yrs () 6-10 yrs () 11-15 yrs () 16-20 yrs () over 21yrs ()

3. **Present Qualification:** Pre-trained () Teacher Certificate () Teacher Diploma ()

Bachelors ()

Masters () Doctorate () Other (state) _____

4. Are you currently studying Yes () No ()

If Yes, state _____

5. **How long have you been teaching in a SHIFT school ?**

1-5 yrs () 6-10 yrs () 11-15 yrs () 16-20 yrs () over 21yrs ()

Section 2: Conceptualisation of Special Educational Needs

Instruction: Briefly explain your responses to the following questions.

6. **What is your understanding of the term special educational needs?**

7. **What are the most frequently reported special educational needs manifested by the pupils in your school?**

8. **What strategies are in place to address the special educational needs of pupils in your school?**

9. Should the teaching of pupils with special educational needs be the primary concern of specialist teachers? Explain

10. Can all pupils irrespective of their special educational needs be taught in regular classes? Explain

Section 3 Facilities/ strategies used to manage pupils with special educational needs.

Instruction: Briefly explain your responses to the following questions.

11. What are the sources from which you solicit help in order to deal with special educational needs displayed by students in your school?

12. What actions are taken when teachers refer pupils with special educational needs to you?

13. What impact do pupils with special educational needs have on your school?

14. What strategies do you use to make your school inclusive to pupils with special educational needs?

15. What are the difficulties you face in including pupils with special educational needs in shift school environment?

16. What are the resources available to support teachers in the execution of their duties in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs at your school?

17. What additional support would be necessary at your school to adequately meet the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs?

KINDLY REMEMBER TO ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

Any other comment you would like to share regarding meeting the special educational needs of pupils in the context of the shift system may be written here.

Appendix 10: Research Log (Abridged)

Date	Research Activity Done	Special comments, if any
18.06.07	Research permission granted by MOE&Y	
19.06.07	Contact made with Maple Meadows Primary School* (MMPS)	
20.06.07	Research permission granted by MMPS	
21.06.07	1. Social Studies examination 5A (Shift X)	Temperature very hot
	2. Oral Reading examination 6A1 (Shift X)	Own classroom, no chalkboard partition, hot
	3. Mathematics examination 4B (Shift X)	A boy gets extra time re SEN
	4. Language Arts 4D (Shift Y)	Special class for those who failed Grade 4 Literacy
	Mathematics examination 4D (Shift Y)	
26.06.07	1. Orientation Programme One (Shift X) 2. Graduation Rehearsal 3. Orientation Program Two (Shift Y)	Not enough seating for parents. There were 2 classes being kept at the back of the Holding Area where the orientation was being convened Government scholarship announced pupil with highest GSAT score in the island is from MMPS
27.06.07	1. Promotion Session 3C1 (Shift X) 2. Promotion Session 4B (Shift 3. Mathematics 3C1 (Shift Y) 4. Language Arts 3C1 (Shift Y) 5. General PTA Meeting	Final PTA meeting for the term Researcher introduced to PTA
28.06.07	3A Mathematics	7 boys; 28 girls
28.06.07	1. Grade 4 Literacy Exam Post Test (X Shift) 2. Spelling Competition	Re-sit test organised for those who failed the Grade 4 Literacy examination (nearby graduation practice was distracting pupils)

04.07.07	1. Graduation (Shift X) 2. Graduation (Shift Y)	Started 8 am Started 1 pm
06.07.07	General Staff Meeting	Started 10:36 Ended 12:56pm Noted that the top performer in GSAT in the country Was a pupil at the school
10.07.07	End of Year report collection day	
23.07.07	Summer Class Conversation with Administrator 1	Grade 4 and 5 combined Pupils' background information
03.09.07		Mid-morning Temperature 88.4 F
10.09.07	3 D Lesson observation (Shift Y)	
07.09.07	General Staff Meeting	
12.09.07	5 Special Class: Diagnostic Mathematics Test Diagnostic Language Arts Test	5 Special given the same diagnostic test like other classes in the grade
24.09.07	Administrator 1 Interview	
27.09.07	Administrator 2 Interview	
11.10.07	National Heroes Programme	
24.10.07	General Staff Meeting	Grade 6 GSAT Class teachers challenged to strive For at least 4 GOJ scholarships Started 12:40 Ended 1:45pm
25.10.07	Breakfast Programme	Started late at 7:05 AM
25.10.07	Music 6A2 (X shift) Music 6B1 (X shift) Music 6B2 (Shift X)	Behaviour deteriorated as the stream lowered
26.10.07	Grade 3 Block Refurbished	Occupied by teachers and pupils
	1. Language Arts 2D2 (Shift X) 2. Integrated Science 2D2 (Shift X) 3. Integrated Science 2D1 & 2D2 (combined, Shift Y) 4. Mathematics 2D2 (Shift Y) 5. Integrated Science 2A (Shift Y)	Inclement weather (pronounced low attendance) 1. Teacher was working at Breakfast Club 2. Class split after teacher arrived

02.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading 1R (Shift Y) 2. Mathematics 1R (Shift Y) 3. Follow-up Conversation with teacher 	Inclement weather
06.11.07	Interview: MOE Personnel	
07.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language Arts 6A1 (Shift X) 2. Social Studies 6A1 (Shift X) 3. Mathematics 6A1 (Shift X) 4. Choir rehearsal extra lesson 	<p>At dismissal time (12 o'clock) mathematics lesson was incomplete lesson (all required to go to Breakfast Room to complete lesson, dismissed)</p> <p>A down pour of rain caused extra lesson classes pupils and teachers to be splashed in the corridor</p>
08.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Informal Interview with Administrator # 2 2. Interview with Administrator 3 	
09.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observed pupils use of Library 2. Informal interview with community member re MMPS' history 	<p>Friday is the only day pupils can use library outside of their schedule lessons</p>
14.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breakfast club 2. Grades 2 &3 PTA meetings (Shift X) 3. Senior Teachers' meeting 4. Classes 4 A & B Science (Shift X) 5. Interview with parent # 1 6. Grade PTA meeting 7. Computer Studies observation plus follow up conversation with teacher 	<p>Pupils still eating at 8am</p> <p>Classes are combined due teacher's absence, class size very large</p> <p>Child of Parent #1 was having a seizure parent was unaware –engage in an activity. Researcher followed up with teacher</p>

15.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breakfast club 2. Language Arts 2D2 3. Mathematics 4. Conversation with specialist teacher 5. Reading Programme 6. Follow-up conversation with Administrator 1 	<p>Started at 7:28 am</p> <p>Parent #1 came in to support her child in class</p> <p>Pupil came in late at 8:02 am</p> <p>Specialist Attrition</p>
16.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Council Meeting (Shift Y) 2. Music Rehearsal 3. 2D2 & 2D1 reading classes (Shift Y) 4. 3D Reading class 5. Physical Education lesson 5 A, B & D 	<p>Only grades 4-6 present at this meeting, 1 pupil present from a low ability stream</p> <p>Not every pupil read due to inadequate Time.</p> <p>Lesson went 20 minutes over; reading specialist should have left at 2:30 pm</p>
21.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent Interview # 2 2. Parent Interview # 3 3. Teacher follow-up conversation 	<p>Did not do any training in Special Education</p>
26.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3A class Physical education lesson 2. 3B class Physical education lesson 3. 3 C1&2 class Physical education lesson 4. 3D class Physical education lesson 5. Interview with Guidance Councillor 	<p>Extremely hot</p>
27.11.07	<p>Homecoming Afternoon</p>	<p>Past students returned and gave speeches to pupils</p>
28.11.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency Staff Meeting 2. Special PTA Meeting re Parent Month Celebration 3. Parent Interview 	<p>Theme: Effective Parenting</p> <p>Transforming Jamaica</p>

29.11.07	MMPS Anniversary Banquet	Shift Y was not convened to facilitate this event Started at 6:30pm
30.11.07	GSAT Class observation	
02.12.07	MMPS Anniversary Church Service	Church service marking the end of MMPS Anniversary celebrations
04.12.09	6C1 Conversation with class teacher 6C2 Science test (mock GSAT Examination)	No reading was done for non-readers Teacher was out of class talking to a parent in the corridor
11.12.07	1. Impromptu Staff Meeting 2. 4 B Music Test 3. Social Studies End of Term Test- 5 Special 4. Teacher Assistant Interview	Started 12:20 pm Ended 1:40 pm
12.12.07	1. General Staff Meeting 2. 4 C2 & 4A Classes End of Term Mathematics Test 3. Language Arts 4. Follow-up conversation with teacher	Started 1:40pm Ended 1:39pm Same test given to 4C2 and 4A
13.12.07	Community Outreach- Golden Agers Dinner	
14.12.07	Pupil Interview	
17.12.07	Christmas Carol Service	
18.12.07	End of Term Class Parties	
19.12.12	General Staff Meeting	
07.01.08	1. Distribution of questionnaire in MMPS 2. Shift Meeting	Buses drivers were on strike, pupil numbers low
04.01.08	Staff meeting observed (none participant)	Kids Club introduced to help pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties
08.01.08	Distribution of questionnaire in Orchid Vale Primary School	

10.01.08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribution of questionnaires in Pine Grove Primary School 2. Distribution of questionnaires in Tulip Grove Primary School 3. Distribution of questionnaires in Sycamore Primary School 4. Distribution of questionnaires in Lilly Bell Primary School 	
11.01.08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pupil Interview 2. Pupil Interview 3. Reading lesson Grade 1 	<p>Amendments made to notes</p> <p>Teacher arrived late- attended a planning meeting</p> <p>Reading material was differentiated</p>
14.01.10	Distribution of questionnaires in Scarlet Ibis	School has a Special Education Unit
16.01.08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribution of questionnaires in English Oak Primary School 2. Grade 3 PTA 	
17.01.08	Distribution of questionnaires in English Oak Primary School	
18.01.08	Distribution of questionnaires in English Oak Primary School	
19.01.08	Collection of questionnaires from Waterford	
21.01.08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collected questionnaires from MMPS 2. Pupil interview 	
22.01.03	1. Distribution of questionnaires in Violet Rose Primary School	
23.01.08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Informal Interview with member of community 2. Pupil Interview 3. Launch of Special Kids Club 4. Spelling lesson- 32C class 	<p>For pupils with behavioural challenges</p> <p>Teacher absent class taken by TA</p>

24.01.08	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents' Day observation 2. Parent Interview 3. Teacher Interview 4. Pupil Interview 5. Parent Interview 6. Parent interview 7. Teacher Interview 8. informal talk with board member 	
25.01.08	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher Assistant Interview 2. Teacher Interview 3. Follow-up Conversation with administrator 1 	
29.01.08	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administration of Grade 4 literacy test observed (entire Grade 4) 2. Parent Interview 3. End of Month Literacy Test 4. Pupil Interview 5. Teacher follow-up 	No differentiation in tests
30.01.08	PTA meeting observed	School's reading problem and limited reading material highlighted to parents
01.02.08	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dance club observed 2. Reading lesson observed 3. Visual Arts lesson observed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outside instructor 2. Lesson disturbed by noise pollution 3. Lesson started late due to delayed lunch
04.02.08	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Staff Meeting 2. Pupil Interview 3. Teacher Interview 4. Teacher Interview 	
05.02.08	Launching the Reading/Book Club	