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An exploration of the factors that influence admission, inclusion and support for learners with special educational needs in international schools

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An exploration of the factors that influence
admission, inclusion and support for learners with
special educational needs in international schools

Clive Underwood

Thesis submitted to Bangor University in part
fulfilment of the requirements of candidature for
the degree of Educational Doctorate (EdD)

2022

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Abstract

The recent dramatic growth in the number of international schools globally has led to significant changes in the types of pupils who attend. Newer international schools are increasingly being established to educate the children of wealthy local populations, as opposed to the traditional international school pupil population of children of expatriate and itinerant workers. As a result, the proportion of children attending international schools identified as having special educational needs (SEN) may have increased significantly. The study explores the responses of international schools to these changes and examines the factors that can promote inclusion and support for pupils with special educational needs in international schools. This research is timely as inclusive philosophies and practices are being increasingly adopted within national education systems across the world. The situation of international schools as being generally separate to, and at times exempt from, national mandates and requirements has meant that until now there has been little by way of incentive for international schools to adopt inclusive philosophies and practices. Nevertheless, the changes in pupil demographic have meant that international schools may need to adapt in order to support a broader range of pupils with different learning needs and abilities.

The study investigated the factors that influenced the admission, inclusion and support procedures for pupils with SEN in a selection of six international schools, located in four different global regions. The design was a multiple case-study that allowed comparisons to be made between some of the schools on a local basis, as well as generally across the whole group of six participant schools. The study adopted an interpretivist paradigm, using qualitative data in the form of attitudes and opinions of school leaders, SENCOs and classroom teachers. Data gathering tools included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and analysis of related school documentation. Data was triangulated in order to allow for comparisons to be made between the responses of school leaders, SENCOs, classroom teachers and external agencies.

The findings showed that host-state intervention and related legislative requirements were the most significant factors in influencing schools within specific areas towards adopting

more inclusive practices in supporting pupils with SEN. Other important factors were an inclusive leadership and governance that supported and implemented effective inclusive policies and practices. These were found to influence other factors, such as the levels of professional development offered to teachers for support of pupils with SEN. The least significant factors were associated with the limitations offered by the environment within which the international schools were located, for example, those relating to the relative scarcity of English-medium specialist support services available to schools in some regions.

Declaration

'I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

I confirm that I am submitting this work with the agreement of my Supervisor(s).'

Name: Clive Underwood

Date: 16 / 7 / 22

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Chapter One: Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

Diversity among students is often celebrated and explored in academic literature as an important facet of international schooling. Much research has been undertaken into the dynamics and potential of multinational and multicultural groupings within international school classrooms, of the drive to create global citizens, and of the inculcation of international-mindedness among students. Relatively little, however, has been undertaken to research *academic* diversity or variations in ability range within the student bodies of international schools.

It is estimated that the number of children in international schooling has currently passed the 5.6 million mark, in more than twelve thousand schools worldwide, and predictions suggest that this might increase to over 16,000 schools, with 8.75 million students, by 2028 (ISC Research, 2021). A snapshot of the current state of international schooling, provided by ISC Research, (a data gathering agency involved with analysis of trends in international schooling) suggests that:

The international schools market has never been so highly respected or publicly recognized. Even in locations that face economic or expatriate challenges, the majority of good international schools are today able to remain stable or continue to grow because of the demand for international education from local families or new types of expatriates. (Gaskell, 2019, p 36)

This recent and unprecedented growth of the international school sector has seen a change in character away from the 'traditional' model of international schooling. In the past, international schools largely catered for globally nomadic families, generally from European, North American, or Australasian backgrounds, who migrated in pursuit of work and career opportunities (Bunnell, 2014; Leach, 1964 and 1969). The use of the term 'international school' now encompasses a wider and far more diverse range of schools, including those schools that cater for children of expatriate workers, but also, increasingly, schools that

educate host national students (from the same country in which the international school is located) who have opted out (either fully or partially) of their national education system. Consequently, these recent trends in the expansion of the international school sector in both number and character have led to changes in expectations of the types of students that would attend an international school. Factors such as traditions of selective admissions policies in international schools and a reluctance among migrant families to travel with children with learning difficulties (Shaklee, 2007) have tended to limit the academic diversity of pupils in international schools to a relatively narrow range of ability (of generally high achieving students). Recently, however, those schools identified under the umbrella term of 'international schools' are experiencing an increasingly wider range of academic ability among their pupils.

Recent changes in the demographic background of international school students have been driven primarily by changes in the global distribution of wealth. The location of growth areas in the international school market generally tend to reflect global trends in overall national economic growth in areas such as the Middle East, China and South Asia (ISC Research, 2019). This regional economic growth has seen the subsequent growth in numbers of relatively wealthy and business-minded middle classes. The perception by some affluent, middle-class parents in many of these areas of economic growth is that the state or national school system is unsuitable for meeting the demands of a more globalized economy and workforce, leading to the rejection of state-school systems in favour of a type of schooling that is seen by some, or marketed as, 'elite' or of 'premium quality' (Morrison, 2016). The current demand for English-medium, western style education, linked with ambitions to enter into institutions of higher education across the world, and, subsequently, successful entry into, and progress within, the global workforce, has driven the rapid growth of the international school industry (MacDonald, 2007). The proliferation of international schools that are nominally linked with traditionally prestigious (mainly UK-based) educational institutions, eg Harrow School, Dulwich College, Malvern College, the entry of transnational corporations into the international schools market, and the success in growth of demand for specific examination and accreditation boards related to the international school market (e.g. Cambridge IGCSE, International Baccalaureate), attest to the global demand for this type of 'international schooling'.

These economic changes have had a dramatic effect on the traditional demographic makeup of international school pupils. By far the most significant change has been the growth in demand for international schooling for children from the same country or nation in which the school is located ('host country'), largely via English language instruction. This study argues as a central tenet that this recent movement away from the 'traditional' model of international schooling has resulted in the broadening of the range of ability among students within institutions classed as 'international schools'. If ISC Research (2019) figures for numbers of children educated globally in international schools are taken into consideration, with a conservative estimate reflecting global averages of at least 10% of students classed as having additional learning needs, current numbers suggest that there are more than half a million students with special educational needs or learning difficulties in international schools, with predictions of a rise in numbers (in line with the rate of the growth of the total international school student population) to over a million by 2028. These figures, however, are complicated by a variety of other factors that affect our ability to estimate the potential numbers of these pupils. These factors include, for example, the fact that English (usually the language of instruction in international schools) is often an additional language for many international school students, making the identification of learning difficulties within English language educational settings more difficult. Whilst many international schools suggest that they have a positive inclination towards supporting students with special educational needs (see ISC Research surveys from 2016, 2017 and 2019), the recent rapid growth of international schooling has led to suggestions that many schools may be underprepared for the challenge of supporting these students (*'A large number of international schools continue to be underequipped to respond to the needs of children with special education needs'* (Gaskell, 2019, p 36)). The study aims to examine the impact of the rapid growth of the international schooling sector on admission and provision for students with special educational needs by comparing practice among a selection of international schools in different geographical areas, with a view to developing an understanding of the main factors that affect the admission and progress of students with special educational needs in international schools.

1.2 Main challenges to the conduct of the study

1.2.1 Relevance and issues related to the ‘field’

Despite recent increases in academic interest in international schooling, fuelled by the general growth of the sector, the availability of research and related literature in the field is low (Bunnell, 2014). One of the main historic reasons for the lack of research into the field of international schooling, and in particular into the issue of inclusion in international schooling, is due to the small and marginal nature of the international independent education sector in comparison with national education systems. International schools are best known by those who work within the international schools sector, by those who have specific interest in international schooling (for example those with economic or academic interests), and those whose children attend international schools. Whilst this may be true of other sectors of education, the relatively low number of those involved with, or educated within, international schooling means that related academic work is limited, despite the recent growth of the international school sector. Similarly, the relative lack of organization, of homogeneity or of central coordination between international schools introduce significant challenges to studies or surveys based on the ‘field’ of international schooling (Bunnell, 2014 and 2019), not least of which is the continuing disagreement and vagueness over what constitutes an ‘international school’ (see p 14 below). The effects of these issues can limit the amount of academic data, case studies and theoretical frameworks available to researchers of the field. Allen (2013) alludes to this situation in his comments that few commentators on the field of international schooling go beyond the act of entering the debate on what constitutes an international school, leading to gaps in meaningful research. Hayden and Thompson (2013) suggest that this lack of literature, coupled with the essential characteristics of international schooling as lacking in homogeneity, results in difficulties in making generalisations across the sector. Bunnell’s (2014) call for the creation of a meaningful theoretical framework to support analysis of aspects of the field is echoed by efforts such as those of Lane and Jones (2016) in attempting to couch developments within the contexts of concepts such as consequentialism. These efforts and exhortations attest to the challenges of studying a field that is largely characterized by a lack of homogeneity or standardization.

1.2.2. Objectivity within the field of academic studies on international schooling

In addition to a lack of depth of research into the field of international schooling, the lack of objectivity that characterises the existing research is also problematic. Conduct of research into international schooling is most often undertaken by those who have a declared interest in the field, for example, those who work in international schooling, or in areas that directly relate to it. Whilst this may also be generally true of research conducted into other forms of education (including into national education systems), uncritical approaches or a lack of objectivity among the small number of researchers involved with the field of international schooling could have a disproportionate impact on the field, due to its limited size.

1.2.3 Perceptions of international schooling

Another issue that offers challenges to an impartial commentary on international schooling relates to the persistence of the tendency to associate international schooling with the educational philosophies of some of the original, pioneering international schools. The tendency towards unquestioned association of international schooling with phenomena such as global citizenship, environmental sustainability issues and bridge building between diverse cultures (as is attested to by many international schools' mission statements), can lead to scrutiny of international schooling by commentators and analysts with a less than critical eye. These views are often driven by the ideological convictions of those few researchers who may be motivated to examine international schools. Ellwood's view that 'it is tempting to think of International Schools as havens of tolerance, peaceful interaction and good will in a fragmented world' (Ellwood, 2005, p5) supports the idea that the traditional perception of international schools persists in much of the literature. The recent growth of the international school industry and diversification of the forms and uses of the term 'international schooling', including its adoption by for-profit organisations, coupled with the movement away from the field by key organisations such as the International Baccalaureate in favour of more lucrative domestic markets, for example the USA, leave this traditional view of international schooling as being a problematic interpretation. These assumptions may no longer be held to be accurate, leading to calls for a more neutral and nuanced approach as the field of international schooling may no longer be assumed to be in its 'ideal'

phase (Bunnell, 2014 and 2019). Adoption of either the traditional, 'ideal' view of international schooling, or of a more negative, critical view of its evolution beyond the 'ideal' phase, pose problems in terms of the objectivity of academic scrutiny.

1.2.4 The implications of admission and provision for pupils with SEN within the context of international schooling

Use of the term 'inclusion', the issue of inclusion, and the extent of the implementation of inclusive measures, may seem contentious when used with reference to international schooling. Relatively little research has been undertaken into studying the measures taken by international schools in supporting children with special educational needs, largely because admissions policies and selection criteria have traditionally excluded many students who may have needed support, at the initial point of enquiry for admissions or entry. Furthermore, the nature of international schooling, as having become largely private, fee paying institutions that cater for wealthy elite groups, precludes any real discussion or use of the term inclusion in its broadest sense, with the exception of students attending on scholarships and some 'ideological' schools (see categorisations by Hayden and Thompson, p22), as it can be argued that all fee-paying educational institutions exclude in an economic and financial sense, and often do so in an academic sense. Furthermore, Resnik (2008) suggests that international education might, in fact, contribute to the reproduction of social inequality, citing that 'IB schools established in the past in order to encourage peace and understanding among peoples become today a source of growing inequality in society' (Resnik, 2008, p148). Contrary to decisions made by the administrators of the International Baccalaureate earlier in its existence that stipulated that the programme should not be offered to 'proprietary' (i.e. for-profit) schools, the current explosion in number of international schools created for profit, and to educate wealthy local elites have raised significant issues in terms of the meaning and underlying ethos of international schooling. Reconciling these disparate views of international schooling and evaluating their attitudes towards phenomena such as the inclusion of children with learning difficulties, adds further weight to Bunnell's comment that this 'requires a special lens of objectivity' (Bunnell, 2014, p 44).

A further challenge to this aspect of the conduct of the study relates to perceptions of the term 'inclusion' and provision made for students with special educational needs. Notwithstanding the global debate about the nature of inclusion, its definition and perceptions of the concept in different parts of the world, variations can be found in expectations of levels of inclusion offered within schools. What constitutes a 'high' level of inclusion for the pupils of one school may not correspond to the levels of support and integration shown towards pupils in another. This, again, is a symptom of the lack of homogeneity and standardisation that defines the international school arena. Furthermore, within the context of isolated international schools across the world, the achievement of 'full inclusion' of all learning styles and ability levels may be difficult to achieve within the environment in which many international schools operate. This, among other factors discussed as part of this thesis, may be due to a perceived scarcity of resources in areas that are seen as removed from many specialist English language support services and products. Examples of this perceived scarcity cited by international schools include difficulties in accessing specialist support such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists for English language international schools. Nevertheless, it can be argued that these forms of resources are also scarce in the state sector. The differences in approaches to inclusion among schools (including international schools) may, then, lie with the degrees to which the principle and sense of obligation (or not) to provide an education for all children are applied, regardless of the setting. These complex and interrelated issues are examined in some depth as part of the study.

1.2.5 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and related lockdowns on the timeline for data gathering and conduct of the study

The Covid-19 pandemic and related lockdowns had an effect on the overall timeline of the conduct of the study. The final stages of data gathering for two of the participant schools was delayed during the first UK lockdown period (March 2020 – July 2020). The writing of parts of the study was also delayed due to the overall work and health effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the researcher.

The timeline for data gathering	
2018	Initial contact with schools A, B, C and D Pilot study
2019	Initial contact with Schools E and F Data gathering with Schools A and B Data gathering with Schools C and D
2020	Data gathering with Schools E and F Interruption to data gathering due to Covid-19 related lockdowns (March – July) Data gathering for Schools E and F completed in the form of semi-structured interviews via virtual platform
2020-21	Writing up period interrupted by Covid-19 lockdown measures and related effect on health and work

1.3 The Research Question and The Aims of the Study

The study seeks to develop an understanding of school processes and external influences that can either support or hinder the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in international schools. The main focus of the enquiry will be to investigate the following:

To what extent do the following factors influence the admission of, and support for, students with special educational needs and learning difficulties in international schools?

- i. the philosophy and attitudes of a school towards inclusion and SEN
- ii. socio-cultural and economic issues related to the host country in which the school is located
- iii. accreditation and inspection procedures and standards

In addressing these areas, the study seeks to develop an understanding of three key, broader issues related to international schooling and inclusion, namely:

- What is international schooling and how have recent changes in the global education market affected our understanding of it?

- Is international schooling concerned with provision for students with special educational needs and, if so, how are these students supported?
- How have recent changes to international schooling affected provision for students with special educational needs in international schools?

The study will examine, through case studies in four different international school environments, the factors that help or hinder students with special educational needs or learning difficulties in being admitted to international schools and, following admission, in accessing the necessary support to enable meaningful interaction with the school's regular curriculum. The factors examined as part of the study that were considered relevant to the admission and support for learners with SEN in international schools include the philosophy and attitudes of the leadership of the school towards SEN, teachers' attitudes and preparedness, host state attitudes and legislation, external environmental factors, e.g., availability of resources, and the effects of accreditation and inspection procedures.

The survey was conducted in different geographical areas in order to try to capture and reflect the diverse influences that act upon international schools within their local environment. The study examines practices in international schools operating in four different states: Egypt, Czech Republic (Czechia), Dubai and the United Kingdom. The choice of these areas has been partly opportunistic (*the researcher has taught, or had leadership roles, in schools in three of the four areas, which has facilitated access to the schools*), but also purposive, in the sense that these areas offer a variation of historical, economic and cultural contexts within which the international schools operate. In conducting the survey, I have sought to involve a range of different types of international schools within the four geographical areas of study, including independently owned schools, schools that are owned as part of multinational chains of schools, and schools that have been created for different purposes, for example, for-profit and not-for-profit schools. Each school, therefore, was chosen to reflect specific aspects of international schooling that bear relevance to the issue of the inclusion of learners with special educational needs, and that reflect the diverse circumstances that can affect decision-making in different global environments.

The design of the study meant that the approach was largely to discover attitudes among the school staff towards the principles of inclusion, and the extent to which the school had committed to these. The participants invited to take part in the study, therefore, included those stakeholders who were able to explain the decisions made by the school in terms of its orientation towards inclusion and inclusive practice (hence the inclusion of school leaders and SENCOs, via semi-structured interviews). Teaching staff were also invited to take part in the study (as respondents to detailed questionnaires), in order to gain insight into the views of those practitioners who may have been tasked with adapting provision to support inclusive measures (or not) in the different sample schools. I was, however, conscious that two other sets of voices were not addressed, namely the learners themselves, and the views of their parents or carers. Whilst acknowledging the centrality of the effects of the orientation of the school towards inclusion on both these sets of stakeholders (and in particular on the learner), it was felt that many of the practices investigated as part of the study meant that the learners in focus may have been prevented from taking part in the study by virtue of their exclusion from the school at the point of admission. It was also felt that the relative impact of inclusive measures on learners at the school deserves focus as part of a separate, detailed study.

1.4 Rationale for the study

The study arose in response to my reflection on three main issues:

1. It is generally acknowledged (e.g., Bunnell, 2014 and 2019; Pletser, 2019; Shaklee, 2007) that there is a lack of literature on provision for students with special educational needs and inclusion in international schools. Much has been written on international mindedness and global education within the international school context. However, there is a distinct lack of literature and, more importantly, little by way of empirical evidence within the field of inclusion in international schooling. Consequently, there are no frameworks for conceptualising the field and approaches to inclusion. There is seemingly little cohesion within, or progress made on these issues.

2. The rapid growth of new types of international schools prompted reflection on my own professional practice and views on inclusion in an international school setting. The speed at which the market, and consequently the field, is changing, provided additional challenges (and impetus) to the writing of the thesis in an effort to try to gain a broader and more conceptual understanding of the field, offered by conducting a comparative overview of international school practices within separate geographical areas.
3. I (the researcher) have a declared personal interest, having worked in the field and having conducted research fieldwork while in posts related to international schooling. Most of my career has been spent working in international schools (in four different schools, each in a different country) in different teaching and leadership roles. My experience in these roles has provided opportunities to examine and question different procedures within international schools, particularly in relation to admissions procedures and the issue of support for pupils with special educational needs.
4. Whilst in a leadership post at an international school, I decided, as part of the school's long-term strategies, to address the philosophy of the school towards pupil admissions and selection and to broaden the range of inclusive practices at the school. Whilst conducting research into inclusive practices in other international schools, it became evident that little of this type of study existed, and that evidence of these practices proved difficult to find.

One document that provoked particular curiosity regarding its basis for evidence was found in a US State Department document entitled 'Overseas Schools Offering Support for Children with Special Needs'. This brief global survey lists and provides short descriptions of schools around the world that can offer support for children with special educational needs and learning difficulties (by country). It has been created to support migrant workers and their families from the USA who have children of school age and is commonly used by families to help decide on the

suitability of the school for their child. Whilst accepting that this type of document (particularly in the absence of any other similar types of document by other states or organisations) could prove useful for families concerned about the types and levels of support that their children could potentially receive within schools in new and unfamiliar locations across the world, particularly if the child experiences difficulties associated with learning, the document prompted questions about the nature of the selection and evidencing process for including the schools listed in the survey, including:

- What was the basis of decision-making and what were the criteria for including the schools contained within the document?
- How was the survey undertaken?
- Are there other, similar documents, for example, is there a European or global equivalent to this list of schools? Are the schools on these lists the same as those listed on the US document?

Upon subsequent enquiries with the section of the US State Department responsible for the writing and updating of the document, it became clear that the selection processes for schools on the list were informed by recommendations (particularly from parents of children who had attended the school) and informal enquiry. This prompted reflection on how the process could become more formalised, and whether the use of tools designed to ‘measure’ levels of inclusion (for example Booth and Ainscow’s Index for Inclusion (2002, 2006, 2011 and 2016) and Azorin and Ainscow’s Themis Inclusion Tool (2018)) would be appropriate and effective in an international school setting. Finally, the research prompted further reflection on how measures of inclusive practice could be used as part of individual schools’ (in this instance the one that I was in post as administrator) self-evaluation procedures as part of an effort to move commitment to inclusive practice away from notions of altruism, and towards recognition as core, measurable educational principles.

5. Finally, the study also arose from an interest in issues related to the meaning of inclusion and its universality as a concept. The work roles described above afforded

me with opportunities to examine and compare the concept of inclusion across different settings at an institutional and national level. One issue that was of particular interest in the planning of the study was whether the concept of inclusion can be applied within a context that many would perceive as being exclusionary by its nature – in this case within private, fee-paying international schools. The implications of focusing the meaning of inclusion solely on academic support for individual pupils, without consideration of wider issues such as the ability of pupils to access those educational experiences in the first place, poses important questions about how the term inclusion relates to, and is understood, in different educational, cultural and socio-economic environments.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 What is an International School?

International Education and International Schooling

International education generally refers to an education that is focussed on global issues and global citizenship and is often identified with internationally-oriented educational organisations such as the International Baccalaureate, among others. It is descriptive of the approaches, philosophies and educational courses adopted by schools interested in promoting international mindedness amongst its student and staff body and as a projection of its values across the school community. Schools designated as, or that describe themselves as, ‘international schools’ may subscribe to the internationalist philosophy contained within ‘international education’. However, this is not necessarily true in all cases, and it is here that the distinction should be made. Some ‘international schools’ may, for example, offer national educational programmes, curricula and examinations in locations other than the ‘home’ of the educational programme, e.g., American International Schools that deliver American programmes of study in locations across the world, an international school delivering British-based Oxford or Cambridge GCSE programmes and examinations. A definition of the term ‘international school’, therefore, does not necessarily mean, or relate to ‘international education’.

2.2 Defining the international school

What, then, is an international school? Efforts in defining the characteristics of an international school have preoccupied and, to a large degree, frustrated a range of academics and commentators interested in the field of international schooling. Bunnell’s (2014) findings that there is a lack of literature on international schooling in general (eg the Educational Resource Information Centre (ERIC) held only 194 references to the term ‘international schooling’ in 2001, rising to 2318 by 2013), coupled with ambiguity in use of terminology (eg the use of ten different words (market, sector, world, movement, network, universe, industry, project, community and field) to describe the landscape (Bunnell, 2014))

has led to confusion as to the nature of both the institutions known as ‘international schools’ and the area of research. Whilst the increase in research within the last two decades highlighted by Bunnell’s findings suggests positive development in this area, the level of output in the field remains generally low. Similarly, notwithstanding recent efforts to establish standardised practice by some organisations such as accreditation and inspection bodies to help achieve coherence in the field, the environment within which these schools operate remains diverse in nature and lacking in homogeneity. Lack of comparable features in procedures and practices, ethos, governance and standards of expectation exacerbate difficulties in defining what an international school is. Nevertheless, efforts to offer a definitive response to the question ‘What is an International School?’ continue. These have evolved alongside dramatic growth and change in the international school sector into what is perceived by some to be an ‘industry’ (MacDonald, 2006), a term which refers partly to the scale of growth, but also to the nature of the new types of schools that have developed in these areas of rapid recent growth, cited by Bunnell (2019) as being located mostly in the Global South.

2.3 History and background of international schooling

Early definitions of international schools were offered in criteria noted by Leach in 1964 in a pioneering survey of international schooling written for, and published by, London and Columbia Universities’ ‘Year Book of Education, 1964’. Seen as the first appearance of, and the origin of discourse on, the field of international schooling in literature (‘a new concept’), it heralded an effort to categorise, coordinate and unify the work of the few international schools that were in operation (in some isolation from each other) at the time. Of the 50 international schools estimated by Leach to be in existence at the time, the main schools linked with the identity of international schooling (and the main articulators of the internationalist educational ideologies associated with early international schools) included Ecolint (The International School) in Geneva, the United Nations International School (UNIS) in New York, and Atlantic College in Wales, whose work eventually coalesced into shared programmes that became the future International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Leach’s survey was subsequently published in the volume entitled ‘International Schools and Their Role in the Field of International Education’ in 1969 and is seen as ‘the first

significant historical research on International Schools and their role in International Education’ (Sylvester, 2003, p 198). Despite issues related to the growth of the field in the interim (1964-69) period during which he wrote his findings based on the 1964 survey, this is the first real survey of international schools and has been influential in defining, traditionally, the characteristics of an international school.

Leach’s early (1964) survey and efforts at defining and categorizing the characteristics of international schools resulted in the creation of a list that included the following features:

- ‘one serving or being composed of students from different nationalities’
- schools that promote ‘international-mindedness’
- privately owned, independent from state control, but different in philosophy to other privately owned schools within a state (many of these types of schools were found in Switzerland at the time)
- ‘overseas groupings of international schools’, set up as personally owned, parentally owned or foreign government owned in another country, serving only an expatriate community
- missionary schools that had evolved into bi-national schools, reflecting the policies and beliefs of the founder and that of the host country, for example French lycées in Africa, Anglo-American Christian schools in the Indian sub-continent
- American international schools, usually parent owned and subsidised by the US State Department
- schools established as a result of bi-national or multinational groupings and actions, for example, the much celebrated and pioneering Ecolint (Ecole International Geneva); European Common Market (EC) schools

The most significant features of the schools listed and described by Leach, however, when comparing with the current designation and debate over the nature of ‘international schools’, was the assumption that these schools would be composed of a variety of nationalities, that they would be non-profit making schools and that they would encourage international-mindedness.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of controversy and debate among the chief administrators and researchers on the early international schools (e.g., Mayer, 1968) in trying to assert some degree of homogeneity in classification of international schools. Examples of these can be seen in disagreements related to acknowledgement of the operation of international schools as separate from each other, in discussions on the dominance of American schools in the total number of schools in areas outside of Europe, and in some of the disparaging remarks made to each other regarding the credibility of some of the schools involved. These early disagreements have continued (to varying degrees) as part of the ongoing debate on definitions of international schooling. The creation of the International Schools Association (ISA) eventually served to provide some unifying force within these discussions. The main focus of the ISA centred on issues related to the provision of a common standard of education that would allow international school pupils to move around the world with the expectation of the same style and quality of education in different locations. The subsequent creation of a system granting tariffs for international qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme would allow entry to universities for the children of itinerant families and provided coherence in thinking regarding the paths open to pupils following graduation from international schools. Enhancement of these programmes via subsequent discussion on the ethos that provided a foundation to these curricula and systems led to the formal creation of global education programmes that promoted ideas of global citizenship and intercultural understanding as their main goal.

Whilst Leach's vision for the future of international schooling as offering a 'safeguard for the future of mankind' (Leach, 1969, p 184) resounds with hyperbole, the phrase reflects the ambitions of the early international schools, not only to offer practical options and pathways for itinerant families, but also to establish international schooling as a platform from which global trends and positive international educational ideologies could be encouraged. This ethos and the accompanying educational ambitions are clearly reflected in the earlier international schools' curricula (and have survived, partly, in some of the current international curricula, such as that of the International Baccalaureate). The emergence of the concept of a 'standard' type of international school (Peterson, 1972) or the 'genuine' or 'model' type (Leach, 1969) heralded what some researchers refer to as the 'Ideal' phase of

international schooling. This, in turn, has allowed a point of comparison with the 'post-Ideal' phase of international schooling, involving the subsequent and recent growth of for-profit education for host country nationals. Bunnell (2014) posits that the 'Ideal' epoch is associated with the 'Leachist' idea of international schooling, and refers to contemporary perceptions of the early, pioneering international schools as being 'another type of Utopia' and 'prepared to act as a global laboratory for curriculum and teaching reform' (Bunnell, 2014, p 24). The 'post-Ideal' era, conversely, is identified by Bunnell as 'mainly business-orientated and profit-focussed and catering for the wealthy local elite within a distinct Asian/Middle East nexus of activity' (Bunnell, 2014, p 25). These types of perceptions have served to influence opinions about the meaning of international schooling, and whether the institutions involved in the current phase of growth in numbers (and change in type) merits their classification as international schools. Subsequent reflections by Bunnell (2019) have seen a refinement of the term 'post-Ideal' in favour of reference to the 'New Era' of international schooling. His use of 'Globalised English Medium of Instruction Schools' (GEMIS) as a new umbrella term for both the existing and newly emerging schools that previously chose to categorise themselves as 'international schools' is suggestive of some of the tensions associated with the categorisation of these different types of schools.

Others, however, have taken a more critical view of this perception of the development of international schools in the past, dismissing the Ideal era of 'lofty goals' as nostalgia and, in more condemnatory fashion, as a Whig interpretation of recent international educational history (Cambridge, 2013). Others argue that international schooling continues to remain aligned with the internationalist goals of the 'Ideal' era of international schools, despite the recent growth and proliferation of schools that cater largely for host state nationals. A survey of international schools' mission statements (Codrington, 2004) suggested that many were still generally swayed by an internationalist outlook and progressive attitudes towards issues related to global citizenship, environmental sustainability and social justice.

A key turning point in the earlier history of the development of international schooling can be seen with the development of 'non-traditional' schools that could lay claim to the name 'international school'. Contrary to the earlier innovators' desires (as suggested by decisions by the ISA in the 1970s) to discourage the transmission of International Baccalaureate

programmes and ideals to 'proprietary' (or 'for-profit') schools, widespread access to the programmes and to the label of 'international school' was made available during the 'post-Ideal' era of international schooling. Recent commentary has been directed at whether the newer types of international schools in the 'Post-Ideal' era should be identified as such, being very different in ideology, governance and pupil demographics to the 'Leachist' perception of international schools. Arguably more relevant to the debate, however, is Machin's (2017) summary of motivations for the use of the 'international school' label:

Motivations for being an international school include a philosophical alignment to international education, commercial incentive (the term 'international' conveying status and prestige in the market) and the more pragmatic adoption of the title to avoid State-directed regulatory control.

(Machin, 2017, p 132)

MacDonald (2006) explains the new era of international schooling as being linked with prevailing economic conditions at the time. The growth of commerce and related capitalist ideologies in many parts of the world from the 1980s onwards, resulting in changes in levels of wealth and influence both within states and internationally, coupled with the creation of large multinational companies that demanded new forms of employment mobility, heralded a new form and level of demand for international schooling.

This growth in demand for the type of schooling offered by international schools from both internationally mobile families, travelling mainly due to parental work commitments, and from developing wealthy middle classes in states relatively new to the traditional international school environment, meant a movement away from the 'traditional' or 'ideal' model of the international school towards what some argue to be new incarnations and forms of institutions that exist under the umbrella term of 'international school'.

A further related and interesting facet of the debate on the nature of new 'Post-Ideal' types of international schools involves the phenomenon that in its earlier, 'Ideal' incarnation, children attending international schools can be seen as 'involuntary players in the field' (Bunnell, 2014, p32) forced into movement away from their home environment and into

attendance at an international school in a new country by the itinerant nature of their parents' movements related to postings and their careers. Leach refers to this situation as pupils in international schools being there 'by accident' (Leach, 1969, p79). This model is still upheld by Hayden and Thompson's (2013) categorisations of international schools (see p 22 below). However, it can be argued that the recent development of newer types of international schools that cater, for example, to wealthy local elites and their children, could involve a greater degree of voluntary choice in the attendance of its pupils at the school and, indeed, a degree of competition for places, dependent on the levels of saturation of the market within which the school is located (though it can be assumed that parental ambitions for their children play an equal, if not greater, part in these decisions). The implications of this for pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties can be viewed as two-fold – first, as part of a greater degree of competition for places in the school among eager members of the local middle-class populations, which may cause the school to be more selective in its intake and to introduce forms of academic testing as part of its admissions process. This can result in reluctance or failure to admit children with special educational needs and learning difficulties within these types of commercial environments, due to a focus by the school on the marketability of academic results. Alternatively, within international school markets that have become saturated due to oversupply of these types of schools (e.g., growth areas in China, UAE, etc), the schools may choose to differentiate their educational offer by appealing directly to different types of potential pupils, for example pupils with special educational needs, and by offering specific forms of support (MacDonald, 2007). This provides a clear link to the focus of this study in demonstrating the variety of factors that can have a bearing on the issue of admission and support of pupils with special educational needs in different international school environments.

2.4 Categorising international schools

Attempts to define the characteristics of an international school have proven difficult and relatively unsuccessful since the development of the 'post-Ideal' era of international schooling. A common criterion used by some (e.g., Bunnell, 2014; ISC Research, 2019) to define the term, and the characteristics of, international schools relates to the language of

instruction employed within the school (English), in comparison to that of its students (usually non-English). This, however, may be contradicted, for example by the number of French lycées that operate in many states internationally, offering French medium education to both expatriate students and to students of host state nationality. There are also numerous International Baccalaureate World Schools that operate in Spanish, French, Chinese and Arabic as some of the permitted languages of instruction supported by the International Baccalaureate, demonstrated for example by the provision of examination papers offered in these languages for each subject area.

Further types of criteria used in defining international schools relate to the levels of internationalist or cosmopolitan influenced ideology offered within, and as part of, the schools' curricula. Other suggestions relate to the nature of governance, the composition of the school governance board and the sources of the school's financial backing. This latter criterion has a historical basis, demonstrated by Leach's assertion that "investment of money must come from at least three national sources – no one of them dominant – and the trustees of such grants to educational institutions similarly distributed. This, I maintain, is the basic minimum allowing for internationalism or multilateral internationalism to develop." (Leach, 1969, p64). It is evident, therefore, that it is difficult to provide a comprehensive definition of what constitutes an 'international school', owing to the different emphases placed by those who have attempted to provide definitions on issues such as language of instruction, governance and financing.

As an insight into the potential difficulties of providing a definition, whilst the following example definition by ECIS has proven popular within the context of schools that offer European-style curricula, this may not be as suitable for the myriad other types of schools that have proliferated in the 'post-Ideal' era of international schooling.

International schools

- offer a curriculum in which the culture and educational system of two or more countries is represented
- offer a curriculum typical of one country, but located in another country and actively pursuing cultural exchange with its host country

- have a student body of diverse nationalities and educational aims and curricula offerings which promote and support the purposes of ECIS

(ECIS definition, cited by Hayden and Thompson, 1995)

An effort to rationalise and categorise, rather than define, has been proposed in a model by Hayden and Thompson (2013) that allows comparisons between different types of schools, established for different purposes.

- Category A, or 'traditional' type international schools, typical of the schools founded to cater for the children of migrant workers who may find difficulty in accessing national curricula in the location (country or state) of their parents' place of work
- Category B, or 'ideological' type international schools, founded to foster ideological values, usually but not exclusively, linked with global citizenship, cosmopolitanism and international mindedness. These schools normally have a higher preponderance of students admitted with the support of scholarships.
- Category C, or 'non-traditional' types of schools that are usually for-profit organisations, founded to cater for the children of wealthier parents from a country or state, who want to 'opt out' of their national education system in favour of English-language, international or western style education that is believed would prepare students for careers in a globalized world and economy.

(Hayden and Thompson, 2013)

Hill (2015) acknowledges the difficulties in attempting to categorise international schools in simplistic terms, and offers a useful and illustrative summary of the complexity of the task in his reflection that:

‘the concept of an international school becomes complex and confusing if we consider the range of manifestations it can have: the overseas schools of countries such as France, Germany, Switzerland for their expatriate nationals; the UWCs (United World Colleges), which are mission-driven; the Aga Khan academies offering IB programmes to the underprivileged in parts of Africa and India; the EU schools the Pestalozzi schools that provide scholarships to bring together students from different countries to study in one place (also mission-driven); GEMS schools that offer differentiated school fees across countries to provide access to various socio-economic sections of communities; the national state schools with international sections for students from abroad in countries like Sweden, France and the Netherlands, that offer IB programmes; the national private IB schools which attract overseas students or open a branch in another country; finally, the IB state schools around the world that accounted for 56% of all IB schools in December 2014 (that is, the 2191 state schools).’

(Hill, 2015, p 64).

His suggestion that schools should be identified within his proposed ‘National-International School Continuum’ acknowledges the idea that many state schools offer international curricula, while, conversely, schools located in the international environment may restrict their educational offer to curricula linked with the home state. Similarly, his view that schools may be partly international, or have sections that cater for international students, shows understanding of the economic environment in which many privately owned schools operate, in needing to broaden their potential catchment to the international market. He proposes that international schools in the ‘post-Ideal’ era have many characteristics that differ greatly from those of the early ‘Ideal’ era schools, which makes providing a short definition of an international school a difficult task to achieve. Rather, he proposes a continuum of different theoretical types that can help to describe and explain the different characteristics of international schools in the current environment. These different theoretical types include:

- The pure national school: inclusive in purpose; open to all students regardless of socio-economic class, culture, ability, etc; offers an education programme prescribed by the nation state; culturally homogeneous students and staff; accountable to and funded by central government.

- The pure national independent (private) school: established as an alternative to the state system of education; offers education programmes prescribed by the state; decides on its admission criteria, in accordance with national laws; culturally homogeneous students and staff; accountable to a governing body independent of the state government; funded from student fees; recognized and approved by the education authorities.
- The pure international school: established principally for the children of internationally mobile parents or to promote international mindedness by voluntarily bringing students from many countries together in one place (*note the comparison with Hayden and Thompson's (2013) category A and B schools*); offer a recognized programme of international education; have a culturally diverse student body with no privileges to any particular cultural or religious group; own admission criteria *which is usually quite inclusive of students with mental and physical disabilities*; be accountable to a governing body which reflects the culturally diverse nature of the school; funded by student fees; officially recognized by the authorities of the host country.

(Hill, 2015)

Hill's view that these suggestions are in part theoretical and are 'pure' school types that rarely exist in reality, allows for the notion that many schools, both in national and international environments, can demonstrate any number of, and varying degrees of, the characteristics of each type along a proposed continuum. Issues such as the ethnicity of students, language of instruction, system of governance, financing, and the nationality of those involved with governance boards, therefore, are accounted for by a more holistic survey of type and allow for variations according to, for example, the school's philosophical approach or to specific regional characteristics. This model is particularly interesting for the focus of this study as it makes explicit reference to an aspect of schooling that is barely acknowledged in the already minimal amount of literature offered on international schooling, namely that of inclusion of students with different physical and intellectual

challenges. Due to its reference to a variety of criteria and descriptors related to defining international schools, Hill's '*Criteria and descriptors for being an international school*' (Hill, 2016, p 15-18) will be used to support part of the study (the headteachers' interview and accompanying school-type identification questionnaire). The continuum and accompanying school self-analysis questionnaire (see Appendix F) provide an opportunity for the case study schools to self-identify their characteristics along Hill's National-International School Continuum, thereby opening discussion on the approaches and philosophy of the school in general educational matters and those focussed on the issue of admission and provision for students with special educational needs and learning difficulties.

2.5 The Current State of International Schooling

2.5.1 The recent rapid growth of numbers of international schools and related tensions

The study has, in part, resulted from acknowledgement of the fact that international schooling has reached a critical juncture by way of movement away from the more traditional, 'ideal' view of international schools towards becoming a phenomenon driven by rapid globalisation and global demand for what can be argued is ostensibly a Western-style, English-medium education. Growth patterns suggest trends that show consumer demand for a school-based educational experience for children from areas such as China and the UAE, in order to eventually access Western-style university education, with the final aim of entering the global labour market equipped with the types of advantage previously associated with those offered to western countries. This trend is fuelled by increasingly wealthy and expanding middle classes in the areas of rapid growth, whose aspirations are considered by some to be the ability to 'buy an educational passport that gives them access to the world's best universities and increases their chances of getting a good job.' (Paton, 2012, p24). In this way, therefore, 'globalisation has created the demand (and necessity) for international education, with a resultant expectation of access to mobility in the global labour market' (Machin, 2017, p135). This rapid growth in demand for international schooling has driven growth in numbers of Hayden and Thompson's (2013) Category C-type international schools, signalling a movement away from the more traditional forms of international schools.

Further economic insight into the reasons for the recent global growth of Category C type international schools can be seen when viewing these new types of schools as instrumental in offering alternatives to government investment and expenditure within the host state. This growth in the number of these types of international schools 'offer governments a pragmatic response to the need to provide international education and a response to the demands of the growing middle classes for quality educational provision ... they provide an efficient means of a country's citizens gaining globally acceptable qualifications (the International Baccalaureate, for instance) and a fiscal response to increasing school choice and quality without increasing government expenditure.' (Machin, 2017, p 134) Thus, it is argued by supporters of this ideology, these schools perform a key role in progressing the particular form of economic development favoured by the state (for example in states like China, India, UAE and Malaysia) by providing a cost-effective alternative tier of education. In doing this, and by educating a proportion of its citizens to what is deemed to be 'Western' standards, these states ensure that continued future growth is 'being driven at the highest level' (Keeling, 2012, p20), referring to the international school educated elites and their potential for the future direction of development of the state.

Other reasons for this unparalleled growth in numbers of pupils applying for education in international schools, and the subsequent growth in the numbers of schools, relate to governments' active encouragement of the development of international schools within their state as a means to create a different type of educational offer as an alternative to the state system. This trend is supported by some governments through relaxing the rules on expectations on host state nationals' children to fulfil national curricular requirements. This relaxation of state regulation of education for some allows pupils interested in international schooling to receive a full (or close to full) education within international schools and according to international school curricula. The resultant demand for international-style schooling can also have a consequent set of impacts on commercial activity within the state. Economic reasons for establishing international schools can relate to factors such as fluctuations in land prices leading investors towards entrepreneurial activity in creating new schools. There is also evidence of a growing number of schools located on 'campus-style' compounds, where commercial and educational needs are met as part of provision for

those members of the growing middle classes who choose to relocate from busy city centres to suburban, purpose-built areas. Further, Bunnell (2019) offers details of political reasons for the growth in the number of international schools, linked with deliberate government policy in some states as a response to stagnant population growth rates, with corresponding drives to invite numbers of expatriate workers to the state, sometimes with the promise of citizenship. Singapore's 2013 'A Sustainable Population for a Dynamic Singapore' White Paper, for example, demonstrated this dynamic within the context of a broader picture of declining birth rates in South-East Asia and fears of a predicted resultant impact on the future workforce. The provision of educational facilities for these invited 'new nationals' explains some of the links with the rapid growth in number of international schools in these areas.

Recent analysis of the changing international school landscape by ISC Research (in 2019 and 2021) has highlighted new trends in demand for international schooling derived from new types of expatriate workers, linked with emerging global technology-related industries; *'fintech and artificial intelligence industries are generating a changing demographic of expatriate professionals, particularly families from India and Southern Asia.'* (Gaskell, 2019, p 37)

Furthermore, new trends have been registered in the form of increasing demand by wealthy elites within some states for international school education in neighbouring countries that may offer alternatives to the restrictive conditions of the national education systems. These neighbouring states may also offer competition to the host state's international schools by providing cheaper alternatives within reasonable travelling distances. The following explanation provides a short analysis, with reference to particular states, of this relatively new dynamic in the development of different types of demand for international schooling:

'This is particularly so for Chinese families buying second properties in such cities as Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok in order to register their child at an international school there. International schools in Malaysia and Thailand are typically more affordable and more readily accessible than the relatively new international bilingual schools sector in China. In addition, they are not regulated so heavily. This means Chinese children can access full

international education from kindergarten to Grade 12, which is not possible in China due to government regulations during the compulsory years. If the cost of international education, plus the curriculum restrictions in China remain high, it is likely that this education mobility trend will continue.'

(Gaskell, 2019, p 36)

Whilst the growth of international schooling across many areas of the Global South has been emphatic, the case of China serves as a good example of how state policymaking, combined with a growth in neoliberal values among neighbouring states' governments has provided lucrative investment opportunities within the international schooling sector. The trend of 'opting out' of Chinese state education in the manner described above may be accelerated by further increases in control over aspects of Chinese education, for example, the introduction of 'Xi Jinping Thought' as part of the Chinese national curriculum (see BBC News (2021); The Economist (2021)).

The growth of Category C type schools has been so rapid and significant, that it has resulted in the further stratification of the market and the development of an unofficial 'three-tier' form of categorization, involving reference to 'Tier 1' or 'Elite / Prestige' schools, in comparison with 'mid-market' or 'lower-market' schools (Bunnell, 2014). The features of schools that serve to distinguish them from other tiers include the perceived quality of the educational offer, the range of facilities found on campus, membership, accreditation and frequency of inspection by different organisations, and the closeness to international or western styles of educational programmes. As these are unofficial designations, the links between these types of categorization and schools' responses to the issue of inclusion and the education of children with special educational needs are uncertain (for example, this may be dependent on whether the school would want to, or would benefit from, portraying itself as 'elite', and therefore 'exclusive' and exclusionary).

The effect of this widespread growth and change in the type, and arguably purpose, of international schools has caused broad reflection on the nature of international schooling; 'there is a need to reconceptualise the role of International Schools. If they are no longer about facilitating global peace, or about educating the global nomad, what are they about? Are they about facilitating global trade or global development? Or is international schooling

about facilitating global capital accumulation and a global ‘superclass’? (Bunnell, 2014, p 32). Some (e.g. Hill, 2006; Maxwell et al, 2018) argue that the term ‘international schools’ should no longer be used to describe Category C type schools, and instead suggest the use of the term ‘Elite education’ as more appropriate for describing the growth of schools that are created for the children of wealthy host state nationals who seek an alternative to the national education system, or at least reduced levels of engagement and expectation with the demands of the national education system. Hill’s (2016) argument that schools should only be identified as purely ‘international’ if they offer all three International Baccalaureate programmes (ie the Primary Years Programme, the Middle Years Programme and the Diploma Programme) offers an idea of the more moral and internationalist, if traditional, values attached by some to the identification of international schools. This argument, however, does not take into account the fact that the International Baccalaureate itself has moved away from its previous client base among more traditional types of international schools for more lucrative US domestic markets (Bunnell, 2012), and that parts of the IB programmes, (in particular the Middle Years Programme) have been the subject of criticism over the quality of its educational offer.

These changes have coincided with the weakening of links between some of the more influential and traditional originators and promoters of international schooling. The International Baccalaureate’s decision to focus expansion on the USA (see above, and Bunnell (2012)) mean that over 1000 schools in USA are now IB World Schools (compared with a global total number of 5284 IB World Schools (IB, 2020)), demonstrating a shift in focus from association with more traditional markets towards areas of profitability. This has caused disillusionment among the more traditional types of international schools. Whilst trends identify a recent resumption in the global growth of the IB programmes, particularly in the IB Diploma Programme (Civinhi, 2020), the most popular international school examination qualification is now the Cambridge International Examinations’ IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education). This has given rise to concerns regarding the quality of the educational product being offered under the banner of a British style education within institutions that may scarcely be identified as international schools. Efforts to ensure the quality of the examination and accompanying courses have seen the involvement of organizations tasked with ensuring that UK-style standards are met in

schools, e.g., the BSO (British Schools Overseas) and accompanying accreditation and quality assurance visits by agencies such as Penta International inspection and accreditation services.

The rapid growth in the number of Category C type international schooling was raised by Walker in 2002 (then Director General of the International Baccalaureate Organization). His predictions of the 'path' of international schooling being that of hyper-globalisation along the lines of exporters of fast food and branded goods (or the 'MacDonaldisation' of international schooling, as referred to by Bunnell (2014)), rather than a more 'visionary' unifying mission of international schooling proposed by supporters of more traditional international schooling, it seems, is being realised if the trends highlighted by ISC Research in the growth of international schooling maintain their current direction. (Walker, 2002)

Some of the more traditional types of international schools have reacted to the recent rapid growth of Category C type schools by emphasizing the preservation of the original values associated with the 'ideal' phase of international schooling. They have shown signs of rallying together to support a common approach in defending the values that are assumed to be at the core of what is traditionally known as international schooling, namely global citizenship, acceptance of diversity, and international cooperation. The University of Bath's Alliance for International Education (AIE) has, since its inception in 2002, spearheaded efforts to coordinate like-minded schools and educators to help support these traditional principles and ethos of international schooling and education. These views were supported as part of a keynote speech at a conference of the AIE in 2017, delivered by Professor Marli Huijter (AIE, 2017), who suggested that, contrary to hastily adopting contemporary progressive ideals along with the pace of change in the international school sector, international schools should consider 'staying behind' to absorb and reflect on those concepts that have served to build international schooling from the outset. A response to the speech in the form of a provocation piece (Haywood, 2018) reinforces the idea that a significant proportion of the international schools sector view the current pace of expansion in the sphere of international schooling as a threat to the values of global citizenship, interconnectedness and inclusion that, in his view, embody the ideals towards which international schooling should continue to aspire:

‘Something that most definitely seems to have been left behind is the notion that international education is for everyone. It never was, you might say: international schools have always been elitist. But there have been moments of opportunity (which George Walker, once IB Director General, referred to as the ‘age of influence’) in which there might have been a coming together with the sharing of experiences and approaches across national/international lines. Not cultural colonisation – but genuine exchange. This moment seems to have evaporated as international schools thrive in their own domains with a sense of superiority that is necessary for them to attract families willing to invest in the expensive fees needed to keep them running and profitable. For those whose values in international learning were always founded on equity and inclusion, this is definitely something worth staying behind for.’

(Haywood, 2018)

It is evident, then, that there are significant sources of tension within international schooling, caused by the recent rapid rate and direction of growth. Examined through a more critical, and perhaps political, lens, one may interpret the growth of new Category C type schools for wealthy local elites, and the corresponding responses by those associated with the more traditional view of the ideals that underpin ‘international schooling’ as a snapshot of wider tensions related to responses by supporters of traditional, liberal and Western economies and ideals, to challenges to the traditional hegemony of these values by the world’s rising economic powers.

Viewed from another perspective, it can be seen as almost ironic that much of the growth of the new types of international schools have been encouraged by the ‘hypercapitalist’ model of international schooling (Bunnell, 2014). This model describes the export of luxury Western-style ‘experiences’, for example, the educational experience offered by international or franchised branches of schools such as Dulwich, Repton, Harrow and Malvern schools aimed at securing Western-style education for the children of the wealthiest. As an example, education in an international school in China generally costs more than the average annual family income in China (The Atlantic.com, 2017). This form of cultural export may be criticised by defenders of the more traditional values of international schooling as a development that seeks to achieve only a specific economic purpose, without

acknowledgement of the more moral stance supported by those schools and nations that were involved with the creation of the international school system in the first place. However, many supporters of these values are themselves schools in traditionally wealthy European nations who have, in past and present incarnations, usually catered for a relatively narrow and wealthy globally itinerant workforce. These views may be seen by some as hypocritical in their judgement of developing nations or other cultures for a lack of international morality in the product offered by international schools in these states. These contending views, it can be argued, stand as simplistic judgements (and counter claims) on the morality of the different types of educational offer that are developing within the field of international schooling. A focus on examining the socio-economic and cultural driving forces behind the growth in demand for new international schools would seem a more effective approach to explaining the recent growth phenomenon and the related values embodied in these newly created schools. A comparison, for example, of the impact of both the traditional and non-traditional international school markets in terms of perpetuating, or even widening, educational and economic inequality and social tension may be a more appropriate approach, rather than assumption of the 'goodness' or altruism of one system in comparison to the other (Cambridge, 2011; Hanley, 2013; Karim, 2012; Maire and Windle, 2021).

2.5.2 The growth of the international school market and effects on admission and support of students with SEN

Within the context of these significant changes in the landscape of international schooling and the ensuing controversy and debate generated by shifts in growth markets and concerns regarding the erosion of values traditionally attached to international schooling, it seems pertinent to ask questions regarding the nature of the educational offer of international schools in different areas of the world. The study aims to use an issue that could, potentially, serve as a 'touchstone' of opinion and act as a means of evaluating the ethos and values of international schools. Whilst the inclusion of students with SEN is a development that has both its critics and supporters within schools in a national context (see 'The Inclusion Debate', p36 below), the debate over inclusion has made relatively little

headway in the international schooling sector. As mentioned earlier, many schools, even those that are traditionally purported to have an enlightened internationalist outlook and embrace a diversity of national backgrounds within the classroom, often display the characteristics of having elitist and selective admission policies with regard to the academic ability of the learner. Whilst some international schools offer access through bursaries, scholarships, or grants (more closely related with Category B 'ideological' type international schools, though these are more usually based on fostering ideological values linked with global citizenship, cosmopolitanism, and international mindedness), these are generally awarded to academically talented learners who are unlikely to be identified as having special educational needs. Some schools such as the United World College chain of schools are known to award generous grants to support the education of those from poorer economic backgrounds. Nevertheless, international schools are generally slow to develop strategies and policies that can be classed as inclusive for students with special educational needs (Haldimann and Hollington, 2004; Lane and Jones, 2016; Shaklee, 2007). Whilst ISC surveys (2016, 2017 and 2019) indicate a movement away from international schools' self-perceptions as being selective, it can be argued that they are still some distance away from being fully inclusive of learners with SEN (ISC Research, 2019).

One dynamic that could influence inclusive practice and attitudes towards inclusion of learners with SEN in international schools may derive from the potential change in demographics involved with the growth in number of Category C type schools. This has the potential to become a catalyst for changes in schools' policies towards children with SEN and learning difficulties, driven by necessity rather than as a philosophical decision. The areas of growth in international schooling focus less on itinerant workers (who, it has been argued, are more reluctant to travel with children if they have special educational needs (see Shaklee, 2007; US State Department, 2017)), and more on host country nationals, who demonstrate closer similarities in terms of their population demographic to global averages, and therefore have similar representative ratios (using an estimate of 10-20%) of students with special educational needs and learning difficulties (notwithstanding, of course, the fact that many of these learners are the children of the wealthy elites of those states, and hardly representative of the state's population as a whole). It may be seen, then, that these factors could result in less selective admissions procedures, and in practical changes in international

schools' practices in response to supporting these students. Furthermore, increased competition in the areas that have seen most dramatic growth in the number of international schools, for example the United Arab Emirates and China, is resulting in some saturation of the market and, at times, a subsequent need for individual schools to enhance their offer by admitting students from a broader range of academic ability, including those with special educational needs, in order to remain competitive (Azzam, 2017; ISC Research, 2019; MacDonald, 2006; Machin, 2017).

The issue of inclusion is considered by some to relate to the concept of the development of fairer and more democratic societies. Ainscow et al (2006) posit the suggestion that inclusion relates to broader issues in the development of principles and educated states. Others (Boyadjieva and Ilieva 2017; Costa 2013; Rawls 2002) identify the concept of inclusion within the context of social justice and a rights-based approach to participation within democratic societies. Whilst these concepts may sit uncomfortably within an international schooling system that is essentially elitist and financially exclusionary in nature, some perceive the benefit of educating those children of the elites who may potentially influence future decision-making (perhaps informed by internationalist and inclusive principles) as being justified (Hanley, 2013; Keeling, 2012). Dubai, for example, in its decision to make educational inclusion compulsory in all schools from 2020, including privately funded international schools, serves as an example of how the issue of inclusion can become relevant in an environment that can be perceived as elitist (see Findings Case Study 2: Section 4.2 (p110) and Discussion Chapter 5.2 (p142) for further detail on the case of Dubai). These ideals, however, may be seen by some as reinforcing a particularly Western, liberal model of democracy and participation. Furthermore, it poses difficult moral questions to the exporters of global, European or British-style education systems that it is acknowledged that some of the areas of most significant global growth in international schooling are administered by regimes that may have an ambivalent view towards concepts of social justice, democracy and fair representation. These issues may serve as potentially fruitful avenues for further study.

One must also be careful of unconscious assumptions of the moral 'good' and 'rightness' of inclusion as a philosophical principle, and a further assumption that full inclusion is a natural

stage of progress within states or institutions. Some argue that there is a disconnect between theories of international human rights and moral theory and legitimations (see Gordon, 2013; Peters and Besley, 2014) that undermine unquestioned assumptions that inclusion stands as a universal societal goal. Dunne's (2009) study of the responses of educators to the 'normalising' of ideals of educational inclusion serves to support the idea that assumptions of a united and supportive response to inclusion can be misleading, even among those who are tasked with supporting and delivering inclusive programmes within educational settings. Furthermore, when viewed from a broader perspective, the universality of the principle of inclusion can become problematic when competing values are involved. Inclusion is understood within this study as a general principle that can be specifically applied to areas such as education and the inclusion of learners with special educational needs. A broader understanding of inclusion, however, also embraces other aspects of society that involve, for example, inclusion on issues related to gender, culture, and religion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). In some cases, the application of these broader societal principles of inclusion can be seen to intersect, and sometimes impair with, the application of the inclusion principle within an educational context. There are abundant instances within the field of education that serve to illustrate this tension, for example, commitment to a linguistic or religious principle within a state or an individual school which can conflict with a concurrent commitment to inclusion (see Jacobs and Arora (2018); Tan et al (2017)).

In conclusion, therefore, the issue of inclusion in relation to international schools can, understandably, be subject to scepticism and criticism, since most international schools, with the possible exceptions of some ideological, religious, or philanthropically motivated schools, are private, fee-paying, and for-profit institutions. The concept of inclusion and, to some extent, its practical application within the environment of some international schools are, therefore, immediately challenged by the financially exclusionary nature of most of the world's international schools. Similarly, international schools, if perceived as globally located private schools, may be equated with an ethos of selectivity, particularly if the school is associated with, or affiliated to, the previously mentioned UK private schools that have traditionally elitist connotations. It is intended that these issues, as further detailed below in the debate on inclusion, will serve to inform the approach adopted by the study both in

terms of the methodology and, more importantly, in the way that inclusion is understood within the context of the attitudes and practices of the international schools.

2.6 The inclusion debate: Views on disability and impairment

The concepts of inclusion within education and inclusive education have emerged as a result of a re-evaluation of systems predicated on the medical / psycho-medical model of understanding disability. Critics of the psycho-medical model of disability focus on the overemphasis of theorists and policy makers on adjustment and assistance by and for the disabled person. This, they argue, ignores the issue of equality of entitlement as part of a diverse humanity. Consequently, the development of the social model of understanding disability as expressed, for example, by changes in the UK that started with the 1978 Warnock Report and resultant 1981 Education Act, or in the USA's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997, with subsequent recognition and development on a global scale, reject the psycho-medical paradigm that emphasises neurological deficits within the individual as the cause of learning difficulties. Instead, the social model proposes that the difficulties faced by those assessed as having special educational needs are environmental and a product of pre-existing assumptions and related exclusions, resulting from the cultures and systems that had traditionally been created to suit those without impairment. The social model of disability posits that it is society and its attitudes that create disability by constructing practices that may deny full access to participation to some of its members. Furthermore, disability scholars and disability rights campaigners view a state of 'normality' as an inaccurate social construct that suggests attitudes of superiority and is dismissive of difference and diversity, arguing that normality 'is a construct imposed on a reality where there is only difference.' (Oliver, 1996, p 88). Accordingly, disability should, then, be celebrated as part of a world that is diverse in a multitude of ways. Inclusive education demands the removal of these socially constructed barriers to accessing education for all by rethinking and changing the whole school's teaching and learning environment in order to provide equitable access to the educational experience (Ainscow, 1999).

Nevertheless, the social model of disability has been criticised for its over-socialisation of the reality of the causes of disability. Critics (e.g., Altman, 2001; Clough and Corbett, 2000; Skidmore, 1996) posit that the social model focuses on the moral importance of inclusion, and tend towards abstraction, with little by way of practical and supportive advice for learners or schools. Others suggest that the social model ignores the reality of impairment and its effects on individuals' abilities and activities, which can, for example, be characterized by physical and intellectual limitations, or in some cases, by issues such as pain, illness and fatigue (Frederickson and Cline, 2002).

These dichotomous paradigms have been subject to criticism (e.g., Gutierrez and Stone, 1997; Tomlinson, 1982; Xiao Qu, 2020) and suggestions that these views of disability and impairment form an inadequate basis for gaining an understanding of the issue of inclusion and its relevance. As an alternative, mediation is proposed in the form of the interactive approach, which avoids 'fatalistic psychological views of individual causality' and 'simple sociological views of environmental determinism.' (Tomlinson, 1982, p 22). This approach is based on the proposal that gauging levels of educational need should be in accordance with an understanding of the learner's strengths and weaknesses, within the context of the levels of support provided to the individual and the appropriateness of the provision. The theoretical basis of this approach within both interactionist and constructivist theory allows for examination of interactions between the individual learner and the environment, taking both the levels of impairment and the potential environmental barriers, among other factors, into account (Frederickson and Cline, 2002; Skidmore, 1996). Studies by Keogh et al (1997) and Booth (1996) suggest that it is impossible to separate the relative success of the individual learner from the contexts in which they live and function, particularly in the case of the relationship between the teacher, learner and curriculum, but also within the wider social context. A further suggestion (Xiao Qu, 2020) posits the critical realist model of education and inclusion as one that accounts for the interactions mentioned above, whilst also acknowledging wider influences such as medical needs, and political and economic tensions, on decision-making related to inclusion. The interactive and critical realist approaches, therefore, are considered to be particularly apt as a form of interpretation of inclusion for this study, as the varied educational environments within which the case study schools are located, with all the attendant contextual factors, coupled with the varied

backgrounds of pupils at the schools, will inevitably have an important bearing on the relative success of the educational experience for individual learners.

2.7 The concept of inclusion: historical and legislative perspectives

Elements of broad international agreements have alluded to the rights of people with disabilities and learners with special educational needs throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. Whilst the United Nations' Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948 (Article 26) and Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (Articles 23 and 29) do not treat with the issues of inclusion and inclusive education in specific detail, they laid the foundations for a rights-based approach to issues relating to inclusion. Concern and regard for inclusion and the rights of people with disabilities, and in particular, for learners with special educational needs was brought into sharper international focus with the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and the convening of UNESCO's World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994, resulting in the celebrated Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. Both sought to secure international agreement on definitions and forms of inclusion and inclusive education, providing for further development in subsequent frameworks for action. These agreements foregrounded the issue of inclusion within wider, ambitious global developmental strategies such as the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (Article 24), the Millennium Development goals, and the current successor to these, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2015-30. The current iteration of the UN's commitment to inclusive education, as stated in the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, 2014) states the aim by 2030 to:

- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

In advancing this goal, the UN proposes that:

- Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Furthermore, Target 4.5 elaborates the aim to:

- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

whilst Article 53, related to Target 4.5, explains that:

- To achieve inclusive education, policies should aim to transform education systems so they can better respond to learners' diversity and needs. This is key in fulfilling the right to education with equality, and it is related not only to access, but also to participation and achievement of all students, with special attention to those who are excluded, vulnerable or at risk of being marginalized.

A recent reinforcement of commitment to these goals was seen in UNESCO's (2020) evaluation of progress with supporting and implementing educational inclusion globally as part of its reflections on the 25th anniversary of the Salamanca Statement.

Whilst the existence of broad global intentions and agreements within legislative and policy statements demonstrate a commitment to inclusive practice in education, it should be borne in mind, however, that these do not necessarily equate to effective action. Criticisms have been levelled at the lack of progress since the Salamanca Statement (Conner, 2016) and the persistence of segregated educational environments (Ravet, 2011), despite the progress of the 'struggle for inclusion' (Rieser, 2012).

2.8 The wider debate on inclusion within an educational context

Whilst it is acknowledged that most opinions on inclusion generally derive from a concern for the wellbeing and progress of the individual learner, the wider debate on inclusion in education has been characterised by deep division and, to some extent, acrimony. There has been fierce debate even among those who advocate an inclusive approach, ranging from issues that one would assume to be elementary, e.g., in defining inclusion (see Armstrong, Armstrong, and Spandagou 2011; Moliner et al, 2011) to the debate about what constitutes inclusion, as opposed to integration (e.g., Pijl, Meijer and Hegarty, 1998).

Supporters of an inclusive approach to education refer to the social model of understanding disability as the basis for eliminating barriers to an equal, inclusive and fair approach to educating all learners (Slee, 1997). Arguments for educational inclusion are unequivocal in the insistence that all learners be given equal access and have the same opportunities to participate and achieve. Whilst integration of learners with special educational needs suggests making accommodations for individuals according to context and the resources to do so (Ainscow, 1997), inclusion, on the other hand, demands that schools are thoroughly and completely restructured to ensure that all students are given equal opportunity to achieve (Ainscow, 2005). Judgements on the extent to which this can, and has, been achieved, have also proven to be divisive. It has been argued, for example, that the continued existence of what is argued are educationally segregatory institutions, such as special schools, attests to the failure of an inclusive approach (Booth, 1998; Jencks, 2007; Ravet, 2011; Wertheimer, 1997). Similarly, others have been unequivocal in their view of inclusion as a right that should be available to, and exercised by, all:

'in the cultures and curricula of mainstream schools and decreasing exclusionary pressures... Schools should alter their ethos and practices to ensure that all children are included as a right.'

(Booth et al, 2006, p. 14)

Alternatively, those who have opposed and argued against the principle of inclusion and assimilation of all learners into mainstream settings refer to the right of the child to be

educated in a separate setting that is appropriate and safe for the learner (Farrell, 2006). Furthermore, some have viewed the social model of disability as having the effect of 'marginalising people with intellectual disabilities' (MacKay, 2002, p 161) and objected to its dismissal of the physiological basis for some learning difficulties. Further arguments against inclusion refer to a variety of factors in supporting the view that not all learners are suited for mainstream settings, including an understanding of relative levels of progress of the learners, concerns for learners' physical and emotional wellbeing and safety, and the opinions and rights of the learner themselves to a separate form of education (Attwood, 2004; Farrell, 2004; Marshall and Goodall, 2015). Studies on the voice of the learner and the right to be educated separately have been particularly influential in questioning the assumptions adopted by an inclusive approach. Farrell (2006), for example, asserts that assumptions made involving inclusion and individual learners are more political than educational in character, and often result in anxiety for both learners and their parents or carers.

2.9 The definition of inclusive schooling used in this study

The study bases its definition of inclusive schooling on that of UNESCO, as articulated in the Salamanca Statement (1994).

According to the Salamanca Statement:

The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.

Within inclusive schools, children with special educational needs should receive whatever extra support they may require to ensure their effective education. Inclusive schooling is the most effective means for building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers. Assignment of children to special schools - or special classes or sections within a school on a permanent basis - should be the exception, to be recommended only in those infrequent cases where it is clearly demonstrated that education in regular classrooms is incapable of meeting a child's educational or social needs or when it is required for the welfare of the child or that of other children.

(UNESCO 1994, p 12)

The decision to base the definition of inclusive schooling used in this study on that of UNESCO is explained by its unequivocal nature and the universality of its expectations within a global context. This was considered to be particularly appropriate within the context of a study based across different geographic locations. Whilst there is no homogeneity in the definition of inclusion across the world's international schools, reference to UNESCO's definition as part of the study would help to ensure that issues of regionalism and relativism are avoided.

One issue that became clear from the outset was the limited and simplistic use of the term 'inclusion' within the context of international schooling. It is difficult to relate the principles and to apply the full implications of the meaning of inclusion to institutions that are essentially privately run, fee-paying and sometimes profit-making. A distinction is made, then, between the use of the term inclusion within this study as referring primarily to inclusion and support for learners with SEN in international schools, and economic inclusion. It is acknowledged, however, that these are both interrelated factors that often overlap with each other, and are part of a broader context that includes, for example, cultural and religious factors that interact to create a successfully inclusive learning environment.

As a result, use of the term 'inclusion' when referring to inclusive measures taken by some international schools generally refers to learners with SEN and is usually limited to a range of learning difficulties of mild to moderate nature, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and, at times, children with autistic spectrum

conditions. Support for students with physical challenges or more severe learning difficulties in international schools is generally dependent on the individual circumstances of the school and can relate to issues such as the resources available, varying expectations in building regulations and subsequent accessibility of buildings and classrooms. Whilst the study would encourage the principle of inclusion to be applied to all children, regardless of intellectual or physical needs, it is acknowledged that the physical and cultural environments within which some of the schools are located can prove a challenge to this.

An idea of a realistic ratio of pupils with special educational needs that would be expected to be represented within international schools has recently been suggested by Next Frontier Inclusion (NFI), an organization working in collaboration with international schools to support the cause of inclusion. Ratios of between 10-20% of children with special educational needs are suggested, in line with broader estimates of prevalence within the global population of learners. Furthermore, one of the founders of the organization elaborates on how international schools should approach the issue of inclusion:

How do thoughtful schools define the concept of “inclusion”? We believe that inclusion is the careful and thoughtful marriage of educational excellence and equity. Inclusive schools successfully serve a managed number of students representing the full range of learning differences: mild, moderate, intensive needs and the exceptionally able. Although percentages vary, we would expect around 10-13% of any school-age population, regardless of nationality or culture, to require learning support reflective of mild learning needs. Another 2 – 3% would require moderate support; and 1% of the population would require intensive support.

(NFI Practical Guide, 2011, p 6)

The literature, however, reveals that some international schools may treat suggestions of inclusion, and more specifically, a definite ratio of representation of learners with special educational needs, with scepticism, citing issues related to the perceived financial cost of inclusion as a barrier:

Many times, school leaders use finances as a reason to exclude children with special educational needs. They'll say 'we don't have the programme for you, so it would be wrong for us to take you into our school.' But on the flip side of this, some of these schools are accepting children with high academic gifts and talents, even though they admit that they are not happy with the provision they make.

(Ochoa, B. quoted in Gaskell, 2017, p 38)

The economic argument used by some schools to justify a selective approach to admissions and, more specifically, for focus on academic results as a marketable and therefore, integral part of the educational offer, is echoed by findings on research into what is termed 'the international school industry' (MacDonald, 2006). Economic analyses of the performance of international schools as sustainably profit-making businesses often refer to concepts such as 'economies of scale'. The realities of ensuring that profitable pupil to teacher ratios in international schools can often lead to schools viewing admission of learners with special educational needs unfavourably, and as being potentially unprofitable. This relates to assumptions that low pupil to teacher ratios, or even one to one teaching, will be needed for these types of learners. These low ratios are inevitably more expensive to support within the business model of the international school. Furthermore, the perception of international schools as 'double bottom line' organisations that are required to monitor both the quality of their educational offer and their financial viability creates tension for international school administrators and headteachers (MacDonald, 2006). These points reflect financial tensions associated not only with international schools, but also with most forms of private (fee-paying) schools. This point serves as a reminder of the recent growth of international schools (mentioned earlier), more as a new form of private, fee-paying institution created from improved economic circumstances for a small group of wealthy nationals, as opposed to the early international schools that were created to support the needs of itinerant workers and were not profit-making.

The effects of these concerns for financial profitability within international schools, and the related tensions, can potentially impact upon educational practice. Some schools may respond to these tensions by trying to decrease the perceived costs of supporting learners with special educational needs. Tarry's (2011) study on the use of classroom assistants in

international schools, for example, referred to a rise in the number of ‘untrained’ teaching assistants tasked with supporting learners with special educational needs in international schools, mainly due to concerns over the costs of low teacher – pupil ratios or the cost of specialised support. These views are supported by those of Rose and Forlin (2010) who highlighted the importance of focussed training and professional development for teaching assistants working with these pupils, stating that ‘a clarification of role is essential if classrooms are to become more inclusive and effective deployment of staffing is to be achieved’ (Rose and Forlin, 2010, p 320).

Furthermore, many international schools claim that lack of a coherent structure of support and the absence of English medium specialist services renders their institution unable to offer the levels of organisation and resources needed to accommodate a broad range of difficulties. These statements tie in with the wider debate on inclusion and the persistence of the psycho-medical model of disability and its use to justify limitations to provision made by institutions. This view, however, has been subject to accusations of promoting a traditionalist paradigm and approach towards the concept of inclusion, ‘the cry of international schools has often been that for them to take students with disabilities is cost prohibitive, and they are probably right under the ‘medical-integrated’ constructs’, and suggesting otherwise that ‘social-inclusive constructs appear both to be able to solve the financial concerns and to point international education more honourably in the way of educating not only the whole child but also every child.’ (Rieser, 2012, p 26)

2.10 The complexities of locating the ‘inclusion debate’ within an international school setting

The issue of inclusion within an international school setting offers a variety of challenges and opportunities to the researcher who hopes to gain insight into the meaning of inclusion and the universality of its applicability within different contexts. The appeal of the present study was related to the opportunity not only to consider the meaning of inclusion across geographically diverse areas, but also within a socio-economic environment (namely that of international schooling) that was subject to powerful neoliberal, elitist and potentially

exclusionary forces. An exploration of the resilience and universality of the concept of inclusion within these settings would, it was felt, offer additional insight into the inclusion debate.

The disputed nature of inclusion can be seen within several different contexts. Some, for example, have drawn attention to the view that inclusion can be seen as being a construct related to primarily western ideas about social justice and democracy that have less relevance in other cultural contexts (see, for example, Rapp and Corral-Granados, 2021; Rose et al, 2014). Others (for example Hansen, 2012; Nilholm, 2020; Norwich, 2013; Qvortrup and Qvortrup, 2018) question the applicability of inclusion as a definite, conclusive set of principles and behaviours, and instead posit the idea that the very nature of inclusion means that it can be better understood as part of a broad set of attitudes, or otherwise as part of a continuous process that adapts and evolves in response to specific challenges. These understandings of inclusion are particularly apt for the current study. The multiple types of challenges to the application of inclusive principles within globally located international schools, which often act independently of state specific systems without recourse to a monolithic set of standards, mean that a single, conclusive definition of inclusion, and most certainly a single set of practical guidelines for its achievement, are often irrelevant or inapplicable to the context in which many international schools operate. For example, if international schools are seen by some as merely globally located private schools, with few functions apart from supporting the ambitions of the global elites, then the concept of inclusion in a wider sense that considers different forms of diversity (that would include financial, gender-based, cultural and religious inclusion, amongst other forms of inclusion) are immediately challenged. Similarly, the myriad individual contextual features of what can recently be described as an 'international school' (from, for example, elitist, wealthy individual private schools to less well resourced 'low-fee' type schools attended by the children of those who seek to find better alternatives to the state's educational provision) serve to undermine the certainties that are assumed in many descriptions or definitions of inclusion. This can be seen even in assumptions as simple as that made by the Salamanca Statement that 'a child with a disability should attend the neighbourhood school' (UNESCO, 1994, p 17), a concept clearly undermined by the fact that many international school pupils are part of globally itinerant families who often rely on a

‘third culture’ (that of the international school) and cannot relate to the assumption that they can attend a ‘neighbourhood school’, whether they have learning needs or not. Recent recognition by UNESCO (2021) of the significance of the role of non-state actors within educational provision in global settings go some way to address and mitigate these assumptions when considering the effectiveness of the implementation of inclusive practice in diverse global educational environments (see paragraph below).

A further element of complexity related to places of learning is seen when examining the situation of international school students through the lens of Norwich’s (2008) ‘location’ dilemma. Many pupils who would potentially apply for places in international schools (particularly those schools identified as Category A or B type schools) are mostly tied to parents’ or carers’ work requirements. The reluctance of families of children with SEN to travel, despite these work requirements, due to concerns that their child’s needs may not be met or, more seriously, due to the trauma of refusal by some international schools to admit students with a history of learning needs, provides a complex international dimension to the ‘location’ dilemma. The potential impact on parental or caregivers’ career requirements, the economic concerns of the family, the effects on the child’s self-esteem and the related broader social effects of these combined dynamics provides an example of the complexity of these situations and related decision-making processes within the context of international school settings.

The complexity of these challenges to the assumptions made by traditional definitions of inclusion are effectively explained by reference to Armstrong’s (2017) adoption of Rittel and Webber’s (1973) ideological proposal, that of a ‘wicked problem’, where he redeploys these principles within the context of special and inclusive education. His view that the complexities of inclusive education mean that they are a ‘wicked problem’ in the sense that they are unique, they defy traditionally successful approaches and are resistant to single, definitive solutions, explains his claim that attempting to address these complexities can lead to the development of new perspectives, which in turn can lead to innovation and positive change. The location of the ‘wicked problem’ of inclusion within an international school context, it can be argued, involves an even further increase in complexity levels, due to the innate lack of homogeneity or single set of standards that characterise international

schools. Whilst this means that any efforts to examine phenomena such as inclusion and inclusive practice within international school environments face considerable challenges, the potential benefit to understanding inclusion as a broader concept and set of principles is also exponentially increased. To explain it another way, one may posit that an exploration of successful engagement with, and implementation of, inclusive attitudes and practices by international schools, despite the existence of very little by previous precedent (being largely unique and independent entities) tests the applicability and universality of the principles of inclusion in unique ways. The application of these principles in environments that are not only unfamiliar (suggested by the lack of related literature), but which can also prove hostile to such concepts, due to the prevalence of exclusionary forces such as neoliberalism within international school environments, arguably serve to reveal facets of the inclusion debate that may not have been previously considered.

Complex issues related to the different types of educational provision within diverse international contexts have also been addressed by UNESCO in a recently published position paper that examines the roles of 'non-state actors' in global education (UNESCO, 2021). The report acknowledges the various stratified forms of provision found within different international contexts and, rather than focussing entirely on the morality of different forms of provision (for example, state versus private education), asks pertinent questions about the socio-economic contexts in which these forms of education are offered. It goes further in dispelling common 'myths' or assumptions related to a variety of different types of educational provision. The report offers some parallels with this study in acknowledging the complexity of the different forms of educational offering and supports the idea that even a simple categorisation of international schools into for-profit and not for profit proves to be a very difficult task. It cites the cases, for example, of British private schools (some of which may use the descriptor 'international school') who operate as registered charities, making the process of identifying levels of profit more difficult to discern (UNESCO, 2021, p38). Further to this, efforts by UNESCO to classify schools into type according to the levels of fees charged, in recognition of the fact that not all international schools are 'elite international private schools' and acknowledging the proliferation of 'low-fee private schools', serve to further highlight the complexity of the context. As a final example of this type of complexity, the report cites the interesting and important insight into the common practice (familiar in

many locations across the world) of state school teachers also providing private supplementary tuition following the end of the school day. The complexity of this situation, involving the potential deterioration of the regular school-based offer in favour of more appealing (and therefore lucrative) tuition opportunities clearly demonstrates the oversimplification embodied in the assumption that education is either state-provided or private. The perspective it also provides on the morality of different forms of educational offering, mired as the example is in the context of low income state roles such as that of a teacher in many parts of the world, coupled with the quality of traditional state-based offers (which may also be influenced by linguistic, religious, cultural and other factors that can affect its appeal to learners within an increasingly globalised world), further emphasises the complexity of the international context. Efforts to address concepts such as inclusion (with the often related assumptions of uniformity of educational opportunity) within such a diverse variety of contexts and practices can, therefore, be very challenging and complex. The UNESCO report provides valuable insight into the difficulties involved with assessing the roles of non-state actors in global education. Within the immediate context of this study, it highlights the difficulties of identifying different types of international schools and emphasises the inadequacy of making simplistic judgements about the morality of eschewing state-provided education in favour of non-state, fee-paying provision.

2.11 Lack of research on inclusion in international schools

Arguably, then, the position of international schools within the debate on inclusion is influenced more by financial and pragmatic concerns such as access to resources (and thus more focussed on the concept of integration, rather than inclusion), as opposed to philosophical and rights-based issues. Some references have historically been made in the literature on inclusion in international schools to examples of inclusion within international school settings, for example Bradley's (2000) article that described the Dover Court Preparatory School (DCPS) in Singapore's support of a range of pupil special educational needs and learning difficulties, including 'physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties ... hearing impaired, children with Down's Syndrome or autism, students with speech and language impairments, students with epilepsy, gifted or talented students, those with cerebral palsy..' (Bradley, 2000, p 30).

Similarly, Haldimann's (2004) study referenced procedures at three international schools (in Barcelona, Manila and Sao Paulo) that had demonstrated a commitment to the principles of inclusion according to the 'Optimal Match Concept'.

Nevertheless, references to these types of studies of inclusion in international schools are generally both infrequent and usually refer only to isolated and individual cases. The work of Next Frontier Inclusion (referenced above) as part of a collaboration between educational administrators, academics and international schools has resulted in a more coordinated approach to understanding the issue of inclusion in international schools and, consequently, has seen some growth of interest in this area. Whether this will have a significant impact on the volume of academic research into the area, however, remains to be seen. Arguably, despite the early promise of case studies and academic research into inclusion in international schools prompted by articles such as Bradley's, the field remains, twenty years later, underdeveloped and lacking in formal academic study and the resultant empirical evidence that could allow more conceptual approaches and frameworks of understanding to be created.

The relatively few contributors to the field (see Agustian, 2021; Haldimann, 2004; Pletser, 2019; Shaklee, 2007) have expressed that the lack of academic research on inclusion in international schooling is a matter of concern. Pletser's (2019) view that there is 'little rigorous research carried out in international schools in the field of learning support and with no theoretical frameworks identified' (Pletser, 2019, p 200) is also expressed by Bunnell (2014) who expresses concern at the lack of empirical evidence and very little by way of conceptualization and theoretical frameworks in the field in general, with existing research limited to 'a relatively non-critical narrative' (Bunnell, 2019, p 29).

Nevertheless, some isolated attempts have been made at the creation of conceptual frameworks, (though both these suggestions refer to pre-existing theories). Haldimann and Hollington (2004) proposed the Vygotskian inspired concept of the Optimal Match as being particularly suited to supporting learners with special educational needs in international schools contexts, in particular due to the difficulties faced by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities that are compounded by the language of instruction (English) often being

different to the learner's mother tongue: 'Optimal Match practices at international schools represent 'good teaching' for all students in the general international population with a special emphasis on students who are in need of special educational support: the ESL students; students with high academic abilities and talents; students with specific learning disabilities; and any other Special Needs students who present themselves with exceptionalities.' (Haldimann and Hollington, 2004, p 13)

Alternatively, Lane and Jones (2016) proposed, within the context of a quantitative correlational study, the appropriateness of consequentialist theory in supporting the concept of inclusion. They argued that the moral effect of making provision for learners with special educational needs would inevitably benefit the international school in general, and would come to be reflected in the broader leadership decisions of the headteacher and the resultant character of the school culture.

It is clear, however, that there remains a lack of directly relevant material and, of more concern, a lack of empirical evidence upon which to base clear practical decisions on how best to support learners with special educational needs and learning difficulties in international schools.

The above definitions of international schooling and inclusion, and the discussions of the implications of these meanings, serve to frame the conceptual context within which the study is located. The study, then, hopes to examine, within the local environment and unique context within which each of the case study schools are located, the factors that may support or hinder the issue of the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in international schools.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 The Research Paradigm

Whilst acknowledging the broad appeal among educational researchers of a positivist model and research paradigm (Paul et al cited in Florian (ed) 2007, p175), it was decided that an interpretivist approach would be appropriate in the conduct of the study, as it involves the exploration of knowledge through elicitation of views, attitudes and the processes of decision-making. The subjectivity of the knowledge offered through questionnaires, interviews and policy documents (these being the main forms of data-gathering used as part of the study) links with ontologies associated with interpretivism and social constructivism. The 'realities' explored in each of the case-study schools are inevitably (and some might argue especially so in the case of independent international schools) social constructs that originate as part of a wider contextual tapestry that is both subjective and relative. Similarly, the 'realities' explored as part of the study of the attitudes and influences that affect inclusion at the schools are not objective or easily measurable in a quantitative sense (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Clark, Dyson, & Millward, 1998). Rather, they are complex and multi-layered, intangible and inextricably bound to contexts that involve, and are affected by, socio-economic, political, and cultural factors (Cohen et al, 2007; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The approach, therefore, to gathering and understanding knowledge as part of the study will be characterized as being holistic, exploratory and subjective.

Some parts of the study did, however, use quantitative methods, for example, in gathering the views of teachers as part of Likert-type scales in the questionnaires. Similarly, the use of Hill's (2015) methodology for determining the characteristics and typology of schools, with accompanying spectrum and scales, relate to a more positivist approach to quantify and categorise. However, the main body of research adhered to interpretivist principles its aim to elicit and deepen knowledge of social phenomena and experiences (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). This is particularly true of the context of studies based on inclusion and special needs education. If disability is understood as a socially constructed phenomenon (Mertens and McLoughlin, 2004), then the most appropriate methods in examining attitudes towards inclusion should account for these differences and their impact on the environments within which the education is provided. It was decided, then, that the main data collection tools

used would be those that allow for the detection and gathering of attitudes and opinions. A positivist approach was considered less important or appropriate. Also, the sensitivity of inclusion to its context, as being variable across classrooms, schools, and in this case, regional and international settings, was seen to be an important consideration in planning the design of the study.

It should be acknowledged that, as part of the interpretivist paradigm, the choice of research methodology involved the researcher within a key role in 'recognising, sorting and distinguishing and dealing with the information obtained in a way leading to encompassing the emotions, values, beliefs and assumptions of individuals in a social context.' (Hassanein, 2015, p73) Whilst this is discouraged within the positivist paradigm as lacking objectivity, in this case, the researcher's role in interacting with the participants of the study was valued in terms of the potential to explore and question issues further. If the type of knowledge sought in qualitative studies is socially constructed (see Gasper (1999) cited in Young and Collin, 2004, p376), the involvement of the researcher in the research process and resultant interactions, is important in itself, as it serves to generate knowledge in a social constructivist sense. One must, however, be aware of one's own influences and agendas on the research process and use tools such as triangulation of data to guard against an overly subjective and self-fulfilling approach and response. This issue links with other epistemological issues concerning the nature of acceptable knowledge in the field of study (Ponteretto, 2005) and relationships between the researcher and participants. The dynamic relationship between researcher and participants as part of the study necessitates a subjective epistemology as it is based on the ontological position that 'social reality is a product of different views of individuals' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p 112). The research process in this case is based on interaction between researcher and participant. The validity of this interaction is contingent on the ability of the researcher to be aware of, to accept, and perhaps to utilize their own subjectivity within the bounds of the research project, thus rendering involvement as a strength (Cohen et al., 2007; Crotty, 2003; Pring, 2000), rather than a design flaw if interpreted through a positivist lens

3.2 The Role and Position of the Researcher: Reflexivity and Self-Critiquing

Despite acknowledgement of the advantages offered by the role of the researcher within an interpretivist, mainly qualitative approach to the study, it is important to note that the researcher should constantly be aware of the impact of their involvement on the design and progress of the study. Reflexivity is defined as 'the process of becoming self-aware. Researchers make regular efforts to consider their own thoughts and actions in light of different contexts. By being reflexive, case study researchers self-critique their frame of reference, cultural biases, and the ethical issues that emerge in field work.' (Mills et al, 2010, p 788). The concept and practice of reflexivity and self-critiquing can support a degree of practical self-awareness during the progress of the study than can lead to greater objectivity in understanding how they may influence the research and what steps they can take to minimise this. Thus, 'researchers should reflect about how their biases, values and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status, shape their interpretations formed during a study' (Creswell, 2009, p233).

Merton (1972) conceptualises the potential influences exerted by the researcher, either consciously or otherwise, by viewing their effects as 'insiders' ('one who has monopolistic or privileged access to knowledge, or is wholly excluded from it, by virtue of one's group membership or social position ... one endowed with special insight into matters necessarily obscure to others') and 'outsiders' ('bound to differ from those of the group under study.. because they occupy different places in the social structure [and] .. will inquire into the problems relevant to the distinctive values and interests which they share with members of their group.') (Merton, 1972, p15). Consideration of the many influences exerted by the researcher on the study, therefore, can be viewed within this conceptual framework, particularly if the researcher fulfils a number of different societal roles. This view intersects with the decision to adopt an interpretivist approach, as these factors will inevitably be seen to influence the study design and the data gathered.

The experience and roles of the researcher that were relevant to the conduct of the study include:

- roles as headteacher and senior leader in international schools in some of the

regions where the surveys were conducted (previous to the commencement of the study)

- roles as teacher in international schools in some of the regions where the survey schools were located
- role as university lecturer in Education
- role as doctoral student

The researcher can be seen, therefore, in a dual role as both insider, due to his role in leadership and teaching within international schools, and as outsider, due to other academic roles related to inclusion and meeting additional learning needs, and as part of a university-based research community.

The benefits of being perceived as an 'insider' to the data gathering and interpretation processes included an understanding of the opportunities and challenges offered by the location and cultures of international schools, as related to the issue of inclusion and provision for pupils with learning needs. Also, knowledge of the researcher's past roles saw a collegiate approach and attitudes within responses by some of the school leaders when interviewed, e.g., as shown by the repeated use of the phrase 'You'll know what I mean when I say that ...'. Similarly, SENCOs were happy to expand on comments in interview by relating anecdotal information about local contexts, e.g., shared knowledge of the lack of accessibility to specialist support agencies in some of the regions that was known by the researcher.

Roles as an 'outsider' were more relevant to the data gathering related to the teacher questionnaires. Whilst a small minority of the of the participant teachers may have been aware of the identity of the researcher as a past teacher and school leader in some of the schools and regions, efforts were made to anonymise these identities, so that respondents were only aware of roles as researcher and doctoral student, highlighted in the contact and consent letters. This positionality helped to make teachers more comfortable with revealing issues that arose regarding the implementation of inclusive measures at the school (Cotterill, 1992). Similarly, the researcher, as an outsider, had the advantage of being able to observe and ask questions without the influence of relationships with participants (Merton, 1972). Furthermore, the researcher's membership of a research community meant that

external processes (e.g., granting ethical approval, informed consent procedures and discussions regarding the methodology) ensured that the study was conducted in an ethical manner.

Despite the fact that objectivity can be seen as relatively less important in an interpretivist approach when compared to positivism, the influences caused by the personal history and social roles performed by the researcher can have significant effects on the conduct of the study, as ‘the degree of affinity researchers have with the population under study including researchers being a member of the group themselves can introduce a question of bias in the study.’ (Chenail, 2011, p257)

Efforts to ameliorate these effects were made by triangulating data between the interviews and questionnaire data, in order to position anonymised questionnaire data alongside more informal and anecdotal evidence gained from interviews with school leaders and SENCOs. Furthermore, regular meetings and scrutiny of the data with doctoral supervisors ensured that opportunities were sought to question biases from alternative viewpoints and different contextual backgrounds (Fischer, 2006).

3.3 Multiple Case Study Approach

It was decided that the most appropriate approach, given the relative numbers of schools, leaders, SENCOs and teachers involved in the study, would be through a multiple case study analysis. This approach is defined by Stake as ‘a research design for closely examining several cases linked together’ (Stake, 2006, p2) that can be used in order to examine complex programmes (particularly when related to education or social work), as it is often profitable to study cases comparatively and in multiple locations. This consideration was one of the primary reasons for the selection of the design of the study, allowing examination on a case study level, with the added function of comparability across a finite number of cases (the six schools chosen for the study, subdivided into four geographical areas).

The suitability of the multiple case study analysis approach was further emphasized by the decision to conduct the data gathering at the locations, and thus within the unique international settings of the schools. Working within the field of international education and

having the opportunities to communicate with and travel to several different international schools allowed a degree of data gathering at source that was felt would enhance the data through understanding of the international contexts within which the schools were operating. The view that 'qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situation.' (Stake, 2006, p 2) provided further support for the decision to conduct a multiple case study analysis approach in this manner. It was also felt that the opportunity to compare schools within some of the geographical areas (e.g., the two schools in Cairo and the two schools in Dubai) as well as across the different regions would provide further points of comparison that could be valuable to the study.

A further consideration for a multiple case study approach resulted from the perceived utility of the study for the schools involved, both as part of an ongoing process to aid self-reflection, and upon conclusion of the study, as a means to compare their own practice with others across the selection of schools. The descriptive nature of the conduct of multiple case studies may also provide some generalizability and, therefore, utility for a broader range of schools and administrators, whose own practices may echo those described as part of the selection, as supported by Parlett and Hamilton's (1976) views that policy making, practice and operations (in this case within an educational context) may be enhanced and become more insightful when based on case-specific understanding of local functions. In this way, the particular (and what might sometimes appear to be the idiosyncratic nature) of decisions made by some of the schools described in the study may chime with others, echoing Creswell's (1998) view that the importance of unusual customs and habitats makes knowledge of individual cases a necessity for other practitioners and operations. This also suggests that once an understanding is gained through research within, and of, different contexts, it may become apparent that the idiosyncrasies of each school can contribute to an understanding of broader commonalities across the contexts. In this way, the study and the decision to conduct a multiple case study analysis provided an opportunity to step back and to try to make comparisons, to highlight good practice, and, in doing so, perhaps make some sense of what is perceived by many to be a chaotic, rapidly growing and increasingly competitive market. Moreover, it provided an opportunity to observe and consider the place and situation of children who, according to the practices of the school and the

availability of local supporting services, may find it easy or difficult to access the curricula that they are studying and to be included and valued by the school and among their peers.

3.4 Nested Case-Study Design

Within the broader framework offered by a multiple case-study analysis, it became apparent that, due to the multi-layered geographical, political, cultural and socio-economic factors that influenced the design and conduct of the study, a nested case study approach was found to be most appropriate. This approach was deemed particularly appropriate as it allows for exploration of issues and concepts at both individual school level, at area level, and across the field of international schooling in general (as part of a ‘Russian doll’ model) (see Chong and Graham, 2013). Their view that ‘a scaled approach that travels through macro, meso and micro levels to build nested case studies allows more comprehensive analysis of both external/global and internal/local factors that shape policy making and education systems’ (Chong and Graham, 2013, p3) supports the aims of the study to examine factors that determine the levels of implementation and success of inclusive measures in schools at both local and global levels. The placement of the case studies within their broader historico-cultural, political and socio-economic contexts would, potentially, reveal information pertinent to an understanding of the ‘ecology’ of the school and its systems (e.g., for inclusion) within the broad and varied international landscape within which it operates (Vulliamy, 1984). The approach was also deemed appropriate due to the study’s adherence to an interpretivist paradigm. Whilst globalisation and the expansion of international schooling within this dynamic would offer opportunities to make positivist, quantitative comparisons across regions (Chong and Graham, 2013, p8), it is the view of the researcher that this approach would have led to the loss of the opportunities offered by a qualitative approach to understand features such as policy and decision making, practitioner attitudes and local cultural influences, that are arguably of central relevance to the day to day operation of international schools. The efficacy of this approach is demonstrated, for example, in the case of schools that may vary in character within the same area (e.g., School A demonstrates the characteristics of a Category C school, according to Hayden and Thompson’s (2013) categorisations, whereas School B, located in the same area, falls more squarely in all criteria as a Category A type school). The importance of the typology of the schools within the scope of the study relates to issues such as the national backgrounds of

the pupils and their parents, and related views towards inclusion. These views may be influenced by factors such as the cultural influences transmitted to those schools that educate a greater proportion of host-state nationals, the influence of parents' itinerant lifestyles in different categories of schools, and subsequent influence on views towards inclusion. The stark difference in attitudes between parents of pupils in School A, in comparison to parents of pupils in School B, suggest that differences between schools within regions can be very illuminating, thus justifying the nested case study approach. Triangulation of these findings with attitudes towards inclusion elicited in other regions would serve to improve the validity and reliability of findings, strengthening the case for a nested approach.

3.5 Mixed-methods data gathering

The complexity of gathering data on policy and decision-making, professional practice and a variety of views on inclusion meant that research frameworks and data gathering tools needed to be robust and appropriate in order to gain valid information on a range of complex and context-based phenomena. This was particularly the case, given that the case studies were located in different global regions, were based on evidence provided by three levels of educational management and practice, and were situated within an education sector that is characterised by a lack of homogeneity. Despite adopting a largely interpretivist paradigm for the study, elements of data gathering necessarily involved both quantitative and qualitative strategies in a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2003). This was based on the decision that mixed-method strategies would render an holistic understanding of educational policies and practices towards inclusion within the participant schools (Creswell, 2003; Steckler et al, 1992), and would allow the types of multi-level comparison sought in the nested-case study design (see above). Furthermore, it was hoped that a mixed-methods research design would offer tools to gather data on a wider basis from a range of respondent types and would offer opportunities to cross-reference and triangulate data more effectively between the different types of respondents (senior leaders, middle leaders and classroom teachers) in order to improve on the integrity and reliability of the findings (Johnson and Christensen, 2004; Patton, 1990; Robson, 2002).

3.6 Reliability of data collection methods and resultant findings

It should be acknowledged that, although qualitative data gathering strategies are a commonplace and trusted method for eliciting attitudes and opinions on social phenomena, caution should be shown towards unquestioned acceptance of knowledge derived from attitudinal surveys. Definitions of attitudes can vary from the unidimensional (*'a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event'* (Ajzen, 2005, p3)) to the multidimensional (*'predispositions to respond to some class of stimuli with certain classes of response'* (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960, p3)). The discrepancies between the definitions lie with the potential responses to an object as being affective or evaluative, cognitive (according to cultural and belief systems) and behavioural. The complexity of the formation of attitudes within this framework offers challenges for the researcher in trying to elicit opinions, attitudes and predispositions regarding issues such as inclusion within schools. The researcher largely reacts to outward or overt signs and expressions of attitude through evaluative comments offered by the participant (Abrarracin et al, 2005; Ajzen, 2005; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Research tools should aim, therefore, to determine the basis and belief system that may define participant attitudes, though logistically this may prove difficult or unattainable.

Also, the links between attitude and behaviour have been shown by various studies (e.g., LaPiere, 1934; Wicker, 1969) to be tenuous. Despite efforts to tie behaviour to attitudes, and to use these links to predict or analyse behaviour (see Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), the causal links between attitudes, intentions and behaviours remain the object of debate. This issue is compounded by degrees of unreliability that may manifest themselves in participant response data gathering methods. Ajzen's (2005) and Krosnick et al's (2005) studies examined the phenomenon of distortions in self-reporting within tools such as Likert's summated rating response scales. Participant tendency to report 'socially desirable' responses and to subconsciously portray favourable images of themselves in order to support their self-esteem renders the act of gathering data from attitudinal surveys as problematic.

Triangulation, described by Bryman (2012, p 392) as 'using and comparing more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena' can be used to detect and

account for the effect of bias and misreporting. A variety of different sources of data, including school leader interviews, SENCO interviews, teacher questionnaires, school typology questionnaires and analysis of relevant and impartial documentation (e.g., the participant schools' most recent inspection reports) were utilised to try to avoid bias and misrepresentation. Data collection methods were also varied to address the effects of bias and misreporting, allowing comparison of data gathered from questionnaires with comments in interviews and cross-referencing these with policy documents and accreditation or inspection reports. The choice of sample participants, including senior leaders, middle leaders, and classroom practitioners, allowed cross-referencing and triangulation of the views of groups in order to detect significant sources of agreement or discrepancies (Lodico et al., 2006; Shenton, 2004). Qualitative researchers should, however, approach the issue of triangulation with caution and avoid assumptions that adopting this method of cross-referencing bestows quasi-positivistic confirmations approximating what may be seen as the 'correct' answer if a phenomenon is measured in a variety of different ways (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2003). This element of caution helped to inform the design process when planning the research and data gathering phases of the study by ensuring that the approach acknowledged the subjectivity of the responses, particularly when eliciting the views of practitioners as part of attitudinal surveys and interviews.

Further to the issue of the quality and reliability of methods and findings, whilst transferability of findings was not considered applicable to the study as generalisability was not sought (demonstrated by the interpretivist paradigm choice and qualitative approach), elements of both dependability in possibilities of future replication of methods, and confirmability of findings were strong considerations in planning for data collection methods and triangulation of data.

3.7 Sampling

The population of the study comprised headteachers, SENCOs or equivalent, and teachers. Techniques relied on non-probability sampling and the judgement of the researcher (Cohen et al, 2018; Vanderstoep and Johnson, 2009).

The three region samples were based on a combination of factors, including the

researcher's knowledge and professional experience within the areas studied, the opportunities offered for comparison across four diverse areas, each with their own cultural and commercial backgrounds, areas with different levels of growth in international schooling, and (linked with the researcher's view that it was important to visit and experience the culture of the individual schools and to meet with individuals) on a practical basis, areas that were relatively accessible within the logistical confines of the study. The least satisfactory samples were found to be the 'European' case studies. While the two other case-study regions examined schools within large cities and areas of rapid growth in the international school sector, the European region was less well defined. The reason for this relates to difficulties in finding consenting schools that corresponded to the school selection criteria and profiles outlined below.

School choices were made by purposive sampling. The researcher sought a variety of schools along criteria that meant the inclusion of a combination of the following: independent international schools, international schools that were part of a larger chain of ownership, schools that had primary and / or secondary sections, schools where students were host state nationals, schools where students were not host state nationals and were part of largely itinerant professionals' families, a boarding school with an international cohort of students, schools that were for-profit and schools that were not for profit, schools with a British style curriculum, and schools with an internationalist curriculum (eg the International Baccalaureate). Finding schools to consent to the study from a combination of the above proved challenging, though these goals were ultimately achieved. The implication for the study, however, was that none of the schools could be seen as directly comparative, apart from their location within regions as part of a nested case-study. The common feature, however, across all schools, was the expression of a desire to move towards a culture of inclusion (though to varying degrees) by all schools. Chosen sample schools were necessarily different in order to gain a holistic understanding of the progress of inclusion in international schools. The aim was, therefore, to compare schools in and across the different areas in an exploratory sense. The study aimed to be descriptive of the stages which schools judged themselves to be at in their progress towards inclusion.

The past roles of the researcher as headteacher and senior leader of international schools could be seen as having the potential to present bias in sampling and selection. These

concerns are congruent with wider issues related to the relatively small size of the field and the lack of academic research on the area, leading to the likelihood that researchers in the area are likely to be working, or have worked, within the field (Bagnall, 2008; Bunnell, 2014). Awareness of involvement as 'insider' and 'outsider' (see also Phillips and Schweisfurth, 2014) and strategies for examining, by self-reflexivity, the researcher's bias, are discussed above.

Individual participants were chosen due to their ability to 'most help to answer the basic research questions and fit the basic purpose of the study' (Erlandson et al, 1993, p83). Therefore, selection of interview participants was purposive and related to the specific roles that they played within the schools, and to their roles as key knowledge holders for the aspects of the school that were relevant to the study (Brayda and Boyce, 2014).

Teacher participant choices used both purposive and convenience sampling methods. The researcher requested the involvement of between twelve and fifteen teachers in each school to complete questionnaires. Participants were not preselected. Involvement was elicited by addressing the teaching body via a staff meeting at the school (in some schools the researcher addressed primary and secondary school teachers separately), followed by an invitation to voluntarily take a package of materials containing the questionnaire and consent materials, placed close to the exit of the room within which the meeting was held. In two of the schools, due to difficulties with coinciding the visit with whole staff meetings, the process was carried out by a member of the school staff. Sealable envelopes were provided for the anonymous return of the completed questionnaires and consent materials to an unmarked box file that the researcher (or representative) removed following an interval of one week to allow for completion of the questionnaires by participating teachers. Whilst this method denied opportunities to draw equal numbers of samples from representative groups, e.g., male or female, length of service at the school, etc, it was considered that the anonymity offered by the process balanced these losses as being an important factor in eliciting the voluntary participation of the teachers.

3.8 Data collection methods

3.8.1 Questionnaires

It was decided that the main form of data gathering for eliciting teachers' views would be a questionnaire. Whilst the use of questionnaires has numerous benefits (see, for example, Cohen et al (2018)), the use of this method must be congruent with the overall aims and be appropriate for that part of the study. The researcher must also bear in mind the 'possible unsophistication and limited and superficial scope of the data that are collected' (Cohen et al, 2018, p 47).

The reasons for choosing a questionnaire for this part of the study were:

- due to the number of teachers involved in this part of the study (at least 10 participants per case-study, amounting to over 60 sets of respondents' views)
- to allow for a range of questioning in different areas (see below), that was considered too time-consuming for individual interviews
- to allow for greater anonymity of responses in the case of teachers
- to enable the use of both structured or close-ended (e.g., Likert-type scales, ranked preference responses, etc), and open-ended questioning
- to facilitate the conversion, coding, and analysis of quantitative responses through use of appropriate software packages (e.g., SPSS)
- to allow for the collection of data without the presence of the researcher, via a negotiated representative at the school
- due to the international nature of the study, return to the areas of study was difficult. In the instance of 'spoiled' responses, use of questionnaires would allow for an easier return to data collection (e.g., electronically) to ensure complete data sets.

3.8.2 The construction and piloting of the questionnaires

A questionnaire of 25 separate close-ended and three open-ended questions was created. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on the background, experience, training and attitudes of a purposive sample of teachers towards the issue of inclusion in the international school in which they were employed. Initial research on the construction of

the questionnaire and the central themes of the inquiry was influenced by the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2016), the THEMIS inclusion tool (Azorin and Ainscow, 2018) and a framework for examining curricular issues related to specific learning needs (Lewis and Norwich, 2004). Inspired by similar approaches in the Index for Inclusion and the THEMIS Inclusion Tool, sections of the questionnaire were designed to elicit information on:

- Teachers' backgrounds (role, age range taught, years of service at the school, experience and training)
- Teachers' experience and confidence in supporting pupils with a range of additional learning needs, based on a list of conditions discussed in separate chapters of Lewis and Norwich (2005)
- Teachers' views on aspects of the school that supported inclusion
- Teachers' views on aspects of the school that limited inclusion
- Teachers' views on aspects of the local environment that promoted or limited inclusion at the school
- Reflection on the culture of the school and an overall judgment on the progress of the school towards inclusion
- Suggestions for improvement

A review of similar questionnaires (e.g., Avramidis et al., 2000; Findler, Vilchinsky and Werner, 2007; Xerri, 2017) allowed comparison of techniques and informed decision-making on what types of questioning were useful in eliciting specific responses, e.g., the omission of 'Don't know' responses, the use of ranking to gain teachers' opinions and preferences, etc. This review provided a basis for piloting of the questionnaire with a sample group of 10 volunteer teachers who were unrelated to the schools involved in the study. The sample teacher participants were selected from volunteer colleagues on the basis that their backgrounds and experiences (a combination of primary school and secondary school teachers, classroom teachers and subject specialists, and a broad range of teaching experience) reflected those of the target participants of the actual study. Feedback from the pilot helped to inform successive cycles of development, amendment and validation of versions of the questionnaire in field-testing, which supported decisions on the final structure of the questionnaire.

A further questionnaire was also constructed, to be administered as part of the school leaders' interview, in order to gain an understanding of the typology of the school, according to Hill's (2015) framework on characteristics and typology of international schools. Five questions were structured, with five possible responses for each, to note or measure the following:

- Reason for the establishment of the school
- Type(s) of educational programme delivered
- The nature of the student body
- The nature of the governing body
- Fee payment for tuition

3.8.3 Interviews

Following consideration of a range of different information-gathering tools, it was decided that semi-structured interviews would be chosen as the main data collection method for participating school leaders and SENCOs. The rationale behind this choice related to the volume and flexibility of the knowledge potentially gained from interviews with a loosely defined agenda. The structured interview format was rejected on the basis that the approach was too restrictive for the qualitative nature of the types of exploratory and discursive responses sought as part of the study. An unstructured format was considered unsuitable as the interview needed to conform, to a degree, to the structures and types of data elicited in the teachers' questionnaire, with specific sections on support for inclusion, barriers to inclusion and environmental factors. Whilst semi-structured interviews can be criticised for lacking objectivity (Bell, 2005), and tend to reflect only the specific context and beliefs of the participant (Denscombe, 2007), the advantages offered in terms of flexibility and adaptation of questioning, particularly in probing particular aspects of the school's policies and practices and the participant's role and responses to these (Bryman, 2012), justified the method as valid within the context of the study. Reservations about the personal and potentially intrusive nature of probing issues via semi-structured interview were addressed by the consideration of the ethical implications of this approach at the planning stage. Consequently, participants were informed at the beginning of interviews that personal information involving themselves, or teachers and pupils at the school was not

sought and would not be discussed. Similarly, participants were reassured that questions were exploratory and not judgmental or evaluative of their work. Finally, procedures were detailed to the participants at point of first contact and at the beginning of the interview, allowing for termination of involvement at any point during the interview without justification or explanation.

A further justification for the semi-structured format of the interview is supported by the epistemology of the study within an interpretivist approach that upholds the role of the interviewer as participant and as part of the knowledge production process (see Kvale, 2006; and Rorty's (1979) reflection on 'knowledge as conversation'). However, within these roles, it was recognised that when conducting the interview one should maintain awareness, and limit the influence of, the interviewer whenever possible. This was considered important because an additional effect of conducting interviews noted by Wellington (2000, p72) is that it can 'offer people...an opportunity to make their perspectives known, i.e., to go public. In this sense the interview empowers people - the interviewer should not play the leading role'.

The researcher practised interview techniques with volunteer participants as part of a small-scale pilot, with the aim of reviewing the questions asked in order to improve the clarity of the wording and to more closely match with the intended knowledge to be gained. The practical approaches to the conduct of the interview, e.g., timing, were also considered at this stage. The pilot allowed for improvements also to be made to the number and type of questioning used, e.g., by using both open- and close-ended questions and basing questions on experiential/behavioural and opinion/values categories (according to Patton's (2002) categorisations on types of interview questions). Furthermore, it was felt that the pilot and the first few interviews allowed for continuous improvements in the conduct of the interviews, derived from an increase in the confidence of the interviewer in focusing on specific aspects of the study and development of the ability to react to information and insights provided by the interviewee. Thus, occasionally, extra questions were inserted into the interview in order to explore issues further, while other questions that were felt to duplicate information already gained earlier in the interview, were omitted. This reflects Gibson and Brown's (2009) view that the researcher should avoid rigid division of the data collection and analysis stages, and that the relevance of information and knowledge should

be assessed as part of a dynamic within the interview process.

The questions asked as part of the school leaders' interviews sought information on the following:

- A summary of admissions procedures relating to SEN provision
- Student demographic, including proportion of students with SEN and types of SEN
- Leadership role in supporting SEN provision
- CPD offered relating to SEN provision
- Challenges to effective SEN provision
- Resources and support for SEN provision
- School self-evaluation procedures relating to SEN provision
- Impact of accreditation procedures on SEN provision
- Impact of environmental factors on SEN provision

The questions asked as part of the SENCOs' interviews sought information on the following:

- A summary of admissions procedures relating to SEN provision
- Student demographic, including proportion of students with SEN and types of SEN
- SENCO role in supporting SEN provision
- Resources and support for SEN provision
- EAL provision at the school
- Challenges to effective SEN provision
- Impact of environmental factors on SEN provision

3.8.4 Procedure for conducting the interviews

Interview guides were prepared to help steer the focus of questioning during meetings with the school leaders and SENCOs (see Appendices H and I).

Interviews were held in 2019. Interviews with school leaders were held separately to those with SENCOs, and often in different locations. Interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes, with variations according to the development of confidence and familiarity with the

interview process (earlier interviews usually lasted longer than later interviews), and according to the number of opportunities taken by the interviewer and interviewee to develop further lines of focus and questioning, according to the flexibility offered by the semi-structured approach.

The opening comments of the interviews explained issues related to confidentiality and anonymity of schools and participants, where ethical considerations were clearly detailed to the interviewee. The interviewer highlighted the option for participants to end involvement with the study at any time, and to do so with no expectation for offering reasons or explanation for their departure. Reassurances were also given regarding the general nature of the study as being comparative with other schools at a regional and global level, though the intent was to be exploratory, rather than judgmental. These considerations were explained as being particularly important for the researcher, who understood the highly competitive nature of international school markets and was therefore aware of the sensitivity of any form of criticism and its potential impact on student recruitment at the schools.

Interview questions were sent to interviewees in advance of the meetings, in order to allow interviewees to plan for questions that demanded detailed statistical responses, e.g., the percentages of students classified as having learning difficulties at the school, etc. This posed a methodological dilemma for the researcher, as it was judged that, without offering the opportunity to research specific information in advance of the interview, the potential for null or inaccurate responses to some questions was high. Allowing participants opportunities to gather data before the interview increased the likelihood of the sharing of rich, factual data on a range of issues within the interview. The drawback, however, with sharing the interview questions beforehand was seen in the increased potential for developing pre-planned responses that may try to offer 'socially desirable' responses and bias the presentation of aspects of the school in interview. The detailed nature of the interview questions and triangulation of data across leaders' interviews, SENCO interviews and teacher questionnaires, however, were considered as factors that would act in mitigating any of these tendencies. It was also considered that providing the interviewees with the opportunity to offer their own perceptions of the school, regardless of the degree of pre-planning and preparation, were congruent with the exploratory and affirmative spirit

of the study. Opinion on this approach is generally divided, with some commentators highlighting the dangers of trading spontaneity for pre-planned and rehearsed responses, and the increased risk of receiving 'socially desirable' responses (see Seidman, 2006; Spradley, 1979). However, some research has framed the practice within the framework of ethical considerations, suggesting that sharing the questions or topic areas with participants beforehand enhanced the idea of 'informed consent'. (see Pearce et al, 2014; Hanna, 2012) The researcher, in hindsight, could have considered sending only those questions that needed to be researched before the interview, in order to limit the effects of preplanning responses to some of the questions that may have affected the reliability of the information. Furthermore, whilst school leaders and SENCOs may have been aware of each other's involvement in the study, the researcher ensured that school leaders were not sent details of SENCO interview questions and, similarly, SENCOs were not made aware of the content of school leader interviews.

A further part of the interview process was spent in discussing the availability of school documentation that could be used as part of the study. Most participants were very supportive in offering a range of important, useful and illustrative material, including whole school SEN and inclusion policies and departmental appraisal procedures. All school leaders agreed to the use of recent external inspection or accreditation reports, as part of the study.

3.8.5 Document Analysis

A third dimension to data collection was provided by the examination and evaluation of insights from documents related to the participant schools. Document analysis 'can fill in some of the missing data pieces' (McEwan and McEwan, 2003, p82) that may not have been gained in the questionnaire and interview data collection processes (Creswell, 2012). It was considered that insights, for example, from recent school inspection reports, could provide useful and objective views on the school's progress towards inclusion goals. The documents used, when available, to gain insight into practices and attitudes, and to cross-reference information offered in questionnaires and interviews, included:

- The school's mission statement
- Whole school inclusion policies (when available)

- The Learning Development Department's policy documents (when available)
- Recent external whole school inspection reports

3.9 Organisation and Analysis of the Data

Following the gathering of the data from questionnaires, interviews and documents, the raw data was prepared for analysis by transcription and, in the case of the questionnaire data, conversion into table format. The interview data was organized using NVivo software, in preparation for thematic coding and analysis. Several initial 'sweeps' of the data were conducted in order to detect emergent themes. Whilst there is no standard method of analysing raw data from qualitative research in this way (Creswell, 2007; Makyut and Morehouse, 1994), a broad thematic approach followed by further examination and coding of the emergent commonalities and issues were effective in the case of this study, and served to create a framework for organising the data along sub-themes such as 'The role of the leadership of the school', 'Environmental factors' and 'Governance'. Many of the sub-themes could then be coded further and attributed as 'positive' and/or 'negative' factors or influences. Identification of themes and sub-themes, supported by verification of the relationships between the codes and the themes, allowed analysis of the impact of different factors on the issue of inclusion in each of the case study schools. These were then organized within the 'nested' case studies in order to draw comparisons between the pairs of schools, followed by a broader comparison across all six of the case study schools. Identification of themes, factors and their impact helped to inform and support decisions regarding the content of both the 'Findings' and 'Discussion' sections of the study.

Questionnaire data was organised and compared in a similar way, though the themes here had largely been predetermined. The purpose of the teacher surveys was to detect attitudes and opinions towards these predetermined issues, including themes such as, for example, teachers' views of the main challenges to inclusion at the school and the levels of support offered by the school's leadership.

Documents were organized manually and were highlighted and coded according to their focus and relevance to the study, for example school inspection reports that made specific

reference to inclusion and inclusive measures enacted at the school.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Procedures to ensure that the study was conducted in a manner that adhered to appropriate ethical practices and considerations were planned to conform to the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (4th Edition) guidelines. The study was also given approval by the Ethics Committee of Bangor University's School of Education and Human Development.

Kvale (1996) divides ethical issues into: obtaining informed consent; maintaining confidentiality; and a regard for consequences of the research process.

Procedures that entailed ethical considerations included:

3.10.1 Protecting the anonymity of the participating schools and individuals by minimising identifying features

Maintaining the anonymity of institutions and individuals who consent to participate in qualitative educational research is a challenging process that can affect not only participants, but also the researcher, by potentially impacting on the integrity and value of data collected as part of the study (van den Hoonaard, 2003). Procedures such as informed consent and use of pseudonyms are common methods used to protect anonymity in educational research, though some have questioned their efficacy in certain environments, e.g., within 'small-sized communities' (Moosa, 2013) or in cultural contexts where concepts such as 'informed consent' have ambiguous meanings (Holliday, 2013). While researchers are ethically obliged to make all necessary efforts to protect participants, identifiers such as distinctive geographical and community-based features, the presence of networks of friends and colleagues, and the extended presence of the researcher within the field of study can undermine these efforts (Nespor, 2000; Perry, 2006).

The researcher adopted the ethical position that the schools involved in the study agreed to participate on the condition that their identity was anonymised as far as practically possible

(despite the fact that not all school leaders insisted on this approach and some, in fact, valued the opportunity to share their practice across a wider forum. Regardless of this view, none of the schools or their leaders were provided with access to data from other schools, nor was their data shared). Safeguards used to protect the identities of those schools involved included anonymising the name of the school within the literature and all parts of the study. Schools were allocated an identifying letter (Schools A-F). The identifying features of the school were minimized as far as possible within the constraints of the study. Methods used to limit the identifying features of schools included: no direct reference to the name of the schools, any groups or affiliations that the schools belonged to, avoiding use of identifying features if they were not relevant to the conduct of the study, e.g., specific numbers of pupils that attended and, instead, using categorisations that communicated the relative size of the schools. This proved to be a challenging aspect of the study, due to the number of factors that could, potentially, inadvertently identify the school. Nevertheless, it was felt that the success of the efforts of the researcher were commensurate with the levels of identifying detail that school leaders acknowledged as being acceptable when giving informed consent (see Appendix K Example Consent Forms). The above safeguards also applied to the identities of the interview participants (school leaders and SENCOs). Since their roles are visible, protecting the anonymity of the school served a further purpose in protecting the anonymity of the interview participants. Also, the identity of the school leader and the SENCO as interview participants could not be kept from each other. Finally, the involvement of interview participants could not be anonymised in the same way as that described for anonymising those who agreed to complete the teacher questionnaires.

The procedures outlined in the 'Questionnaire' section (above) served as safeguards against the potential identification of those who agreed to complete the teacher questionnaire.

3.10.2 Informed consent and the right to withdraw

Information on all stages of the study relevant to the participant was detailed in a letter attached to the consent form, shared at the beginning of the data gathering process (Appendix J). All participants were offered the opportunity to withdraw at any stage during the study, without the need for explanation. If respondents wanted to discontinue involvement with the study, procedures were prepared for removal of data in the form of

questionnaires and responses to interview or recordings by deletion and cleansing from all forms of electronic data storage. Responses, and any data gained from responses as a result of analysis, would also be removed from the study and discontinued from statistical representations (e.g., graphs or tables), explanations, conclusions or any other form of qualitative information produced. In the case of withdrawal from the study, responses in physical form (e.g., questionnaire returns) would be destroyed by shredding.

3.10.3 Secure storage of data gathered as part of the study

The study adhered to the UK's General Data Protection Requirements (2018) as a measure and guidance for data protection procedures.

Interview respondent data and involvement with the study was stored so that the information was confidential and known only by the researcher. Interviews were recorded on a non-encrypted device, but, following the conclusion of the interview, were immediately transferred to an encrypted device. Data on the non-encrypted recording device was subsequently cleansed.

Responses made by physical means (e.g., paper questionnaire responses) were stored in a locked area/facility, available only to the researcher.

In addition to the above measures, the timespan of retention of survey data of the study was limited to a maximum of 3 years following the conclusion of the study, the writing of the thesis and completion of the viva. Following the elapse of this timeframe, electronic data is planned to be cleansed and physical data shredded.

Chapter 4: Findings

A note on the reporting of data and findings in each of the case studies

It was decided that, due to the levels of detail reported in the teacher questionnaires and school leader / SENCO interviews that formed a large part of the data gathering from each of the case study schools, the reporting of Case Study 1 (Schools A and B) would make very detailed use of the findings in the form of tables and diagrams, with related written analysis of these results. The reporting of Case Study 1 is, therefore, detailed and supported by frequent references to these tables and statistics. This approach helps to inform the reader of the different types of questions asked and provides details of the respondents' opinions in mostly statistical format. This, it was felt, was important not only for the sharing of detailed feedback from the questionnaires and interviews, but also helped to illustrate the decisions relating to methodology described in Chapter 3. However, once this methodological approach had been illustrated in the first Case Study, this detailed reporting of questionnaire responses and related statistics was considered to be less necessary for the reporting of the other Case Studies. As a result, it was decided that the approach adopted for the analysis of Case Study 2, 3 and 4 was to examine the data for specific emergent themes and explain these. Reporting in these sections is, therefore, more synoptic and less reliant on statistical data presented in the form of tables, than that of the more comprehensive approach and outlining of the study's methodologies used in Case Study 1. These decisions were also made due to the constraints of the word count of the thesis.

4.1 Case Study 1: Schools A and B in Egypt

4.1.1 Background and context

See Appendix A: Case Study 1 for background and context to Case Study 1: Schools A and B

4.1.2 Descriptions of the schools and their backgrounds

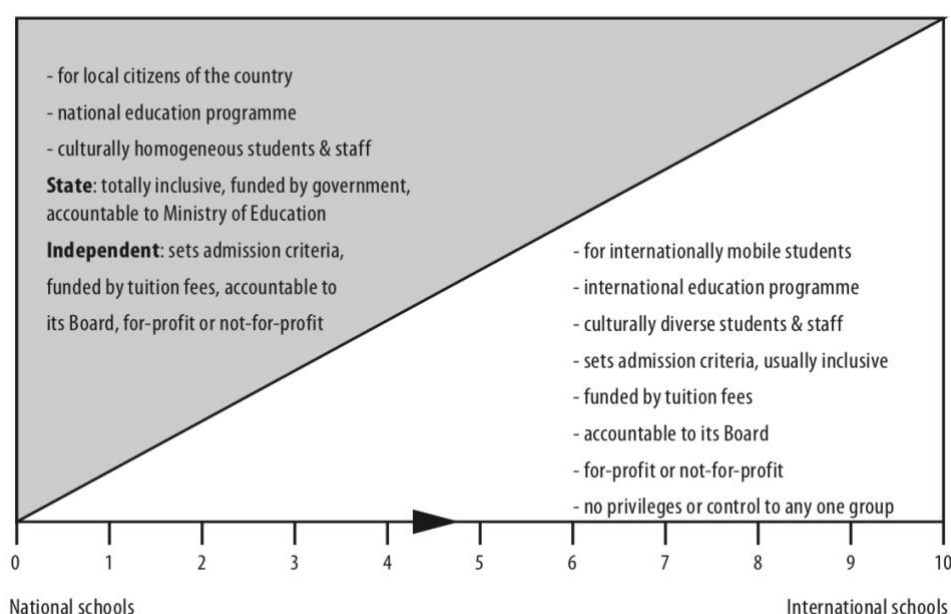
School A

In School A, most students come from an Egyptian background, with the relatively few

expatriate students coming mainly from Gulf Arab states.

Using a combination of Hill's (2015) school typology continuum (see Figure 1) and Hayden and Thompson's (2013) school type categorisations (see Chapter 2 Literature Review Section 2.4, p22), feedback from the School Leader's Typology questionnaire showed that the school would be categorized as a Type 'C' school ('non-traditional', market-driven for the local elite, predominantly for-profit), and is more characteristic of features related to the lower scores on Hill's continuum and descriptors.

Figure 1 : Hill's (2015) School Typology Continuum Diagram



School A offers support for pupils with SEN through its Learning Development (LD) Department. It has a primary school section with a dedicated staff of two full time teachers (one of whom is the head of department and SENCO). One of the two full time teachers had recently been asked to take charge of a mainstream class as a replacement for a class teacher who had been experiencing difficulties in the classroom, thus effectively swapping roles with the specialist teacher. One Teaching Assistant is also attached to each class in the primary school, part of whose roles include supporting pupils with SEN. The secondary section of the LD Department consists wholly of teachers who are not specialist in SEN. They teach their own subject during most of their teaching time and contribute some time to supporting pupils with SEN. This includes the secondary SENCO, who also had a role as a

subject teacher. Neither SENCO had a place on a leadership team at the school. Brief mention is made of support for pupils with additional learning needs on the school website.

School B

School B has a diverse range of pupil nationalities. 10% of the total school population are local Egyptians, with the remaining 90% of pupils coming from expatriate families living in Egypt due to parents' work or have 'dual nationality', with one Egyptian parent and one non-Egyptian parent.

Hill's (2015) continuum (see Figure 1) and Hayden and Thompson's (2013) categorisations suggest a Category A, 'traditional' type of international school, catering largely for itinerant, expatriate families. The average length of attendance at the school for pupils is 2-3 years (in line with the average length of parental work contracts). The characteristics of School B, as revealed by the results of the School Typology questionnaire, match the higher scores on Hill's (2015) continuum, suggesting a model close to that of a 'traditional' international school.

The school has an 'Inclusive Learning Team', organized into primary and secondary sections, each with a separate coordinator. Specialist teachers within the departments work across sections of the school to support pupils with SEN according to their specialisms.

School policies state that support for pupils with SEN is offered at three levels, ranging from inclusive and differentiated class lessons (Level 1), through support specifically targeted at developing separate skills (e.g. literacy) for limited periods of time and referral for diagnostic assessment (Level 2), to intensive and long-term support via one-to-one or small group sessions that act upon recommendations made by specialist diagnostic assessments (Level 3).

Policies for supporting pupils with SEN are visible and available via the school's website. The inclusion policy states that the school aims to fulfil the UK's Department for Education

description of an inclusive school, offering aspects that an inclusive ethos, a broad and balanced curriculum for all students and systems for early identification of barriers to learning and participation.

Further details of the schools are offered in the form of a summary table, in order to protect the anonymity of the schools involved in the survey.

Table 1: *Summary of details: Schools A and B*

School details	School A	School B
Location	Modern suburb	Modern suburb
School Size Classification	Very Large	Small to Medium
Structure of School	Primary and Secondary Provision	Primary and Secondary Provision
Facilities offered	Playing fields, athletics track, swimming pool, ICT facilities	Playing fields, athletics track, swimming pool, ICT facilities, language support
Single Sex or Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender
Education Programmes Offered	British Curriculum; US Track Curriculum; International Baccalaureate	British Curriculum; International Baccalaureate; some alternate programmes for specific nationalities
Use of teaching assistants to support pupils with SEN	Yes. In-class support for pupils with SEN (one per class group in primary).	Yes – mainly to support pupils withdrawn from class for intensive support sessions
Main forms of support for pupils with SEN	Separate Learning Development Departments in both primary and secondary sections. Separate SENCO for each section. In-class support by Teaching Assistants; withdrawal in small SEN groups.	Separate Inclusive Learning Team in both primary and secondary sections. Separate SENCO for each section. In-class support by Teaching Assistants; withdrawal in small SEN groups

Notes:

1. Both schools in this case study are located in a modern suburb of Cairo, on the outskirts of the city where many wealthier residents have relocated to escape some of the problems experienced in the city centre related to overcrowding, traffic and pollution.

2. It was felt that some details, e.g. numbers on roll, would risk revealing details of the identities of the schools involved. In order to address this issue, a classification system was used to describe the relative size of the schools. Classifications are based on the following:

Small: less than 200 pupils

Medium: 200-800 pupils

Large: 800-1500 pupils

Very large: over 1500 pupils

It should be noted that independent schools and international schools tend to have lower pupil numbers than state schools.

3. International schools tend to be mixed-gender schools. However, this criterion was added in recognition of that fact that the cultural and religious traditions of some areas demand separate schooling. Also, trends have been shown in a small number of schools for separating genders for educational purposes, based on findings from longitudinal studies (see, for example, Garcia-Gracia and Vasquez, 2016; Jackson and Bisset, 2005; Lee and Bryk, 1986).

4. Classification as for-profit or not-for-profit was omitted, due to the difficulties in distinguishing between these (see Chapter 5 Discussion Section 5.2.3 p150 for further detail on issues related to the governance of international schools).

The leaders of each school were asked to complete a questionnaire, based on Hill's (2015) school typology classifications (see Appendix F: School Typology Questionnaire) at the start of the interview session in order to help categorise the school type. The questionnaire was composed of five closed questions that were designed to elicit very specific information about the school and its governance. The responses of the leaders of Schools A and B were:

Table 2: *School Type Questionnaire Responses, based on Hill's (2015) School Typology Classifications*

	School A	School B
What was the reason for the establishment of the school?	To educate local children of the nation where the school is located	To educate the children of families living abroad with a small percentage of students from the host country
What type of education programme(s) does the school deliver?	A recognised international education programme in a school to educate local children of the nation where the school is located	A recognised international education programme in a school established to educate the children of families living abroad
What is the nature of the student body?	More than 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country	Host country nationals are 0% to 25% of total student body
What is the nature of the governing body?	More than 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country	10% or less are nationals of the school's host or home country
Do students pay tuition fees?	Full tuition fees apply	Full tuition fees apply

Responses to these questionnaires provided data that relates to Hill's (2015) classifications of international schools and offered valuable details about the school's purpose, the type of educational programme offered, and the nature of both the student and governing bodies. These details enabled the researcher to quickly locate the school within Hill's school typology continuum (2015), in order to gain a 'snapshot' of the school's ethos and demographics, according to the view of its leadership.

4.1.3 Findings from teacher questionnaires, school leader interviews and SENCO interviews for Schools A and B

Notes on the data reporting:

- The approach adopted for Case Study 1 involves a description and analysis of the data and is a comprehensive approach which aims to outline the findings within the context of the study's methodologies. The sections on Case Studies 2, 3 and 4 are more synoptic and focus on emergent themes.
- Teacher questionnaires were completed by ten teachers in each school. The percentages referred to in some of the tables (below and in Appendices B-E) refer to the proportion of the ten teachers in each school who chose those particular responses.

4.1.4 Teachers' roles and length of service at the school

The opening section of the teacher questionnaires asked for details of the teacher participants' roles at the schools, the age ranges that they taught and their length of service at the school. Although participants were volunteers, the distribution of the roles of participant teachers between primary, secondary and specialist teachers satisfied the research aim of gaining a balanced sample of teachers across the phases. Teachers in School B also expressed that most would work across the phases as 'specialist' subject teachers. The length of service reflects common practice in international teaching, where teachers tend to spend shorter times in post, with teachers showing a degree of mobility between posts. This often results in greater teacher turnover in international schools, in comparison with national education systems.

Table 3: Participant Teachers' Backgrounds

<i>Role at the school</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Specialist</i>
<i>School A</i>	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
<i>School B</i>	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	6 (60%)
<i>Length of service at school</i>	<i>1-2 years</i>	<i>3-5 years</i>	<i>5 years +</i>
<i>School A</i>	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)
<i>School B</i>	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)

4.1.5 Teachers' experiences of supporting learners with SEN

The next items on the questionnaire sought to gather data on respondent teachers' experiences of supporting learners with SEN and asked for teachers to make judgments on their levels of confidence in teaching and supporting pupils with different learning difficulties. Confidence levels were measured on a scale ranging from 'Very confident' to 'Not at all confident'. The list of conditions and learning needs used in the study roughly matched categorisations provided by Lewis and Norwich's (2005) study on teacher and curricular specialism and types of conditions and learning needs.

Table 4: *Teachers' experiences of supporting learners with specific conditions / SEN*

Learning difficulties encountered or taught	Responses	
	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>
Deafness	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Visual Impairment	2 (20%)	2 (20%)
Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
Down's Syndrome	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)
Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD/ADHD)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Dyslexia	6 (60%)	10 (100%)
Dyscalculia	1 (10%)	6 (60%)
Dyspraxia	1 (10%)	4 (40%)
Moderate Learning Difficulties	7 (70%)	9 (90%)

The range of conditions and additional learning needs encountered by teachers during their careers (Table 4), supported by teachers' own judgments on confidence levels in including and supporting different types of learners (Charts 1a/b and Chart 2) were considered to be useful data in developing an overview of teachers' past and current experiences relating to provision for pupils with SEN. The inclusion of data relating to where teachers gained this experience (Table 5) aimed to examine views on whether international schools tended to support the development of their teachers by providing training and experience in supporting pupils with a variety of learning needs.

Chart 1a. Reported confidence levels among School A teacher respondents towards supporting pupils with SEN

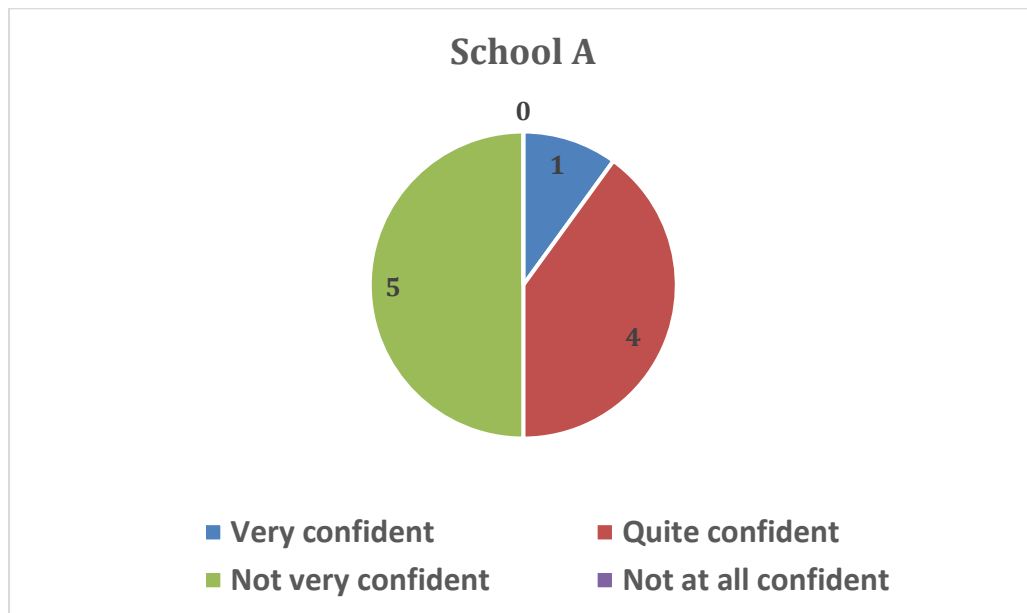
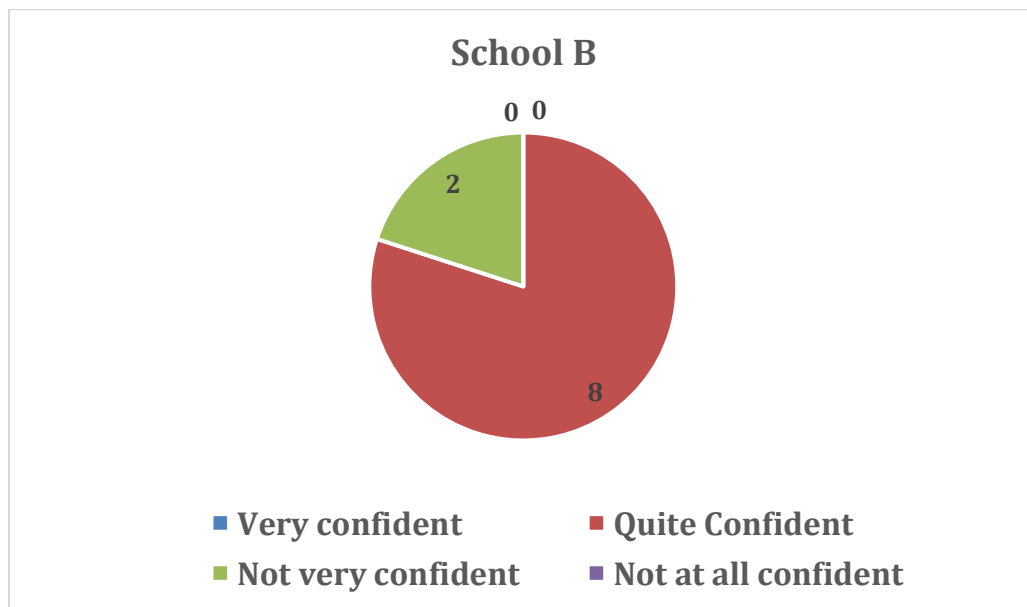


Chart 1b. Reported confidence levels among School B teacher respondents towards supporting pupils with SEN



Charts 1a and 1b show notable differences in confidence levels between the participant teachers in the two schools. 8 of the 10 School B teachers who took part in the study

declared themselves to be quite confident in supporting pupils with SEN, compared with teachers at School A (with the exception of a single participant who stated that they were 'Very confident'), where half of respondents considered themselves to be 'Not very confident' in supporting pupils with SEN. This is supported by the findings shown in Chart 2, which shows patterns of a greater proportion of respondents from School B who considered themselves to be 'Very Confident' or 'Quite Confident' in supporting different SEN (with the exception of confidence levels in supporting pupils with MLD and PMLD), in comparison to respondents from School A, where greater numbers of teachers considered themselves to be 'Not very confident' across a range of conditions.

Chart 2: Respondent teachers' reported levels of confidence in supporting different SEN / learning difficulties



The responses shown in Chart 2 also confirm that teacher confidence in supporting the more commonly encountered conditions and learning difficulties, for example dyslexia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), was generally higher across both schools than the less frequently encountered conditions, for example learners with Profound Learning Difficulties and Down's Syndrome. This may be due to teachers' assumptions that a more specialized approach is needed to support the educational development of those with more severe types of conditions, which may have affected their levels of confidence towards supporting pupils with these types of learning difficulties. Teachers from School B related that recent Continual Professional Development (CPD) on dyscalculia and the better availability of dyscalculia assessors visiting the school helped with their confidence in this area. This may help to explain the discrepancy in confidence levels between School A (40% 'Quite Confident') and B (70% 'Quite Confident') on this item.

Further questioning regarding where teachers felt that they had received most experience and support in developing their ability to support pupils with SEN (Table 5) served to highlight the relatively small number in both schools who reported that they had received this in international schools, in comparison with gaining this experience as a result of teaching or teacher education elsewhere (e.g. in their home country).

Table 5: Responses to questionnaire item 7: *Where did you develop the skills and ability to create diverse classroom environments that support students, including those with SEN?*

	School A	School B
In current school	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
In current school and other international schools in the past	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
In other international schools, but not including current school	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
In other schools, but not international schools	8 (80%)	4 (40%)
During Initial Teacher Education (ITE), with no revisitation since	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
As part of training undertaken on own initiative, outside of current school	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Never received advice/training in supporting learning difficulties	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

4.1.6 Teachers' professional learning and supporting learners with SEN

The connection between teacher confidence and the school's provision of training or Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in supporting pupils with SEN was examined by asking questions about any recent CPD that was specifically related to supporting pupils with SEN (Appendix B: Table 1.8). 9 of the 10 respondents in School B reported having received CPD on inclusion and SEN within the last two years (2017-19), in comparison with 4 of the 10 teachers in School A. A further item (q10 of the questionnaire) confirmed teachers' opinions that CPD opportunities related to inclusion and SEN at both schools were delivered on an infrequent basis (Appendix B: Table 1.8).

The provision of professional learning opportunities based on issues related to SEN was also discussed as part of both the school leaders' and SENCO interviews, and was considered in both schools by teachers, school leaders and SENCOs to be one of the main methods

offered by the school to support inclusion and SEN provision (see p94 below).

A subsequent questionnaire item asked teachers to select the three types of CPD opportunities (from a list of nine) that would be most useful and important in relation to inclusion and support for pupils with SEN (Appendix B: Table 1.9). Choices were not made in order of importance. The three professional learning opportunities most commonly identified by teachers in both schools were found to be:

- i. Provision of examples and case studies from other teachers to help inform practice
- ii. CPD on theory-based and academic knowledge of inclusion and SEN (provided by an external specialist)
- iii. CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice (again, delivered by an external specialist).

These choices were not found to be particularly significant, although the popularity of CPD provided by external specialists suggests that teachers' views towards SEN provision may be influenced by a form of 'expertism', or the idea that supporting pupils with SEN demands a specific form of expertise not currently linked with teachers' own current practice. This could be connected to the low levels of confidence expressed by some of the participant teachers in earlier parts of the survey.

4.1.7 Opinions towards the school and inclusive measures

The next section of the teacher questionnaire examined teachers' general opinions and perceptions of how inclusive they considered the school to be.

Participant responses to this area (questionnaire items 11 and 12) demonstrated notable differences in teachers' perceptions of the attitudes of their school towards inclusion at both admission and post-admission support stages (Appendix B: Table 1.10). The majority (8 out of 10 respondents) of teachers in School A considered the school's admissions policy to be 'Quite Selective' or 'Very Selective', compared to fewer teachers in School B (2 out of 10). Conversely, the majority of teachers in School B (8 out of 10 respondents) considered the admissions policy to be 'Inclusive' or 'Quite Inclusive'. Similar responses were reported on the levels of support offered to those who had already been admitted to the school, with 8

out of the 10 participant teachers in School A considering the support offered to pupils enrolled at the school with SEN to be 'Occasional' or 'Minimal' (compared to 2 teachers who held similar views in School B). In contrast, 8 of the 10 participant teachers in School B considered the levels of support at their school for pupils who were successfully admitted to the school to be 'Inclusive' or 'Supportive'.

Similar attitudes towards the levels of inclusive measures offered by the schools were found in response to a separate question (q13) that offered descriptors of the schools' efforts and procedures to support inclusion (Appendix B: Table 1.11). None of the teachers in School A chose to describe the school as 'providing a good degree of encouragement, practical support and training in maintaining diverse classroom environments, where different learners thrive'. Many participants from School A (7 of the 10 participants) considered the school to be providing 'little encouragement'. This contrasts with the responses of participants from School B, where 2 of the 10 participant teachers described the school as 'providing a good degree of encouragement, practical support and training in maintaining diverse classroom environments, where different learners thrive,' whilst a further 6 considered that the school provided 'some encouragement'. None of the teachers in School B considered the school to provide 'little or no encouragement'. Notably, none of the participants from either school considered the school to be 'inclusive / celebrates and embraces diversity', which supports ISC Research's (2017 and 2019) view that most international schools identify themselves as being partway in developing inclusive measures.

In response to a similar question on their view of the school as an inclusive institution (asked as part of the school leaders' interview) the leadership of School A considered that their aim was to be inclusive, suggested by the whole school principal's view that

We're proud of our support of the students that we do have. We work hard to make sure that they are included and that they attain what they are capable of. We can't admit every student, so we are working on our journey towards inclusion.

(Leader of School A)

However, it was clear that the governing body of the school controlled the selection of pupils and that refusal of admission on the basis of potential pupils having SEN did occur:

The Board will decide on who to admit, based on what kind of profile we have decided on and how it will affect issues such as staffing.

(Leader of School A)

One of the primary reasons for refusing admission to pupils with SEN was offered by the principal as

It can be expensive to support children with learning difficulties, particularly the most severe.

(Leader of School A)

These comments highlight the tensions that can exist between different stakeholders within the schools' operative framework, demonstrating an intention by the leader of School A to make the school more inclusive, despite the limitations imposed by a selective admissions policy. The comments are useful in portraying the relationship between the governing bodies of schools and the leadership, highlighting possible areas of difference, such as over issues related to school finances and staffing costs (see Chapter 5 Discussion Section 5.2.3 p150 for further on this issue). The findings also highlight the differences in opinion that can exist within schools, particularly when examining the contrast between the School A participant teachers' views of the school's efforts at inclusion (Appendix B: Table 1.10 and Table 1.11), in comparison with those of the leadership and governors of School A.

Teachers in School B considered that the school had shown progress in its journey towards inclusion (Appendix B: Table 1.11), although it is evident that some (4 of the 10 respondents) considered that practical concerns were preventing the implementation of fully inclusive measures. Discussions with the leader of School B on this issue served to highlight concerns over the short-term nature of specialist SEN support staff placements at the school and restrictions to adaptations to the buildings.

4.1.8 Reasons for refusing admission to pupils with SEN to the schools

Both schools had refused admission to applicant students with SEN within the past two years, though the reasons for their refusal differed. The reasons for refusal offered by School A related to the additional costs and resourcing that they perceived would be incurred by admitting pupils with additional learning needs.

Yes. It can be expensive to support children with learning difficulties, particularly the most severe. We have to be fair with the other students, so even though we may want to admit, if students have severe difficulties, we may turn them away. We can cater for those with mild additional needs.

(Leader of School A)

School B examined each application on a case-by-case basis, judging the suitability of candidates within the context of the expertise and resources that they felt they could offer in order to support the pupil.

Unfortunately, we've had to refuse three this year. I guess it's because we've been given a name as a school that's willing to try, and we've had some remarkable successes with students who other schools would not take. And so, then you have families come along and see if it's possible. One of those was totally wheelchair bound. Impossible. Secondly was one of the lowest CAT scores I've ever seen in my life, and that child was just not going to be happy. And a third person. They had ... not only were they academically at a level where we didn't think they would be very happy, but they had extreme behavioural problems, so it didn't seem to be the right fit. It's rather subjective, I'm afraid, but it didn't seem to be the right fit, and the fact that the parents didn't even complain suggests that we were probably right.

(Leader of School B)

4.1.9 Participant teachers' views on the most important sources of support offered by the school for learners with SEN

Teachers were asked to share what they perceived were the three most important types of support offered by the school to the teaching body in order to support inclusion of students with SEN (not in order of importance) from a list of nine suggested items or methods.

Table 6: *Participant teachers' views of the three most important forms of support offered by the school to the teaching body for inclusion and supporting students with SEN.*

Form of Support Offered	School A	School B
Information provided by the LD Department (or equivalent)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)
Provision of different learning resources	2 (20%)	2 (20%)
Provision of financing for supporting students with SEN	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Training / CPD for LD Dept staff	7 (70%)	5 (50%)
General staff training / CPD on issues related to SEN	2 (20%)	2 (20%)
A school-wide inclusive philosophy and attitudes	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Teaching assistants that offer specific support for SEN	1 (10%)	5 (50%)
Withdrawal of students with SEN for some lessons	8 (80%)	6 (60%)
Long term or permanent withdrawal of students with SEN	0 (0%)	2 (20%)

The centrality and importance of the Learning Development Department (or equivalent) was attested to by the fact that all respondents in both schools (100% of respondents) expressed that the most important source of support was derived from the efforts of the Learning Development Department in sharing information and offering support (Table 6). Teachers in both schools (8 of the 10 participants in School A, 6 in School B) also considered the withdrawal of pupils with SEN from mainstream classes on an occasional (i.e. not permanent) basis to be an important form of support. None of the teachers in Schools A or B considered the philosophy and attitudes of the school, or the provision of a budget to support learners with SEN, to be significant forms of support provided by the school. However, these factors were mentioned by the SENCO of both schools as being significant. This may relate to the responsibilities of the SENCO as being involved not only with provision and pedagogy, but also to their duties as a department head (and, in the case of some of the schools involved in the survey, as senior leader). These roles, therefore, would involve the SENCO in wider areas such as budgetary concerns and contribution to the development of the ethos of the school.

When asked similar questions about the most important forms of support offered by the school for inclusion and supporting pupils with learning difficulties, the principal of School A felt that these were linked with professional learning:

given through in-house INSET sessions and training, either as twilight sessions or training days. We also pay for teaching assistants to go on local courses. A local psychologist will sometimes come in to give CPD training to staff.

(Leader of School A)

These comments do not generally concur with School A teachers' views, the majority of whom considered the provision of CPD on inclusion and support of SEN to be 'infrequent' (Table 6). Moreover, the SENCO of School A considered that the drive towards educating and supporting mainstream staff on issues related to inclusion and provision for pupils with SEN were a consequence of her personal efforts and that of the department, as opposed to being part of a school-wide approach:

I have pushed to provide training and raise the profile of LDD in the school. I have trained the department and ran workshops on Dyslexia and EAL. I often find that I'm working by myself on this, with little support from the leadership or outside the school

(SENCO of School A)

These comments were supported by the participant teachers of School A's unanimous (100% in agreement) view that the work and information provided by the SENCO and the Learning Development Department was the most important factor in the success of inclusion and support for SEN at the school (Table 6). Conversely, support offered by the leadership (for example in the form of the creation of a supportive ethos, or the commitment of finances and resources) were not considered significant by these participants.

Further insight is provided by comparison with School B, where teachers considered provision of opportunities for professional development through CPD/Training to be an important factor in the success of inclusive practice (Table 6). These views were echoed by the leader of School B, who acknowledged the importance of teacher education on issues related to inclusion and SEN:

I think we're lucky, because some of the for-profit schools seem to struggle for funding for things like staff training. We are fortunate because a lot of the money from fees is reinvested in training staff properly. It's not an area where you should try to save, because at the end of the day, it is the quality and training of your staff that makes your reputation and your success.

(Leader of School B)

A further form of support considered important by both the school leader and the SENCO of School B was the allocation of staff numbers and levels of specialism within the LD department:

We have a good number of staff within the LS department, though we could always do with more. We have discussed this as a leadership and are trying to maintain a balance between

the number of LS staff and fees. We wouldn't want to go down the road of starting to charge extra for support. But it can be a difficult balance.

(SENCO of School B)

The perceived financial demands of provision for pupils with SEN in international schools, involving the possibility of paying for specialist support staff, small group sizes or one-to-one teaching, can be seen to place additional financial demands on the school. Many schools respond to this situation by charging additional fees for pupils with SEN. This, however, was not the case with School B – suggesting that a model of ‘not-for-profit’, where profits from fees are reinvested into provision for pupils at the school, may be favourable for inclusion of pupils with SEN. This is also suggested in Hill’s (2015) school typology descriptors, which places not-for-profit and inclusive schools together in categories closer to ‘pure’ or ‘traditional’ models of international school.

This insight provides a context to School B’s comments regarding their employment of qualified specialist SEN staff. The school leadership’s support of this suggests a commitment to the principle of inclusion, expressed as a willingness to direct resources to achieving this aim.

in Primary we have three .. four staff who are qualified and have been SENCOs somewhere.

[We have] a head of Learning Support for the whole school with a team of 11 or 12 people, so that the Speech Therapist can work across both areas, the Counsellor can work across both areas through becoming part of that team. One is a specialist in Individual Education Plans and the writing up and doing the testing and access arrangements. Others are very much more practical, hands on.

(Leader of School B)

The leader of School B explained that maintaining these levels of specialist staffing for learning support was a particular challenge within international schooling, which can be exacerbated by the often short-term nature of international school contracts and the regularly high turnover of staff that some international schools can experience. This was,

however, also seen as an advantage by the leader of School B due to the possibilities offered by the arrival of potential new staff to the learning development department with different types of skill sets:

we're constantly getting new people in and so they come in with different skills from different schools and qualifications, so they're training our staff, so that's quite nice because they don't forget what they were doing before. Obviously, we'd love them to stay, but it's not a reality.

(Leader of School B)

The school leader's reflection on the role and effectiveness of the department demonstrated support and respect for the abilities and specialism of the teachers and leadership of the learning development department.

I started teaching in 1975 and I've never seen a learning support team like this one. It really is very, very good. And they've done everything like 1:1, and other things and had fantastic results.

(Leader of School B)

The different approaches towards staffing and resourcing shown between Schools A and B serve to highlight the importance of leadership and governance to the success of inclusion in international schools.

School B also showed a commitment to inclusive principles and support of pupils with SEN by appointing the SENCO as part of the senior leadership team, thus acknowledging the importance and centrality of the issue of inclusion and support for all pupils within the school:

I think that having a role in leadership and being part of decision making also means that the school works together to support all students, rather than as a separate department, so that all the teachers feel that we work collectively to teach all the children and to support with each individual need.

(SENCO of School B)

Whilst the leadership of School A indirectly acknowledged that it was important to involve representatives of the Learning Development Department in whole-school decision-making, the SENCO did not have a role on the leadership team:

The SENCO is not part of the leadership team but is a middle manager. We sometimes ask for her advice in decision-making.

(Leader of School A)

As a result, the SENCO of School A expressed a degree of isolation in her role:

Decisions are made by SLT that can undermine what we do. Sometimes I might get pulled away from a class to attend a meeting, often to give a reason why we won't admit a child. It's difficult when I might not agree.

(SENCO of School A)

Both schools scrutinised the work of their learning development departments and the quality of provision for pupils with SEN as part of departmental self-evaluation procedures. In School A:

Both SENCOs evaluate their departments and observe their teachers in supporting students. Students receive support in the form of an ILP [Independent Learning Plan], written by the LDD teacher or SENCO. Students are part of the general measures of progress applied by the school.

(SENCO of School A)

Whilst little comment was offered by the SENCO of School A regarding the efficacy of these measures, the school's expectations that the department come under the same level and type of scrutiny as other sections suggests that the role of the LD department was considered to be important.

School B had similar appraisal and self-evaluation procedures to ensure the quality of provision for pupils with SEN, within common appraisal procedures across the whole school.

The leadership of School B acknowledged that the issue of provision for pupils with SEN was not central to whole school appraisal initiatives, and viewed the study as an opportunity to reflect and to make improvements to this practice:

We pay lip service to it. In our lesson observations, if there is a teaching assistant in there, you will get marked down if the teaching assistant doesn't know the complete lesson plan and the two are working together with the students, because you'll only have a learning support assistant in the class if there's a learning support need. So, in that sense, we measure and we tick the box. Do we do it really well? As I said, I had a pang of guilt. A really good question. So, not as well as we should.

(Leader of School B)

4.1.10 Participant teachers' views on the most important challenges involved with supporting pupils with SEN at the school

School A and B's teachers were asked to choose their three most important challenges to inclusion and supporting pupils with SEN from a list of nine suggestions. Choices were not made in order of importance.

Table 7: *Participant teachers' views of the three most important challenges to inclusion and supporting students with SEN at the school*

Challenges	School A	School B
Selective admissions process	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
Lack of support from leadership	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
Lack of resources / budget for supporting SEN	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
Lack of confidence among staff	5 (50%)	3 (30%)
Lack of willingness among staff	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
Lack of experience among staff	2 (20%)	9 (90%)
Perceived lack of specialism among staff	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
Difficulty of access to specialist services	5 (50%)	7 (70%)
Number and range of student abilities at the school	2 (20%)	6 (60%)

Teachers at School A considered that the most important challenge faced in trying to establish inclusive measures at the school was the selective admissions policy practised by

the school (Table 7). Teachers considered that the school's selective admissions policy would mean that students with SEN were likely to be refused at point of entry. The teachers of School A also considered that a lack of support from the leadership of the school on issues related to provision for students with SEN was an important challenge. This perception was further reflected in the third most common selection - a reluctance by the school to commit resources and budget to support inclusion and SEN.

Similar views were also shared by the SENCO of School A, who expressed frustration at a mounting workload and a perceived lack of support from the school's leadership.

[the school should] ensure that the specialist teachers are protected from either being taken for cover and supply, or more seriously in the case of this year, when my only other full-time specialist was taken as a mainstream class teacher. This caused huge issues for myself as department head, but more importantly, for the provision for students, having a change midway through the year with no warning and being replaced by someone who wasn't a specialist. It says lots about the view of the school towards the department and the issue of supporting the children with additional needs. It also created a lot of parental complaints. It really caused issues in terms of how we are seen and the value of what we do.

I think chopping and changing staff members which impacts on the continuity. The main LDD teacher has now been put in charge of a class because of a weak mainstream teacher, who was swapped and has been asked to work in my department. LDD children need short, regular and often. We are also pulled for support when teachers are off sick or change.

Even if I do have all my staff, one teacher is responsible for two year groups. Up to 360 kids, so if you take an average of 10% as having learning difficulties, then they may be responsible for at least 36 kids. It's not enough for the support that they need.

(SENCO of School A)

The tension expressed by the SENCO in School A serves to highlight the difficulties experienced by some schools in reconciling an expressed desire by the leadership to become more inclusive as a school, and the practical issues involved with achieving this,

most notably in this case in staffing and retaining specialist teachers in the Learning Development Department. This may be felt more keenly in an international environment due to issues related to the availability of appropriately qualified staff, teaching resources and access to specialist SEN support services (see 'Environmental factors that impact on inclusion and provision of support for SEN', p 104 below).

Comments made by the leadership of School A acknowledged the scarcity of adequately qualified staff available to international schools. When asked about the main challenges faced by the school in supporting students with SEN, the leader felt that the biggest issues were in finding and retaining qualified specialist teachers:

It is difficult to find experienced staff wanting to work here who have the relevant qualifications. Staff, especially in the Secondary School, might offer LDD as a second subject if we feel that they can offer this. It is very difficult to find properly qualified staff.

(Leader of School A)

The reluctance of the leadership of the school to prioritise the learning development department when allocating the staffing budget was highlighted by the school leader's comments that:

In the primary school, we employ one LDD teacher per two year groups. We used to have a teacher for each year group but we found it to be expensive for the staffing budget

(Leader of School A)

In order to further gauge the school's levels of commitment to the principles of inclusion, when asked if the issue of inclusion and related staffing formed part of the school's long-term plans, the school leader replied that:

Our five-year plan refers to support of students with special needs, especially in the primary school. We find it difficult to support students in the secondary school, as we do not have enough staff. There are no plans for any major investment to change this. We offer the US track programme for students who may not be so academic.

(Leader of School A)

The teachers of School B considered that a lack of experience among staff (as opposed to lack of confidence and willingness - also offered as option choices within the same question responses) was the biggest challenge to inclusion at the school. This may prove, to a degree, to be inevitable in the international school environment, particularly among those staff who have been international school teachers for a while, due to the high number of schools that have, until recently, been selective in their approach. It is credible to think that this level of selectivity has impacted on international school teachers' experience and development in supporting pupils with SEN, or, at least, on their views of their own competence levels. The teachers' views on the source of their experiences of SEN and inclusion on an earlier questionnaire item (60% of the participant teachers in both schools shared that their experience of SEN was UK or other home-state based) helps to support this view (see Table 5). The commitment of School B to a well-supported CPD programme on issues related to SEN may mitigate some of the inevitable feelings of uncertainty related to perceived lack of experience.

Finally, teachers in both schools A and B also considered the difficulties in securing the services and support of external agencies such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists in the local area to be a significant challenge to the inclusion of pupils with SEN at the school.

4.1.11 Environmental factors (internal and external) that influence the inclusion of pupils with SEN at the schools

4.1.12 Availability of resources in the local area

A majority of teachers in both schools considered that the availability of teaching resources and access to specialist support services in the local area was limited (Appendix B: Tables 1.14 and 1.15). This is not considered unusual, particularly when the demand is for English language resources, and is a common limitation faced by many international schools. Schools' responses to this situation, however, can be varied, and may demand a higher degree of innovation when compared to the availability of resources for schools that are located in home-state environments. The efficacy of schools' responses can be framed by

the general levels of commitment shown by the school towards the principle of inclusion and support for pupils with SEN.

The scarcity of English-medium specialist support services within the international school environment can often be overcome by the school's approach to staff recruitment. In the example of School A, many of the diagnostic assessments (particularly for those related to dyslexia), were undertaken by the SENCO herself, who was qualified to conduct assessments:

Can be difficult, but luckily I can provide the majority of the above however there are other private agencies that can provide this specialist support.

(SENCO of School A)

The school's previous comments, however, on the difficulties in recruiting adequately qualified professionals to roles within the learning development department attest to the challenges faced in this area.

School B, likewise, acknowledged the difficulties of securing the services of English-medium specialists and offered details of their strategies to manage and overcome this:

We're lucky in some ways. We have a Speech and Language specialist who works closely with the school. The Educational Psychologist does visits. I mean, in ... it is difficult, particularly when there are so many languages. It can be hard to get English medium specialists. Some assessments are done here at the school. The parents are happy to pay, but it can be difficult to arrange for testing. Often they will go home during holidays for those types of things. Sometimes the reports are translated. So we manage, but it is difficult to guarantee that type of specialist support all the time.

(Leader of School B)

These views were echoed by teachers from both schools, who expressed that scarcity of resources, particularly those related to English-medium specialist support, proved to be a significant challenge to inclusion and supporting pupils with SEN.

4.1.13 The impact of the requirements of accreditation and inspection bodies

The requirements of accreditation and inspection bodies were not considered by the leadership of either school to be of particular importance to the issue of inclusion and support of pupils with SEN.

There are no specific requirements that I know of that ask for measures of inclusion to be implemented. The IBO and examination boards offer support for students who have learning needs by offering special conditions like extra time.

The students are included within the whole experience and are part of the cohorts that are assessed and scrutinised in terms of their progress. None of the bodies that I know of would force admission of students, especially if we felt that we didn't have the resources to support them.

(Leader of School A)

In my humble experience, again it's like a tick off box, it comes under the general pastoral support for all children. It would be very interesting if ISI take it to the next level. They certainly didn't used to. They just wanted to know that you've got a Learning Support team, you were supporting every child, you were differentiating, you were helping the gifted and talented. So my answer would be 50-50. It's there, but you can get along quite nicely.

(Leader of School B)

This was partly confirmed by the fact that no specific reference was made to supporting pupils with SEN in any of the most recent school inspection reports made by an external inspection or accreditation body for either School A or B.

4.1.14 State requirements, local law and regulations concerning pupils with SEN

When asked about the stipulations that host state ministries (e.g., the Egyptian Ministry of Education) make on the issue of admission and support for pupils with SEN at the school, the leader of School A stated:

We are an independent international school, and, while we do have to adhere to Ministry rules about some of what we teach, how long students stay in school, and so on, it is really up to us as to whether a student is admitted if they are not deemed a match to what the school can offer by way of support.

(Leader of School A)

Furthermore, the leader of School B considered that host-state influence could act as a hindrance to plans to support pupils with SEN, commenting on architectural restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Education at the school:

It would be very nice to go along to the Ministry and say for the future, we've got a couple of children that are in wheelchairs. Allow us to put in a lift on the other side of the school to help those students. I don't think that would be allowed, or you'd have to pay a lot of money. That's the only way that I can think that or suggest that they maybe would affect or mitigate our efficiency. But there again, laws are laws.

(Leader of School B)

4.1.15 Parental opinions and views towards inclusion

When asked about the impact of parental opinions and support for inclusion at the school, the leader of School A stated that these were contradictory:

Sometimes the parents can be concerned if some of the school resources are taken up by individual students who need support. They also mention that students can be affected by disruption. Having students with special needs does make the school a more diverse environment, which we embrace.

Most parents prefer for students to have a support teacher working with them, or to be taught in the small classes separately if it affects their study.

(Leader of School A)

In contrast, the leader of School B referred to anecdotal evidence of international school parents' commitment to the principle of inclusion, and whether parental views affected issues related to admissions and support for pupils with SEN (note: the leader of School B initially perceived the question to be asking whether parental opinion had a *negative* effect on these issues):

Not at all. Not to my knowledge. We've got a student in Year 7 with cerebral palsy. He really struggles. There are days when he has to sit in the ... area and we take him the work. We have to get the doctor to take him painkillers. He is one of the most loved and respected students in the whole school. When somebody, for the right reasons, but the wrong way suggested that the child, that the parents might like to look at home schooling for the child, the next day, I had ten parents in saying: 'You can't do that here, we love that boy.' And I said 'I'm not doing anything. I agree with you. He's staying.... I don't honestly know what might happen if we took ten students that had Down's Syndrome, and I don't think our international parents would bat an eyelid. Whether some of our local parents... I don't know. We're not going to put it to the test. That's a bit sad, but we're not going to put it to the test.

(Leader of School B)

The leader of School B's comments also suggests a possible difference in attitudes between 'international' parents, and 'local' parents, though this issue was not pursued in further detail during the interview.

These comments were partly reinforced by the views of the teachers. 7 of the 10 participant teachers in School A felt that parental opinions affected school policy and procedure towards including students with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms in a negative way, compared to 2 teachers in School B who expressed the same opinion (Appendix B:

Table 1.16). A greater proportion of teachers in School B (7 of the 10 participants) expressed that parental opinion did not impact on school policy towards SEN.

4.2 Case Study 2: Schools C and D in Dubai

4.2.1 Background and context

See Appendix A: Case Study 2 for background and context to Case Study 2: Schools C and D

4.2.2 Descriptions of the schools and their backgrounds

Both Schools C and D are located in suburbs of Dubai. They are identified as a Category A, or ‘traditional’ type international schools, on account of the number of expatriate pupils that attend, the multicultural backgrounds of the staff and the international education programmes offered. However, whilst Category A schools for expatriate children are still predominant in the Dubai international school market, recent economic and demographic trends suggest a movement away from these types of schools in Dubai towards the characteristics of Category ‘C’ type schools (‘non-traditional’, market-driven for the local elite). The student population of School D demonstrates this, shown by a significant recent growth of the number of Emirati students on roll. They are large and very well-resourced schools that aim for the ‘elite’ sector of the market in Dubai, attested to by the facilities and curricula offered (see Appendix C: Table 2.1). Responses to the school leaders’ questionnaires revealed similarities in terms of their purpose, reasons for establishment, curricula and student demographic. Differences were noted in the nature for the governing body, where up to 75% of the governors of School D were host country nationals, in comparison to up to 50% of School C (see Appendix C: Table 2.2).

4.2.3 Findings from teacher questionnaires, school leader interviews and SENCO interviews for Schools C and D

As explained above (p 75), the detailed reporting of questionnaire responses and related statistics found in the above report on Case Study 1 was used as a way to further describe the methodology of the study, and was considered less necessary for the reporting of the remaining Case Studies. The approach adopted for the analysis of Case Study 2, 3 and 4 was to examine the data for specific emergent themes and explain these. Reporting in these

sections is, therefore, more synoptic than that of the more comprehensive approach and outlining of the study's methodologies used in Case Study 1.

The main theme that became evident very early in the analysis of data from both schools in Case Study 2 was the impact of recent state-driven legislation, involving annual school inspections and a commitment to making all international schools in Dubai inclusive by 2020.

The samples of teachers who volunteered in both schools was well balanced between the primary and secondary section. More teachers at School D held whole-school, specialist roles, than in School C. The length of service in both schools was similar, with the majority in both schools (70%) having been in post for 1-2 years (Appendix C: Table 2.3). This, again, closely reflects the patterns of staff retention demonstrated in many international schools. The leaders of both schools expressed similar views on the issue of the availability and turnover of staff:

I think that the issue of funding and staffing and being able to hold on to well trained and qualified staff is always going to be an issue. We find it hard to deal with turnover. It can be quite high here, because of the contracts in the area. Finding suitably qualified staff to work in Learning Development can be a headache. We do train, but the budget is difficult to manage. Either they're primary trained or secondary subject trained, so it is hard to get qualified LD staff. Sometimes we look for EAL as well - that's what you sometimes get, English trained specialists. But it's not ideal, because of the challenges that the kids face, they need qualified and well-trained teachers.

(Leader of School C)

It can be difficult to find appropriate specialists throughout the year, and people tend to come and go according to contracts, so you're never really sure that you're going to be able to get the support and specialists that you need throughout the year. But this has improved a lot and we see much more established practices that link well with what the environment

demands, particularly in light of the new Inclusion Framework and the need for clear reporting and information to support the achievement of this.

(Leader of School D)

Most of the teachers at School C (7 of the 10 participant teachers) and School D (8 of the 10 participants) considered the school to be either 'Inclusive' or 'Quite Inclusive' in their approach towards admitting and supporting pupils with SEN (Appendix C: Table 2.10 and 2.11). Similarly, most teachers in both schools (9 of the 10 participants in each school) considered the school's approach to supporting pupils with SEN already enrolled at the school to be 'Inclusive' or 'Quite Inclusive'. The commitment of the school to the principle of inclusion was clearly voiced by the SENCO of School D, who stated that:

The ethos and philosophy of the school are very clear as stated through our message of inclusion and open access. This isn't an empty rhetoric, but it is really put into practice in practical and visible ways throughout the school. I think we as a department are central to this and are well supported by leadership that is fully committed to the principle.

(SENCO of School D)

School C had refused admission to a small number of pupils within the past two years. The reason for refusal of admission was given as:

The most important consideration is whether we can appropriately support the needs of the child and enable them to feel supported and make maximum possible progress.

We very rarely refuse. Only if we feel that the school is unable to offer the support or specialist environment in which they could do well. Sometimes if the behavioural patterns and or if there is a history of behavioural issues.

(Leader of School C)

Notably, the leader of School D stated that the school had not refused admission to any pupils during their period of leadership:

No. None. We aim to be as inclusive as possible, and we are constantly looking for ways to broaden our intake to include students with a broad spectrum of learning needs.

(Leader of School D)

The approach of School D would comply with the requirements of the standards planned by the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework which stipulate that, from 2020, no pupil should be denied admission to the school on the basis of their experience of a learning need or disability (KHDA, 2019, p 14).

Data gathered from Schools C and D showed evidence of preparations for the introduction of the measures stipulated in the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework, both in their long-term planning and in the focus of CPD activity. All teachers from both schools who participated in the study stated that they had received training or CPD in issues related to inclusion and support for pupils with SEN within the past two years, with most (with the exception of a single teacher in School D) claiming that they had received specific training within the past year (Appendix C: Table 2.8). The teachers' opinions on what CPD opportunities they would consider valuable (Appendix C: Table 2.9) showed that many teachers in both schools felt that they wanted to have the time to implement their learning into their teaching ('Time out of teaching to develop knowledge and practice on issues related to inclusion' was the most popular choice from a list of nine training suggestions in both schools), whilst the opportunity to share practice with other teachers, both within the school and in other schools, also proved to be popular choices. This was supported by the comments of the SENCO of School C, who stated that:

I think being part of the group and being able to meet with other SENCOs in the area allows sharing of good practice and to discuss how to achieve best for the pupils.

(SENCO of School C)

The recent professional learning opportunities and preparations for the implementation of the Inclusive Education Framework may help to explain the relatively high levels of confidence expressed by teachers in both schools towards supporting pupils with SEN. 7 of the 10 participant teachers in School C and 8 of the 10 teachers in School D considered

themselves to be 'Very Confident' or 'Quite Confident' in their ability to support pupils with a range of SEN (Appendix C: Table 2.5/2.6). 6 of the 10 participant teachers in School D acknowledged that they had developed the skills to support a diverse range of pupils at least partly at the school, or at the school and in other schools that they had worked at (Appendix C: Table 2.7).

The focus of recent training activity on preparations for the implementation of the Inclusive Education Framework was confirmed by the leaders of both schools:

We support the ethos of inclusion and are moving towards orienting ourselves in alignment with the plans by the state to implement the Inclusion Framework. We are basing CPD on issues related to inclusion and we use the school's mechanisms to ensure that all students, including those with SEND achieve their potential.

(Leader of School C)

The staff benefit from constant opportunities to develop their own practice, with frequent and specific reference to the enterprise of inclusion. Again, this is supported by the state's commitment to the Inclusion Framework.

(Leader of School D)

The host state's influence on the ethos and the operational orientation of the school towards inclusion finds its most obvious and clearest expression in the demands of the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework. Both school leaders strongly acknowledged this, though in both cases the leaders shared that the new requirements echoed inclusive practices that already existed in their schools:

The Inclusion Framework will make it part of the law to accept and support students with a wide spectrum of learning needs. This won't change our practice drastically as we accept most students, and certainly all that we feel that we can support to their fullest potential. But I think it will mean big changes for some of the other schools who may be more selective with their intake, or don't have such well-developed systems for including all learners.

(Leader of School C)

Dubai has a new Inclusion Framework, and this is going to be part of the yearly DSIB [Dubai School Inspection Bureau] inspection. It's a real positive to schools like mine that have a reputation for being inclusive and very positive about the inclusion agenda.

(Leader of School D)

Evidence of the state's requirement that teachers orientate themselves towards inclusive approaches was found in reference to the general stipulation that:

as part of the teacher licence all staff have to complete a module on learning support.

(Leader of School D)

The reference to the KHDA's annual inspections supports the idea that, in contrast to the more traditional international accreditation and inspection procedures (see earlier comments in Case Study 1, p 106), Dubai's state-driven inspections places specific and separate emphasis on inclusion and support for pupils with SEN as an important part of the successful administration of an international school:

the schools' inspection framework in Dubai, the DSIB Dubai Schools Inspectorate Bureau, is set out by the KHDA the Knowledge and Human Development Authority. We are inspected annually for a week. We get three weeks' notice. The team of inspectors are largely UK based experienced OFSTED inspectors. It is very rigorous.

(Leader of School C)

we have a school-based inspection each year by DSIB and this has a number of foci, one of which is learning support. The DSIB team send in an inspector who has a complete focus on the team and the support under their care.

(Leader of School D)

Examination of KHDA and DSIB literature revealed that inspection reports refer to the number of students of determination at the school and a separate section on 'Inclusion of Students of Determination', listing requirements for, and evaluation of, provision and

outcomes, as well as detailing areas for further development. Other references are also frequently made in DSIB inspection reports to the work of the inclusion team, to curricular adaptations and to the inclusion of students of determination within general progress data. When asked about the relevance of other forms of inspection and accreditation to inclusion and support for learners with SEN, leaders of both schools made mention that:

We are registered for examinations with Edexcel and AQA under JCQ regulations. We are a member of BSME and COBIS accredited. It is irrelevant. If a school claims to be inclusive they should be doing all that they can to ensure that SEN and EAL students are making at least expected progress. I would hope that we would always be supporting all students to best meet their needs and learning goals regardless of accreditation and inspection. However, Dubai has a very specific Inclusion Agenda currently and is really pushing ahead with this agenda. Hence, it forms a significant part of the school's inspection framework. We have a country-wide inspection framework largely based on OFSTED with a very strong emphasis on inclusion both in terms of provision and outcomes.

(Leader of School C)

Yes, both the IB and CIS have areas within their accreditation on the provision for students with learning needs.

(Leader of School D)

State influence on the inclusion agenda in Dubai has also had the effect of increasing the significance of inclusion for the governance of international schools:

We have a School Advisory Board, which is similar to a Governing Body. They are kept abreast of inclusion policy, developments, provision, outcomes at the school but we are not held to account by these. One member of this group will be allocated specifically to the SENDCO. We also have our owners who do hold us to account. They are there to support and challenge us with regards to all matters, which will include admission and support for children with additional learning needs. But they are not directly involved with the day-to-day operations of the school.

(Leader of School C)

The leader of School D expressed greater autonomy in their decision-making in this area:

No, they allow me to lead on this and make the decisions I want to make.

(Leader of School D)

On the translation of findings from the DSIB state-based inspections into school-based long-term plans, the school leaders mentioned that:

Yes, the school has a Strategic Plan, which has at its heart our inclusive ethos. It is reviewed annually in line with the DSIB data to ensure we are able to continue providing the support required to best meet the needs of all of the students.

All students will have academic targets. The SENDCO sets some of these in conjunction with the student and their parents if the student is on a Pupil Passport. The SENDCO and her team also attend Pupil Progress Meetings with Heads of Department to discuss the progress of SEND and EAL students.

(Leader of School C)

There is a very detailed SEF [Self Evaluation Form] completed which has a section just on Learning Support requiring data showing progress. The department have to produce their SEF and development plan, and this sits within the School Development Plan and three-year strategic plan.

(Leader of School D)

Some of the schools' most recent inspection reports (conducted by international agencies, as opposed to the KHDA Dubai-state driven inspections) commented on the arrangements made for learners with SEN. Some of the reports predated the Inclusion Framework. The generally positive comments made in these reports about inclusive principles and practice support comments made by the leaders of both schools that the schools had already demonstrated positive practice and an inclusive approach to supporting students, with very few causes to limit admission or exclude learners.

The Dubai state government's preparations and requirements for the Inclusive Education Policy Framework proved, therefore, to be a very significant influence on the approaches to inclusion demonstrated by both Schools C and D. Whilst the constraints of the study meant that the types of schools involved in this case study was limited to those that cater largely for expatriate pupils, one can assume that the blanket demands made by the Inclusion Framework on all international schools in Dubai would mean that this influence would be felt equally by a variety of different types of international schools within the area.

4.3 Case Studies 3 and 4 (Schools E and F): Methodological issues

The schools chosen for these case studies did not fit as neatly into the symmetry of the 'nested case study' design found with the two closely located schools in Cairo for Case Study 1, and those in Dubai for Case Study 2. Schools E and F, therefore, have been included in the survey as separate, singular cases (rather than 'nested' with elements of comparison between the pair, as in Case Studies 1 and 2). Apart from both being located in Europe, there is less commonality in geography or type between these two schools. The challenges of finding these types of schools as 'nested' in European locations proved difficult to overcome, particularly due to the generally lower numbers of international schools located in European cities and countries in comparison with other areas of growth (such as in Case Studies 1 and 2). This, in addition to more general difficulties in recruiting schools to take part in the study, meant that the 'nested' design was not adopted with the final two case studies. There are, therefore, fewer comparative elements between the final two schools in the study. Nevertheless, it was felt that the inclusion of these schools in the study would serve to enrich the comparisons due to their exemplification of specific aspects of international schooling and approaches to inclusion and supporting learners with SEN.

The approach in analysis of these two separate cases was therefore thematic, with a focus on the specific aspect of international schooling that the school was chosen to exemplify: the first (School E), was chosen due to its exemplification of approaches to inclusion and specialism in supporting students with SEN and, therefore, as a possible or potential model for the development of other international schools along these pedagogical principles. Furthermore, School E was included because it can be described (according to Hill's (2015) typology descriptors) as having an 'international' section that allows some students the option to complete 'international' courses but is located within an English (and Welsh) speaking home state (the United Kingdom). This, it was felt, would allow for useful comparisons to be drawn with the other schools on issues related to the availability of English-medium resources such as access to specialist support and the availability of teaching resources. The inclusion of this type of school would provide useful contrast with the situations of other international schools not located in English-speaking locations that may experience greater challenges in securing these types of resources and services.

The reasoning for the inclusion of School F was due to its ownership as part of a large chain of international schools, with the related requirements for uniformity across the schools owned by the group. This provided opportunities to examine specific issues related to the governance of international schools and how these relate to support for learners with SEN, particularly relating to inclusive leadership and the influence of boards of governance.

4.4 Case Study 3: School E in the United Kingdom

4.4.1 Background and context

See Appendix A: Case Study 3 for background and context to Case Study 3: School E

A note on the descriptors used: *School E is located in Wales. Wales uses the descriptor ‘Additional Learning Needs’ (ALN) rather than ‘Special Educational Needs’ (SEN). This section, therefore, regularly refers to ALN and ALNCO rather than SEN and SENCO.*

4.4.2 School description and background

Responses to the school typology questionnaire (Appendix D: Table 3.2) and analysis of the characteristics of the school places School E as demonstrating the traits of both a ‘Category B’ type school (ideologically driven), with elements of ‘Category C’ (‘non-traditional’, market-driven for the local elite). Category B, or ‘ideological’ type, international schools are (according to Hayden and Thompson, 2013) founded to foster ideological values, usually but not exclusively linked with global citizenship, cosmopolitanism and international mindedness. In this case, the ideology or ethos is oriented towards inclusion and support for pupils with ALN. School E demonstrates many characteristics that resemble the ‘National School’ descriptors in Hill’s (2015) typology criteria, such as ‘catering for a local population’, ‘accountable to a Board’ and ‘sets own admission criteria’. However, these elements were also common in many of the other schools involved in the survey, particularly those designated as ‘Category C’ type schools according to Hayden and Thompson’s (2013) categorisations. Also, other criteria on Hill’s continuum that were demonstrated by School E, such as having a number of ‘internationally mobile students’ and offering elements of an

‘international education programme’ matched the ‘International Schools’ criteria more closely and serve not only to justify the inclusion of this School E as part of the study, but also to highlight the difficulties in defining an ‘international school’ (see also Chapter Two Literature Review Section 2.2, p 14).

The school curriculum has been diversified in order to appeal to different learning styles and pupil abilities and includes both international programmes and a range of UK-based qualifications. The school also supports pupils from both the local area and other parts of the UK who receive local authority (LA) funding to attend, due to the school’s ability to offer specific support to pupils with ALN (see Appendix D: Table 3.1). Both the student and governing bodies are made up of over 75% host country nationals (see Appendix D: Table 3.2).

4.4.3 Findings from teacher questionnaires, school leader interviews and ALNCO interviews for School E

The sample of volunteer teachers from School E (see Appendix D: Table 3.3) served the purposes of the study as including a range of teachers from across the school, though it is noted that, due to the small size of the primary section in School E, most teachers in this school were classified as ‘Secondary’ or ‘Specialist’. The sample from School E also included some specialist ALN support teachers. The majority of the teachers had worked at the school within the 1-5 year range.

All (100%) of teachers at School E considered the school to be either ‘Inclusive’ or ‘Quite Inclusive’ in their approach towards admitting and supporting pupils with ALN. The school, though, had refused admission to some applicant pupils over the previous two years. The ALNCO explained the reason for refusal of admission to these potential pupils as:

Only if the child is out of profile or displaying behavioural issues that we are ill-equipped to deal with.

(ALNCO of School E)

The most notable finding that emerged in analysis of the teacher responses of school E was seen in the high levels of experience (Appendix D: Table 3.4), confidence (Appendix D: Table 3.5 / 3.6) and training (Appendix D: Tables 3.7 and 3.8) expressed by teachers at the school. All 10 teachers at School E who participated in the study expressed high degrees of general confidence in being able to support pupils with ALN, particularly in supporting pupils with autistic spectrum conditions, attention deficit and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and moderate learning difficulties. The areas where confidence levels seemed lower related to supporting pupils with less commonly encountered conditions such as hearing or sight impairment, profound and multiple learning difficulties and Down's Syndrome. This was general to nearly all teachers from all schools involved with the survey (see, for example, earlier comments on Case Study 1, p 87-88).

Further examination of the reasoning for the markedly higher confidence levels in supporting pupils with ALN expressed by teachers of School E revealed links with high levels of experience among the staff (Appendix D: Table 3.4). This was reinforced by the participant teachers' views that the school provided high levels of professional development in CPD and training on issues related to inclusion and support for pupils with ALN (Appendix D: Table 3.7 and 3.8). The provision of training opportunities and CPD on these issues was considered by many of the participants (7 of the 10 teachers) to be one of the main strengths and forms of support (along with 'A school-wide inclusive philosophy and attitudes' – also chosen by 8 out of 10) offered by the school. It is notable that a smaller proportion (5 out of 10) of participants chose 'Information provided by the LD Department (or equivalent)' as one of the three main forms of support offered by the school. This can be compared with the responses of all other schools, where every teacher (100%) in every *other* school listed this as one of the three main forms of support offered by the school. This discrepancy between School E and the other schools can be explained by School E's policy of offering high levels of training to all staff (including mainstream staff) to support learners with ALN. This would have the effect of reducing the mainstream staff's dependence on the Learning Development Department of the school. These views were supported by the school leader's and ALNCO's comments:

We have a very healthy budget for CPD, most of which is spent on ALN and inclusive practice.

(Leader of School E)

With few exceptions, all staff are trained in Masters' levels courses in supporting pupils with ALN within a maximum of two years, preferably one, of entering service at the school. Mostly for access arrangements, assessment and other qualifications with dyslexia and dyscalculia, but we also try to focus INSET on other aspects of ALN as we have many pupils that have autistic spectrum conditions, attention deficit disorders. We have termly INSET for all staff in specific areas of learning need.

The result of this investment into supporting our ALN pupils is small class sizes and dyslexia-friendly classrooms lead by the curriculum teacher as well as regular withdrawn support by specialist support teachers. Pedagogy is characterised by chunking, visual cues, low reliance on auditory memory, and extensive use of assistive technology, and multikinaesthetic teaching.

(ALNCO of School E)

This approach was confirmed by the school leader's reference to the school's commitment to recruitment and staffing of qualified specialist teachers. At the time of the survey, the school employed 24 specialist ALN teachers (out of a total of 64 teachers), in addition to the previously mentioned requirement for all mainstream staff to gain qualifications in supporting pupils with ALN. Some staff members also held qualifications as assessors of dyslexia and dyscalculia. The school employed a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist and secured regular access to the services of qualified educational psychologists. The contrasts seen here with other schools in terms of staffing and access to specialist support services relate to the commitment of the school to an ethos that supports inclusion and provision for pupils with ALN. However, the situation is also made easier by the relative ease in availability of qualified English-speaking staff and specialist support, in comparison to the other areas and schools involved with the survey. One of the main constraints faced by many international schools in supporting pupils with ALN is related to the relative scarcity in qualified specialist teachers in the international school labour market,

and in securing access to the services of English-medium specialist support professionals such as educational psychologists. Whilst access to these types of services is difficult for state-based education to achieve for reasons mostly related to the cost of the service, the focus in the case of this study (being largely involved with expensive and privately-run international schools) is on the limitations in the form of the language of provision of specialist services and availability in the local area, and not one of cost. These challenges in securing the services of English-medium specialist services have been commented on in Case Study 1 and was also a challenge experienced by those schools studied in Case Study 2. However, the relative ease of access to specialist staff and services (afforded by the location of the school within the context of an English (and Welsh) speaking setting, and the fact that it is a privately-run and affluent school) was acknowledged by the ALNCO of School E:

[On access to specialist support] *Pretty easy if parents are prepared to pay for private assessments. We have staff on site qualified to assess and screen for several specific learning difficulties such as Irlen's and dyslexia. We also have two or three Educational Psychologists that visit the school to assess potential and current pupils.*

(ALNCO of School E)

Nevertheless, despite the advantages offered by a mostly bilingual or English-medium setting, upon being questioned about the reasons why the school had such well-developed support systems for learners with ALN, the headteacher shared that the school had not always demonstrated an inclusive ethos in their approach to admissions and pedagogy. This ethos, according to the school leader, had developed and evolved along these lines in response to a conscious and deliberate decision by the governors and leadership of the school to admit a broader range of student ability. The resultant reputation gained for supporting an initially small number of pupils from a diverse ability range allowed for the subsequent training of a small number of specialist teachers. This then allowed the school to be marketed as one that could offer specialist support for learners with specific learning difficulties and to grow this aspect of the educational offer, particularly to international students within a market that would traditionally exclude learners with ALN. It is significant to note that the conscious adoption of an inclusive ethos towards pupil applicants with ALN by the leadership of the school proved to be a catalyst for the subsequent success in the

growth in numbers attending the school. This seems to contradict the traditional fears voiced by some international schools, including some in this study, that admission and support of pupils with ALN is not cost-effective, and has been the focus of limited research on the success of some international schools in appealing to specific markets (e.g., MacDonald 2006 and 2007). It is beyond doubt, however, that the location of School E within an English-speaking or bilingual context was also a decisive factor in the school's ability to offer high levels of support to its pupils with ALN, due to the greater availability of English-medium resources and specialists.

The final theme that emerged within this case study (although the point relates to all schools involved with the survey) relates to the offer made by international schools of curricular options and adaptations to support the academic progress of older pupils, including those with ALN. Some international schools offer older pupils a more diverse range of subject areas and qualifications as an alternative to a narrower focus on more traditional academic-type curricula. These offers often include more vocational qualifications such as those of the UK-based BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) as an alternative to the more traditionally academic A-Levels. Similarly, the International Baccalaureate Career Related Programme (IBCP) offers a different pathway to the more academically demanding IB Diploma Programme, although there are overlapping elements from the IBDP that form a core part of the IBCP. Comments related to this approach were offered by several of the school administrators:

'the range of courses that we offer match the abilities of all our students, giving everyone a choice, from the academic to the vocational ..'

(Leader of School E)

'our decision to look at and implement the IBCP will offer a chance to those who are struggling on the Diploma Programme, some of the SEN students will stay on and complete. More so than in the past, when they could go away with nothing or only a couple of certificates' [n.b. the final comment relates to the challenges of completing the IB Diploma Programme and the prospect of 'failing' if students do not attain a specific points score, based on the modules studied]

(Leader of School F)

These comments were also reflected in Case Study 1 by the leader of School A, who, in reference to a curricular adaptation for older students, commented that:

We offer the US track programme for students who may not be so academic.

(Leader of School A)

Whilst it may be disingenuous to suggest that vocational type courses are less challenging than those courses considered more traditionally academic, however, based on the evidence offered above, international schools seem to find the option of offering alternative types of courses to be to the benefit of a range of student abilities and different learning styles.

The offer of these types of courses is relatively new within the international schools market. An examination of whether these types of vocational courses prove to be as popular in international schools as, for example, the International GCSE qualification (currently the most popular qualification in international schools), particularly in those areas or schools who choose to offer these courses as alternatives for pupils with a varying range of learning styles and abilities, would prove to be a fruitful and interesting area of further study.

4.5 Case Study 4: School F in the Czech Republic (Czechia)

4.5.1 Background and context

See Appendix A: Case Study 4 for background and context to Case Study 4: School F

4.5.2 School description and background

Pupils at the school study a British curriculum in the earlier years and an international curriculum (IGCSE and IBDP) for the later year groups. A Czech education programme runs alongside the international curriculum. This allows Czech learners who attend the school to fulfil state educational requirements. Supplementary opportunities are offered for some older students to gain the US SAT qualifications, as well as the international qualifications offered to all learners (see Appendix E: Table 4.1).

The school has a Learning Development Department with separate primary and secondary sections. Pupils are more likely to be withdrawn from lessons in the primary section of the school than in the secondary. A single SENCO has responsibility over both sections. The SENCO has a whole-school management role but is not a member of the senior leadership team.

School F can be identified as a Category A, or ‘traditional’ type international school, on account of the number of expatriate pupils that attend, as well as the multicultural backgrounds of the staff and the international education programmes offered. The school demonstrates numerous characteristics of an international school according to Hill’s (2015) criteria, including ‘internationally mobile students’, the offer of ‘international education programmes’ and ‘culturally diverse students and staff’ (see Appendix E: Table 4.2).

4.5.3 Findings from teacher questionnaires, school leader interviews and SENCO interviews for School F

The sample of teachers who volunteered from School F (see Appendix E: Table 4.3) included a good range of teachers from across the school, with many having whole-school roles. The

length of service of teachers in School F saw the majority having worked at the school within the 1-5 year range. A larger number of teachers had taught at School F for 1-2 years (7 of the 10 participants) reflecting the nature of work patterns in many international schools, with relatively high turnover of staff who work for 1-2 years before moving on to work in other international schools.

The number of teachers who considered the school to be inclusive in its approach to admission and support of pupils with SEN was relatively low (3 out of the 10 participants) (see Appendix E: Table 4.10 and 4.11). Though the school explained that their aim was to be inclusive, a number of potential pupils had been refused admission within the past two years. When questioned about the reasons for refusal for admission, the leader of School F explained that:

It goes back again to the idea of a 'best fit'. We don't have a specific student 'profile', but we do use the information that we receive through the assessments, the interview and the pupil's academic history. We match this with what we can offer. Maybe, perhaps, if a very disruptive pupil. Maybe with some sort of emotional and behavioural issues, we may not be as well equipped. That's the only thing that I can think of that would cause some issues.

(Leader of School F)

The concept of a 'student profile' when considering applications from potential students, was a theme common to most schools involved in the survey. This 'student profile', whether consciously decided upon by schools, or developed as an unconscious set of ideals, is examined further in the Discussion section (see Chapter 5 Discussion Section 5.1 p 134-137).

Two other main themes emerged from the analysis of School F in Case Study 4. The first develops further the idea that some international schools experience significant difficulty in gaining access to English language specialist services.

This was acknowledged by the school leader as a particular problem:

Very difficult through the medium of English. Also the state isn't very far along in their journey in supporting students with disabilities. So this means that as well as the language barrier, there are some issues with the general level of support here.

Our head of LD is also the SENCO and is local, so she can work with local [non-English] specialist support people. That can be a problem. We do have visiting specialists, who come mainly from England, but they can be hard to organise at a time that you want. I'm guessing that they are busy with international schools at particular times. So it can be a problem.

I think it is also difficult to get specialist support in English here. Sometimes students fly to the UK to be tested, or they might wait months until the Ed Psych arrives and book in then.

(Leader of School F)

These views were supported by the comments of the SENCO of School F:

The lack of specialist outside agency support especially in English is a problem. For example, currently if a student, at parental request, needs to be seen by an educational psychologist, then we either suggest that the family visits the UK to see a recommended practitioner, or they have to schedule with someone who visits the school, although this is very infrequent – once or twice a year at most. Even though our budget has been cut a couple of times, we can still manage with what we've got in order to support the students.

(SENCO of School F)

The experiences described in the case of School F relate to other significant aspects of international school culture as being located within largely non-English speaking areas with low proportions of expatriate populations. The high levels of development of the state mean that these types of specialist services are available but are most likely to be offered in a language that is not English. This was not necessarily the case with Case Study 2 in Dubai, where the high levels of English-speaking expatriates meant that specialist services were relatively abundant, and in particular in the case of School E, which was located in an English

(and Welsh) speaking context. Furthermore, the contrast in accessibility between the schools in Case Study 1 also proved interesting, as the SENCO of School B explained that it was very difficult to find English-language specialist support in Cairo, whereas this issue was not so apparent in the case of School A. The high numbers of Egyptian (and presumably, therefore, Arabic-speaking) pupils attending the school may help explain this, owing to the availability of Arabic-language specialist support services within the local area for those who can afford the cost of this provision.

The second main theme that emerged involving School F related to the practice of international schools charging additional fees for support offered to pupils with SEN, in comparison with fees charged to other pupils at the school. This was discussed both at school level, and within the context of the governance of the school as part of a large chain of international schools owned by a multinational company. The common justification for charging additional fees is cited by some international schools as related to the extra, more specialised support offered by teaching assistants within classrooms, or for the withdrawal of pupils for teaching in small groups or on a one-to-one basis by specialist teachers. The argument for not charging additional fees for pupils with SEN has already been raised within Case Study 1 and was cited by the leader of School B as being a difficult balance to achieve but, in his opinion, a worthwhile approach that he felt was possibly a feature only of not-for-profit schools (see Case Study 1, p 96-98). This issue was also of particular importance by School F and had proven to be the focus of recent discussions among staff. The SENCO of School F raised the issue with the leadership of the school and had suggested a reduction or elimination of separate and additional fees charged for the support of pupils with SEN. The SENCO made several comments throughout the interview relating to this theme, with particular focus on the problems associated with identifying SEN in the international school environment:

We don't charge extra for support of more able (MAT) pupils, so why do we charge for SEN support? Also, we can't be sure whether young students need support for SEN or for EAL [English as another language]. It's too young to tell when they're that age. When older students come in for whom English might be a third language, we're not sure whether it's EAL or if there could be a learning difficulty. Being an international school, we don't charge

for EAL, but we do for SEN. There seems to be an unfairness there. We don't know for a while if it's EAL or SEN if it isn't declared in the application for admissions. Parents might be charged for SEN even when we're not sure.

Maybe a reason for the students to receive more one-to-one specialist lessons at no extra cost to the parents.

(SENCO School F)

The leader of School F considered that the school made a financial loss by supporting pupils with SEN, when compared with other pupils, but felt that it was a necessary part of the costs of maintaining a school that was diverse in terms of both its cultural and academic profile:

If students have special needs and need a lot more support, then parents will need to know the extra cost to the school and themselves. The extra that we charge doesn't cover the costs, but the parents don't know this. So, the financial side is important. Taking on a big proportion of students with special needs will be expensive for the school, and this is something that we have to take into consideration. Also, if they have physical disabilities, these can be expensive or impossible to accommodate in the building.

(Leader of School F)

The issue of some international schools' interpretation of the costing of inclusion of students with SEN proved particularly interesting within the context of the ownership of School F, being part of a larger chain of schools, each maintained as a profit-making enterprise:

The school is part of a larger body of international schools, who all communicate and share via our global campus and the platform. We use this to share expertise and to offer resources and help between schools. The board relates to the larger body, with managers for each geographical area that help us to set targets, both educational and financial. We are

subject to conditions within this framework that can affect our ability to offer places to students of diverse educational backgrounds, including those with special needs. We do have some autonomy in our choices, and we try to make that work within the broader financial structure. So again, it's a balance of being able to make use of shared resources but being subject to decision making on a different level, having a wider management structure that supersedes that of the school.

(Leader of School F)

The discussion sheds light on a common source of tension between decision-making and strategies or 'wish-lists' on a departmental level (for example, the SENCO's discussions with the school leader to reduce or stop charging extra fees for SEN lessons), and the practical implications for the leadership of the school. The school leader's perceptions and understanding of the financial implications of adopting different approaches to teaching and support are often driven by an awareness of a frequently restrictive 'double bottom line' that mainstream staff may not share. The links between these tensions and issues of governance, both within school-based governing bodies and, in this case, the policies of trans- or multinational education companies, were particularly evident in this case study and provided an important example of the dilemmas faced by schools at departmental, leadership and governance levels when addressing issues related to inclusion and provision of support for pupils with SEN (see Chapter 5 Discussion Section 5.2.3, p 150 for further detail on this issue).

Chapter 5: Discussion

The first part of this chapter explores the commonalities and differences in approaches, attitudes, and practice towards supporting pupils with SEN that were found across the schools in the case studies. One of the conclusions to be drawn from the research is that widespread agreement in approaches and attitudes amongst practitioners does not always reflect actual practice. There are other factors, both internal and external to the school, which have an impact on the actual extent to which the schools were inclusive and supportive of pupils with SEN. To complement and balance the perceptions of those working within the schools, the second part of the chapter discusses a number of factors which the research suggested were particularly important in influencing the inclusion of pupils with SEN across the case study schools. These factors include the orientation of the host state towards the issue of inclusion, the leadership and governance of the schools, parental attitudes towards inclusion, accreditation requirements and factors relating to the availability of resources in the environment within which the schools were located.

5.1 Commonalities and differences across the case studies / schools

Analysis of the data for the six schools across the four case studies revealed some commonalities that related to all the schools involved.

The first commonality was that none of the schools involved with the study, according to the opinions of the leadership, identified themselves as selective. Most of the teachers, all school leaders, and most SENCOs in all six schools claimed that their school was inclusive or moving towards inclusion, both in its admission process and in the levels of support it offered learners with SEN. The descriptor most commonly chosen by teachers in response to item 11 on the questionnaire (*'Which one of the following characterises the school's approach towards admission / support of learners with SEN?' Inclusive / Quite Inclusive / Quite Selective / Selective*) in relation to their school was *'Quite Inclusive'*, while the more commonly chosen descriptor of the school in response to the final, summative reflection question (q25) was *'The school is moving towards supporting children with learning*

difficulties and is adapting its policies and practices to reflect this.' The only exception to this was found with the teachers of School A, some of whom considered the school to be 'Selective'. Their views were supported by the SENCO of School A, who felt that the school did not invest enough resources in supporting learners with SEN, but contrasted with those the leader of School A, who considered the issue of inclusion to be a priority for the school. The differences in opinion in School A offers an example of how measures within a school can be perceived in different ways according to the stakeholders involved. These responses also justified the approach adopted by the study of surveying and triangulating data from potentially different viewpoints.

These findings are supported by the results of a wide-scale quantitative survey of international schools conducted by ISC Research in 2016, 2017 and 2019 on inclusion in international schools, which saw similar findings in the declining number of schools that identified themselves as 'Selective and not interested in inclusion' from 4.5% of the schools polled in 2016 to 1.46% of the 207 schools polled in 2019. The majority of the schools in the 2017 poll identified with the descriptor, *'We are well on our way [towards inclusion]. Policies, protocols, and personnel are in place. We can still grow. We take pride in the learning diversity of our students.'* The selection of this descriptor by the majority of participants in the ISC Research 2017 and 2019 surveys mirror the results found in the case study schools, both in their movement away from associations with selective admissions policies, and in their claims to be moving towards an inclusive ethos and practices.

Whilst the views expressed by many of those involved in this study about the inclusive nature of their schools may be supported by the results of the broader surveys, the conclusions of this research suggest that this belief may not be entirely accurate. Despite recent improvements in provision for learners with SEN by many international schools, Shaklee's (2007) view that 'as private entities the international schools by and large have no legal requirement to accept or serve students with disabilities of any kind' remains relevant. (Shaklee, 2007, p 270). This can be seen in the fact that all but one of the schools (School D) involved with the study had refused admission to at least one pupil with SEN within two years of the survey. The justification offered by almost every school in the survey regarding refusal of admission to potential pupils was by way of reference to a concept that they

described as a 'pupil profile'. When questioned on the meaning of, or descriptors involved with, the 'pupil profile', three of the schools explained that there were no formal criteria but were identified on a case-by-case basis. A further comment that was frequently offered to support this concept of a pupil profile was a reference to a mismatch between the characteristics of the potential pupil and the resources that the schools could offer, or had access to, that could support the learning of the pupil. Schools often used phrases such as 'the right fit' (School B), 'a 'best fit'' (School F) and 'the child is out of profile' (School E) to explain this idea of a mismatch.

Research (e.g., Carrasco et al, 2017; Haldimann, 2004; Shaklee, 2007) has suggested that the concept of a 'pupil profile' exists when it comes to deciding on international school admissions. Haldimann (2004, p 134) claims that 'when international schools do allow access for exceptional students the definition of exceptionality is often very narrow and seldom includes more than mild learning disabilities, highly able or English as a second language (ESL) learners'. Similarly, Shaklee has found that 'the majority of international schools also have selective admissions policies primarily dependent on prior grades, standardized testing and teacher recommendations that show the student to be average or above average in academic performance with few behavioural problems' (Shaklee, 2007, p 270). The findings from the study, as shown in the comments of many of the school leaders and SENCO interviews, suggest that despite the schools seeing themselves as moving towards inclusion (see ISC Research, 2019), a degree of selectivity in international schools' approaches to admitting pupils with SEN persists, and that these practices have not entirely disappeared in the period since the writing of Haldimann's and Shaklee's articles. The concept of a 'pupil profile', for example, still enables schools to refuse admission to pupils with SEN (evidenced by the fact that five of the six the schools that took part in the study had refused admission to pupils with SEN within two years of the study, with some of the schools referencing the concept of the 'pupil profile' as justification for this). Whilst the lack of recent literature on this issue may suggest that selective admissions procedures are becoming less prevalent (or that schools are unwilling to take part in research that may reveal these types of practices), the findings in this study offer a view that these types of selective practice do persist in subtler forms.

An exception to the 'ill-defined' pupil profiles suggested by some of the schools was provided by School E, whose detailed and definite criteria served as an example of a more clearly defined 'pupil profile':

The school has a pupil profile agreed with the governing body. We accept pupils that we feel we can make reasonable adjustments for and who will benefit from the education we can provide.

We accept pupils with very severe dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, speech and language communication difficulties. We also do not accept pupils with moderate or general learning difficulties if it is apparent that they would not be able to function in school without 1-1 support. The school policy is not to have teaching assistants in the classroom and consequently we do not accept pupils with severe ASC, ADHD, or behavioural problems such as oppositional defiance disorder.

(SENCO of School E)

Several authors are critical of the claims of international schools to be moving in inclusive directions, dismissing these as a marketing tool used disingenuously by some to increase recruitment (Agustian, 2021; Yvonne and Nirmala, 2012). Further criticism is levelled at the practice of using entry testing and scrutiny of academic records as a means to 'filter out' potential pupils with SEN, despite the schools' claims that this admission data is used to inform the creation of support programmes for the pupil. This situation can lead to other difficulties within the admissions process. Some of the schools surveyed mentioned a trend shown by parents of potential pupils with SEN of trying to downplay the child's learning difficulties in order to secure admission. The comments made by School F demonstrate the range of reasons why parents may not be forthcoming with detailed information about their child's learning needs during the admissions application:

Parents find it quite hard to accept that their child has special needs. And parents of those that don't have special needs sometimes don't want the education of their child affected by students who do. Parents think of the school as very prestigious and don't want the

reputation of the school to be affected by having lots of children with SEN. Sometimes it can be difficult to find at admissions.

If the child comes from past schools with reports that suggest a behavioural issue, or if the child scores very low on the test, which indicates a severe learning difficulty, we may refuse the child. However, we do receive very young children who have not got English as a first language, so we have to consider whether problem is EAL based or if it is something else. But sometimes they find ways to hide this information to admissions.

(SENCO of School F)

This is not a new phenomenon, as commented on by Shaklee's (2007) observations that 'parents can be sometimes less than forthcoming about their child's past history, special needs services or learning supports needed in order to acquire access for their child to an international school' (Shaklee, 2007, p 271). These tensions relate to broader 'dilemmas of difference' within inclusion and provision for learners with SEN (Norwich, 2008 and 2013). The view that the identification (and potential labelling) of learners' needs are a source of tension is demonstrated emphatically by the international school context in this case. The practical realities experienced by some parents or carers who seek to gain admission for children with SEN to international schools by concealing their child's learning needs provides a further example of how consideration of the international school situation can offer a different contextual background to the inclusion debate and raises issues that may not relate to more general state-based educational contexts.

It is also evident that, in some cases, the issue of admissions can lead to tensions between parental desire for placement of their child at the schools and the views of other parents towards inclusion (Paseka and Schwab, 2020). These often interact with the schools' preconceived (and arguably, therefore, selective) notions of a 'pupil profile' and their estimation of whether they are able to support the child with their current resources and specialisms, creating a complex decision-making process over admission of pupils with SEN. The existence of the notion of a 'pupil profile' (whether explicit and acknowledged or not) implies that, despite the stated views of the majority of teachers and leaders at the schools,

many international schools are selective to a degree due to the existence and application of these criteria as part of the admissions process.

A second commonality, related to the above concerns with admissions and a 'pupil profile', was found across all the case study schools in their reluctance to admit pupils considered to have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The term Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) has been used extensively in recent educational policy and practice (and will be the term used in this section). However, related conditions can be referred to in various ways and using a variety of different terms, including Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties (SEBD), Emotional and Behavioural difficulties (EBD), and more recently, issues related to Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

Young people's experiences of BESD pose significant challenges to social and educational institutions throughout the world. It is estimated by the World Health Organisation that up to 20% of young people globally may experience a mental health problem at some point in their development, and roughly 2% can experience these problems to a level that represents a 'clinically recognisable mental health disorder'. Whilst measurement of the prevalence of mental health difficulties in different parts of the world is varied and difficult to quantify, the WHO estimates provide some insight into the scale and seriousness of this issue. Within the international school context, ISC Research (2019) found that 60% of participant international schools had students reported as having mental health or emotional problems that required intervention (this constituted a 6% rise in numbers since 2017), whilst 35% of schools reported students with significant behavioural challenges that needed intervention. The problems faced by learners with BESD can include emotional disorders (such as anxieties, phobias, and depression), self-harm and suicide, conduct disorders (CD), hyperkinetic disorders or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum conditions (ASC), psychotic disorders, eating disorders, and substance and drug abuse. Many young people will probably experience more than one of the conditions. This group, therefore, represents a considerable proportion of current pupils or potential admissions to schools and international schools. Gopalkrishnan (2018) and Hechanova and Waelde's (2017) studies provide further insight in their findings that cultural differences can

impact on how mental health is understood in different global environments. This relates strongly to the case of the intercultural mix of students found in international schools, many of whom are seen as ‘third culture’ children who exist between, or apart from, home and host state cultures. A common response by international schools in applying western understandings of issues such as mental health and emotional difficulties may well exacerbate this situation for some pupils, the effect of which may be compounded by dislocation from home environments (WISE, 2020). This aspect of provision within international schools also contributes to the wider concept, raised earlier (see Chapter 2 Literature Review Section 2.10 p 47), of inclusion in international schools being understood as a particularly complex and ‘wicked problem’, in that the different cultural understandings of mental health mean that provision of common or uniform types of support may be unsuitable within international school contexts. This is supported by Armstrong’s (2021) views that ‘manage and discipline’ approaches to understanding child and adolescent behaviour, accompanied by related classroom management and intervention strategies, are inappropriate and incompatible with prevailing commitments to inclusive principles in education. The added dimension to this debate offered by international school pupils’ and their families’ different national perspectives on issues related to mental health mean that specialised intervention in the form of counselling support, as well as more general classroom management techniques, become complex and necessitate a very individualised approach to intervening and supporting with mental health issues.

Despite the prevalence of experiences of BESD among young people, reactions to these conditions remain relatively uninformed, particularly within the uncoordinated international school environment. Studies suggest that inexperience and perceived lack of specialism among teachers on issues related to supporting pupils with BESD can lead to prolonged tension between teacher and pupil, characterised by problematic relationships within school and classroom environments (Cooper, 2011; Myers and Pianta, 2008; Sheffield and Morgan, 2017). Jull (2007) comments that this situation is exacerbated by the fact that a common recourse to responding to young people who experience BESD is to use punitive action (and possibly exclusion) as a response. Studies suggest that teachers find it difficult to respond in classroom situations to pupils who demonstrate behaviours that are traditionally viewed as antisocial or contrary to the expectations of the school (e.g., Cosma and Soni,

2019; Nind et al, 2012; Pepler, Smith, and Rigby, 2004; Reid *et al.*, 2004; Sheffield and Morgan, 2017). The perceived risk of disruption to learning activities posed by those who experience BESD mean that successful admission of those pupils with a history of BESD (if revealed in admissions interviews and documentation – see p 134-137 above for related issues with reluctance in revealing information related to SEN during admissions procedures) may be jeopardised. Further tension regarding the admission of, and support for, pupils with BESD may be more apparent if parental opinion is, or becomes, prejudiced against the presence of pupils with BESD at the school.

The responses of every case study school confirmed the idea that the admission of pupils with BESD was viewed with scepticism. The schools' comments offer insights into the reasons why admission may be denied, ranging from 'not having the capacity' (School A), 'can't cater for their needs' (School B) and 'not well equipped for that sort of issue' (School E). Further explanation of this reluctance to admit learners with a history of emotional and behavioural issues referenced issues such as a lack of staff knowledge and expertise and the potential for disruption. It was interesting to note that even those case study schools that demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusive principles and practice and were well staffed with the expertise to support this, expressed reluctance to admit pupils with BESD.

It is evident, therefore, that some international schools feel unprepared, whether due to lack of knowledge or lack of willingness, to support pupils who are known to have conditions associated with behavioural issues. The resultant reluctance to support pupils with BESD can threaten the process of inclusion, as acknowledged by Ogden's (2001) view that "behavioural difficulties and individual differences in behaviour are among the main barriers for making the principle of the inclusive school work" (Ogden, 2001, p75).

A third commonality that was found across the schools was that all schools had a Learning Development Department or equivalent (also known by other designations, such as the Learning Support Department, the Inclusion Team, etc). However, levels of reliance on the department for support and guidance on issues related to inclusion and support for learners with SEN varied between the schools. The main factor that determined this level of reliance related to the confidence and preparedness of the classroom teacher in providing effective pedagogy for all learners. In those schools where teachers felt confident in supporting a

range of different learning needs, SENCOs expressed that the learning support departments felt able to deploy their support more effectively, and in different ways. Studies suggest that several factors such as the effectiveness of differentiation by class teachers, levels of reliance on teaching assistants and the practice of creating smaller groups taught by learning support teams, are relevant to the success of inclusive provision and practices (see Asfa-Wossen, 2018; Civvitillo et al, 2016; Hoover et al, 2004; Webster and Blatchford, 2018; Westwood, 2013). SENCOs' comments from the case study schools confirmed that when classroom teachers showed greater degrees of confidence and autonomy in supporting pupils with SEN, it allowed Learning Development teams to consider and develop a broader variety of different ways of supporting pupils. This was confirmed by responses to the teacher questionnaires, which revealed that the role of the Learning Development team and SENCO was less important to teachers from those schools that had invested in higher degrees of training and provision on inclusion and supporting SEN. The effect of this investment was seen in increased teacher confidence in supporting a range of learning needs (shown in responses to teacher questionnaire item 15 and items 5-6 for schools C, D and E). This was particularly the case if the requirement for classroom teachers to develop successful and effective inclusive pedagogical practices was mandated by the school (as in the case of School E) or by the state in which the school was located (as in the case of Dubai, and Schools C and D). This was seen by the schools involved (and acknowledged by both school leaders and SENCOs of those schools) to be a powerful incentive in encouraging mainstream teachers to address and embody effective pedagogical practices for learners of all abilities.

5.2 Main factors that influenced inclusion in the international schools

5.2.1 Host state intervention, attitudes and orientation towards inclusion

The second case study, based on Schools C and D in Dubai, provided the most compelling evidence to show the importance of host state requirements regarding inclusion in supporting learners with SEN. Headteachers, SENCOs and teachers' responses suggested that the instructions embodied in the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework meant that orientation towards inclusive practice was to become central to their approach and pedagogy. This was evident in various aspects of Schools C and D's responses to the survey, including those items associated with the focus of CPD, attitudinal questions regarding teachers' views of the schools' approaches to inclusion and SEN, and perceptions of the schools' ethos, allocation of resources and admissions processes.

Dubai's Inclusive Education Policy Framework required international schools to implement the following measures by 2020:

- School governance is oriented towards inclusion of 'students of determination', including implementation of measures such as appointing a governor for inclusive education.
- Schools create an Inclusion Support Team, led by the Principal, to ensure implementation and monitoring of measures stipulated in the Inclusion Framework.
- Principals review, develop and implement a comprehensive and strategic inclusive education improvement plan, supported by implementation and monitoring of the Framework's requirements
- Inclusion Champions are nominated in each school to promote and model practice that supports the development of inclusive attitudes and approaches

- That 'leaders of provision' play a crucial role in supporting classroom teachers to identify and develop approaches in the classroom so that every student is empowered to succeed.
- Appointment of 'support teachers' to model and advise classroom teachers on effective practices that support the implementation of inclusive attitudes and practice in classrooms.
- Classroom teachers cooperate with the Inclusion Support Team and Learning Support Assistants to support the learning, progress, and outcomes of all the students in their classroom.

The evidently ambitious, pervasive, and far-reaching requirements of the Framework had a demonstrably positive effect on the orientation and attitudes of headteachers, SENCOs and teachers in the two Dubai schools involved with the study (see Case Study 2: Schools C and D, p 110). The notion that host state attitudes and interventions can have a significant impact on international schools' orientation towards inclusion is reinforced by Shaklee's (2007) comment that: 'The degree to which the host country has embraced and created legislation to serve exceptional children may be reflective of the degree to which the international school embraces special needs students as well.' (Shaklee, 2007, p 274).

The situation of the schools in Dubai and the Dubai government's directives also provoke important questions about the nature of inclusion and how it is achieved. Inclusion in this case is evidently understood as a definitive process achievable by implementing a specific set of directives (see earlier discussion on the complexities of understanding the nature of inclusion, Chapter 2 Literature Review Section 2.10 p 45). Consideration of the methods by which these inclusive measures were implemented and achieved, understood within the context of the nature of a state's power and its relationship with its people (and in the case of Dubai, towards a largely expatriate school population, which complicates analysis of the context even further) leads to interesting insights into issues related to inclusion, the democratic process and a state's influence within this. A comparison of the case of Dubai's orientation towards inclusive principles within its international schools with, for example,

the United Kingdom's educational system, where provision of special education to some learners is still largely offered in separate locations, raises important questions related to the nature of inclusion, power and democratic systems. These tensions also provoke reflection on the nature of 'utopian realism' as a facet of thinking about inclusion. Achievement of these types of goals can often be seen as unrealistic or even dangerous when discussions that promote these ideals become entwined with judgements about achieving 'greater good' and 'ends justifying means' in their implementation (Norwich, 2008). The unique context of this study, within specific international environments that are affected as much by influences such as neoliberalism, state intervention and authoritarian decision-making, as they are by democratic processes, serves to emphasise the importance of examining the concept of inclusion within a variety of different educational and political contexts. Whilst these issues are beyond the remit of the current study, consideration of these principles can serve to enrich and inform the inclusion debate, particularly on how inclusion is practically achieved.

Revisiting Schools C and D following implementation of these procedures in 2020-21 with an aim to evaluating their effect would provide the basis for an interesting further study on the long-term impact of such measures on issues such teachers' confidence and attitudes towards inclusion (see Chapter 6.4 Implications for Future Studies p 170).

A similar degree of host-state influence expressed through a set of expectations was described by the leader of School E, who outlined the school's obligations related to inclusion as:

SEN targets, standards and measures are at the core of our education. We are monitored annually by ESTYN [the Welsh national education and training inspectorate]. We are registered with Secretary of State, Welsh Assembly Government and CreSTeD [Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils] for the admission of pupils with SpLD. Expectations are rigorous and are monitored regularly.

(Leader of School E)

These details refer to a combination of national guidelines and inspection procedures for schools in Wales, conducted by the Welsh Government. Schools are expected to develop a

self-evaluation process for improvement on all aspects of schooling (including provision for pupils across the ability range) on a three-year cycle, with a formal whole school inspection visit organised by ESTYN on an approximately three-to-four-year basis. The leader of School E also refers to registration with CreSTeD, or the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils (though the designation has recently been changed to refer to pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), rather than dyslexia). Accreditation of the school with the Council involves a similar period of self-evaluation, with annual audits and triennial formal visits to ensure that the quality of provision for pupils with SEN is maintained. The case of school E demonstrates the importance of the influence of the host state through the interaction of formal, state-driven inspection procedures with accreditation by an organisation specifically concerned with provision for pupils with SEN.

In contrast, the influence of the host state on the other schools in the survey was considered a relatively unimportant factor, with very little bearing on either the admissions process ('it really is up to us as to whether a pupil is admitted' (Leader of School A)) or the day to day running of the school.

The influence of the host state, then, is often complex and linked with the traditional and cultural norms that relate to disability and SEN. Shaklee's views on the dynamic between host-state attitudes towards SEN and the values of the international schools, summarise the situation experienced by many international schools: 'respect for the host country traditions, beliefs and values are of paramount importance, this can present a unique dilemma for serving students with disabilities. While the school personnel might embrace the ideal of serving a diverse population including those with learning disabilities or behaviour disorders, the cultural norms of the host country itself might not support those ideals.' (Shaklee, 2007, p 273). Conversely, the attitudes of the host state towards the issue of inclusion may be proactive and positive, as has been recently seen in the case of states such as Dubai. If this is the case, then an opposite dynamic to that suggested by Shaklee (above) should be discernible in the form of a greater impetus towards inclusion and, consequently, a requirement that international schools examine and, if necessary, change existing practices to become more inclusive in both admissions procedures and pedagogy.

5.2.2 Inclusive leadership of international schools

Inclusion in international schools also happens because of specific decision-making by the leadership of individual schools (Pedaste et al, 2021). Both Schools B and E described the inclusive natures of the schools as being the result of planned leadership decisions to adopt and develop an inclusive culture and practices. The leader of School E detailed the evolution of the school along these lines, and felt that the school's subsequent marketing of the culture and levels of support had proved so successful that it was commonly (and mistakenly) identified in both local and international contexts as a school that was created from the outset for the specific purpose of supporting pupils with SEN. This, to some extent, conceals the efficacy of the decision-making process demonstrated by the leadership that led to the development of this reputation. A similar case was commented on by Pletser (2019) where an international school that served as the focus of a single case study became so successful in its inclusive approach and practice, that it 'necessitated the school having to manage and protect the inclusion balance in order to prevent the school becoming an international special education school' (Pletser, 2019, p 207).

The importance of the creation and encouragement of an inclusive ethos by the leadership was demonstrated in several parts of the study and was seen to have impacted on teachers' opinions on factors such as resourcing (e.g., in recruiting and allocating qualified and successful specialist teaching staff), training and CPD (e.g., in focussing on developing specialisms further and in encouraging and informing inclusive practice through differentiation by the class teacher, etc), and parental engagement.

It can also be observed that the types of interventions demonstrated by the state of Dubai in cases C and D reflected inclusive leadership practice that was already taking place in some of the international schools as a result of individual leadership decisions. The leaders of schools C and D suggested that the state-wide regulations for implementation of inclusive practice reflected what was already taking place in their schools:

The Inclusion Framework will make it part of the law to accept and support students with a wide spectrum of learning needs. This won't change our practice drastically as we accept

most students, and certainly all that we feel that we can support to their fullest potential. But I think it will mean big changes for some of the other schools who may be more selective with their intake, or don't have such well-developed systems for including all learners.

(Leader of School C)

Dubai has a new Inclusion Framework and this is going to be part of the yearly DSIB inspection. It's a real positive to schools like mine that have a reputation for being inclusive and very positive about the inclusion agenda.

(Leader of School D)

These comments, however, raise the issue of whether these measures would be as effective in schools that are less well prepared for, or even hostile to, the implementation of the Inclusion Framework. This offers potentially fruitful opportunities for further research on the impact of the introduction of the Framework and its enactment in some of Dubai's international schools (see Chapter 6.4 Implications for Future Studies p 170).

The literature suggests that leadership has been found to be the most important factor in creating and maintaining inclusive environments in education (Blandford, 2017; Boscardin, 2007; DeMatthews et al, 2019; DiPaola et al, 2004). Much of what has been found to be effective in inclusive educational leadership reflects successful practice in other fields, eliminating the common recourse to citing a 'lack of specialism' as a reason for not adapting to inclusive ethos and practice (Blandford, 2017; De Matthews et al, 2019). Analysts of those practices seen as effective in inclusive educational leadership tend to include, as their view of the most important characteristics of inclusive leadership: the ability to engage with a range of administrative, legal and instructional practices (Billingsley et al, 2018; Mayrowetz and Weinstein, 1999), awareness (through experience or education) of cultural and historical issues relevant to the success or failure of inclusion (Skiba et al., 2008), a willingness and commitment to adapting organisational aspects of the school to support inclusion (McLeskey et al, 2014; Waldron et al., 2011), a collaborative approach to involving relevant stakeholders and facilitators aimed at ensuring the success of the inclusive approach (Bays and Crockett, 2007; DeMatthews, 2015) and a fund of effective contacts and

services, or proactive creation of these, who can ensure the continued momentum of the inclusive approach by supporting specific parts of the process (Billingsley and Banks, 2019; Hoppey and McLeskey, 2013). Within these broader descriptors, an inclusive leader, according to Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) should aim to achieve three specific goals: 'fostering new meanings about diversity; promoting inclusive practices within schools; and building connections between schools and communities' (Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004, p134).

Whilst previous experience in special education has been found to be important in enabling inclusive leaders to dismantle segregated learning environments and in building effectively inclusive schools (Frost and Kersten, 2011; Lasky and Karge, 2006; Wakeman et al 2006), the recent growth in number of educational leadership programmes that feature elements of instruction in inclusive leadership as part of the offer attests to both the relative scarcity of those who already would have this level of experience with SEN and the widespread recognition of demand for these types of courses. This would particularly be the case in an international school environment where concepts of inclusion and inclusive approaches are in their relative infancy.

Those leaders in the case study schools that expressed support for inclusion and inclusive practices reflected many of those characteristics described above. The leaders that were identified by their staff in questionnaire items 11, 12 and 15 as being inclusive (or well advanced in taking the school on a journey towards inclusion) often showed a commitment to ensuring that the leadership team was attuned to, or trained in, inclusive principles and practices. This was expressed either by references made to the prominent roles played by SENCOs within leadership teams (e.g., 'a really key part of our school the Head of Learning Support is part of SLT and an Assistant Head' (Leader of School D)) or by the SENCOs themselves in praise of the support that they felt was being offered to them by the leadership ('We're well supported by leadership and, unlike other schools that I've worked at, an integral part of the school both in what we do and in being part of the decision-making process.' (SENCO School B)).

Some of the case study schools demonstrated a long-term commitment to inclusive practice through a system of continuous monitoring and improvement that asked questions of the

effectiveness of the whole school within the context of inclusion. This was often linked with planning for staff training and professional development to address any perceived deficiencies in provision for pupils across the ability range. The participant teachers in those schools whose leaders offered comments on these types of procedures (Schools B, C, D and E) often offered positive responses in the questionnaires on issues such as their views of the school's inclusive approaches, and their confidence and preparedness to support pupils with SEN.

Finally, elements of inclusive leadership relate to a determination to maintain inclusive admissions and provision, even when these may conflict with other interests or stakeholders at the school, as referred to by Abawi et al (2018, p 4) as 'espoused values and beliefs'. This form of commitment can place inclusive leaders in situations that may conflict with other stakeholders, within nuanced and complex relationships, as described by the following example:

Their [governing body] perception is that we should not go down the one-to-one in a classroom, because that could give us the reputation of accepting anybody because, in other people's perception, if we're taking those students, we've got a financial difficulty. They would not understand that it's because of our ethos, you know, that we can make a difference. Then that would put us at a disadvantage, compared to some other schools, who might have a different marketing philosophy. So both ways actually. They will support me, but they've made the decision – no one-on-one. Which is a pity, but I fully understand where they're coming from.

(Leader of School B)

The above demonstrates how commitment to inclusive leadership can be compromised by the decisions of a governing body or owner (in the case of the above example, the reluctance to commit to 'one-to-one' teaching). It effectively illustrates the complexities of inclusive decision-making in an international school context, as the nuances of this particular case relate not only to the school leader's desire to maintain an inclusive offer in the form of close support of pupils with SEN, but also to the governors' wider commitment to including individual pupils in classrooms with their peers, and to the overall impact of decisions based on inclusive principles within the competitive economic environment of international schooling.

5.2.3 Issues related to governance

The issue of the governance of international schools is inextricably linked with the success of inclusive leadership and decision-making. The main aspects of international school governance that bear relevance to this study relate to the nature of ownership. Matthews (1989) explains international school governance as being either 'market driven' or 'ideology driven'. The basis of governance of international schools inevitably affects decision-making for schools, particularly when related to issues such as admissions and the maintenance of the reputation of the school as both an educational institution and as a financial entity. Further, the identification of types of ownership of international schools as being either 'for-profit' and 'not-for-profit' categories is complex, and can affect decision-making in relation to support for pupils with SEN. The leader of School B suggested a common perception that these two school types often respond to issues such as budgeting and staff training in different ways:

I think we're lucky, because some of the for-profit schools seem to struggle for funding for things like staff training. We are fortunate because a lot of the money from fees is reinvested in training staff properly.

(Leader of School B)

However, the distinction between these types of ownership is not necessarily clear (Bunnell, 2015 and 2019; James and Sheppard, 2014; Machin, 2017), leading to difficulties in making judgments about the orientation of international schools towards issues such as inclusion. Whilst tensions between the leadership of the school and the owners were evident in the case of School F (see Case study 4, p 130-132), the temptation to dismiss the cause of the tension as related to it being owned by a large, profit-making multinational education company is simplistic. An example offered by James and Sheppard (2014) serves to illustrate the complexity of governing body categorisations and educational decision-making, involving case studies that examined schools where responsibility for educational decisions was ostensibly devolved to school leaders. Despite this, the links between admissions decisions, a potential fall in academic performance (e.g., as shown by external examination results), declining enrolments and the resultant impact on reputation, meant that the

governing bodies of the schools were seen to be intervening in day-to-day operational and educational matters. According to the researchers, this was the case regardless of whether the school ownership was designated as profit-making or not. Headteachers frequently clash with governing bodies on similar issues, leading to estimations in past studies that the average tenure of international headteachers have ranged from 2.8 years (Hawley, 1995) to 3.7 years (Benson, 2011). It is evident, therefore, that despite seeming to grant a degree of autonomy to school leadership in decision-making related to the ethos of the schools, and to admissions and provision, the wide remit of governance bodies in both the economic and educational dimensions means that issues such as a school's orientation towards inclusion are subject to a complex set of conditions.

A selection of school leaders' comments on the issue of governance provides useful insight into the variation in attitudes shown by different governing bodies towards inclusion and support for pupils with SEN in the case study schools:

The Board will decide on who to admit, based on what kind of profile they have decided on and how it will affect issues such as staffing.

(Leader of School A)

The board relates to the larger body, with managers for each geographical area that help us to set targets, both educational and financial. We are subject to conditions within this framework that can affect our ability to offer places to students of diverse educational backgrounds, including those with special needs.

(Leader of School F)

Other schools reported the influence of governing bodies as being supportive in their demand for accountability for decisions that support inclusion:

There is a specific designated Governor with experience of SpLD and he attends all meetings and is chair of EdCom – a sub-group of the Main Board.

(Leader of School E)

We have a School Advisory Board which is similar to a Governing Body. They are kept abreast of inclusion policy, developments, provision, outcomes at the school but we are not held to account by these. One member of this group will be allocated specifically to the SENDCO. We also have our owners who do hold us to account. They are there to support and challenge us with regards to all matters, which will include admission and support for children with additional learning needs but they are not directly involved with the day to day operations of the school.

(Leader of School C)

These findings suggest, then, that the orientation of a governing body or ownership of an international school can have a very significant influence on the success of admission, inclusion and support for pupils with SEN.

5.2.4 Parental engagement and attitudes towards inclusive education

The study revealed startling differences in parental attitudes towards inclusion of learners with SEN at the schools. School leader and SENCO comments from Schools A and F suggested that these attitudes could often be negative. The reasons for these parental attitudes ranged from a belief that inclusion would result in increased demands on the school's resources: *'parents can be concerned if some of the school resources are taken up by individual students who need support'* (Leader of School A), to concerns expressed about the potential for disruption of having learners with SEN in classrooms: *'Most parents prefer for students [with SEN] to have a support teacher working with them, or to be taught in the small classes if it affects their [other pupils'] study', 'students can be affected by disruption'* (Leader of School A).

The responses of teachers in school A to questionnaire item 23 (*'Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with ALN'*), saw 7 of the 10 participant teachers report that parental opinions and intervention affected inclusion processes in a negative way. Further, two teachers from School A also made specific reference to this in the 'free comment' section at the end of the questionnaire, offering opinions that some parents tended to view SEN and disability negatively and that parents

were concerned about the effects of admitting pupils with SEN on the 'prestige' of the school.

Similarly negative parental attitudes towards inclusion were also reported, to a lesser degree, in School F, citing issues such as '*parents of those that don't have special needs sometimes don't want the education of their child affected by students who do*' and '*parents think of the school as very prestigious and don't want the reputation of the school to be affected by having lots of children with SEN*'. The SENCO of School F reported that these types of comments and attitudes could intensify with parents of older students, and particularly in relation to parents of pupils in examination groups.

These types of negative parental responses to the inclusion of learners with SEN may be due to a variety of factors, including the attitudes of the leadership of the school and the cultural orientation of the home state to issues of disability and inclusion (Hassanein, 2015). The study revealed a very sensitive issue in comments made by school leaders on the ratios of expatriate and domestic students (and parents) at the school bearing some relevance to the levels of parental acceptance of, or engagement with, the concept and processes of inclusion. This was reported by School B, and hinted at by School C:

I think that the parents, like before, are supportive of our approach and value the togetherness of how we do things. I think that we are fortunate to be more international than some of the schools, and the attitudes are reflected in that. We do have a small local number, but mostly with parents from a different country, but with some local parents sometimes.

(Leader of School B)

No. Our inclusion policy remains the same, regardless of some local parental attitudes towards students with additional learning needs. We are proud of our inclusivity.

(Leader of School C)

Some of the School A participants identified the effects of negative parental attitudes towards inclusion and support of learners with SEN as being a cause of stigmatisation and the creation of a culture of rejection of these learners at the school. This, in turn, could result in parental attempts to deny that their children had SEN: *'parents are influential here. Some parents refuse to allow the school to put them on the LDD register. They don't want to accept their child has learning difficulties. It's a personal thing...they don't want their child to be singled out as different or a failure'* (SENCO of School A).

Parental reluctance to identify their children as having SEN can be linked to studies that described parental anxiety about the social impacts such as bullying, social isolation and rejection (Balboni et al, 2000; Leyser and Kirk 2004; Salisbury 1992). Furthermore, Blandford (2017) identified the difficulties that parents of children with SEN faced as a kind of 'grieving process' that they often articulated, leading to reluctance to engage with discussions regarding identification and provision for their children.

In relation to those parents who objected to the admission of pupils with SEN, studies suggest that one possible reason for the development of these attitudes may be linked with concern that their own children might be affected by learning what they termed as inappropriate behaviours as a result of being within proximity of pupils with SEN (Reichert et al, 1989). These types of parental responses to SEN can have an effect on the children themselves within institutions such as schools in inculcating attitudes that refuse to accept difference and inclusion (De Boer et al, 2010; Holden 1995; Katz and Chamiel, 1989), and can in itself result in bullying and rejection of children with SEN. De Boer et al's (2010) observation that parents tend to support inclusive measures more readily if they have experienced inclusive practice in action suggests that a possible means to enlist the support of parents who are sceptical or reluctant to accept inclusion would be to invite them to observe and participate in lessons that demonstrate inclusion in action (see also Chapter 6.2 Implications and recommendations for practice in international schools, p168).

Conversely, all the other schools (Schools B, C, D, and E) reported parental attitudes and involvement as positive influences. As an example of this, the ALNCO of School E reported positive parental pressure to develop the inclusive ethos of the school and cited the *'pressure by parents to constantly monitor and upkeep our high standards with regard to*

inclusivity' as an important aspect of her role. Other examples have already been reported as part of the case studies, including the comments of the leader of School B who cited a case where parents exerted pressure on the school to limit measures that they perceived would serve to exclude an individual student. This example also served to represent the differences in attitude reported between expatriate parents and local parents (see Case Study 1, p 108).

These attitudes were confirmed by some teacher questionnaire responses (questionnaire items 23 and 24), who reported parental influence as positive responses. The most common form of response, however, was that teachers were unaware of parental opinion towards inclusion, or that they felt that the school was unaffected. These types of responses may serve as more helpful indicators, suggesting an accepting general parental response towards inclusion as being normalised in those schools.

The importance of parental attitudes and involvement in supporting enterprises and cultures within schools that support inclusion is well documented, e.g., Blandford's (2017) findings on the efficacy of programmes that encourage parental engagement with inclusion, such as the Parental Engagement Partnership Programme (PEPP). Similarly, Pletser's (2019) view confirmed that a collaborative approach involving parents and other stakeholders served to remove barriers to learning for a diverse range of learners within a case study international school. Further studies (e.g., Koster et al, 2009; Palmer et al, 1998; Scheepstra et al, 1999) serve to confirm this, citing that parents often initiate the inclusion process with the expectation of benefits such as increased social interaction for their children and a general benefit in contributing to the creation of environments that accept and encourage differences.

To sum up, therefore, the situation in international schools shows a mixed parental response to issues of inclusion. Participants' comments from all the case study schools often reflected broader research findings that the majority of parents tend to accept physical disabilities and milder learning needs more easily but find it difficult to demonstrate similar attitudes towards more severe learning difficulties, particularly if these are expressed as behavioural issues. Also, those parents who have more experience of SEN and inclusion

tend to be more accepting of inclusive measures, and those whose children attend inclusive classes, are more accepting still (Paseka and Schwab, 2020).

5.3 Other factors

Two remaining factors can be seen as contributing to attitudes to inclusion but were considered by most of the case study schools to be of lesser importance. These factors include accreditation and inspection procedures by international agencies or bodies (as opposed to the national inspections – see 5.2.1 Host state intervention or attitudes/orientation towards inclusion, p 142 above), and the relative availability to international schools of resources and specialist support.

5.3.1 Accreditation and inspection by international bodies

The leaders of most of the case study schools did not consider the impact of international accreditation and inspection procedures to be of particular importance to the implementation of inclusive measures in their schools. Some of the schools acknowledged that there were general requirements and standards that were applicable for all learners (which, in itself, can be argued is an inclusive approach in not discriminating in procedure between mainstream pupils and learners with SEN). However, when asked whether any accreditation or inspection procedures provided specific support for inclusion processes within the school, some of the school leaders felt that they were irrelevant, for example:

There are no specific requirements that I know of that ask for measures of inclusion to be implemented. The IBO and examination boards offer support for students who have learning needs by offering special conditions like extra time.

None of the bodies that I know of would force admission of students, especially if we felt that we didn't have the resources to support them.

(Leader of School A)

Other schools did find aspects of accreditation and inspection procedures to be relevant to the issue of inclusion. Of these, the school leaders referred to the following requirements as having an impact on provision for learners with SEN:

- The Council of International Schools' (CIS) accreditation requirement of documentation on the provision for the different forms of learning support offered by the school.
- The requirements of the European Council of International Schools (ECIS) that schools implement effective methods for identifying and supporting pupils with SEN, provide of an adequate number of staff for effective learning support and offer curricular support or adaptations for those whose needs warrant these measures, as part of their accreditation and monitoring procedures.
- The International Baccalaureate's requirement that schools appoint a full-time representative and manager of SEN (e.g., SENCO) who is qualified and experienced in fields such as the use of assistive technology and can manage curricular demands and adaptations for pupils with SEN, as part of the requirements at initial authorisation and subsequent five-year self-assessment processes.

It can be argued, though, that the relative lack of importance attached to external accreditation processes expressed by most of the case study school leaders communicates a continued sense of failure within the international school environment to achievement of a unified approach to the issue of inclusion by external agencies. Again, the exception to this was seen in the national, host state requirements and related monitoring procedures, commented on as relevant to Schools C, D and E (see 5.2.1 Host state intervention or attitudes/orientation towards inclusion, p 142 above).

5.3.2 The availability of resources and specialist support

Difficulties in acquiring specific resources and specialist support are an inevitable part of international schooling (although this is becoming less the case as digital technology and related resources become more freely available). Nevertheless, it can be argued that success in dealing with these difficulties is dependent on the degree of innovation and determination shown by schools to overcome this common challenge. The 'nested' approach proved useful for exploring this issue as it revealed large differences in success

levels between Schools A and B in this regard. School B seemed to be far more effective in acquiring resources and recruiting staff, despite being located within the same city as School A and experiencing similar challenges in acquiring these resources, whilst School A was more successful in securing the services of specialist support (although these were mostly Arabic speaking). Other factors such as the relative size of the school (that may affect the level of demand for specialist services), the size of the Learning Development department and the governance structure of the school also relate to success in this area.

The study also revealed that the challenges associated with acquiring resources and specialist support varied across the regions. Schools located in Egypt (Schools A and B) and Czech Republic (School F) tended to report higher levels of difficulties associated with accessing specialist support such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists in comparison to Schools C, D and E. The school leader and SENCO interviews revealed that these difficulties may be related to the number of expatriates living in the region, suggesting that the higher the concentration of expatriates (or in the case of School E, home state nationals) within the local environment, the lower the likelihood of the case study school reporting problems related to acquisition of resources and access to specialist support.

The schools located in Egypt also reported higher levels of difficulties in accessing resources (e.g., pen grips, coloured overlays, reading schemes and related resources, etc) that supported successful provision for pupils with SEN. When questioned, the leaders of both schools in Egypt (Schools A and B) described delays and difficulties in importing goods and customs procedures that tended to slow the process of accessing resources delivered from international manufacturers of English medium resources across the schools. However, upon further questioning on this issue, nearly all schools reported that the increasing availability of resources in electronic format helped to support provisioning in international environments.

Chapter 6: Reflection on the contribution of the study, implications and recommendations for practice in international schools, limitations of the study, further research and conclusion

6.1 The contribution of the current study

The study was designed and carried out in response to a recognition that the nature of ‘international schooling’ is changing rapidly and that this unparalleled growth will inevitably mean diversification of the types of learners admitted to study in these schools. The growth in the number of pupils studying in ‘international schools’ has outpaced the growth in the number of schools in recent years. Bunnell (2019) reports that the number of pupils in international schools grew by 385% between 2000 and 2017, in comparison with a 245% growth in the number of schools (and an accompanying 778% growth in fee income)). This would suggest a resultant and proportionate growth in the number of pupils with SEN admitted and educated in international schools. Parts of the international school sector have recently indicated an inclination towards more inclusive principles and practice that may support this increase in the number of pupils with SEN (as shown, for example in the responses to ISC Research surveys in 2017 and 2019). However, the paucity of literature on inclusion and support for pupils with SEN in international schools means that these purported claims and attitudes are unsupported by clear, empirical evidence. The study addresses this by examining the extent to which a selection of six international schools support pupils with SEN, and how this is achieved. It therefore contributes to the body of evidence with detailed qualitative data on the types of practices that can both support and limit the progress of pupils with SEN within international school environments. Whilst the case of each school involved with the study is unique, and their practices therefore are not easily generalisable, the findings offer insight into the factors that can contribute to the successful admission and inclusion of pupils with SEN across a range of different international school settings, which will prove potentially useful to other international schools that may be motivated to develop their own inclusive approaches and procedures.

In basing the study within two highly contested fields that are often characterised by heated debate and divided opinion, namely ‘inclusion’ and ‘international schools’, it is

acknowledged that the study risked being overshadowed by the broader issues related to these areas of controversy. A study based on these contested areas presents challenges to an understanding of the term inclusion and the extent to which it can be applied within the context of international schools (see, for example, the earlier discussion on the distinctions between inclusive measures for learners with SEN and economic inclusion (see Chapter 2 Literature Review Section 2.9 p 42-45)). Nevertheless, it was felt that the study was worthwhile in that it examined a core educational value (inclusion) within a very diverse and rapidly changing educational environment, where the principle of inclusion could potentially be overlooked by schools in favour of other factors such as economic concerns or the relative access of schools to English-medium resources. The speed and direction of change in the field of international schooling can be seen as a reflection of broader political and socio-economic dynamics linked with globalisation and the development of neoliberal policies among those states where the recent growth of the international school market has been most pronounced. Whilst acknowledging that these rapid changes would inevitably present challenges to a comparative study that focusses on a specific educational value, it was felt that examination of the principle of inclusion within this relatively chaotic environment could offer perspectives hitherto not considered. Tarc and Mishra-Tarc's (2015) view that 'the international school represents an important object of inquiry for theorizing schooling in a context of globalization' (p 34) supports the idea that the international school environment can prove to be a useful arena within which to examine the universality of educational principles such as that of inclusion, despite (or perhaps because of) the challenges posed by the nature of the environment. Furthermore, UNESCO's recent (2021) acknowledgement of the role of non-state actors as a reality within the fabric of global educational provision also bears relevance to the contribution made by the study as it allows the adoption of a more 'realist' approach to understanding issues such as inclusion within global contexts. The traditional recourse to assuming that state-based educational provision is more morally acceptable than other forms of provision often ignores the realities that exist for learners within different global educational environments. The more practical acceptance and understanding of the many diverse forms of global educational provision (including non-state forms of provision) that suit particular environmental contexts allows a more holistic approach to understanding what inclusion means to different types of learners in a global context.

6.2 Implications and recommendations for practice in international schools

The study found that international schools exist in a variety of different forms, within innumerable global contexts, often operating indendently of each other and in very different ways despite close geographical proximity to each other (see for example the cases of Schools A and B). This, inevitably, makes the formulation of a coherent set of recommendations for international school practice that would appeal to all the different types of schools, set as they are in their different local contexts, difficult to achieve.

Categorisation by differences in ethos and type (according, for example, to Hayden and Thompson's (2013) categorisations – see p23) or in relative levels of wealth and influence (see, for example, UNESCO's (2021) descriptions of some schools as 'elite schools' or 'low-fee schools') are inadequate, considering the range of other factors that can affect or serve to characterise international schools. It is also acknowledged that the range of schools involved with this study was limited to those that can be described as being more affluent. This affects the generalisability of the findings and their translation into a viable set of recommendations suitable for the multitude of different international schools and their leaders. Furthermore, the study's finding that Dubai's state-wide decision to promote inclusion as a practical and measurable principle in all its international schools was an important factor in influencing the success of inclusion is, in itself, unique due to its local context. There are few states in the world who have the same levels of expatriate populations (and related numbers of international schools) or operate according to the specific political systems that may have helped to achieve the wholesale adoption of the principles and instructions (see discussion of this above in Chapter 5 Section 5.2.1 p 143-144) demonstrated by Dubai in this case. This, again, affects the generalisability of the findings and their distillation into a specific set of recommendations. The study was intended as an exploration of the types of conditions, actions, attitudes and changes that can affect the situation of learners with different types of SEN in international schools. The aim was to provide a snapshot or portrayal of those types of practices that can serve to support or limit provision for a diverse range of learner ability in international schools, observed within the variety of different geographical, political and school-based contexts in which they exist.

Despite this, and according to the intended universality of the principle of inclusion, some suggestions may be made that can be useful as a set of general observations and recommendations. This is particularly the case within the context of the findings of ISC's surveys (see Chapter 5 Section 5.1.1 p 134), which suggested that the majority of international schools that took part in the survey purported to see inclusion and inclusive practice as positive, and chose to identify themselves as aiming to be inclusive (which matched those opinions stated by the schools involved with the current study).

Implications for the international school sector

Despite efforts made by some agencies (e.g., the Alliance for International Education and some accreditation and examination organisations) to introduce cohesion to the international school environment, the field remains largely uncoordinated and lacking in uniformity and homogeneity. This makes it difficult to establish a standard set of expectations across schools (even within the same local areas) regarding issues such as inclusion and support for pupils with SEN in international schools. Despite this, efforts by accreditation and inspection bodies to introduce or reinforce standards and expectations relating specifically to support and provision for pupils with SEN will help to raise the profile of these learners among groups of international schools, with the effect of normalising inclusive policies and practices.

Recommendation:

- a. International accrediting and examination bodies should consider giving a higher profile to the diverse range of learners, and in particular to learners with different types of SEN, as part of accreditation, inspection, and examination procedures. Criteria should be developed that appraise the support offered to a broad and diverse range of learners in international schools.

It was found that the most effective factor that influenced support for pupils with SEN in the international schools involved with the study related to the state-wide mandate for inclusion introduced as part of Dubai's Inclusive Education Policy Framework.

It is acknowledged, however, that this perception of inclusion (as a definitive, practical set of measures), coupled with an understanding of the host state's unique political background and its relationship with its people (see discussion of these ideas in Chapter 5 Discussion, Section 5.2.1, p 143-144 and p 162 above) may not be universally applicable or achievable. However, although studies to evaluate the full impact of these changes have yet to emerge, the changes in attitude and procedure described by the participants in the study in preparation for these changes suggested a wide-scale and decisive shift in commitment towards the principles of inclusion in international schools in the area. Other states may not be able to replicate these actions, due to the unique context of Dubai's situation, and it is not the intention of this thesis to influence state-based action across a variety of different global contexts, or to make comment on specific political systems. One can observe, however, by examining Dubai's decision to adopt the Framework for Inclusion and subsequent actions, its levels of intentionality and determination to ensure its implementation. Notwithstanding the inevitable debate that would ensue about the nature of inclusion as an expression of democratic pluralism (again, see Section 5.2.1, p 143-144), this provides an important reflection on the types of approach that could lead to the successful adoption of inclusive practice by schools on a state-wide basis in different political contexts.

Recommendation:

- a. Other states may find it useful to consider the levels of intervention and actions adopted by Dubai in acting to establish widespread inclusive practice via the Inclusive Education Policy Framework. This may help them to reflect on their own positionality towards the promotion and implementation of inclusive practice.

Implications for the leadership and governance of individual international schools

Whilst it is difficult to make specific school-based recommendations (see both p162-163 above and the school-based recommendations below), it was found that the roles of the leadership and governance of the school were vital for the effective implementation of inclusive policies and practice, regardless of the ethos, type or relative levels of affluence of the school. The attitudes and actions of the leadership of international schools have a

strong impact on other factors that influence support for pupils with different types of SEN within classrooms. The commitment of a school's leadership and governance to factors such as staffing and resourcing effective learning development teams, or provision of professional development opportunities related to supporting inclusion, impact positively upon classroom teachers' attitudes and levels of confidence towards supporting pupils with SEN.

Recommendations:

- a. Person specifications for international school leaders should contain explicit reference to expectations of a commitment to inclusive measures designed to support pupils with a range of different types of SEN.
- b. Appropriate training should be provided to newly appointed school leaders who lack experience of supporting pupils with a range of different types of SEN in international school environments.
- c. School leaders should ensure that the development of an inclusive ethos forms a central and integral part of the international school's mission statement and related policies. This should be clearly outlined in the school's mission statement.
- d. School leaders should create an inclusion support team to ensure implementation and monitoring of inclusive measures throughout the school.

The attitudes of governing bodies and owners of international schools, and their influence on the school's decision-making processes, are also of central importance to the success and effectiveness of policies and procedures that involve inclusion and support for learners with SEN.

Recommendation:

- a. Governing bodies should appoint members specifically tasked with supporting inclusive measures for pupils with a range of different SEN in their school(s).

- b. Person specifications for all governors of international schools should contain explicit reference to expectations of a commitment to inclusive measures and attitudes, and to supporting pupils with a range of different SEN at the school.

Implications for school-based practice

In reference to the above discussion on the unique contexts of each international school and the related difficulties in offering coherent sets of specific recommendations that would be applicable to, or achievable by, all schools, the main suggestion that can be made (in light of the study's schools' and ISC survey respondent schools' views that they wish or aim to be inclusive) is that each school should explore its own possibilities in ensuring that inclusive principles and practice are implemented and maintained. The starting point for this self-survey would be to use tools such as Booth and Ainscow's (2016) Index for Inclusion or Azorin and Ainscow's (2018) THEMIS Inclusion Tool to make judgements about the school's current capacity for supporting a diverse range of learners, and to use the findings to plan for the implementation and expansion of further inclusive practice. It is important that a nominated person be appointed to support and monitor this process. For example, some schools ensure that SENCOs are members of the school's leadership team in support of this role, whilst some also choose to nominate 'inclusion champions' to work alongside the SENCO (and therefore, also, the leadership team) to ensure that the findings from self-surveys such as those suggested above are translated into effective practice at leadership and classroom levels. By adopting this approach, schools can adapt provision within their own geographic, political, and socio-economic contexts, whilst maintaining focus on the overarching goal of furthering inclusive practice. More importantly, these plans can be made to support the needs of individual learners. In this way, schools can adapt, regardless of their contexts, to support a range of learners, for example, according to the severity of their learning needs.

In doing this, schools will be able to use the contextual information about their attitudes and practices to make decisions about how best to support a diverse range of learners at the school, according to the means at their disposal on issues such as:

- a. The allocation of adequate resourcing and investment in their learning development departments in order to support pupils with SEN and their teachers.
- b. The allocation of investment into regular and consistent training and professional development based specifically on supporting pupils with SEN at the school.
- c. Ensuring that classroom and subject teachers are aware of their responsibilities in offering differentiated learning experiences that support all learners.

In addition to the above suggestions for schools to explore their own contexts to ensure that adequate provision can be made for a range of different learners according to their own capability to do so, the following recommendations can apply to all schools:

Judging by the rapid growth in the number of Category C type international schools, it is likely that the growing number of pupils applying for admission to these types of international schools will result in a corresponding increase in the number of pupils attending these schools who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recommendation:

- d. International schools should be prepared to develop procedures to help admit and support pupils with BESD in response to this potential growth in numbers. Schools should explore a variety of interventions to support pupils with BESD, including the appointment of guidance counsellors and learners' mental health services, coordinating with external psychotherapeutic organisations whenever this is possible, acquiring self-help resources, preparing staff for supporting mindfulness techniques among pupils, and developing mentoring programmes. These procedures should align with the requirement within international schools that provision of these services be tailored to individual students' situations, due to the nature of different nationalities' responses to issues related to mental health (see discussion of these ideas in Chapter 5 Discussion Section 5.1, p 138-139).

Finally, in line with the findings of the studies on parental attitudes towards pupils with SEN in classrooms (see Chapter Section 5.2.4 Parental engagement and attitudes towards inclusive education (above p152); Paseka and Schwab (2020)):

Recommendation:

- e. Parents of all pupils should be invited into classrooms to observe differentiated and purposeful learning experiences for all pupils.

These actions will help to ensure that parental opinions about inclusion and special educational needs are informed both by the school's own values and practices, in addition to their own contextual understandings of disability (for example as informed by cultural or religious context).

6.3 The limitations of the study

The conduct of the study was considered to be an important and worthwhile exercise, not only in developing academic techniques as part of the research and writing processes, but also in supporting development and professional understanding within the fields of inclusion and international schooling. The act of working with, and consulting, a wide variety of stakeholders within international schools, and to be able to learn about and observe innovative and inspiring practice was found to be a particularly valuable aspect of the study.

A variety of specific issues arose during the processes of researching and writing that caused reflection and consideration of practice on future occasions. The main reflections involved:

An evaluation of the paradigm and methodological approach used in the conduct of the research. Whilst maintaining that the interpretivist approach was the most appropriate type of methodology for this type of study, the fact that it is based on gathering and analysing mostly qualitative data through eliciting opinion and exploring the attitudes of those most closely involved with the operation of the international school, gave cause for reflection. The link between attitudes and behaviour remains an area of contention (Azjen and Fishbein, 2005; Marcinkowski and Reid, 2019; Pennington, Gilen and Hill, 1999), particularly

when related to the measurement of attitudes (Kronsnick et al, 2005 Stahlberg and Frey, 1996). Whilst the opportunity to consult with those whose daily lives involved administering or teaching in international schools proved invaluable, some concerns remained regarding the objectivity of the data gathered from the questionnaires and interviews. This was the case despite the implementation of procedures designed to ensure that participants felt secure in sharing their views. The potential for misreporting or misrepresentation was mitigated to some extent by the range of opinions sought in each school, and by the potential for triangulating data not only from the respondents, but also from documents such as school policies and inspection reports. Furthermore, it was considered an opportunity missed that pupils and their voices were not included, due to the constraints and the scope of the study. It was felt that consultation with the learners would have enriched the data in terms of understanding what inclusion means to the young learner, particularly within an international school setting.

Whilst researching and writing the study, it became evident that other practical issues also served to limit the scope of the survey. The samples that were eventually decided upon were felt to provide good indicators of several aspects of international schooling and the degrees to which inclusion was central to their philosophies and procedures. Nevertheless, the study brought to the attention of the researcher the limitations placed upon educational research by reliance on the cooperation and consent of schools to participate. This proved to be a valuable lesson in understanding the academic process and the constraints imposed by practical issues. This was particularly evident in Case Studies E and F, where the established 'nested' approach had to be abandoned due to difficulties in gaining the cooperation of appropriate sample schools. The process also caused reflection on, and gratitude for, the involvement of all the individuals and institutions that agreed to participate. Having developed knowledge from my own professional experience that all schools, including international schools, are always very busy places, the time taken by leaders, governors, SENCOs and teachers to cooperate with and contribute to the study was greatly appreciated.

Finally, a reflection on the academic process revealed some mistakes made during the data gathering phase of the study. The most notable of these was felt to be a question included

in the teachers' questionnaires (questionnaire item 14) that elicited opinion on what they felt were the most important factors that influenced the success of inclusion at the school. The omission, however, of any indicator of whether they felt that the factor was supportive of the inclusion process or not, meant that the responses became less useful and rendered the responses to this particular questionnaire item to be unusable in the way that it was intended. The opportunity to reflect on this type of error, however, proved to be a valuable methodological lesson, and was useful for informing practice in future research-based endeavours.

6.4 Implications for future research

The study was purposefully designed as small scale and offered a limited and comparative portrait of some of the practices that occur within international schooling in different parts of the world. It is hoped that further studies in this area may help to broaden and clarify this picture and to encourage the sharing of strategies for development towards more inclusive international schools, particularly in light of the paucity of empirical research and related literature in the field.

A revisitation of the schools that participated in the current study to assess the levels of progress made since the conduct of the study would be an important and valuable exercise (particularly as all schools expressed that they were on a journey towards being inclusive and intended to implement further measures to achieve this). This is particularly the case with Schools C and D, as the study was conducted in the period immediately preceding the implementation of the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework. It would be a valuable and interesting exercise to see how successful this process has been, and to examine the progress and impact of the Inclusion Framework for the pupils attending international schools in the region.

Another area for further study emerged from some of the limitations of the current study. Due to constraints related to the timing, scope and word count of the current study, some data that was gathered from the participant schools was not used. The most notable were:

- Opinions and data gathered on how schools and learning development teams differentiate between SEN and EAL (English as an additional language), and whether approaches to supporting pupils who experience either, or both, differ.
- Opinions and data gathered on the use of Teaching Assistants in international schools to support pupils with SEN.

These aspects of international schooling are of central importance to the issue of inclusion. The size and significance of these areas, however, are so considerable that each would merit a study of this type in themselves. These areas could prove to be important avenues for further study in contributing to the growth of the body of research and literature on the field of inclusion within international schools. Whilst similar studies exist that relate to some of these areas (see, for example, Lee's (2021) investigation of learning support assistants' perception of their roles in a small Jordanian school, or Tarry's (2011) exploration of the deployment of teaching assistants in international schools), the potential for conducting studies with a similar range and scope to the current study (that is, across different geographical areas and with different types of international schools) offers potential for developing further perspectives and for making a significant contribution to the available empirical evidence.

6.5 Conclusion

The study was designed with focus on three broad issues involving international schools and inclusion, namely:

- What is international schooling and how have recent changes in the global education market affected our understanding of it?
- Is international schooling concerned with provision for students with special educational needs and, if so, how are these students supported?

- How have recent changes to international schooling affected provision for students with special educational needs in international schools?

In response to the first key issue (defining and describing international schools), the speed of change within the market has made the seemingly simple task of defining an international school difficult. The proliferation of Category C type schools (namely ‘non-traditional’ type international schools that cater for host-state children who have opted out of their national education system (Hayden and Thompson, 2013)) in growth areas such as Asia and the Middle East, in comparison to the numbers of the more traditional Category A (‘traditional’ type schools developed for itinerant, mostly Western workers’ children) and B type schools (established according to a specific ideology), has made identification challenging. The growth of Category C type schools and movement away from the cosmopolitan values of Category A and B type schools have resulted in rejection of the use or designation of the name ‘international school’ by some, in favour of descriptors that may more accurately reflect the new pupil demographic, namely ‘elite schools’ or Globalised English Medium of Instruction Schools (GEMIS) (Bunnell, 2019). The rapid growth of these types of schools has seen the fragmentation of the field of international schooling into at least two identifiable sectors (the ‘premium’ and ‘non-premium’ – a reference to the ‘elite’ nature of provision offered by some schools in comparison with others (Bunnell, 2019; Morrison, 2016)). The pattern of change, however, suggests an ever more complex landscape of further fragmentation involving, for example, the recent proliferation of Non-English Schools to cater for migrant workers not from the Global North, a new dynamic of Western expatriates seeking registration with state schools in Hong Kong (whilst Chinese students seek admission to Hong Kong’s international schools), among other diverse developments. The inevitable result of this fragmentation is seen in the identification of the field as ‘a complex area of study, constantly growing and evolving to such an extent where the frameworks used to describe it can barely keep up’ (Bunnell, 2019, p12).

The second and third issues relate to the question of whether international schools are concerned with inclusion and provision for learners with SEN. This issue is inextricably linked with consideration of what inclusion means and what it looks like within an international school context. The study chose to base its definition of inclusion on that of UNESCO’s 1994

Salamanca Statement, due mainly to its uncompromising nature, its resistance to accusations of cultural relativity (being a statement of international intent), and to its focus largely on the principles of educational inclusion and special education (as opposed to a broader, more societal understanding of inclusion). Despite claims to having made notable progress towards its inclusion goals in its review of provision 25 years after the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 2020), the 1994 statement has, however, come under recent scrutiny, leading to criticisms that it was largely seen as a statement of intentions and lacked any legislative power to ensure that its directives were adhered to. Critics of the statement cite the continued resilience of resorting to using segregated locations and practices within educational provision for learners with SEN (for example, Conner, 2016, refers to the fact that 44% of learners in the United Kingdom who were identified as requiring further provision to support their learning needs were being educated in special schools), despite the recommendations of the Statement. The subsequent Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (2015) broadened the focus of the application of the concept of inclusion to examine other factors that had direct relevance to the successful inclusion of learners. These included societal factors such as the educational opportunities offered globally according to gender, national and economic backgrounds, among others. These factors are relevant to the issue of inclusion in international schools in different ways as it can be argued that many international schools' strengths are focussed on voicing cosmopolitan attitudes and addressing issues related to social justice, equality and global citizenship. Whilst these factors are significant for a broader understanding of the relative success of inclusion within educational settings, the study maintained its focus on those narrower aspects of educational inclusion that were outlined in the original 1994 Salamanca Statement. Despite the criticisms of the Salamanca Statement referenced above, the resilience of the demands made by the statement have been supported by others who have applauded its influence as 'the most significant international document that has ever appeared in the field of special education' (Ainscow et al, 2019, p 671). The basis of comparison with the attitudes and practices of the schools involved with the study and the related findings and recommendations, therefore, remained firmly based with the recommendations of the Salamanca Statement.

In conducting the study, it was found that, whilst it is becoming increasingly clear that international schools generally view themselves as moving away from selective admissions policies, evidenced both by many of the responses of the case study schools involved in the study and by responses to ISC Research's 2016, 2017 and 2019 surveys, the reasons for adopting inclusive measures and the extent to which international schools are doing this are still closely linked with the orientation of the individual school and its leadership towards the principles of inclusion. The exception to this was seen with the adoption of inclusive principles on a state-wide basis (by the government of Dubai), which proved to be the single strongest and most effective incentive for the adoption of inclusive principles and measures by any of the international schools involved with the survey. Nevertheless, this does not exclude the possibility that schools in areas that are not subject to similar state-driven incentives also adopt effective inclusive practices. The influence of a leadership and governing body that demonstrated a belief and commitment to inclusive principles also proved to be important in developing positive and supportive practices within the international schools that they administered. Other factors that had potentially limiting effects on the effective implementation of inclusive practices, such as scarcity of resources and specialist support, or negative parental attitudes towards mixed ability classrooms, were largely mitigated by the influence of inclusive leaders, who innovated and found creative ways to overcome the types of challenges that many international schools can face in promoting inclusion.

However, a comparison of the self-analytical judgements made by international schools in the recent ISC Research surveys with the limited number of recent studies conducted by researchers in this area (see for example Agustian (2021) and Pletser (2019)), demonstrates differences of opinion on the issue of inclusion in international schools. Whilst many international schools have expressed aims to become more inclusive in their approaches to the admission and support of learners with SEN, some research findings on inclusion in international schools attest to the persistence of some exclusionary practices, particularly within the admissions process. The study has found evidence of both approaches - of schools that have made significant commitments to the principles of inclusion, and others that have persisted in refusing admission to potential pupils with SEN. It remains to be seen whether the proliferation of Category C type schools will act as a catalyst for change in

breaking down traditionally exclusionary attitudes among international schools.

Furthermore, the exclusionary nature of many international schools' practices, particularly in a financial sense, may mean that use of the term 'inclusion' in describing international schools can only be applied specifically in reference to pedagogical considerations for a range of different learner types, rather than in a universal sense.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Background and context to the case study schools

Appendix A: Case Study 1 - Background and context to Schools A and B

Schools A and B are located in Cairo, Egypt. Cairo has an estimated population of 21 million people and has one of the highest population growth rates in the world. 75% of Egyptians are under the age of 25, and only 3% of the population are over the age of 65, making it a country with a very young population (though average age is slightly older in Cairo). The high birth rate and young population has caused pressure on Egypt's education system.

Schooling and education in Egypt is overseen by the Ministry of Education. Education is free and compulsory to children aged between 6 – 15 years. School enrolment stood at 97% in 2016 according to UNESCO / UIS data. Post-15 education is subject to successfully passing the *Adaadiya Amma* examination, following which students make choices between continuing in upper-secondary education or vocational schools. Completion of upper-secondary education involves success in the difficult *Thanawiyya Amma* examination, which is seen as important for placement at Egyptian universities.

Critics have noted a decline in the quality of provision within the Egyptian state system:

‘national schools have been employing poorly trained or unqualified teachers who mainly rely on the outdated pedagogical tool of rote memorization, which did not help the students learn the skills needed to be globally competitive. In addition, the public schools were underfunded and poorly managed. While Egypt's flagging national schools closed doors, private schools opened them to the demands of the Egyptian elite for education that allows access to global markets, attaining cultural capital, as well as for upward and global mobility’ (Belal, 2017: 4)

Despite planned reforms to aspects of the state education system (eg a reform of the *Thanawiyya Amma* examination), this dissatisfaction with the state system has led to a

growth in the number of educational alternatives. The most recent alternative is seen in the rapid growth in number of 'international schools' in Cairo, offered (according to some) as 'the Egyptian elite's way of dodging antiquated national curricula, avoiding overcrowded classrooms (at least forty students in a class), and circumventing the rote learning of the notorious *Thanawiyya Amma*' (Mehrez, 2008:102). The rapid growth of these 'international schools', fuelled by a recent resurgence in international investment after the events of the Arab Spring in Egypt of 2010-11 and the resultant resumption of the growth of a wealthy middle class willing to invest in the social capital afforded by an 'international' style education for their children, has been significant. Cairo has seen at least 72 newly opened schools within the last decade, including franchised 'elite' type international schooling eg Malvern College. Furthermore, around ten schools are perceived as 'top-tier' schools. This designation is largely related to the view that they offer a higher quality of educational experience, employ teachers from overseas (a very important issue, according to many clients of the 'international' schools), have invested in facilities such as playing fields, running tracks, swimming pools, and offer international curricula such as US track education, International Baccalaureate, or versions of British curricula. Some of the international schools (the most popular of the 'top-tier' and, inevitably, the most expensive) limit the number of Egyptian nationals allowed to enrol, in the interest of maintaining a balance of diverse national backgrounds in the student population. Others, however, employ various strategies in order to ensure appeal to the widest possible catchment, including the offer of a variety of curricula, for example American-track, British and Egyptian curricula within the same school.

Appendix A: Case Study 2 - Background and context to Schools C and D

Dubai is one of seven Emirates that comprise the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The population of Dubai in 2019 was 3.3 million, compared with a total population of 9.6 million for the UAE (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2019.) The unprecedented growth in the number of international schools in the United Arab Emirates, and in particular, Dubai has seen it become the city with the highest concentration of international schools in the world. In 2016, Dubai had over 276 international schools, with Madrid, Spain a distant second with 183 international schools (ISC Research, 2019). The reasons for this rapid growth in the

number of international schools in Dubai is related to the high percentage of the population (over 80%) that are identified as expatriate. The fact that the state of Dubai offers free education only to children who are UAE citizens (and, therefore, not to expatriate children) (Azzam, 2017) has fuelled demand for international schooling. Nevertheless, this growth over the past 20 years in international schools specifically targeted for expatriate children (Category 'A' type international schools, according to Hayden and Thompson's (2013) classifications) has seen recent and dramatic change. As a result of a recent decline in the oil industry, a change to the demographic of the children who attend international schools in Dubai has become increasingly evident. Anecdotal comments on the number of expatriate residents, suggest that 'as two families enter Dubai, ten are departing'. Those leaving tend to be expatriates largely from Western countries, whereas those arriving are mostly from Arab countries and India (ISC Research, 2019). This change in demographic has resulted in a slowing in the growth in numbers of new international schools opening in the city. Furthermore, places in those international schools considered to be 'premium schools' have been increasingly taken up by local families. Finally, a further factor affecting the international school market in Dubai relates to the government's intervention to control rises in school fees in international schools by linking fee increases to performance in school inspections (KHDA, 2012). This has driven changes to the types of new international schools opening in Dubai away from the traditional, 'premium' type expatriate schools towards alternatives that charge lower fees (ISC Research, 2019).

International schools in Dubai are regulated by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). All international schools in Dubai are inspected annually by the KHDA according to standards that relate to both international and Arabic curricula. Many international schools are also accredited and inspected by the more traditional and international accreditation and examination bodies.

The KHDA's launch of the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework in 2017 provided an agenda for educational improvements that is particularly relevant to the focus of the study. The rhetoric of the Framework set out an overarching goal that all schools be fully inclusive by 2020. Practically, measures to support this aim included the implementation of admissions requirements that stipulated that 'schools must not refuse to admit students of

determination because of their experience of disability' (KHDA, 2019). (Note - the Framework recognizes and refers to learners with disabilities or additional learning needs as 'persons of determination'). Following admission, assessment and identification, schools in Dubai are required to enable access, to plan provision and to act to remove any potential barriers to learning for students of determination. The number of students of determination at a school is noted in all annual KHDA school inspections. The rhetoric of the Framework policy declares the adoption a rights-based approach to inclusion and a transition away from more traditional psychomedical models of disability (KHDA, 2019). According to the Framework, school leaders and governing bodies are required to adopt and encourage inclusive approaches and practices throughout the school. Schools are required to include a ratio of at least one appropriately qualified specialist SEN teacher for every 200 students, at least one appropriately skilled Learning Support Assistant (LSA) for every 125 students, and to appoint an Inclusion Champion as a key advocate for the inclusion of students of determination.

Finally, a further recent innovation within the Dubai education system also bears relevance to the study in the form of the Rahhal system. The system is envisaged as a personalised education initiative (inspired by Finnish education models) that 'empowers students by offering flexibility and choice in their educational progression' (KHDA, 2019)) by offering the option for some learners to blend school attendance with other community-based opportunities. Whilst not solely offered to students of determination ('will support learners with special education needs as well as those with special gifts and talents', (KHDA, 2019)), the KHDA claims that the Rahhal system provides opportunities for student development outside the confines of the traditional classroom, and serves as an example of an holistic approach whose flexibility could provide choices and opportunities for students with SEN.

Appendix A: Case Study 3 - Background and context to School E

School E is a small school located in a rural area in Wales in the United Kingdom. The school is an independent boarding school with a cohort of overseas pupils. It provides support for all pupils, including those that it identifies as having ALN or Additional Learning Needs (the descriptor used in Wales instead of 'SEN' or 'SEND') and for more able pupils in its MAT

(More Able and Talented) provision. The school has a dedicated section of specialist ALN teachers who are trained and experienced in supporting pupils with a range of conditions, and more specifically with dyslexia and dyscalculia, via small group or one-to-one lessons. The school stated (and was confirmed by scrutiny of a recent inspection report), that at the time of the study, over 65% pupils had some form of ALN, over 50% have a diagnosis of dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty, and 16% have a statement of SEN or EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) or equivalent. Specialist ALN support staff and mainstream staff are expected to complete Masters' level courses in supporting pupils with ALN (most frequently in supporting pupils with dyslexia, and usually within one or two years of commencing in their role). The school also employs a Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist and is regularly visited by three different Educational Psychologists. The Learning Support Department has a prominent profile within the school and is lead by an ALNCO who is also a member of the senior leadership team. The school combines their approach to ALN with an ambitious programme in outdoor education, aimed to help support pupils' fitness, confidence and wellbeing.

Appendix A: Case Study 4 - Background and context to School F

School F is a small school located in Prague in the Czech Republic (Czechia). Due to a smaller population of 1.3 million people (compared to other locations studied as part of the survey, eg Cairo's conservative estimate of 20 million people) and the relative saturation of the local international schools market, the international school landscape is different to that of the previous case studies. The market is characterised by stability (with few new international schools opening) and a smaller number of well-established schools (there are an estimated 17 'international'-type schools in Prague, in comparison with around 72 recently established 'international'-type schools within the last decade in Cairo). Most of the Prague international schools are attended by significant numbers of international expatriate students, and by a smaller proportion of the children of the affluent local families. This may reflect lower levels of dissatisfaction with state education system by Czech families, meaning that less 'elite' and separate schooling is demanded by the local population, in comparison with other areas surveyed as part of the study.

Appendix B: Case Study 1 Schools A and B – Questionnaire Data

Table 1.1: *Details of Schools A and B (included as Table 1 in main text)*

School details	School A	School B
Location	Modern suburb	Modern suburb
School Size Classification	Very Large	Small to Medium
Structure of School	Primary and Secondary Provision	Primary and Secondary Provision
Facilities offered	Playing fields, athletics track, swimming pool, ICT facilities	Playing fields, athletics track, swimming pool, ICT facilities, language support
Single Sex or Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender
Education Programmes Offered	British Curriculum; US Track Curriculum; International Baccalaureate	British Curriculum; International Baccalaureate; some alternate programmes for specific nationalities.
Use of teaching assistants to support pupils with SEN	Yes. In-class support for pupils with SEN (one per class group in primary).	Yes – mainly to support pupils withdrawn from class for intensive support sessions
Main forms of support for pupils with SEN	Separate Learning Development Departments in both primary and secondary sections. Separate SENCO for each section. In-class support by Teaching Assistants; withdrawal in small SEN groups,	Separate Learning Development Departments in both primary and secondary sections. Separate SENCO for each section. In-class support by Teaching Assistants; withdrawal in small SEN groups.

Table 1.2: *School Type Questionnaire Responses, based on Hill's (2015) School Typology Classifications (included as Table 2 in main text)*

	School A	School B
What was the reason for the establishment of the school?	To educate local children of the nation where the school is located	To educate the children of families living abroad with a small percentage of students from the host country
What type of education programme(s) does the school deliver?	A recognised international education programme in a school to educate local children of the nation where the school is located	A recognised international education programme in a school established to educate the children of families living abroad
What is the nature of the student body?	More than 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country	Host country nationals are 0% to 25% of total student body
What is the nature of the governing body?	More than 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country	10% or less are nationals of the school's host or home country
Do students pay tuition fees?	Full tuition fees apply	Full tuition fees apply

Table 1.3: *Participant Teachers' Backgrounds (included as Table 3 in main text)*

		Responses		
<i>Role at the school</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Specialist</i>	
<i>School A</i>	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	
<i>School B</i>	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	6 (60%)	
<i>Length of service at school</i>	<i>1-2 years</i>	<i>3-5 years</i>	<i>5 years +</i>	
<i>School A</i>	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	
<i>School B</i>	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	

Table 1.4: *Teacher experience in supporting learners with specific conditions / SEN (included as Table 4 in main text)*

Learning difficulties encountered or taught	Responses	
	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>
Deafness	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Visual Impairment	2 (20%)	2 (20%)
Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
Down's Syndrome	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)
Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD/ADHD)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Dyslexia	6 (60%)	10 (100%)
Dyscalculia	1 (10%)	6 (60%)
Dyspraxia	1 (10%)	4 (40%)
Moderate Learning Difficulties	7 (70%)	9 (90%)

Table 1.5 / 1.6: Levels of teacher confidence in supporting SEN / different learning difficulties

Items		Responses			
1.5	<i>Confidence in ability to support a range of diverse learning abilities and difficulties</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
	School A	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
	School B	0 (0%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
1.6	<i>Confidence in supporting specific conditions</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
Deafness	School A	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
	School B	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)
Visual Impairment	School A	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)
	School B	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
SPLD	School A	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)
	School B	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)
Down's Syndrome	School A	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)
	School B	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
ASC	School A	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
	School B	1 (10%)	8 (80%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
ADD/ADHD	School A	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
	School B	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
Dyslexia	School A	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
	School B	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)

Dyscalculia	School A	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
	School B	0 (0%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Dyspraxia	School A	0 (0%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
	School B	0 (0%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
MLD	School A	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
	School B	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 1.7: Responses to question 7: ‘Where did you develop the skills and ability to create diverse classroom environments that support students, including those with learning difficulties?’ (included as Table 5 in main text)

	School A	School B
In current school	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
In current school and other international schools in the past	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
In other international schools, but not including current school	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
In other schools, but not international schools	8 (80%)	4 (40%)
During Initial Teacher Education (ITE), with no revisitation since	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
As part of training undertaken on own initiative, outside of current school	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Never received advice/training in supporting learning difficulties	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 1.8: Training / CPD received by participant teachers

Responses				
<i>When was latest CPD related to supporting inclusion / SEN</i>	<i>Within last year</i>	<i>Within last two years</i>	<i>Over two years ago</i>	<i>Not within five years</i>
School A	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)
School B	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
<i>Best fit description of inclusion related CPD opportunities provided by current school</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, but not relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides infrequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Has never provided CPD related to inclusion</i>
School A	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)
School B	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)

Table 1.9: *Perceived training needs to develop inclusion and support learners with SEN (nb Top three choices)*

	School A	School B
Examples and case studies of inclusive practice from other teachers (informal)	7	8
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by outside specialist	5	6
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by school-based practitioners	2	3
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by outside specialist	7	5
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by school-based practitioners	1	0
Opportunities to discuss and share practice with other international schools	4	4
Time out of teaching to develop knowledge and practice on issues related to inclusion	4	4

Table 1.10: *Teachers' views of the school's approach towards admission of pupils with SEN*

Responses				
<i>Views of the school's approach to admission of pupils with SEN</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Quite inclusive</i>	<i>Quite Selective</i>	<i>Very selective</i>
School A	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)
School B	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
<i>Views of the school's support of pupils with SEN already enrolled at the school</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Minimal</i>
School A	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)
School B	3 (20%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)

Table 1.11: *Teachers' views of the school as an inclusive institution*

Teachers' views on school as an inclusive institution	School A	School B
School is supportive of students with SEN	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
School is selective, and not supportive of students with SEN	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
School would like to be inclusive, but finds it practically difficult	1 (10%)	4 (40%)
School is moving towards inclusion and is adapting policy	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
School can support SEN, but does not commit resources to achieve	7 (70%)	0 (0%)
School is inclusive and celebrates / embraces diversity	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 1.12: *Main forms of support offered for inclusion and supporting learners with SEN*
(included as Table 6 in main text)

Form of Support Offered	School A	School B
Information provided by the LD Department (or equivalent)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)
Provision of different learning resources	2 (20%)	2 (20%)
Provision of financing for supporting students with SEN	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Training / CPD for LD Dept staff	7 (70%)	5 (50%)
General staff training / CPD on issues related to SEN	2 (20%)	2 (20%)
A school-wide inclusive philosophy and attitudes	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Teaching assistants that offer specific support for SEN	1 (10%)	5 (50%)
Withdrawal of students with SEN for some lessons	8 (80%)	6 (60%)
Long term or permanent withdrawal of students with SEN	0 (0%)	2 (20%)

Table 1.13: *Main challenges to inclusion and supporting learners with SEN (included as Table 7 in main text)*

Main Challenges	School A	School B
Selective admissions process	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
Lack of support from leadership	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
Lack of resources / budget for supporting SEN	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
Lack of confidence among staff	5 (50%)	3 (30%)
Lack of willingness among staff	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
Lack of experience among staff	2 (20%)	9 (90%)
Perceived lack of specialism among staff	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
Difficulty of access to specialist services	5 (50%)	7 (70%)
Number and range of student abilities at the school	2 (20%)	6 (60%)

Table 1.14: *Availability of teaching resources for inclusion / supporting SEN in local environment*

Availability of teaching resources for supporting SEN	School A	School B
Many teaching resources available	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Some teaching resources available	1 (10%)	3 (30%)
Few teaching resources available	6 (60%)	6 (60%)
Issue of resources unrelated to supporting SEN	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Issue of resourcing related to all students, regardless of SEN	1 (10%)	0 (0%)

Table 1.15: *Access to specialist support within local environment*

Availability of access to specialist support	School A	School B
Many sources of specialist support available	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Enough sources of specialist support available	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Few sources of specialist support available	10 (100%)	8 (80%)
Issue availability of specialist support unrelated to supporting SEN	0 (0%)	1 (10%)

Table 1.16: *Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN*

Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN	School A	School B
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a positive way	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a negative way	7 (70%)	2 (20%)
Parental opinion does not affect school policy towards SEN	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
Unaware of impact of parental opinion on school policy towards SEN	2 (20%)	7 (70%)

Appendix C: Case Study 2 Schools C and D – Questionnaire Data

Table 2.1: *Details of schools C and D*

	School C	School D
Location	Modern Suburb	Modern suburb
School Size Classification	Large	Large
Structure of School	Primary and Part Secondary Provision	Primary and Secondary Provision
Facilities offered	Playing fields, athletics track, swimming pool, theatre, ICT facilities, drama studio	Playing fields, athletics track, ICT facilities, auditorium, additional language support, additional support for pupils with SEN.
Single Sex or Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender
Education Programmes Offered	British Curriculum (including BTEC), selected elements of international curricula; Arabic curricula	International Baccalaureate; Arabic curricula
Use of teaching assistants to support pupils with SEN	In-class support with TA; withdrawn for work with specialist support teachers.	In-class support with TA; withdrawn for work with specialist support teachers.
Main forms of support for pupils with SEN	Separate Learning Development Departments in both primary and secondary sections. Separate SENCO for each section. In-class support by Teaching Assistants; withdrawal in small SEN groups.	Separate Learning Development Departments in both primary and secondary sections. Separate SENCO for each section. In-class support by Teaching Assistants; withdrawal in small SEN groups. Dedicated classes for integration of pupils with SEN.

Table 2.2: *School Type Questionnaire Responses, based on Hill's (2015) School Typology Classifications*

	School C	School D
What was the reason for the establishment of the school?	To educate local children of the nation where the school is located	To educate the children of families living abroad with a small percentage of students from the host country
What type of education programme(s) does the school deliver?	A recognised international education programme in a school established to educate the children of families living abroad	A recognised international education programme in a school established to educate the children of families living abroad
What is the nature of the student body?	Host country nationals are 0% to 25% of total student body	Host country nationals are 0% to 25% of total student body
What is the nature of the governing body?	Up to 50% are nationals of the school's host or home country	Up to 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country
Do students pay tuition fees?	Full tuition fees apply	Full tuition fees apply

Table 2.3: Teachers' backgrounds

		Responses		
<i>Role at the school</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Specialist</i>	
<i>School C</i>	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	
<i>School D</i>	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	5 (50%)	
<i>Length of service at school</i>	<i>1-2 years</i>	<i>3-5 years</i>	<i>5 years +</i>	
<i>School C</i>	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	
<i>School D</i>	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	

Table 2.4: *Teacher experience in supporting learners with specific conditions / SEN*

<i>Learning difficulties Encountered / Taught</i>	Responses	
	<i>School C</i>	<i>School D</i>
Deafness	1 (10%)	3 (30%)
Visual Impairment	2 (20%)	3 (30%)
SPLD	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
Down's Syndrome	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
ASC	7 (70%)	7 (70%)
ADD/ADHD	8 (80%)	8 (80%)
Dyslexia	8 (80%)	8 (80%)
Dyscalculia	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
Dyspraxia	6 (60%)	6 (60%)
Moderate Learning Difficulties	7 (70%)	8 (80%)

Table 2.5/2.6: Levels of teacher confidence in supporting SEN / different learning difficulties

Items		Responses			
2.5	<i>Confidence in ability to support a range of diverse learning abilities and difficulties</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
	School C	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)
	School D	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
2.6	<i>Confidence in supporting specific conditions</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
Deafness	School C	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
	School D	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)
Visual Impairment	School C	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
	School D	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
SPLD	School C	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
	School D	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)
Down's Syndrome	School C	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
	School D	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
ASC	School C	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
	School D	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
ADD/ADHD	School C	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
	School D	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)

Dyslexia	School C	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
	School D	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
Dyscalculia	School C	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)
	School D	0 (0%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Dyspraxia	School C	1 (0%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
	School D	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
MLD	School C	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
	School D	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)

Table 2.7: Responses to question 7: *‘Where did you develop the skills and ability to create diverse classroom environments that support students, including those with learning difficulties?’*

	School C	School D
In current school	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
In current school and other international schools in the past	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
In other international schools, but not including current school	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
In other schools, but not international schools	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
During Initial Teacher Education (ITE), with no revisitation since	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
As part of training undertaken on own initiative, outside of current school	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
Never received advice/training in supporting learning difficulties	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 2.8: Training / CPD received by teachers

<i>When was latest CPD related to supporting inclusion / SEN</i>	Responses			
	<i>Within last year</i>	<i>Within last two years</i>	<i>Over two years ago</i>	<i>Not within five years</i>
School C	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
School D	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Best fit description of inclusion related CPD opportunities provided by current school</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, but not relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides infrequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Has never provided CPD related to inclusion</i>
School C	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
School D	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)

Table 2.9: *Perceived training needs to develop inclusion and support learners with SEN (nb Top three choices)*

	School C	School D
Examples and case studies of inclusive practice from other teachers (informal)	4	5
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by outside specialist	7	5
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by school-based practitioners	0	1
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by outside specialist	5	4
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by school-based practitioners	0	1
Opportunities to discuss and share practice with other international schools	6	6
Time out of teaching to develop knowledge and practice on issues related to inclusion	8	8

Table 2.10: Teachers' views of the school's approach towards admission of pupils with SEN

	Responses			
<i>Views of the school's approach to admission of pupils with SEN</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Quite inclusive</i>	<i>Quite Selective</i>	<i>Very selective</i>
School C	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)
School D	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
<i>Views of the school's support of pupils with SEN already enrolled at the school</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Minimal</i>
School C	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
School D	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)

Table 2.11: *Teachers' views of the school as an inclusive institution*

Teachers' views on school as an inclusive institution	School C	School D
School is supportive of students with SEN	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
School is selective, and not supportive of students with SEN	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
School would like to be inclusive, but finds it practically difficult	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
School is moving towards inclusion and is adapting policy	5 (50%)	4 (40%)
School can support SEN, but does not commit resources to achieve	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
School is inclusive and celebrates / embraces diversity	1 (10%)	2 (20%)

Table 2.12: *Main forms of support offered for inclusion and supporting learners with SEN*

Form of Support Offered	School C	School D
Information provided by the LD Department (or equivalent)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)
Provision of different learning resources	3 (30%)	0 (0%)
Provision of financing for supporting students with SEN	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
Training / CPD for LD Dept staff	3 (30%)	2 (0%)
General staff training / CPD on issues related to SEN	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
A school-wide inclusive philosophy and attitudes	3 (30%)	4 (40%)
Teaching assistants that offer specific support for SEN	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
Withdrawal of students with SEN for some lessons	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
Long term or permanent withdrawal of students with SEN	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 2.13: *Main challenges to inclusion and supporting learners with SEN*

Main Challenges	School C	School D
Selective admissions process	3 (30%)	4 (40%)
Lack of support from leadership	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Lack of resources / budget for supporting SEN	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
Lack of confidence among staff	5 (50%)	4 (40%)
Lack of willingness among staff	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Lack of experience among staff	8 (80%)	8 (80%)
Perceived lack of specialism among staff	3 (30%)	2 (20%)
Difficulty of access to specialist services	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
Number and range of student abilities at the school	7 (70%)	6 (60%)

Table 2.14: *Availability of teaching resources for inclusion / supporting SEN in local environment*

Availability of teaching resources for supporting SEN	School C	School D
Many teaching resources available	0 (50%)	1 (10%)
Some teaching resources available	4 (40%)	5 (50%)
Few teaching resources available	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
Issue of resources unrelated to supporting SEN	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Issue of resourcing related to all students, regardless of SEN	3 (30%)	3 (30%)

Table 2.15: *Access to specialist support within local environment*

Availability of access to specialist support	School C	School D
Many sources of specialist support available	1 (10%)	5 (50%)
Enough sources of specialist support available	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
Few sources of specialist support available	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Issue availability of specialist support unrelated to supporting SEN	3 (30%)	1 (10%)

Table 2.16: *Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN*

Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN	School C	School D
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a positive way	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a negative way	1 (10%)	3 (30%)
Parental opinion does not affect school policy towards SEN	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
Unaware of impact of parental opinion on school policy towards SEN	4 (40%)	3 (30%)

Appendix D: Case Study 3 School E – Questionnaire Data

Table 3.1: *Details of school E*

School E	
Location	Rural
School Size Classification	Small
Structure of School	Part primary and Secondary Provision
Facilities offered	Playing fields, athletics track, ICT facilities, dedicated 'centre' for SEN support
Single Sex or Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender
Education Programmes Offered	British Curriculum (including BTEC), selected elements of international curricula
Use of teaching assistants to support pupils with SEN	No. Specialist support teachers work on a 1 to 1 basis with students.
Main forms of support for pupils with SEN	A 'centre', dedicated to supporting pupils with SEN across the school, with specific focus on dyslexia, though provision caters for a range of conditions. SENCO coordinates work across the schools. OT, SALT offered.

Table 3.2: *School Type Questionnaire Responses, based on Hill's (2015) School Typology Classifications*

School E	
What was the reason for the establishment of the school?	To educate local children of the nation where the school is located
What type of education programme(s) does the school deliver?	National programme of the Ministry of Education in the country where the school is located together with a recognised international education programme – some students choose
What is the nature of the student body?	More than 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country
What is the nature of the governing body?	More than 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country
Do students pay tuition fees?	Full tuition fees apply

Table 3.3: Participant Teachers' Backgrounds

		Responses		
<i>Role at the school</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Specialist</i>	
<i>School E</i>	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	
<i>Length of service at school</i>	<i>1-2 years</i>	<i>3-5 years</i>	<i>5 years +</i>	
<i>School E</i>	5 (50%)	2 (30%)	3 (20%)	

Table 3.4: *Teacher experience in supporting learners with specific conditions / SEN*

<i>Learning difficulties Encountered / Taught</i>	<i>School E</i>
Deafness	6 (60%)
Visual Impairment	5 (50%)
SPLD	3 (30%)
Down's Syndrome	2 (20%)
ASC	10 (100%)
ADD/ADHD	10 (100%)
Dyslexia	10 (100%)
Dyscalculia	10 (100%)
Dyspraxia	10 (100%)
Moderate Learning Difficulties	7 (70%)

Table 3.5/3.6: *Levels of teacher confidence in supporting SEN / different learning difficulties*

Items		Responses			
3.5	<i>Confidence in ability to support a range of diverse learning abilities and difficulties</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
	School E	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3.6	<i>Confidence in supporting specific conditions</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
Deafness	School E	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)
Visual Impairment	School E	0 (0%)	6 (30%)	1 (10%)	3(30%)
SPLD	School E	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
Down's Syndrome	School E	0 (0%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
ASC	School E	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
ADD/ADHD	School E	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Dyslexia	School E	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Dyscalculia	School E	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)
Dyspraxia	School E	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
MLD	School E	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 3.7: Responses to question 7: *‘Where did you develop the skills and ability to create diverse classroom environments that support students, including those with learning difficulties?’*

	School E
In current school	6 (60%)
In current school and other international schools in the past	0 (0%)
In other international schools, but not including current school	0 (0%)
In other schools, but not international schools	3 (30%)
During Initial Teacher Education (ITE), with no revisitation since	0 (0%)
As part of training undertaken on own initiative, outside of current school	1 (10%)
Never received advice/training in supporting learning difficulties	0 (0%)

Table 3.8: Training / CPD received by teachers

Responses				
<i>When was latest CPD related to supporting inclusion / SEN</i>	<i>Within last year</i>	<i>Within last two years</i>	<i>Over two years ago</i>	<i>Not within five years</i>
School E	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Best fit description of inclusion related CPD opportunities provided by current school</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, but not relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides infrequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Has never provided CPD related to inclusion</i>
School E	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 3.9: *Perceived training needs to develop inclusion and support learners with SEN (nb Top three choices)*

	School E
Examples and case studies of inclusive practice from other teachers (informal)	2
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by outside specialist	9
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by school-based practitioners	4
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by outside specialist	3
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by school-based practitioners	0
Opportunities to discuss and share practice with other international schools	7
Time out of teaching to develop knowledge and practice on issues related to inclusion	5

Table 3.10: Teachers' views of the school's approach towards admission of pupils with SEN

Responses				
<i>Views of the school's approach to admission of pupils with SEN</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Quite inclusive</i>	<i>Quite Selective</i>	<i>Very selective</i>
School E	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Views of the school's support of pupils with SEN already enrolled at the school</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Minimal</i>
School E	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 3.11: *Teachers' views of the school as an inclusive institution*

Teachers' views on school as an inclusive institution	School E
School is supportive of students with SEN	6 (60%)
School is selective, and not supportive of students with SEN	0 (0%)
School would like to be inclusive, but finds it practically difficult	0 (0%)
School is moving towards inclusion and is adapting policy	1 (10%)
School can support SEN, but does not commit resources to achieve	0 (0%)
School is inclusive and celebrates / embraces diversity	3 (30%)

Table 3.12: *Main forms of support offered for inclusion and supporting learners with SEN*

Form of Support Offered	School E
Information provided by the LD Department (or equivalent)	5 (50%)
Provision of different learning resources	2 (20%)
Provision of financing for supporting students with SEN	1 (10%)
Training / CPD for LD Dept staff	3 (30%)
General staff training / CPD on issues related to SEN	7 (70%)
A school-wide inclusive philosophy and attitudes	8 (80%)
Teaching assistants that offer specific support for SEN	0 (0%)
Withdrawal of students with SEN for some lessons	4 (40%)
Long term or permanent withdrawal of students with SEN	0 (0%)

Table 3.13: *Main challenges to inclusion and supporting learners with SEN*

Main Challenges	School E
Selective admissions process	1 (10%)
Lack of support from leadership	0 (0%)
Lack of resources / budget for supporting SEN	6 (60%)
Lack of confidence among staff	0 (0%)
Lack of willingness among staff	3 (30%)
Lack of experience among staff	5 (50%)
Perceived lack of specialism among staff	1 (10%)
Difficulty of access to specialist services	5 (50%)
Number and range of student abilities at the school	9 (90%)

Nb Several comments in the ‘free comment’ section at the end of the questionnaire indicated that School E staff responses to this section was difficult, as some felt that several (and some none) of the categories particularly applied to their situation.

Table 3.14: *Availability of teaching resources for inclusion / supporting SEN in local environment*

Availability of teaching resources for supporting SEN	School E
Many teaching resources available	5 (50%)
Some teaching resources available	3 (30%)
Few teaching resources available	0 (0%)
Issue of resources unrelated to supporting SEN	0 (0%)
Issue of resourcing related to all students, regardless of SEN	2 (20%)

Table 3.15: *Access to specialist support within local environment*

Availability of access to specialist support	School E
Many sources of specialist support available	7 (70%)
Enough sources of specialist support available	3 (30%)
Few sources of specialist support available	0 (0%)
Issue availability of specialist support unrelated to supporting SEN	0 (0%)

Table 3.16: *Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN*

Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN	School E
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a positive way	6 (60%)
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a negative way	0 (0%)
Parental opinion does not affect school policy towards SEN	1 (10%)
Unaware of impact of parental opinion on school policy towards SEN	3 (30%)

Appendix E: Case Study 4 School F – Questionnaire Data

Table 4.1: *Details of school F*

School F	
Location	Modern suburb
School Size Classification	Small
Structure of School	Primary and Secondary Provision
Facilities offered	Playing fields, athletics track, ICT facilities, additional language support
Single Sex or Mixed Gender	Mixed Gender
Education Programmes Offered	British Curriculum; International Baccalaureate; elements of the Czech national curriculum.
Use of teaching assistants to support pupils with SEN	Yes – in-class support with TA; withdrawn for work with specialist support teachers.
Main forms of support for pupils with SEN	Separate Learning Development Departments in both primary and secondary sections. Separate SENCO for each section. In-class support by Teaching Assistants; withdrawal in small SEN groups.

Table 4.2: *School Type Questionnaire Responses, based on Hill's (2015) School Typology Classifications*

School F	
What was the reason for the establishment of the school?	To educate the children of families living abroad with a small percentage of students from the host country
What type of education programme(s) does the school deliver?	A recognised international education programme in a school established to educate the children of families living abroad
What is the nature of the student body?	Host country nationals are 0% to 25% of total student body
What is the nature of the governing body?	10% or less are nationals of the school's host or home country
Do students pay tuition fees?	Full tuition fees apply

Table 4.3: Participant Teachers' Backgrounds

		Responses	
<i>Role at the school</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Specialist</i>
<i>School F</i>	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
<i>Length of service at school</i>	<i>1-2 years</i>	<i>3-5 years</i>	<i>5 years +</i>
<i>School F</i>	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)

Table 4.4: *Teacher experience in supporting learners with specific conditions / SEN*

<i>Learning difficulties Encountered / Taught</i>	<i>School F</i>
Deafness	0 (0%)
Visual Impairment	0 (0%)
SPLD	0 (0%)
Down's Syndrome	0 (0%)
ASC	4 (40%)
ADD/ADHD	5 (50%)
Dyslexia	6 (60%)
Dyscalculia	0 (0%)
Dyspraxia	2 (20%)
MLD	4 (40%)

Table 4.5/4.6: Levels of teacher confidence in supporting SEN / different learning difficulties

		Responses			
4.5	<i>Confidence in ability to support a range of diverse learning abilities and difficulties</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
	School F	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
4.6	<i>Confidence in supporting specific conditions</i>	<i>Very confident</i>	<i>Quite confident</i>	<i>Not very confident</i>	<i>Not at all confident</i>
Deafness	School F	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)
Visual Impairment	School F	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)
SPLD	School F	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	6 (60%)
Down's Syndrome	School F	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
ASC	School F	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	10 (10%)
ADD/ADHD	School F	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
Dyslexia	School F	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
Dyscalculia	School F	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)
Dyspraxia	School F	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)
MLD	School F	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)

Table 4.7: Responses to question 7: *‘Where did you develop the skills and ability to create diverse classroom environments that support students, including those with learning difficulties?’*

	School F
In current school	2 (20%)
In current school and other international schools in the past	1 (10%)
In other international schools, but not including current school	0 (0%)
In other schools, but not international schools	5 (50%)
During Initial Teacher Education (ITE), with no revisitation since	3 (30%)
As part of training undertaken on own initiative, outside of current school	2 (20%)
Never received advice/training in supporting learning difficulties	0 (0%)

Table 4.8: Training / CPD received by teachers

Responses				
<i>When was latest CPD related to supporting inclusion / SEN</i>	<i>Within last year</i>	<i>Within last two years</i>	<i>Over two years ago</i>	<i>Not within five years</i>
School F	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
<i>Best fit description of inclusion related CPD opportunities provided by current school</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides frequent CPD, but not relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Provides infrequent CPD, relevant to inclusion</i>	<i>Has never provided CPD related to inclusion</i>
School F	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)

Table 4.9: *Perceived training needs to develop inclusion and support learners with SEN (nb Top three choices)*

	School F
Examples and case studies of inclusive practice from other teachers (informal)	3
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by outside specialist	9
CPD based on suggestions for classroom practice by school-based practitioners	0
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by outside specialist	6
CPD based on academic/theoretical information by school-based practitioners	0
Opportunities to discuss and share practice with other international schools	8
Time out of teaching to develop knowledge and practice on issues related to inclusion	4

Table 4.10: Teachers' views of the school's approach towards admission of pupils with SEN

Items	Responses			
<i>Views of the school's approach to admission of pupils with SEN</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Quite inclusive</i>	<i>Quite Selective</i>	<i>Very selective</i>
<i>School F</i>	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)
<i>Views of the school's support of pupils with SEN already enrolled at the school</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Minimal</i>
<i>School F</i>	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)

Table 4.11: *Teachers' views of the school as an inclusive institution*

Teachers' views on school as an inclusive institution	School F
School is supportive of students with SEN	2 (20%)
School is selective, and not supportive of students with SEN	2 (20%)
School would like to be inclusive, but finds it practically difficult	4 (40%)
School is moving towards inclusion and is adapting policy	0 (0%)
School can support SEN, but does not commit resources to achieve	2 (20%)
School is inclusive and celebrates / embraces diversity	0 (0%)

Table 4.12: *Main forms of support offered for inclusion and supporting learners with SEN*

Form of Support Offered	School F
Information provided by the LD Department (or equivalent)	10 (100%)
Provision of different learning resources	0 (0%)
Provision of financing for supporting students with SEN	1 (10%)
Training / CPD for LD Dept staff	2 (0%)
General staff training / CPD on issues related to SEN	0 (0%)
A school-wide inclusive philosophy and attitudes	1 (10%)
Teaching assistants that offer specific support for SEN	8 (80%)
Withdrawal of students with SEN for some lessons	5 (50%)
Long term or permanent withdrawal of students with SEN	0 (0%)

Table 4.13: *Main challenges to inclusion and supporting learners with SEN*

Main Challenges	School F
Selective admissions process	7 (70%)
Lack of support from leadership	6 (60%)
Lack of resources / budget for supporting SEN	0 (0%)
Lack of confidence among staff	7 (70%)
Lack of willingness among staff	0 (0%)
Lack of experience among staff	5 (50%)
Perceived lack of specialism among staff	1 (10%)
Difficulty of access to specialist services	4 (40%)
Number and range of student abilities at the school	0 (0%)

Table 4.14: *Availability of teaching resources for inclusion / supporting SEN in local environment*

Availability of teaching resources for supporting SEN	School F
Many teaching resources available	1 (10%)
Some teaching resources available	3 (30%)
Few teaching resources available	5 (50%)
Issue of resources unrelated to supporting SEN	0 (0%)
Issue of resourcing related to all students, regardless of SEN	1 (10%)

Table 4.15: *Access to specialist support within local environment*

Availability of access to specialist support	School F
Many sources of specialist support available	0 (0%)
Enough sources of specialist support available	2 (20%)
Few sources of specialist support available	7 (70%)
Issue availability of specialist support unrelated to supporting SEN	1 (10%)

Table 4.16: *Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN*

Teachers' views on impact of parental opinion on issue of inclusion and support of students with SEN	School F
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a positive way	2 (20%)
Parental opinion affects school policy towards SEN in a negative way	3 (30%)
Parental opinion does not affect school policy towards SEN	3 (30%)
Unaware of impact of parental opinion on school policy towards SEN	2 (20%)

Appendix F: School typology questionnaire

|

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A Study of Factors that Influence Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs in International Schools

Questionnaire – School Administrator (Principal or Headteacher)

School Typology (based on Hill, I (2016) *What is an International School?*, International Schools Journal Vol XXXV No.2 p 9-21)

Choose the one response most applicable to your school:

Q1. What was the reason for the establishment of the school?

To educate local children of the nation where the school is located ☐

To educate local children and attract a small number of overseas students in a boarding section ☐

To educate the children of families living abroad with a small percentage of students from the host country ☐

To bring students from around the world together in one place to offer an education for international mindedness (which includes international and intercultural understanding) ☐

To educate the children of families living abroad ☐

To provide an education for international mindedness for the children of families living abroad ☐

Q2. What type of education programme(s) does the school deliver?

National programme of the Ministry of Education in the country where the school is located ☐

National programme of the Ministry of Education in the country where the school is located, incorporating a deliberate international perspective ☐

National programme of the Ministry of Education in the country where the school is located together with a recognised international education programme – students choose ☐

A recognised international education programme in a school to educate local children of the nation where the school is located ☐

National programme of the Ministry of Education not from the country in which the school is located and in a school set up to educate the children of families living abroad ☐

A recognised international education programme in a school established to educate the children of families living abroad ☐

Q3. What is the nature of the student body?

Host country nationals are 100% of total student body ☐

Host country nationals are at least 75% of total student body ☐

Host country nationals are at least 50% of total student body ☐

Host country nationals are at least 25% of total student body ☐

Host country nationals are 0% to 25% of total student body ☐

Q4. What is the nature of the governing body?

All are nationals of the school's host or home country ☐

Up to 75% are nationals of the school's host or home country ☐

Up to 50% are nationals of the school's host or home country ☐

Up to 25% are nationals of the school's host or home country ☐

10% or less are nationals of the school's host or home country ☐

Q5. Do students pay tuition fees?

There are none ☐

There is a partial payment of tuition fees (in a state school or UWC, for example) ☐

There are tuition fees to cover the costs of some teachers ☐

Full tuition fees apply ☐

Appendix G: Teacher Questionnaire

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A Study of Factors that Influence Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs in Independent and International Schools

TEACHER CONSENT TO QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

Please tick the boxes that apply to you.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this study

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason

☐

I understand that no personal details will be sought in the conduct of the questionnaire, and that responses will be fully confidential

☐

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Please note that use of the terms '*inclusion/inclusive*' and '*selective*' relate only to academic issues and learning abilities in this survey. Whilst factors such as student fees, nationality and ethnic background, etc may have strong influence on admission of students to international schools, they are not referred to as part of this survey.

About Yourself as a Teacher

Please tick ✓ the closest / most appropriate response to the questions below:

Q1. What age range(s) do you teach? (you may tick more than one box):

Age 2 – 5 ☐ Age 6 – 10 ☐ Age 11 – 14 ☐ Age 14 – 16 ☐ Age 16 – 19 ☐

Q2. What best describes your teaching role at the school?

- Primary school class teacher ☐
- Subject specialist (with roles in both Primary and Secondary) ☐
- Secondary School Subject Teacher ☐
- Learning development / support teacher or equivalent ☐

Q 3. How long have you been a member of the teaching staff at the school?

For this academic year only ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 3-5 years ☐ Over 5 years ☐

Q 4. Have you taught students at the school with the following additional learning needs within the past five years (or within your current period of employment at the school, if less than five years)?

- Deafness ☐
- Visual impairment ☐
- Severe and profound learning difficulties ☐
- Children with Down's Syndrome ☐
- Children with autistic spectrum conditions ☐

- Children with ADHD ☐
- Children with dyslexia ☐
- Children with dyscalculia ☐
- Children with dyspraxia ☐
- Children with moderate learning difficulties (identifiable as separate to having autistic spectrum disorders, and requiring support – usually in-class) ☐

Training, Staff Confidence and Preparedness

Q 5. How confident are you in your ability to support a range of diverse students, some of whom will have additional learning needs, at the school?

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Q 6. How confident would you feel in teaching students with the following additional learning needs in your classroom?

Deafness

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Visual impairment

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Severe and profound learning difficulties

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Children with Down's Syndrome

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Children with autistic spectrum conditions

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Children with ADHD

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Children with dyslexia

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Children with dyscalculia

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Children with dyspraxia

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Children with moderate learning difficulties (*identifiable as separate to having autistic spectrum disorders, requiring support – usually in-class*)

Very confident ☐ Quite confident ☐ Not very confident ☐ Not at all confident ☐

Q 7. Where did you develop the skills and ability to create diverse classroom environments (including students with a range of additional learning needs)? Please tick the box most appropriate to you.

In the school in which you are currently employed ☐

In the school in which you are currently employed, and in other schools in which you have been employed in the past ☐

In other independent schools in which you have been employed in the past, but not including current school ☐

In other schools, but not in independent schools ☐

During initial teacher training (ITT), with no further revisitation or support since ☐

As part of training which you have undertaken through your own initiative, outside of the school and as part of your own interests in the area ☐

I have never received advice or training in supporting students with learning difficulties in diverse classroom environments ☐

Q 8. What type of support would you like to receive in order to help develop your ability to create and maintain diverse classroom environments, suited to a range of ability ranges and types (including children with additional learning needs)? Place a tick on your top three choices only.

Examples and case studies of inclusive practice in teaching from other teachers, on an informal basis (part of day-to-day teacher conversations) ☐

CPD / Training sessions based on practical suggestions for creating diverse classroom environments and inclusion of students with additional learning needs, delivered by specialists from outside the school ☐

CPD / Training sessions based on practical suggestions for creating diverse classroom environments and inclusion of students with additional learning needs, ☐

delivered by colleagues from *within* the school

CPD / Training sessions based on academic and theoretical information for creating diverse classroom environments and inclusion of students with additional learning needs, delivered by specialists from *outside* the school ☐

CPD / Training sessions based on academic and theoretical information for creating diverse classroom environments and inclusion of students with additional learning needs, delivered by colleagues from *within* the school ☐

Opportunities to share good practice regarding inclusion and provision for students with additional learning needs, with other independent schools ☐

Extra budget to resource the further support of students with additional learning needs ☐

Teaching assistants or extra numbers of teaching assistants to support students with additional learning needs ☐

Time out of teaching to develop knowledge and practice on issues related to inclusion ☐

Q 9. When was your latest CPD / training that related to improving or enhancing your knowledge of, or ability to support, students with additional learning needs, within your current school?

Within the last academic year ☐ Within the last two academic years ☐

Over two years ago ☐ Not within the last five years ☐

Q 10. Which of the following best describes the knowledge / training opportunities provided for teachers in your current school? (regarding issues of inclusion, creating diverse classrooms and supporting students with additional learning needs):

The school provides frequent and relevant CPD or training opportunities for a number of issues, including provision for students with additional learning needs ☐

The school provides frequent CPD or training opportunities, but not often targeted toward issues of diversity, inclusion and students with additional learning needs ☐

The school provides infrequent CPD or training opportunities regarding issues of inclusion and provision for students with additional learning needs ☐

The school has never provided CPD or training opportunities regarding issues of inclusion and provision for students with additional learning needs ☐

About the School

Q 11. Which one of the following characterises the school's approach towards *admission* of students with additional learning needs?

Inclusive ☐

Quite inclusive ☐

Quite selective ☐

Selective ☐

Q 12. Which one of the following characterises the school's approach towards *supporting* students with additional learning needs currently enrolled at the school?

Inclusive ☐

Supportive ☐

Occasional ☐

Minimal ☐

Q 13. Which one of the following best describes your school?

The school provides a good degree of encouragement, practical support and training in maintaining diverse classroom environments, where different types of learners thrive ☐

The school provides some encouragement, practical support and training in maintaining diverse classroom environments, where different types of learners thrive ☐

The school provides little encouragement, practical support and training in maintaining diverse classroom environments, where different types of learners thrive ☐

The school provides very little or no encouragement, practical support and training in maintaining diverse classroom environments, where different types of learners thrive ☐

Deployment of Resources

Q 14. What do you think are *the most important factors* that influence the success of inclusion and provision of support for students with additional learning needs at the school? (Please number in order of importance, with 1 being most important, and 6 being the least important)

The school's philosophy and attitude towards students with additional learning needs ☐

The school's leadership and decision-making regarding support for students with additional learning needs ☐

Practical concerns regarding resourcing for teaching students with ALN ☐

Financial issues related to provision of support for students with ALN ☐

Levels of staff training and specialism towards provision for students with ALN ☐

Accessibility of specialist support services for students with ALN ☐

Q 15. What are the main *sources of support* offered by the school to you as a teacher, related to teaching and supporting students with additional learning needs? Please tick the three most appropriate responses/boxes.

Information provided by Learning Development/SEN department, based on assessments and IEP/ or Learning Plans, but without further support in classrooms ☐

Provision of a range of resources for supporting students with ALN ☐

Provision of a budget for supporting students with ALN ☐

Training of learning development / ALN department staff ☐

General staff training on issues related to supporting students with ALN ☐

A school-wide inclusive philosophy and attitudes ☐

Teaching assistants that offer specific support for students with ALN ☐

Withdrawal of students with ALN for some lessons, for closer support with another teacher or teaching assistant ☐

Long term or permanent withdrawal of students with ALN, for closer support with another teacher ☐

Q16. What are the main *challenges* involved with supporting students with additional learning needs at your school? Please tick the three most appropriate responses/boxes.

A selective admissions process that discourages the entry of students with ALN ☐

Lack of support from school leadership for issues related to provision for students with ALN ☐

Lack of resources/budget related to provision for students with ALN ☐

Lack of confidence among staff in general towards supporting students with ALN ☐

Lack of willingness among staff towards supporting students with ALN ☐

Lack of experience among staff for supporting students with ALN ☐

Concerns about lack of specialism in supporting students with ALN ☐

Lack of specialist services (eg Educational psychologists, speech and language therapy) in the wider environment of the school to support classroom practice ☐

The number and range of students with additional learning needs at the school ☐

Q17. Do you have classroom assistants that support you with teaching children with additional learning needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

[If response to Q 17 was no, please advance to Q 21]

Q 18. Do teaching assistants support students with additional learning needs:

- within the classroom ☐
- withdrawn outside classrooms and working with small groups ☐
- combination of both in-class support and withdrawal from classrooms by teaching assistants ☐

Q 19. How would you describe the teaching assistants' level of qualification for teaching and supporting students with additional learning needs?

Well qualified ☐ Some qualifications ☐ Not very qualified ☐ Not qualified ☐ Don't know ☐

Q 20. How would you describe the teaching assistants' level of experience for teaching and supporting students with additional learning needs?

Very experienced ☐ Some experience ☐ Inexperienced ☐ Don't know ☐

The Environment within which the school is located

Q 21. Which of the following do you agree with most? (Please tick only one box)

Note: Resources in this case refers to materials used in planning and delivering lessons that may support students with learning difficulties, eg pencil grips, reading schemes, etc

There are many resources available in the local area to help me to create diverse and inclusive classroom environments ☐

There are enough resources available in the local area to help me to create diverse and inclusive classroom environments, though this could be better ☐

There are few resources available in the local area to help me to create diverse and inclusive classroom environments, making it difficult to create classroom environments that support children with additional learning needs ☐

The issue of resources available in the local area is unrelated to the levels of provision that I can offer to students with additional learning needs ☐

The issue of resources available in the local area relates to all students, regardless of their learning needs ☐

Q 22. Which of the following do you agree with most? (Please tick only one box)

Note: Specialist support in this case refers to a variety of services that support the identification of, and support with, children's needs related to learning difficulties, including, for example, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, etc.

There are many sources of specialist support available in the local area to help students with additional learning needs ☐

There are enough sources of specialist support available in the local area to help students with additional learning needs, though this could be better ☐

There are few sources of specialist support available in the local area to help students with additional learning needs, making it difficult to know how to support these students ☐

The issue of sources of specialist support available in the local area to help students with additional learning needs is unrelated to the levels of provision that I can offer to these students ☐

Q 23. In your opinion, is the school's attitude towards supporting and including students with learning difficulties affected by parental attitudes towards students with additional learning needs? (Please tick only one box)

Yes, parental opinion affects school policy and procedure towards supporting students with additional learning needs in a positive way ☐

Yes, parental opinion affects school policy and procedure towards supporting students with additional learning needs in a negative way ☐

No, not affected ☐

Unaware of parental opinion or its effects on school practice ☐

Q 24. Is the school's attitude towards supporting and including students with learning difficulties affected by parental attitudes towards inclusion of children with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms? (Please tick only one box)

Yes, parental opinion affects school policy and procedure towards including students with additional learning needs in mainstream classrooms, in a positive way ☐

Yes, parental opinion affects school policy and procedure towards including students with additional learning needs in mainstream classrooms, in a negative way ☐

No, parental opinion does not affect school policy and procedure towards including students with additional learning needs in mainstream classrooms ☐

Unaware of parental opinion or its effects on school practice ☐

Q 25. Do you consider the school to be an inclusive school, and an environment that welcomes, and is supportive of, children with learning difficulties in diverse classrooms? Please tick one response that best describes the school.

The school is supportive of students with additional learning needs ☐

The school is selective, and not supportive of children with additional learning needs ☐

The school would like to be inclusive, but finds it practically difficult to support children with learning additional learning needs ☐

The school is moving towards supporting children with additional learning needs, and is adapting its policies and practices to reflect this ☐

The school can support children with additional learning needs, but it does not commit many resources to achieve this ☐

The school's philosophy and practice embrace and celebrate diversity, and makes all students welcome, regardless of learning styles or ability ☐

You may expand on your views here:

What, in your opinion, is the effect of support for students with learning difficulties at your school? (eg on students with ALN, on the school)

Do you think the school could improve on its policy towards admitting students with additional learning needs? If so, how?

Do you think the school could improve on its provision for students with additional learning needs already enrolled at the school? If so, how?

Thank you for your participation in the survey. Your responses are highly valued.

References:

Lewis, A ed and Norwich, B ed (2004) *Special Teaching for Special Children? Pedagogies for Inclusion*, Open University Press

Cecilia Azorin and Mel Ainscow (2018): *Guiding schools on their journey towards inclusion*, (Themis Inclusion Tool) *Journal of Inclusive Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2018.1450900

Ainscow, M and Booth, T (2011) *Index for Inclusion*. 3rd Ed. Bristol: Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education

Appendix H: School leader interview prompt sheet

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A Study of Factors that Influence Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs in Independent and International Schools

Semi-Structured Interview – School Administrator (Principal or Headteacher)

Please note that use of the terms 'inclusion/inclusive' and 'selective' relate only to academic issues and learning abilities in this survey. Whilst factors such as student fees, nationality and ethnic background, etc may have strong influence on admission of students to international schools, they are not referred to as part of this survey.

Please note that no reference is sought, or should be made, to individuals, or groups within which individuals can be identified, during the course of the interview.

Admissions

Q1. Can you describe the admission and selection procedures used for students applying to enter the school (in general)?

Q2. Can you describe the admission and selection procedures used for students with additional learning needs or statements of special educational needs applying to enter the school? (are they different to procedures for other students? If so, how?)

Q3. What are the most important considerations when deciding on the admission of students with additional learning needs to the school: eg philosophical, financial, social, logistical? Explanation of choice.

Q4. Are students ever refused admission on the basis of having additional learning needs? Details?

Q5. What is the total number of students on roll?

Q6. How many students on roll are classed as having additional learning needs? (Number or %)

Q7. Has the school admitted students with the following additional learning needs within the past five years:

- Deafness
- Visual impairment
- Severe and profound learning difficulties
- Children with Down's Syndrome
- Children with autistic spectrum conditions
- Children with ADHD
- Children with dyslexia
- Children with dyscalculia
- Children with dyspraxia
- Children with moderate learning difficulties (identifiable as separate to having autistic spectrum disorders, requiring support – usually in-class)

What are the approximate numbers for each within the past five years?

Q8. What, in your opinion, is a realistic figure / % for the number of students with additional learning needs that can be supported to their potential at the school?

Role of Leadership, Policies and Resource Allocation

- Q 9. How does the leadership of the school support provision for students with additional learning needs?
- Q10. What are the main challenges involved with supporting students with additional learning needs at your school?
- Q 11. Does the school have a Learning Development Department or similar with a SENCO or similar? How are staff that work within this department selected, trained or prepared for the role?
- Q 12. Does the school offer training opportunities *for staff within the Learning Development department, or equivalent*, to further their professional development with specific regard to supporting students with additional learning needs? How often? Examples?
- Q 13. Does the school offer training opportunities *for general teaching staff* to further their professional development, with specific regard to supporting students with additional learning needs? How often? Examples?
- Q 14. Do the school's self-evaluation procedures support the setting of targets, standards and measures in provision and outcomes for students with additional learning needs? How are these measured?
- Q 15. Do the school's self-evaluation procedures have long term plans for enhancing the process of admitting and supporting students with additional learning needs at the school?
- Q 16. Is the school independent or part of a group/chain? Does being part of the group/chain affect admission, resourcing and provision for children with additional learning needs? Details?

Accreditation

- Q 17. What boards, associations or examination groups is the school enlisted with / a member of? Do they have inspection or standardisation procedures?
- Q 18. Do any of these inspection procedures make reference to standards in the support of teaching of students with additional learning needs?
- Q 19. Would you say that accreditation by the school with a specific board/group affects the issue of supporting students with additional learning needs at your school? Which board/group? Why?
- Q 20. Would you say that accreditation by the school with a specific board/group is irrelevant to the issue of supporting students with additional learning needs at your school? Why?

Host State Legislation/Requirements, Governing Body and Parents

- Q21. Are you aware of any stipulations or laws made by the Ministry of Education of the state that affects (directly or indirectly) the admission and support of students with additional learning needs at the school?
- Q 22. Does the school's governing body influence or engage with issues specifically related to admission and support for children with additional learning needs?
- Q 23. Are the school's attitudes towards supporting and including students with additional learning needs affected by parental attitudes towards students with additional learning needs?
- Q 24. Are the school's attitudes towards supporting and including students with additional learning needs affected by parental attitudes towards inclusion?
- Q 25. Does the school aim to be inclusive towards students with additional learning needs? If so, where would you place the school on its journey to being an inclusive environment for students with additional learning needs?

Appendix I: SENCO interview prompt sheet

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A Study of Factors that Influence Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs in Independent and International Schools

Semi-Structured Interview – SENCO, ALNCO, Coordinator of learning development or equivalent

Please note that use of the terms 'inclusion/inclusive' and 'selective' relate only to academic issues and learning abilities in this survey. Whilst factors such as student fees, nationality and ethnic background, etc may have strong influence on admission of students to international schools, they are not referred to as part of this survey.

Please note that no reference is sought, or should be made, to individuals, or groups within which individuals can be identified, during the course of the interview.

Admissions

Q 1. What is your job title? What does your role involve?

Q 2. Can you describe the admission and selection procedures used for students applying to enter the school (in general)?

Q 3. Can you describe the admission and selection procedures used for students with additional learning needs or statements of special educational needs applying to enter the school? (are they different to procedures for other students? If so, how?)

Q 4. Do you have a role in the admission and selection procedure for students applying to enter the school? What is your role in the admission and selection procedure?

Q 5. Are students ever refused admission on the basis of their having additional learning needs?

Q 6. What is the total number of students on roll?

Q 7. How many students on roll are classed as having additional learning needs? (Number or %)

Q 8. Has the school admitted students with the following additional learning needs within the past five years:

- Deafness
- Visual impairment
- Severe learning difficulties
- Children with Down's Syndrome
- Children with autistic spectrum conditions
- Children with ADHD
- Children with dyslexia
- Children with dyspraxia
- Children with moderate learning difficulties (identifiable as separate to having autistic spectrum disorders, requiring support – usually in-class)

Approximate numbers of each within past five years?

Q 9. What, in your opinion, is a realistic figure / % for the number of students with additional learning needs that can be supported (to excellence?) at your school?

Resources and Support Procedures

Q 10. Can you describe and explain the main support procedures available for students with additional learning needs at the school?

Q 11. Are students with additional learning needs more likely to be withdrawn for support, or are they more likely to be supported within classrooms?

Q 12. Does the faculty/department distinguish between students for whom English is another language, and students with additional learning needs? How?

Q 13. Does the faculty/department offer different types of support for students for whom English is another language, in comparison to support for students with additional learning needs? If so, can you offer details?

Q 14. Are Teaching Assistants used to support students with additional learning needs at the school? Who are they? How are they deployed? What is their training and background?

Q 15. What are the main sources of support offered by the school for your department and the issue of teaching and supporting students with additional learning needs? (eg resources, budget, training of LDD staff, general staff training on issues related to supporting students with additional learning needs, an inclusive philosophy, other)

Q 16. What are the main challenges involved with supporting students with additional learning needs at your school? (eg lack of support from school leadership, lack of resources/budget, lack of confidence among staff in general, lack of willingness among staff, lack of experience among staff, the number and range of students with additional learning needs at the school, other)

Q 17. What steps would you take to further enhance support for students with additional learning needs at the school? (*nb no assumptions are made, though, that there is a need for change – no implied criticism*)

Environmental

Q 18. In your opinion, do you think that the school's attitudes towards supporting and including students with additional learning needs are affected by parental attitudes *towards students with additional learning needs*?

Q 19. In your opinion, do you think that the school's attitudes towards supporting and including students with additional learning needs are affected by parental attitudes towards *inclusion of students with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms*?

Q 20. How easy is it to access specialist support services for students with ALN? (eg educational psychologists, assessment, speech and language therapy, autism support groups, etc) Does this affect the level or quality of support offered to students with additional learning needs?

Q 21. Does the school aim to be inclusive towards students with additional learning needs? If so, where would you place the school on its journey to being an inclusive environment for students with additional learning needs?

Appendix J: Example information sheet

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A Study of Factors that Influence Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs in International and Independent Schools

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction:

You are being invited to take part in a study looking at the factors that influence how students with additional learning needs are enrolled and supported in international and independent schools. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information before you decide whether to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study seeks to:

1. Better understand the experiences of children with additional learning needs in international and independent schools.
2. Examine the factors that both help and limit the effectiveness of admission and provision for students with additional learning needs in international and independent schools.
3. These factors will be compared across different types of international schools within the local area, and also with similar types of international schools in different geographical locations. The aim of this is to examine whether there are factors that are common to the experiences of children with additional learning needs in international and independent schools, regardless of the location of the school.

Why have I been chosen?

The school, and yourself as a participant, have been chosen as a sample of teachers in international and independent schools. Teachers will be asked to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary and so it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you should complete the consent form. Please remember to keep this information sheet.

What will happen if I decide to take part?

You are invited to complete a confidential questionnaire about school policies and procedures. I would be interested to hear about the approach of the school and teachers to provision for children with additional learning needs. The areas of comparison between schools that I am interested in are: school philosophy and leadership, environmental factors associated with the location of the school and resources available, and accreditation and its effects.

Should you consent to take part, questionnaires will be distributed to teachers and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

There are no right or wrong answers. Questionnaires will be completed in English. Consent forms are provided for questionnaire respondents.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. All schools involved will be anonymous. All respondents to both interviews and questionnaires will be anonymous. The information you share will be treated in **confidence**. You **will not** be identified in any reports or publications. You will not be asked to comment on individuals or identifiable groups of individuals in your care as teacher. Other members of the school will not be aware of your individual involvement with the study.

The survey has received the approval of Bangor University's School of Education and Human Development Ethics Committee, and is characterised by the practices proposed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA). These practices and safeguards include:

- Full and informed consent by all participants
- The right to withdraw from the survey by all participants, at any point in the study
- Safeguarding of the privacy and anonymity of all respondents involved with the survey
- Safeguarding of data gathered as part of the survey
- Impartiality and an ethical approach in writing and reporting on the findings of the survey
- Distribution of the findings of the research to the schools involved, following completion of the study

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The findings from this study will be used in the writing of a paper that compares two groups of international schools in two separate geographical areas. Findings may also be used as the basis for papers delivered at an academic conference and published in an academic journal and in a book based on the thesis. All findings will be shared with the schools involved, following completion of the study, and may help to inform future planning and school self-evaluation, if this proves to be beneficial to the school.

Who is organising the research?

The study is being undertaken as part of a doctoral research thesis. The research student is registered as a doctoral candidate at the School of Education and Human Development of Bangor University, North Wales, UK.

What happens if I have any concerns about this project?

If you are concerned about any aspect of this project and would like to speak to someone please contact my doctoral supervisors, Dr Jean Ware and Dr David Sullivan. Their email addresses are j.ware@bangor.ac.uk (Dr Jean Ware) and dmsphil@aol.com (Dr David Sullivan). The telephone number of the School of Education at Bangor University is: 0044 (0) 1248 382408.

Contact for further information:

If you would like more information, please contact the above, or the researcher directly at edp5eb@bangor.ac.uk

Instructions for the completion of the Questionnaire

You should find the following documents inside the questionnaire envelope:

- A copy of the 'Teacher Consent to Questionnaire Form'
- A copy of the Participant Information Sheet
- A copy of the questionnaire

Completion of the Questionnaire

1. If you are willing to take part in the survey by completing the questionnaire, please complete and sign the 'Teacher Consent to Questionnaire Form' found inside the blank envelope.
2. Please complete the questionnaire. Try to choose the response(s) that are closest to your situation/opinion by ticking the appropriate box. Most questions will ask you to indicate opinion by ticking one box. However:
 - Three questions (Q8, Q15 and Q16) will ask you to *tick three boxes* to indicate your opinion.
 - One question (Q14) will ask you to *rank factors in order of importance* on a scale of 1-6.
3. The final page of the questionnaire offers you an opportunity, should you wish to do so, to comment further on aspects of provision for students with learning difficulties at your school.
4. Once you have completed the questionnaire, please place the 'Teacher Consent to Questionnaire Form' and the questionnaire inside the envelope and seal it before returning it for collection. Sealing the envelope will ensure that your identity and opinions remain confidential. You should keep the information sheet, so that you have contact details, should you have need to contact either the researcher or supervisors following the completion of the questionnaire.

Thank you for kindly taking the time to read this information.

Appendix K: Example consent form

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A Study of Factors that Influence Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs in International and Independent Schools

RESPONDENT CONSENT TO INTERVIEW FORM

Please tick the boxes that apply to you.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this study

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason

☐

I understand that no personal details will be sought in the conduct of the questionnaire, and that responses will be fully confidential

☐

Signature: _____

Date: _____