GENDER AND SPECIAL EDUCATION: WHAT MAKES BOYS SO 'SPECIAL'?

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ABSTRACT.

This study is concerned with those pupils registered as having 'special educational needs' within mainstream schools and also those who attend special schools of non normative designations and seeks to explain the over - representation of white working class boys amongst such populations. The processes of identification and subsequent allocation to non normative special categories are argued to be both class and gender biased and to represent the placement of pupils so identified along a continuum of exclusion, being an indication of their failure in conventional terms.

An approach is developed which attempts to make the link between such failure and wider social and educational processes, viewing schooling as a form of cultural politics and seeing such politics as being intimately linked to wider structural relations. To this end the work of Pierre Bourdieu is employed.

The aim of the research is to test and also to develop Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural reproduction and particularly his concept of habitus and its gendered embodied nature, as a means of illuminating the processes involved in the generation of these differential outcomes.

The study takes the form of qualitative in-depth semi structured interviews with teachers from eight schools, five special and three mainstream, in order to generate detailed contextualised knowledge of the processes by which pupils may have been identified as having special educational needs within mainstream schools and then possibly allocated to special schools and of the assumptions perceptions and understandings of those teachers in special schools at the 'receiving end' of these processes. The resultant data is analysed using a conceptual framework provided by Bourdieu's theories.

The study is placed within the context of the recent history / politics of special educational practices through a consideration of legislative and other developments of the past twenty years or so which are argued to have led to an increase in exclusionary pressures despite the rhetorical emphases throughout most of this time firstly on integration and latterly on inclusion.

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Chapter One
Introduction

The concept of Special Educational Needs has extremely wide currency within the education system of England and Wales with the meeting of such needs taking up an increasing proportion of funds, time and energy and incorporating an ever growing number of pupils. (Bowers 1996, House of Commons Education Committee 1996, DfEE 1997) Its importance may be measured by considering the share of LEA budgets it takes up, the number of pupils that fall under its ageis and the rate of expansion of its usage as a means of managing particular pupil outcomes.

Thus, approximately £1.5 billion was spent making provision for special educational needs in 1990/91 (Audit Comm. H.M.I. 1992) a figure which had grown to £2.5 billion or 12.5% of total LEA budgets by 1996/7. (DfEE 1997) This growth continued such that, by 1998 the Audit Commission estimated that 15% of all 'educational resources' were being spent on special needs, representing an increase of 25% from 1992/93 figures. (Audit Comm 1998 p2)

Further, whilst the concept of special educational needs is itself extremely problematic (see for example, Tomlinson 1982, 1985 Pumphrey P. and Mittler P 1989, Booth 1995 Thomas1995) it nonetheless is the basis upon which large numbers of pupils are excluded from educational experiences and settings enjoyed by the majority, through attendance at special schools, (some 115,700 pupils in 1994/95) (DfEE 1996) and also upon which an infinitely larger number of pupils have their membership of mainstream

settings qualified, through their identification, registration and re-designation as pupils with special educational needs.

Now whilst the tip of this iceberg is made up of those pupils with statements, in mainstream schools, (134,000 in January 1997 a figure which had more than doubled from 62,000 in Jan 1991) the bulk however, consists of some 1,201,400 pupils in England alone, for the school year 1996/7 (DfEE 1998) identified as having SEN under the procedures of the Code of Practice introduced by the 1993 Education Act. (DfEE 1994)

Moreover, as many writers have illustrated, the clients identified for special educational programmes and interventions and particularly those for whom such identifications either put at risk their continued 'membership of the mainstream' or lead to their exclusion from it, are not drawn in random fashion from the generality of the school population but come overwhelmingly from working class backgrounds and contain an over-representation of black pupils and of boys (see for example, Tomlinson 1981, 1982, 1984, Ford et. al. 1982, Galloway and Goodwin1987, Maxwell W. 1994, Hill 1994, Male 1994, 1996)

Moreover, the descriptive terms, applied or difficulties identified in relation to such students are almost exclusively 'non normative.' (Tomlinson 1982) For example, those such as emotionally and behaviourally disturbed, moderate or mild learning difficulties. These are terms whose definitions are such that, as Tomlinson puts it, 'there are no adequate measuring instruments or agreed criteria in the social world to decide upon these particular categories.' (1982 p 65) There can therefore be quite legitimate disagreement about both the terms themselves and also whether a particular individual falls within them, indeed, the socially constructed nature of both

the categories and processes of allocation to them is emphasised by Tomlinson.

Further, the consequences of such identifications are argued to be profound and invariably detrimental, leading to the stigmatisation of such pupils with a resultant negative impact on their future employment prospects. (see for example, Tomlinson 1985, Tomlinson and Colquhoun 1995) Such processes may be seen then to be both indicators of and a further entrenchment of the marginalisation and social exclusion of these pupils.

This study is concerned with those pupils registered as having 'special educational needs' within mainstream schools and also those who attend special schools of non normative designations (Tomlinson 1982) and seeks to explain the over-representation of white working class boys amongst such populations. The processes of identification and subsequent allocation to non-normative special categories, will be argued to be both class and gender biased and to represent the placement of pupils so identified along a continuum of exclusion, being an indication of the failure in conventional terms of the pupils so identified.

The study is based on the hypothesis that the identification of a child as having Special Educational Needs and / or their allocation to a special school is the most stark and obvious indicator of a discontinuity between the needs and interests of the child and the educational experiences offered by the school. It is also hypothesised that the nature of this 'discontinuity' is gendered, resulting in different consequences for male and female pupils.

It will be the central argument of this thesis that practices organised around notions of S.E.N. and implicitly disability operate as mechanism for

managing and legitimating the educational failure of (amongst others) large numbers of white working class boys. This failure in itself, will be accounted for by a consideration of those mechanisms, processes and practices, which work to produce and confirm the devaluation, exclusion, otherness and marginality of members of this group whilst masking the inabilities of the education system to engage appropriately with the pupil diversity they represent. The work of Pierre Bourdieu will be employed in order to attempt such an account.

We now turn to a discussion and critique of the prevailing paradigm within which special educational issues are usually framed and a description of the alternative perspective which will form the basis for this study.

Theoretical Preliminaries.

Following Burrell and Morgan (1979) Thomas Skrtic characterises functionalist presuppositions as providing the predominant contemporary approach to the study of social organisations. (Skrtic 1991 1995) These are said to yield a politically conservative view whereby the usual arrangement of society is considered to be functional and inherently correct, leading to the general conclusion that '.. social and human problems are pathological.' (Skrtic 1995 p 67) He further argues that these mutually reinforcing theories of 'organisational rationality and human pathology,' (p 67) have become more than just theories applied by social scientists but have become social norms forming the unquestioned assumptions underlying lay or commonsense approaches to social problems and issues.

Such a perspective when applied to the question of pupil failure within schools tends to reinforce a psychologistic individualising gaze on the supposed deficiencies and problems of the pupil, thus drawing attention away from the school, education system and wider society.

Skrtic identifies four fundamental assumptions in which special educational theory / practice is grounded and which derive from this functionalist viewpoint. These are that,

> '(1.) school failure is a .... Pathological condition that students have ....(2.) Differential diagnosis... is an objective and useful practice ....(3.) special programming ..... is a rationally conceived and coordinated system of services that benefits diagnosed students ....
> (4.) Progress in education ..... is a rational-technical process of incremental improvements in conventional diagnosis and instructional practices.' (1995 p 68)

These assumptions, he argues, in focussing attention onto the supposed deficiencies / disabilities of students draw attention away from the deficiencies of the schooling such students may have received thereby discouraging educators from questioning their own practices. (1995 p 70)

Due to their incorporation of such assumptions, much research and writing in this field has been characterised as research 'for,' rather than research 'of' special education (Bogdan and Kugelmass 1984) leading to a situation whereby as Tomlinson argues,

> 'those dealing with special educational needs are in danger of knowing 'how to do it,' while knowing little about why they do it.' (1994 p xiii)

This is a form of naive pragmatism, (Cherryholmes 1988 p151) whereby in such work, the major concepts employed and processes described are

largely unquestioned, taken for granted and treated as objective, natural and disinterested rather than as involving political, cultural and moral choices which may serve particular interests. Further, as applied to special education, whenever there are allusions or references to the making of choices or the serving of interests, it is invariably the clients of special educational practices whose interests are said to predominate, a perspective which has been described by Tomlinson as 'an ideology of benevolent humanitarianism.' (1982 p 5)

Much of this work then, is dominated by an instrumental rationality which may be described as, a search for efficient means to educational ends that are taken for granted, a concern with practical, technical, questions, and a claim to be acting in the best interests of the child. This perspective involves an assumption that material explanations of mental behaviour are more secure than social ones, (Carrier 1983a, Gould 1996) and that the personal histories of individuals, and the social histories of their contexts are not relevant to a consideration of their responses / performances within an educational setting. (Kincheloe1991) Indeed to the extent that the personal histories of individuals can be said to 'intrude' into these accounts, they are invariably pathologised, and described in terms of the social knowledge of the investigators derived from their positions within the social structure (Tomlinson 1981) from where as Skrtic puts it they draw on 'the common beliefs and assumptions contained in social norms.' (1995 p 68)

The major thrust of special educational practices is directed towards locating any perceived difficulties in attainment, behaviour and so on as emanating from within the child who is invariably characterised as having a handicap or disability. This conflation of difficulty with disability and this concepts implicit links with impairment and deficit, serves to de-politicize

the issue of the identification of, special educational needs, and turns it into a technical one and therefore the province of 'experts' ie. professionals, with the professional status of those involved further serving as to legitimise their interventions. (Tomlinson 1996) Thus Fulcher notes that while there is a clear lack of 'impairment' present in the case of most categorisations of disability within education, that, nonetheless the presumption is made is that they exist. This she regards as an '.. extraordinarily political act..' (1989b p8) elsewhere characterising disability as a '..political and social construct used to regulate...' (1989a p21) further arguing that,

> *'the social construction of disability is relative*
> *to particular social practices and independent*
> *of the presence of impairment'* (1989a p 23)

Indeed, as will be argued later, the particular social practices that constitute schooling, may lead to those pupils who are seen to posses a less than docile body eg. a problematic masculinity qualifying for inclusion in such categories. Further the needs of such pupils as are identified are not seen as arising from any such social processes or practices but are individualised and perceived as the result of individual deficits. (Bart 1984 p 82) Typically then, a victim blaming psychologising of school failure, a pathologising of pupil backgrounds, and an assumption in favour of the rationality of current school arrangements, are brought into play in order to explain differences in pupil attainments.

The approach of this study however, will be to employ perspectives which question the taken for granted assumptions and beliefs, which underpin such approaches, with the aim of exposing those practices which promote social and educational advantage and disadvantage.

For example, a perspective such as that of Slee who argues that, 'functionalist special educational theory serves the imperatives of racism, class and disablement...' (1997 p 416) He considers that the important issues at stake and questions to be asked in the area of special education are not those of resources, diagnoses, and methods of instruction in the narrow technical sense in which they are often discussed as for example in the integration debate (eg. see Solity 1992, Wade and Moore 1992, 1993) nor indeed do they lie in the prescriptions of those who adopt a school effectiveness / improvement approach in pursuit of the development of supposed 'high reliability organisations.' (Slee 1998) Rather they relate to such,

> 'exclusive and inclusive cultures ... (as are) ...
> mediated through ...(the) .. academic content and
> forms of delivery and the structures and
> processes of schooling.' (1997 p416)

Thus while special education has essentially concerned itself with differences between students and historically has acted so as to construct many such differences as deficits to be remediated and excluded rather than as diversity to be celebrated, the concern of this study will be to identify and to challenge those exclusionary cultures, practices and processes within schools which serve to devalue and marginalise pupils, particularly white working class boys. From this perspective the identification of a pupil as having special educational needs is itself an 'act of exclusion' (Florian1998 p106) based as it is on a distinction between learners cast as 'normal' and 'less than normal,' (Booth1995) or as between 'distinct types of students - special and regular.' (Stainback and Stainback1984 p102) Further, when such devaluations may be seen to be substantially based on differences, which have their sources in the wider society as in the disproportionality in

patterns of identification which are the focus of this study, then their political nature becomes even more apparent.

The perspective then, is one which views schooling as a form of cultural politics, (Apple1996) and which sees such 'politics' as intimately linked to wider structural relations. Thus as Apple argues,

> 'We do not confront abstract 'learners' in schools. Instead, we see specific classed, raced and gendered subjects, people whose biographies are intimately linked to the economic, political and ideological trajectories of their families and communities, to the political economies of their neighbourhoods.' (Apple 1986 p75)

The issues addressed by this study are political, that is in relation to the area of social life under consideration they seek answers to questions such as 'who gets what, how, when, where, why and with what consequences?' (Barton 1997 p231) With regard to special educational practices then, the questions to be asked are those of whose interests they serve and therefore whom they empower and whom they disempower. (Stirling 1996) Thus following Tomlinson we might ask whose values and beliefs predominate when such judgements are made, whose are marginalised or disregarded and with what consequences?

The emphasis will be placed on the centrality of politics, power and conflict in understanding how schools function within the larger society, giving prominence to the question as to 'whose interests?' are served by current educational arrangements and processes as they relate to the identification of such pupils as having special educational needs. To ask as Fulcher puts it, which,

*'aspects of the present social order are sustained by,
and which social actors are able to realise their
objectives via dominant discursive practices organised
around a notion of disability?'* (Fulcher 1989a p49)

Such a perspective may broadly be described as a radical structuralist approach, which Burrell and Morgan characterise as focussing on the 'conflictual nature of social affairs and the fundamental process of change which this generates.' (1979 p 326) This approach as Tomlinson argues,

*'can show that education systems and their parts .... develop
out of conflicts ...... Winners and losers emerge not so
much because of individual merit or deficit, but because
they belong to groups who have, or lack, access to
power and modes of legitimation.'* (1995 p 124)

This overall approach whilst subject to variations of emphasis and interpretation based on a number of 'central' elements ie. those of, totality, structure, contradiction and crisis (Burrell and Morgan 1979) may be summarised by the view of society as consisting of fundamental conflicts of economic social and political interests, with power struggles and attempts at domination by more powerful social groups characterising and generating social change. Thus, for example in relation to the education system, changes may be seen to occur not through the unfolding of an evolutionary 'plan,' nor indeed may they be viewed as necessarily embodying progress towards a more enlightened, democratic and humanitarian form of provision. Changes occur rather because people with the power to impose them are relatively successful in the pursuit of their interests and goals.

These changes however are never simply a straightforward imposition or domination by one group, for such a view fails to address the complexity of power relationships in such contexts, rather the outcomes of such power struggles invariably, 'bear the marks of concession to allies and compromise

with opponents.' (Archer1979 p3) A further point to bear in mind however is that such 'results' are never complete or settled, indeed the maintenance of any 'settlement' is a matter of continued struggle at a number of levels. Indeed according to Avis et al. such 'settlements' are based on a,

*'superficial consensus ..... marked by their capacity
to hold diverse interests together within an
unstable equilibrium which has to be
continually reworked and remade.' (1996 p 5)*

Thus when we come to consider the Warnock and other reports and legislation in a later chapter, it may be seen that the various inconsistencies, contradictions and absences revealed in the texts, together with the 'outcomes' in terms of further policy/practice may be in large part explained in terms of the interests of the various groups involved. Moreover, such texts including legislation and other such 'policy decisions' may be seen themselves as but one type or level of intervention (albeit relatively powerful ones) in educational politics, with 'policy' itself being 'made' at a number of levels and subject to a wide range of influences. (see eg. Weatherley and Lipsky 1977, Goacher et. al. 1988, Fulcher 1989a, 1989b, Ball 1990, 1994, Riseborough 1993, Ridell and Brown 1994)

Changes and developments in the forms and types of educational provision, including those practices whereby some pupils are identified as special and processed accordingly, are not then to be explained simply in terms of benevolence nor indeed malevolence, but may best be accounted for in terms of ongoing processes of struggle between various interests in whatever form these may manifest themselves. Further the manner in which different groups and interests are able to mobilise power is not simply in terms of the use of coercion on the part of the more powerful to impose

their will, for power may be seen to exist in many and subtle forms eg. in terms of relations built into the practices of everyday life and in the legitimating frameworks and logics of various forms of knowledge. Moreover, it must be added that whilst the context for the development and pursuit of such interests may be linked to economic / structural relations they must not be seen as determined by them, for the sheer complexity of the contingencies surrounding policy making at a number of levels is such as to warn against such reductive and essentialising analyses.

There are then, many possible histories of the nature, origins and subsequent development of the 'special' educational provision made available for those pupils considered to have 'disabilities of body or mind' (pre1981) or 'special educational needs' (post 1981) thus rendering them 'unfit' for or unable to 'benefit' from the educational experiences provided for the majority by virtue of such 'handicaps,' or 'disabilities.' Indeed, one approach which informed the historical chapter of the Warnock Report (1978 ch. 2.) and which supports the functionalist presuppositions of much work in this area as discussed above, is an interpretation whereby the story is that of the gradual improvement of the 'lot' of such pupils through the charitable and humanitarian work of significant benefactors and more generally through the development of more enlightened and progressive social attitudes and values. Accordingly the history of, and indeed current practices in relation to, the identification, assessment of and provision for pupils with, special educational needs, has been presented as an humanitarian response, as doing good, to individual children. As Adams put it,

> 'all children are special... some children are more special than others .... special education is about exceptional consideration and providing exceptional opportunities and exceptional help to those whose needs .... are greatest.. (Adams1990 p 4-5).

This statement is a classic example of what Tomlinson (1982) has called an, 'ideology of benevolent humanitarianism.' (1982 p5) an approach which seeks to gloss over any other possible forces, factors, motivations and 'interests' involved in developments in this area. Thus, she argues that,

'those who find difficulty in moving beyond humanitarian rhetoric ... have to explain why a sub-system of special education has developed and expanded, which is backed by legal enforcement and caters largely for the children of the manual working class ... (suggesting that) ... *To do this attention must turn from the psychogenic focus on individual 'needs' to the social interest groupings, the educational, political and economic 'needs' which an expansion of special education is serving.'* (1985 p164).

Therefore whilst an alternative account may indeed need to acknowledge the humanitarian concern and motivation at an individual level on the part of many involved, a fuller view of such developments needs to foreground the social, economic and professional interests served in order to expose the contradictions between the claims such as those of Adams who talk of such 'exceptional consideration .. exceptional opportunities .... and exceptional help,' (1990 p 4-5) and the reality for those pupils subjected to special educational practices and interventions.

For example Tomlinson (1982) in discussing the historical origins of special education has pointed to the socially constructed nature of 'the special' emphasising the degree to which such categorisation related to the need to achieve and legitimise social control, at a time of rapid economic change, particularly of those 'elements' of the population who were considered potentially troublesome. Further there was the desire to ensure that those who could not, or would not, conform to the requirements of mass schooling, particularly at a time of payment by results were removed, so as

to ensure the smoother running of such establishments and also that they were given an 'appropriate' diet of education / training to prevent them becoming a burden on the rates. Apart from the commercial interests served through increasing the future productivity of pupils, or from quietening them she also pointed to the growth of professional 'vested interests' in this area, particularly that of medicine, though shortly to be followed by psychologists and a growing army of special educators and therapists.

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Moreover, whilst the foregoing passage referred to changes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it might equally serve to illustrate the principles underlying the development of special education since that time. Indeed the situation at the end of the 20th Century may be seen as having many parallels with those earlier times. For example given recent structural changes in the economy involving a decreasing demand for manual labour those who formerly would have occupied such positions are increasingly likely to find themselves designated as having special educational needs thus rationalising their inability to be economically productive. In this way, as Tomlinson argues, 'special education is fast becoming a means of legitimating a labour crisis.' (1988 p 48)

Moreover, recent legislation (eg.D.E.S.1988, D.F.E. 1993) which has had the effect of exposing schools to the disciplines of the market, involving 'outcome related funding' (Fish and Evans 1995 p4) (payment by results?) has greatly increased exclusionary pressures such that more pupils than ever find themselves in the special category and thereby have their membership of mainstream settings qualified by such re-designations and with an ever increasing number of professionals to cater for their needs. Indeed Tomlinson has recently listed as many as thirty four different professional roles with an interest in special education (1996 p176) this not including

those who teach the 'non-special' in whose interests troublesome or 'harder to teach' (Fish and Evans 1995) pupils may be removed, and whilst a number of these are employed by the health or social services, those directly employed within the education service were in 1996/7 responsible for spending some £2.5 billion or 12.5% of local authority education budgets. (DfEE 1994) This constitutes an extremely powerful interest / lobby group in itself apart from other and wider interests such a 'professionalisation' of the problem of pupil failure may serve.

Pierre Bourdieu.

Whilst the overall perspective employed will be that described above as a 'radical structuralist' approach, the specific focus of this study will be provided by the work of Pierre Bourdieu. He argues that the differential educational outcomes / attainments of pupils belonging to different social groups are largely due to the discontinuity between home and school experienced by members of these groups. The purpose of this study is to explore how far and in what sense this argument can be validly employed / extended to account for the disproportionate number of white working class boys identified as having Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools and of those who may be allocated to special schools.

The aim of the research is to test and also to develop Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural reproduction and particularly his concept of habitus, as a means of illuminating the processes involved in the generation of such outcomes. Now the concept of habitus encompasses a range of attributes, one aspect, the implications of which have received very little attention, being that of its physical gendered embodiment. However whilst Bourdieu does not focus directly on this aspect in his educational writings, this study

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seeks to emphasise such aspects, within the overall schema, as a means of providing insights into the issues addressed.

The study was designed to generate data which might illuminate and evaluate Bourdieu's theories and also to provide for the possibility of extending his insights to the particular issues identified and took the form of qualitative, in depth semi structured interviews (McCracken G.D. 1988, Holstein and Gubrium 1995, Kvale1996), with thirty six teachers from eight schools, five special and three mainstream, in an attempt to gain detailed contextualised knowledge of the processes by which pupils may have been identified as having special educational needs within mainstream schools and then possibly allocated to special schools and of the assumptions, perceptions and understandings of those teachers in special schools at the 'receiving end' of such processes.

The resultant data was analysed using a conceptual framework provided by Bourdieu's theories, by being sorted and coded into responses, relating to a set of propositions as to those elements of reported teacher / school / pupil encounters and of wider processes and practices, which Bourdieu's theories implied would be present in the data. It was hypothesised that Bourdieu's theories would be seen to be applicable to the situation of the pupils in question if the data supported the propositions as outlined.

The thesis then, may be seen as an attempt to 'test' a number of propositions derived / developed from a reading of Bourdieu's work as a means of illuminating or explaining the disproportionality in patterns of identification and referral described above.

The propositions were that the data would provide evidence of :-

School Habitus.

(1) A location of the sources of differences in educational outcomes in 'neutral' events or qualities external to the basic relations of power and authority within society.

(2) An assumption in favour of the neutrality and universality of school culture,
including a belief that schools operate equal opportunity policies which involve high expectations for all and that they distinguish between pupils only on the basis of attributes and qualities identified in (1) above.

(3) Schools' involvement in assessing their pupils' participation or otherwise in a specific culture, lack of familiarity with which is taken as evidence of a lack of ability, or of a cultural deficiency rather than cultural difference.

Habitus and Class / Family Strategies.

(4) Parental actions and orientations will reflect a scepticism towards or failure to subscribe to a belief in the supposed meritocratic and benevolent nature of schooling with this being taken by teachers as evidence of pathological traits such as laziness or lack of ambition.

(5) That such actions as may be taken in support of their children's schooling by members of subordinate social groups will be lacking in effectivity compared with those taken by members of dominant social groups.

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*(6) Evidence of the schools involvement in the production
and valorisation of particular forms of bodily control,
expression and self management, with those produced by
pupils from subordinate social groups constituting a form
of 'physical capital' which has less 'exchange value'
within schools, than that produced by
the dominant classes and is thereby interpreted
negatively by teachers.*

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*(7) The lack of congruence between the bodily forms
produced by members of subordinate social groups
and those forms which the school valorises is 'gendered'
in nature, with greater significance of and lack of continuity
between the two forms being ascribed to male pupils.*

An extended consideration of Bourdieu's work and a justification / rationale for the propositions as outlined will be provided in later chapters. This chapter will conclude with an outline summary of the rest of the thesis.

Thesis Outline.

The general processes of identification and subsequent allocation to non-normative special educational categories within schools have been argued to be both class and gender biased, leading to a disproportionate number of white working class boys being identified as having Special Educational Needs. In chapter two the extent of this disproportionality will be outlined and discussed in relation to both segregated and mainstream settings as will the general lack of interest in and failure to problematise the issue.

Chapter three will take the form of a selective review of work in the area of gender and education in relation to the interests of the study. The main

question at issue is that of how to understand the part played by schooling in the confirmation or denial of, support or discouragement of, development and regulation of, particular forms of masculinity / femininity and further, the extent to which the processes involved might be related to the differential outcomes which are of concern here.

The recent history of special educational practices and their developing context is provided in chapter four through a consideration of the Warnock Report, the 1981 Education Act, the 1988 Education Reform Act, the 1993 Education Act and the development of the Code of Practice and the 1997 Green Paper on 'Meeting Special Educational Needs.' This history will show many changes in terminology, vocabulary and policy, yet reveal a continuation / entrenchment, and even intensification of earlier approaches. Thus despite the changes in administrative practices and the increasing rhetorical emphases on inclusion the underlying processes and practices are argued to remain substantially the same and are ones in which a significant and ever increasing number of pupils find themselves in 'special' categories.

In chapter five the major themes of Bourdieu's theories as they relate to education will be presented, focussing on the concept of habitus and particularly its embodied nature. The major criticisms of his approach will then be presented and discussed and a justification for using aspects of his work as the theoretical basis for the empirical study will be provided.

A description and rationale of the design of the study will be provided in chapter six, including a justification and critique of the main methods of data generation employed by this study, and also of the particular focus on teachers 'accounts.' Also discussed will be the issues of data analysis, ethical concerns and criteria of validity for the research.

Chapter seven reports on interviews with eighteen mainstream school teachers from three primary schools. What was sought, was a detailed examination of the ways in which these teachers made sense of what they were doing within their classrooms and of the resulting outcomes of their engagements with their pupils. This to include an analysis of their broader educational and social philosophies, including their assumptions about their pupils' positions within wider structural relations and the implications of these. Within these mainstream schools interviews may be seen as an attempt to gain detailed contextualised knowledge of the processes by which pupils may have been identified as having special educational needs within mainstream schools and then possibly allocated to special schools.

Chapter eight reports on interviews with eighteen special school teachers from five special schools of non normative designations. Again what was sought, was a detailed examination of the ways in which these teachers made sense of what they were doing within their classrooms and of the resulting outcomes of their engagements with their pupils. This to include an analysis of their broader educational and social philosophies, including their assumptions about their pupils' positions within wider structural relations and the implications of these. Within these special schools however the focus was on the the assumptions, perceptions and understandings of those teachers at the 'receiving end' of processes of identification and allocation initiated in mainstream schools.

Chapter nine will examine the relevant findings of the data chapters in relation to a set of propositions for analysis relating to those elements of reported teacher / school / pupil encounters and of wider processes and practices, which Bourdieu's theories imply would be present in the data and which were outlined earlier in the research methodology chapter and in the

introduction. A further discussion of Bourdieu's theories and a justification for the propositions will also be provided.

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The final chapter will re visit and review some of the major arguments of the study and draw together the claims made in chapter nine.

Chapter Two
Boys: Just How 'Special?'

The general processes of identification and subsequent allocation of pupils to non-normative special educational categories within schools may be seen as being both class and gender biased. One outcome of such a 'bias' being that of the disproportionate number of white working class boys identified as having Special Educational Needs. In this chapter the extent of this disproportionality will be outlined and discussed in relation to both segregated and mainstream settings as will the general lack of interest in and failure to problematise the issue.

The over-representation of boys in special categories and particularly in segregated settings is long standing and enduring. Cyril Burt is reported to have described a ratio of 1.66:1 boys to girls attending ESN schools in 1950 and Schonell those varying between 1.7:1 and 2.3:1 in 1948 with Lovell et.al. reporting a ratio of of 2:1. in 1964. (quoted in Male 1996) Davie et. al. (1972) reported that twice as many boys as girls within the population they studied had attended child guidance clinics while Croll and Moses (1985) reported from their work that boys outnumbered girls in every single category of special educational needs. Similarly Tomlinson in her consideration of DES statistics of those requiring special educational treatment in 1979 notes that in the categories of E.S.N. and maladjusted, boys outnumbered girls by a ratio of 3:1. (1982 p 65) She further notes that during the one hundred year history of such provision, a major characteristic of the pupils allocated was their unskilled or manual working class parentage. (p 63)

Also, Ford et. al. (1982) found a substantial majority of boys over girls in the four maladjusted schools they studied amounting to at minimum a ratio of 4:1. they also quote national figures for such schools which demonstrate ratios of between 4:1 and 5:1 for the years 1950 up to 1975. (p 133) They also note what they term an absence of social class distribution within the schools they studied ie. out of a total of some 400 pupils only seven cases of parents employed in non-manual work were found, and these were not professionals but included such work as security guard and bank messenger, concluding that in the area they studied that middle and upper class children simply did not become maladjusted! (p 136)

The populations of maintained special schools have always contained a disproportionately large number of boys but there appears to have been a steady increase in this disproportionality recently. Thus, in 1970/71 there were 62,900 boys and 40,000 girls in special schools, a ratio of 1.56:1, by 1979/80 however the figures were 86,500 to 53,900 a ratio of 1.6:1, by 1985/6 while the population of special schools had dropped slightly the figures showed a continued increase in disproportionality with 77,800 boys to 45,200 girls, a ratio of 1.72:1. By1990/91 there had been a further decrease in the special school population and a yet higher ratio of boys to girls with figures of 70,600 and 37,100 a ratio of 1.92:1. For the next few years while figures in special schools stabilised the disproportionality continued to rise with figures of 72,900 to 37,100 a ratio of 1.96:1 in 1993/94 and those of 72,900 to 36,900 a ratio of 1.97:1 in 1994/5. (Dfee 1996) The figures for 1995/96 were 71,600 to 36,100 a ratio of 1.98:1 and for 1996/97, 72,800 boys to 36,400 girls a ratio of 2:1. (Dfee 1998) Thus despite a fluctuating special school population over the past twenty-five years the ratio of boys to girls has increase from 1.56:1 in 1970/71 to 2:1 in 1996/97.

Further these figures relate to all categories of special school with no disaggregated data seemingly available which would make it possible to isolate non-normative categories. However given what is known from smaller scale studies of the populations of such schools (eg. Male 1966, Cooper et.al 1991) it may well be the case that the form in which the figures are made available mask rather more significant changes than indicated. Also worthy of note from the latest official figures (DfEE 1998) is a new category of Pupil Referral Unit for pupils who have been permanently excluded from schools. Such units are argued to be special schools in all but name and to provide fast track entry bypassing the usual statementing procedures. (Booth 1996) For such units the figures for 1996/97 show that there were 5,500 boys and 1,900 girls in attendance, a ratio of 2.89:1.

There are relatively few studies of the populations of special schools completed recently, however those that have been reported upon confirm the patterns identified above.

Thus, Male (1996) reported on a survey of 75 MLD schools which sought to obtain a profile of their pupils. She discovered that only 5.5% of such schools reported roughly equal numbers of girls and boys with 85% reporting up to three quarters boys and 7.5% more than three quarters. She also found that such gender imbalances were long standing with 81% of schools reporting no recent changes in this disproportionality. Indeed almost 17% reported recent and continuing increases in the number of boys on roll.

The over-representation of black pupils in such schools had been a matter of much concern for many years (see for example Coard B. 1971, Tomlinson 1982) however figures derived from this survey show no such

disproportionality. Thus whilst 4% of headteachers considered white pupils to be over-represented in their areas one commented that the problem in relation to black (African Caribbean) pupils no longer existed because the 'goal posts' were kept very tight due to a 'sensitivity' to such issues. (p 40) This sensitivity and its effects on patterns of allocation serves only to reinforce the political nature of the processes involved. Thus while Male refers to anecdotal evidence on increases in the proportion of Asian pupils in such schools she reports that a question in relation to this issue was the only one that some headteachers (11%) refused to answer, with some deleting the question and others writing comments such as not relevant or not known. (ibid p 40)

Data in relation to the occupational status of parents showed a marked imbalance with 75% of headteachers considering children whose parents were unemployed and 52% whose parents were unskilled to be over-represented in their schools compared with mainstream schools in their areas.

In summary then this survey showed an overwhelming over-representation of white boys from predominantly unskilled and unwaged backgrounds attending M.L.D. schools. However also revealed was a sensitivity to allocations in relation to black pupils implying a recognition of the politics involved and a need to respond by reducing their intake. However in relation to the gender, class and ethnicity of the majority of their pupils, while there was clear evidence of differential and disproportionate patterns of referral such data were treated as completely unproblematic and taken for granted.

However while the problem of black over representation in MLD schools was argued to no longer exist the same cannot be said for EBD schools. Thus, Cooper et.al. (1991) in a survey which covered 60% of schools and units for 'pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties' in England and Wales found African Caribbean boys over-represented by a factor of four and white European boys by a factor of two. Girls however represented only 14.9% of the sample giving a ratio of 5.7 boys to every 1 girl. Further whilst it is not a direct concern of this study it must also be noted that black boys of African Caribbean origin are considerably over represented in the populations of pupils permanently excluded from school. (Bourne et.al. 1994, Blyth and Milner 1996, Hayden 1997)

Data will later be presented (chapter 8) which has also been reported elsewhere (Smith 1998) of a survey of five special schools, two of which were designated as Delicate two as MLD and one as EBD. The total number of pupils at the five schools was 467 of whom 328 or 70% were boys, and 139 or 30% were girls. The E.B.D. school however contained only 1 girl out of a school populatiom of 25. If we take out the figures for this school we are left with a total population of 442 of whom 304 or 68% were boys and 138 or 32% were girls, revealing proportions of 69% and 65% boys at the two M.L.D. schools respectively, and 71% and 68% boys at the two Delicate schools respectively. Further, in economic terms the background of these pupils could be said to be 'poor' for the most part, with 65% of them qualifying for free school meals, at least 70% living in rented local authority housing, and approximately 47% of them being unemployed, with most of the others engaged in unskilled or semi - skilled work.

Hill's (1994) examination of assessment procedures in Sheffield L.E.A. revealed 67.6% boys and 32.4% girls in receipt of statements of special

educational needs in 1991 an overall proportion of 2:1. He found however that whereas ratios of those statemented for more normative categories such as severe learning difficulties and physical handicaps were roughly equal, that non normative categories such as EBD were particularly male dominated.

The figures thus far have concentrated on segregated provision, however while data on gender differences in statementing and 'identification' within mainstream schools is difficult to come by, it must be noted that the vast majority of those pupils who find themselves in special schools do so as a result of processes of identification which originated in the mainstream! There is however a growing interest in this area perhaps partly motivated by a recent and continuing moral panic into boys' overall performance which has brought such issues to the forefront. (see for example Woodhead 1996 Pyke 1996a, Dean 1998 but also Epstein et. al. 1998,) However, such a debate may be seen as largely irrelevant to the issues addressed by this study given the longstanding and enduring nature of the problem addressed here. Indeed the more recent 'discovery' of and concerns expressed about 'underachieving boys' may be seen as having rather obvious links to those changes in the labour market which are leading to a reduction in the number of 'manual' jobs in which these boys would previously have found employment thus increasing the visibility of their educational 'failure' rather than as being a new phenomenon. (Tomlinson and Colquhoun 1995, Mahony P. 1998)

In a discussion of gender bias within special education, Green (1993) noted a preponderance of male pupils amongst her case load as a special needs teacher within mainstream shools, a perception she reports as being shared by many of her colleagues. Further, data generated by her in order to assess

the extent of the disproportionality resulted in 204 boys and 95 girls being identified by teachers as having special educational needs thus confirming her earlier perceptions. Similarly Vardill (1996) noted that in the educational psychology service in which he worked twice as many boys as girls were referred.

Daniels et. al. (1999) in their study of an education authority found a ratio of 2.6:1 boys to girls amongst the 358 pupil profiles obtained from the 21 schools which participated in their survey. They also found wide variations between schools. Thus for example despite the overall ratio reported, one school was found to be working with twice as many girls as boys and another with eight times as many boys as girls. Gender differences were also seen to vary as a function of the category of SEN which teachers used to describe pupils with very marked differences in favour of boys' identification in relation to EBD, MLD and SpLD with least differences in relation to what was described as the mild learning difficulty category.

Gender differences were also seen to vary as a function of ethnicity with the male female ratio close to 1 in the black group and above 2 in the white English group. Also worthy of note was that gender differences in relation to EBD while being greater than for any other category were much greater in the white group. Further they found that black children were more likely to find themselves in the socially less acceptable category of general learning difficulty rather than reading difficulty.

The Undeserving Poor?

Now, if we consider the extent to which such a disproportionality is considered an issue and also in what sense it is considered to be so, we find

that apart from the very limited number of references cited above, the over-representation of white working class boys in both segregated settings and in the populations of those identified as having special educational needs in mainstream schools is for the most part taken for granted. However to the extent that it is regarded as an issue at all, it is not one which sees an identification of a pupil as having SEN as in any way disadvantageous to those so identified. Indeed quite the reverse is the case with the argument often being framed in terms of the distribution of limited resources in which such boys are seen as obtaining a disproportionate share of them at the expense of other equally or even more deserving cases.

Thus for example Green (1993) reports that all the professionals interviewed by her agreed that the disproportionately large number of boys identified as having special educational needs meant that girls interests and needs were being neglected at the expense of the boys and that this was 'unfair' to the girls. (p79) Similarly Daniels et. al. refer to a '... disparity of provision ... in access to ..' special schools (1999 p2) and describe their study as a survey of 'the allocation of .... special provision made available..' with one of their concerns being that of the 'equitable distribution of resources,' (p 3) resources which they see as being distributed unfairly in favour of boys. They comment that not only are significantly more boys than girls given extra help in mainstream schools but that they are given more time and more prestigious / expensive forms of support than are the girls who may be identified. Indeed from their analysis of resources spent they found that as the time / resource allocation increased so did the disproportionality in favour of boys.

For Green this situation was said to arise because the boys by engaging in aggressive, demanding behaviour forced themselves onto the attention of

the teachers in order to have their needs met, whereas the girls were seen as relatively introverted and undemanding, this leading to the relative neglect of their interests. Now, the general issue of such patterns of interaction as are claimed here will be discussed in some detail in a later chapter where wider perspectives are brought to bear. However, given the teachers' reported perceptions on the interactions which led to the identification of these boys' as having special educational needs it is almost inevitable that such pupils would be viewed by them as relatively undeserving.

Further, the perspective identified by both Green and by Daniels et. al. in relation to resources is also understandable, for the prevailing paradigm on special educational needs (Skrtic 1991, 1995) within which such professionals may be assumed to work, is one where an 'identification' of a pupil is generally seen as a positive step, an example of positive discrimination within an 'ideology of benevolent humanitarianism' (Tomlinson 1982 p5) and a means therefore of helping the pupil to overcome difficulties through the provision of extra support.

The studies cited thus far all consider that social processes interfere with, bias or distort the identification and allocation processes of pupils 'with SEN' and claim therefore that such processes may be viewed as gendered in nature. Thus for example Green (1993) talks of teachers' and pupils' stereotypes and expectations while, Daniels et.al. (1999) lament the individualistic approach generally applied within special education, an approach which they consider as having led to the disproportionality they identify and also to its being neglected with the whole area of special educational needs having been insulated from the concerns of equal opportunity policies. However such studies are few and far between with

the general question of the disproportionately large numbers of boys identified as having SEN being almost completely taken for granted.

This taken for grantedness is for the most part a feature of the recent Green Paper on SEN. (DfEE 1997) Thus, there is a recognition that the process of identification and statementing is not an 'exact science' in that much space is devoted to an analysis of patterns of statementing 'behaviour' through the provision of tables which illustrate differences in the percentages of statemented pupils between the various Metropolitan districts, between the New Unitary Authorities and Non-Metropolitan Counties and between Inner and Outer London. The document also describes variations between schools themselves in the proportion of children being identified as having SEN (p 38-9) Both of these issues relating to patterns and rates of identification and statementing are considered worthy of note with the extent of the variation deemed to be in need of explanation and indeed action, with subsequent sections devoted to the question of how to obtain greater national consistency in order to change things. (p40)

However, the much greater variations in the patterns and rates of identification and statementing as between boys and girls and also in relation to black pupils and the class based nature of these processes are not even mentioned let alone do they qualify as an issue worthy of action. The document then is ostensibly gender, race and class blind and to that extent neglects or ignores the wider social context, with its main prescriptions being based on a school effectiveness discourse.

There is a partial move away from this position however, where in the final chapter on emotional and behavioural difficulties it is stated that the term 'EBD' is applied '...to a broad range of people - **preponderantly boys...**'

(p78 my emphasis) No explanation as to why this might be is attempted nor indeed is it followed up as an issue to be explained. It seems curiously to be a throwaway fact at first, perhaps an implicit recognition of a wider 'boys debate.' Again given that the overwhelming degree of this preponderance must be known to the authors it seems curious therefore that this fact is identified but not elaborated upon with much of the rest of the chapter being devoted to various strategies for dealing with and responding to the problems generated by such pupils eg. early intervention, behavioural policies and so on.

However, whilst gender is barely mentioned again, other than to commend 'specific policies to promote achievement by boys' (p 81) 'wider social issues' (p79) are somehow relevant and given prominence, in a way they do not appear to have been in earlier chapters and in relation to other types and kinds of special educational needs. Thus, for example to address the problems presented by pupils with EBD great emphasis is put on the liason between schools and other agencies. There is also mention of the roots of such problems including 'family disadvantage... (and) . poor parenting..' (p78) Moreover, broader policies to combat disadvantage are seen as important in terms of their creation of a 'social climate which engenders hope, not disaffection..' (p80)

There is then at least some recognition of the social processes involved in such patterns of identification if only in relation to EBD both through the acknowledgement that the population of pupils identified consist predominantly of boys and the further need to locate such pupils within a 'wider society' and not simply within schools. However if social processes and social context are considered part of the problem, and therefore solution in relation to EBD the question must arise as to why it is not

considered to be the case in relation to other forms and types of SEN. On this item the paper is silent.

Further boys feature as an undifferentiated category with no explicit information given on background features of these boys, however certain assumptions are made which give some indication as to who they may be. Thus 'policies to combat disadvantage..' in order to 'engender hope, not disaffection..' are seen as part of the solution, as indeed are 'policies for a fairer society...' which emphasise 'real opportunities..'(p80). Thus whilst background tends to be marginalised and cast as irrelevant in prevailing official discourses it nonetheless forms an important subtext of this document.

Similarly with Green's work, while she does not refer directly to the background of the boys identified she does provide a list of items which teachers reported as contributing to the 'stress of teaching' such pupils, a list which includes many organisational features such as a lack of resources, training and time, the demands of extra record keeping and difficulties in adapting the National Curriculum etc. However the only items reported which may be said to refer directly to the pupils themselves were, the '..un-niceness (being dirty and / or smelly) of some...' the fact that many of these pupils' problems were 'beyond the scope of school' and a further concerns expressed over the '....plight of the vulnerable and weak...' (p 80)

The responses of many of the writers above who have considered the question of the disproportionately large numbers of boys identified as having SEN has been that of either an explicit or (as in the case of the Green paper) implicit recognition that the issue needs to be addressed through the consideration of wider social processes and contexts. However

such views are neither widespread or popular with the question being largely unrecognised and taken for granted.

Conclusion.

There is very clear evidence then from both segregated and mainstream settings of an over representation of white working class boys amongst the populations of pupils identified as having special educational needs. Moreover, despite this phenomenon being long standing and enduring it remains for the most part unproblematised. However, within the small number of recent writings to have recognised the phenomenon there is an acknowledgement that patterns of identification and referral may not simply be related to the supposed individual deficits of those so identified but may be related to a wider social context and therefore in some senses political. This may be seen in Male's work in relation to the referral of black boys to MLD schools (1996) and in the claim that girls were not receiving sufficient resources within mainstream schools as in Green (1993.) and in Daniels et.al. (1999) Moreover such issues were seen as requiring a response which recognised these pupils as members of a group and in some ways disadvantaged due to this membership thus being a legitimate concern of an equal opportunities policy.

However this was not the case in regard to white working class boys. Indeed such boys were more likely to be demonised as the source of many of the problems identified and indeed as at least partly responsible through their behaviour for any disproportionality or inequality identified. Further it was seemingly not possible within prevailing discourses to cast such pupils as in any sense disadvantaged. Thus they may in some cases have had problems 'beyond the scope of the school to cope with,' may even have

'suffered' from poor parenting, however given their responses to the schooling they received they were seen as the undeserving poor with strong arguments presented that the demands they made for resources, attention and time should be resisted by a greater adherence on the part of teachers and others to equal opportunities policies which prioritised the interests of others.

The 'cause' of white working class boys then, is not a popular one. Thus their disproportionate membership of categories which for other groups such as black boys, would be seen to signal a disadvantage (for example attendance at an MLD school) is something which for the most part is regarded as unremarkable and taken for granted in their case. Similarly their disproportionate identification as pupils with special educational needs, a category which at the very least is an indication of a lack of progress or failure in conventional terms at school, is again simply taken for granted. Indeed to the extent that it is discussed at all, such an identification may be presented as an actual advantage to these boys.

However a feature which is central to the issue and perhaps the main reason why white working class boys may often be seen as undeserving of the extra resources which may be attendant upon their being identified and included in special categories, and indeed which may in part lead to their being identified in the first place, is what is seen as their potentially threatening and problematic masculinity. Thus there are many allusions to their physicality through references to aggressive behaviour and demands for attention and so on. These boys are seen as being unable or unwilling to submit to the particular form of regulated bodily comportment and control which is a central feature of the disciplined demeanour, expression and self management schools seek to produce in their students and are thereby often

perceived as threatening. This in turn may well lead to their being identified and processed as having special educational needs if only as a means of quietening them and securing their governance.

Chapter Three.
Masculinities and Schooling

This study is concerned with differential educational outcomes related to gender and class, specifically that of the relative failure of white working class boys as indicated by the disproportionate identification of members of this group as having Special Educational Needs and their possible allocation to special schools or marginalised status within mainstream on the basis of this. This chapter will take the form of a selective review of work in the area of gender and education in relation to the interests of the study. The main question at issue is that of how to understand the part played by schooling in the confirmation or denial of, support or discouragement of, development and regulation of, particular forms of masculinity / femininity and further, the extent to which the processes involved might be related to the differential outcomes which are of concern here.

The Limitations of 'Equal Opportunity' Policies.

An important and influential strand within the earlier literature relating to gender and schooling was a concern for such things as, the sexist images contained within teaching materials, (Spender 1980a. Lobban 1987) the role models presented to pupils, (Byrne 1978) the channelling of pupil subject choices, (Whyld 1983) the sex segregation of pupils for administrative or organisational purposes (Clarricoates 1981 Delamont 1980. Windass A. 1989)) and patterns of interaction and language use in the classroom. (Spender 1982, French J. and French P. 1984. Swann and Graddol 1988). The argument made by this work was that the school is instrumental in the

establishment and perpetuation of inequalities between males and females, through the unequal treatment of students and that this helps to set the pattern for and legitimate such inequalities amongst adults. (Deem 1980) The cumulative effects of such images and practices being explained through an implicit theory of socialisation described often as 'gender stereotyping.' (Skelton C. 1989.)

The above work indicates the terrain upon which many attempts to redress this inequality of treatment have been fought largely through the development and implementation of 'equal opportunity' policies. Such approaches have continuing relevance for various versions and interpretations of such work have come to represent the theoretical basis upon which many such policies and particularly many teachers' understandings of such issues are founded. (Jordan 1995. Siraj-Blatchford I. 1993, see also data chapters.)

However as important as such understandings have been in raising a whole range of issues and informing various responses to the problems outlined, their explanatory value and therefore their efficacy have long been questioned by a number of writers. (for example Davies B. 1989a 1989b 1989c Thorne B. 1993. Gilbert 1992, Jordan 1995. Jones L. and Moore R. 1992. Moore R. 1996 Cullingford 1993, Walkerdine 1981, 1990)

Thus, Jones and Moore argue that such approaches, concerned as they are with notions of stereotypes and their internalisation fail to connect with pupils' own understandings and interpretations, or of what they *make* of such messages, and how they are able to deconstruct and reconstruct them in their everyday interactions both more widely and within the context of the school. (1992 p249)

Davies points to the limitations and superficiality of many such approaches arguing that it is often pupils who have understandings and insights into the way the world is ordered based on their own experiences which contradict bland and optimistic statements by teachers such as those to the effect that girls are 'equal' to boys.(1989b) These sentiments are echoed by Gipps who argues that,

'the slogan 'girls can do anything' is a liberal fantasy which has little purchase in the reality of many girls lives.' (1996 p3)

Davies further points to the need for an approach which gives far more recognition to the nature of the 'gender order' of society and how it is sustained. Employing a feminist post structuralist approach she criticises the implied passivity of pupils in many accounts and argues for the need to consider pupils' experiences of being positioned and of positioning themselves, within the various and often contradictory discursive practices they have encountered both inside and outside the school and the consequent 'baggage' which they bring to the classroom. She calls therefore for the need to recognise and work with the notion of pupils as active agents rather than passive recipients. (1989a p239)

Such understandings are fundamental to much work within this area. Indeed a large number of authors including those who have produced 'critical ethnographies' (for example Willis 1977 McRobbie 1978 Mac an Ghaill 1994 and Connolly 1995) employ accounts which describe schooling as dynamic and interactive in nature. Thus whilst schools may indeed be seen through a range of 'practices,' to support, encourage, develop and valorise certain manifestations of masculinity / femininity and to discourage others, such accounts do not see schools simply as dominating institutions,

manipulating and controlling pupils, but rather see forms of interaction within these institutions as, to a greater or lesser extent, as being produced by *all* the participants. (Jones A. 1989)

Such approaches are sensitive to the ways in which these productions are structured by wider societal power relations whereby processes and interactions within schools and classrooms may seen to be mediated by institutionalised relations of gender, sexuality, class, race and power. These accounts also seek to attend therefore to the complexities and contradictions of the social locatedness of pupils and of schools and can offer a more finely nuanced approach, one which for example rejects all embracing categories such as girl and boy, as monocultural and class blind.

Hegemonic Masulinities and 'Gender Regimes.'

R.W. Connell's work on masculinities (1987, 1993, 1995.) has proved extremely important and influential amongst many writers in this area, his concepts of hegemonic masculinity, gender order and gender regime being widely quoted and discussed.(for example Mac an Ghaill 1994, 1995. Kenway, Willis et. al. 1994. Skelton 1997, Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997.) His general argument is that arrangements and practices at various sites such as schools are crucial to the institutionalisation of particular systems of gender differences, drawing on discursive resources beyond these particular sites and organising gender distinctions and also practices which can be said to materialise these distinctions (1987, 1995.)

He employs the Gramscian term 'hegemony' to describe relations between various masculinities and femininities, both within institutions where he talks of 'gender regimes' and more widely in society where he refers to a 'gender order.' Thus within an institution such as a school, the 'state of play in gender relations,' (1987 p 120) may be described as its gender regime, whereby a particular form of masculinity may be seen as ascendant or hegemonic, with other forms being subordinated or marginalised and others complicit. (1995 p 76) The importance of his use of the notion of a hegemonic masculinity constructed in relation to subordinated masculinities and also in relation to women, is twofold. Firstly it serves to indicate a range of masculinities as a corrective to a reified notion of the masculine, this finding its way into much educational research through the category boys. (see eg. Skelton 1997, Yates 1997) Secondly, it gives a sense of the instability of the categories and heirarchies involved thus hegemony can never be taken for granted but must be fought for and secured.

There are a number of studies which seek to show how schools as social settings may be said to 'create the conditions for relations of power,' (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 1996 p 51) and are thereby implicated in the development of forms of masculinity / femininity through a range of practices and discourses which offer or make possible, different ways of being male or female. Further, these masculinities / femininities may be seen as being 'produced' along a range of axes including class, race, ethnicity and sexuality, signalling a differentiation related to social structure and access to power and resources. Of some concern to these writers and of relevance to this study is the development of what might be termed 'oppositional masculinities' their use of particular resources and their linkages to perceived collective trajectories.

Connell (1989) conducted life history interviews with a group of male secondary students from what he referred to as the 'unrespectable' sector of the working classes who described their total alienation from schooling. What the school offered to some but not to these pupils was a form of masculinity organised around the possibility of social power delivered through academic success and access to higher education. He argues that the differentiating practices associated with a heirarchical curriculum involve the institutionalisation of failure, through the system of competitive exams and grading of pupils. The resultant frustration and alienation experienced by his respondents he saw as being managed through a discipline system characterised by violence and machismo, this inviting an equally violent response from some students. Such students espoused other definitions of masculinity than those valorised by the school this forming a source of power for them. Indeed the authority of the school and such pupils' opposition to it became one of the defining features of their masculinity.

Similar processes are described by Mac an Ghaill in his account of Kilby School (1994a) where he found low status nonacademic classes characterised by an overrepresentation of tough African Caribbean young men (the 'Rasta Heads') being policed vigilantly and in authoritarian manner by tough white teachers. He describes the students' building of a defensive culture of machismo against their marginalisation and notes how their hypermasculine style allowed them to win some space within the school, albeit at the expense of other students, particularly young women, female staff and more conformist male students.

Another factor cited in the formation of this group's masculine identity is that of racism, structural unemployment and these youths' projected

position in the local labour market where the issue for them was not one of a perceived inability to pass examinations (some members of this group had previously been in higher streams) but that of the lack of relationship between qualifications and actual job prospects for them. Finally he refers to the intuitive identification of many of the authoritarian teachers with the macho mode of masculinity celebrated by the 'Rasta Heads,' partly through the sponsorship of such students in sport and partly in the attitudes of them towards many of the more 'conformist' Asian students whose behaviour was seen by these teachers as effeminate.

In his study of Parnell School Mac an Ghaill (1994) again points to the central role of the curriculum, particularly that of the divide between the academic and non academic tracks and the teacher pupil relationships which accompany such 'routes' as, crucial to the production of various forms of masculinity within the school. He does however also cite local labour market conditions, students' relationships with their families and the organisation of peer group relations as critical factors and warns against a concentration on such things as teacher discourse and school structures in accounting for the development of masculine youth forms as leading to, explanations which lay everything at the door of the school or teachers' themselves as responsible.

His is an account which is sensitive to the imbalances of cultural, economic, social and political power between various groupings within the student population and which shows how differing discourses are mobilised by these groups in the expression of their various masculinities in relation to the social structure of the school. He identified a number of student groups, the Macho Lads, the Academic Achievers, the Real Englishmen and the New Enterprisers. Of most relevance to the concerns of this study however

were the group identified as The Macho Lads all of whom were in the lowest 'sets' and who were said to celebrate a working class masculinity organised around notions of physicality, solidarity and territoriality. Like Willis's Lads (1977) they saw school work as irrelevant and associated it with effeminacy, as girls' work and simply as not relevant to them. They were disparaging about their teachers and what they felt was the unrealistic advice they gave given their situations and the futures *they* projected for themselves.

They considered their mates to be of primary importance, whereas school and teachers represented an oppressive form of authoritarian control to be resisted at every turn through the development of toughness. Indeed schooling was seen as an apprenticeship in toughness through cultivating skills not in the three R's but in the three F's ie. 'fighting, fucking and football.' (p56) As with the Rasta Heads at Kilby school this group were vigilantly policed through high profile surveillance of their 'bodies.' They were seen by the teachers to be communicating their opposition to the school in myriad ways which led to attention being focussed on their footwear, clothing, hairstyles and so on and their subjection to constant teacher injunctions in relation to these items as well as amounting to what Mac an Ghaill considered to be systematic discrimination against them.

The 'Achievement' of a Masculine Identity.

(A) The Peer Group.

Many writers point to the salience of gender in children's lives and the importance of pupils' interactions and relationships with peers in the development of forms of masculinities / femininities. (see for example,

Abraham 1989, Cullingford 1991, Francis 1997b, Cullingford and Morrison 1997, Thorne 1993, Troyna and Hatcher 1992, Connolly 1995.)

Thus Reay argues that although tough teachers may indeed help to produce tough working class male students, these students can perfectly well manage the process by themselves! (1996a) Haywood and Mac an Ghaill point to the extremely oppressive nature of male peer group networks. (1996) This viewpoint is echoed in the work of many other writers (for example Kehily and Nayak 1997, Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997, Kenway, Willis, Blackmore and Rennie 1997, Walker 1988.)

Haywood described a school where male high academic achievers who had 'neglected' their heterosexual careers were positioned as childlike and potential 'poofs,' as a result of this inexperience, by other groups of males many of whom focussed on the development of such careers at the expense of their schoolwork. (reported in Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 1996 p55-6)

J.C. Walker studied four friendship groups in an inner city boys' school and described their heirarchical ordering. (1988) There was a traditional 'Aussie' footballer group at the top being challenged for ascendancy by a group of Greek boys, with both of these groups exemplifying forms of aggressive macho masculinities. Next came a group of ethnically diverse 'handballers' and finally 'the three friends.' These 'friends' who showed no interest in sport or in pursuing 'heterosexual careers,' were almost inevitably stigmatised as 'poofs.'

Kenway, et. al. (1997) describe the emotional insecurities and anxieties underlying many demonstrations of toughness and independence on the part of boys within schools. They refer to various 'toxic emotions,' in evidence,

such as fear of being isolated and of being seen to be different and therefore laughed at and teased. They argue that in their research,

'only a minority of boys present ... with tough, mysoginist facades, others ... talk of .. (the) .. anxiety .. shame, (and) frustration associated with boys' relentless banter and name calling, pushing and shoving.
(and that for many of them the) .... *Verbal and physical harassment the constant pushing to see who is tougher and the pressure to show your strength ... provoke feelings of intense powerlessness and pessimism...'* (p 25.)

Kehily and Nayak consider that much use of humour amongst groups of boys within schools may be seen as a means of policing and consolidating working class masculinities. They argue that although pupil humour may at times be subversive, all to often it acts so as to compel conformity on its victims. (1997) They point to its often oppressive and regulatory effects on its targets, such as young women and particularly young men who do not conform to the dominant definitions of masculinity, further describing a range of practices activities and techniques whose effects are to establish or consolidate power over such targets. These include practices such as 'play fighting' involving ritualised gaming such as 'punch and run,' as well as more routine hitting, pushing and tripping and also the 'verbal sparring' involved in such activities as cussing matches and blowing competitions which involve the ritualised exchange of insults. Further, those boys who failed to display the appropriate skills in such activities or who worked hard at school or were merely quiet became targets for homophobic abuse.

Kimmel (1994) explains such behaviours, displays and interactions as being engaged in largely for the benefit of peers, whom he considers, 'act as a kind of gender police.' (p 132) This implying the ever present threat that the individual will be exposed and unmasked as not measuring up as a 'real man' and stigmatised as a result. Thus he states,

'masculinity is a homosocial enactment. We test ourselves, perform heroic feats ... because we want other men to grant us our manhood.'
(p129)

This view regards a masculine identity as an achievement, constantly to be proven and constantly under threat hence the anxieties alluded to above. He further argues that a strong element of the development of hegemonic masculinities in such contexts involves a renunciation of the feminine, involving a definition of masculinity as fundamentally 'not feminine' whereby whatever is associated with or 'tainted' as feminine is forbidden, hence the engagement in exaggerated forms of macho behaviour and the virulent homophobia which often characterises boys' interactions.

(B) The 'Flight' from the Feminine.

Many writers have pointed to a dichotomous and oppositional construction of gender in schools (for example, Thorne 1986, Davies 1989c, Davies and Banks 1992, Lloyd and Duveen 1992) with girls often positioned as a negative reference group for boys. (Spender 1982)

The maintenance and policing of such gender boundaries as a central feature of pupil behaviour is highlighted by Thorne (1986). She studied gender in the context of young childrens' (kindergarden to year 4) interactions with one another in two predominantly working class schools. She found that the pupils readily separated themselves by gender by for example choosing their own seating arrangements and when lining up to go to lunch and so on which resulted in an almost total division between the sexes. However, she also described what she called 'border work' between boys and girls defined as 'interaction across yet based upon and even strengthening gender

boundaries.' (p 64) This 'border work' consisted largely of ritualised chasing, touching and name calling with boys controlling much of the playground and also invading girls space.

Also of interest were a series of pollution rituals, involving invisible pollutants (like germs) called 'cooties' which were transmitted by touch either directly, person to person or through touching the possessions of others. Girls were stigmatised as the main or only polluters that is boys did not generally pollute other boys, save that in some situations boys who were marginalised for other reasons such as poverty or physical disability were able to give cooties. She also refers to other studies which showed similar pollution rituals where race was relevant such as in Fresno California where Mexican (Chicano / Litano) pupils gave cooties. In this way she argues that such rituals, 'frequently express and enact larger patterns of inequality ...' (p75)

Walkerdine (1981) reported on her observations of young children, describing the attempts of both boys and girls to assume power within games by manoeuvering the play either towards, or away from, the domestic. For both girls and boys she argued the domestic constitutes an area of female power. However she further considers that the nursery school itself constitutes an area of female power, arguing that the power of women in this context (the staff being exclusively female) and the similarity between the discursive practices of the home and that of the school, encouraged girls to take up similar positions of power and competence, to the teachers this possibly accounting for girls' early successes in school whereas boys resistance to such power may be seen to have detrimental consequences for their educational progress.

Thorne's term 'borderwork' is an extremely useful one for analysing classroom and playground interactions in such contexts, and is indeed an important part of much work in this area, thus many writers have pointed to boys' 'flight from' or 'fear of' the feminine, where their primary concern is to be seen as 'not feminine.' (Chodorow 1971, Kimmel 1994 p126 Walker 1988a)

Ellen Jordan (1995) studied children's constructions / negotiations of gender identities in the early years of schooling and pointed to the extreme anxieties felt by many boys particularly in the context of various anti sexist initiatives in education. She describes an attempted construction within schools of a gender free world. This is an approach she argues which has encouraged teachers to behave towards their students as if gender differences were no more significant than differences in eye colour for example, such an approach being hoped to lead to a diminution in sexist attitudes and gender dichotomisation. She reports however that whilst a 'non gender' approach was successful in changing conceptions of gender appropriate games and jobs within the classrooms she studied, that it made very little difference in the importance gender assumed in children's lives and interactions.

She argues that pressures for gender conformity are far stronger on boys than on girls and describes the forms of masculinity developed in relation to the efforts of the school to play down differences between boys and girls. Thus, some of the boys whom she refers to as embryo 'lads' (see Willis 1977) have available to them or develop, a form of masculinity in which getting into trouble at school, 'has been elevated into a touchstone for masculinity.' (p77) This simultaneously involves the more conforming boys being subjected to the charge of being sissies or wimps. She describes these

latter boys' attempts to develop or negotiate for themselves a form of masculinity in order to repel the charges of wimpishness. It would appear however that this can only be done by a firm distancing of themselves from anything that might be 'tainted' with femininity. Thus she found that it was the more sensitive less aggressive boys that were being signed up by their parents for junior cricket and soccer classes. She considers then, that the general consensus she identifies that boys and girls should be treated the same has been at odds with boys' projects of establishing a definition of themselves as 'not female.' and argues that this account for the lack of effectiveness of such policies in modifying pupils' beliefs and actions in this area.

The Disciplining of Pupils as a Gendered Practice.

A number of studies are concerned directly with teachers' expectations, their attitudes towards, typifications and perceptions of, pupils and pupils' behaviour in relation to gender. These are seen as manifested through a variety of practices particularly disciplinary ones involving the employment of particular discourses and constructions of masculinity / femininity which reinforce / support such practices. (see for example, Walkerdine 1981 1989a 189b Cullingford 1993, Hurrell 1995 Riddell 1989, Kamler 1997 Connolly1994, 1995 Francis 1997a Robinson 1992) Many of these studies tend to support the argument that the disciplining of pupils is a gendered practice.

Cullingford provides an account of teacher perspectives / actions as seen through the eyes of pupils. (1993) He interviewed a number of pupils in the first year of secondary school. Both boys and girls felt that teachers

discriminated against boys. Thus whilst both groups readily agreed that boys were generally badly behaved they nonetheless considered that boys were unfairly treated. These children's accounts contained a number of claims most notably from girls that teachers' behaviour was discriminatory with boys being told off whilst girls' identical behaviour was ignored they were also said to shout at the boys whereas girls were simply spoken to, and that teachers generally expected boys to be badly behaved and girls to be well behaved. Similarly Hurrell reports from her study that even after controlling for behaviour that,

> *'girls were significantly less likely to be nominated as disruptive, sent out of the classroom, given a detention, and subjected to an observed reprimand than boys.'* (1995 p 68)

Crozier and Anstiss (1995) suggest that teachers respond to and invoke disciplinary procedures disproportionately in relation to the kinds of behaviour which are produced by males, such as physical and noisy behaviour, whilst overlooking the extent to which and the ways in which girls' learning may also be disrupted by their own and others' behaviour. They argue that teachers focus on those activities / behaviours which interfere with the *teaching* task rather than focus on those that interfere with their pupils' *learning* per se. They are said therefore to neglect a range of behaviours / strategies employed by girls which interfere with their learning but do not disrupt the teachers' teaching in an overt way.

Thus, in their study they found that issues related to boys' behaviour dominated staffroom discussions of 'pupils causing concern,' with ratios of twenty two boys to four girls, and twenty two boys to two girls referred in two year groups during one term of their study. They also found that when girls were discussed it was more likely that the concerns related to their

home lives, emotional and health matters rather than classroom and learning matters. Further, while they provide much evidence of girls' poor behaviour by for example 'wagging off' pretending to be ill, chatting in class, flirting with boys and baiting the teachers, nonetheless, girls disruption generally took less active confrontational forms in the classroom as opposed to boys and therefore encountered less censure.

Riddell found in her study that girls were described in terms of their neatness, maturity, conscientiousness and hard work (1989 p 186) whilst the boys were invariably described as able but immature. She shows how such teacher typifications and constructions led to strategies and disciplinary actions which tended to reinforce traditional gender codes. Thus within lessons the consent of the boys was sought through their being allowed to control the physical space of the classroom as well as much lesson content whereas the girls' negotiations of space for themselves manifested itself through their exploitation of male teachers reluctance to confront them and by their keeping a relatively low profile. Thus after describing various disciplinary encounters between a teacher and a number of boys within an art lesson, she observed that no such encounters were in evidence between the teacher and the girls even though they were doing very little work themselves.

Jordan argues that within primary schools girls are, seen as model pupils (1995) whilst Francis observes a construction within primary schools of femininity as,

> 'sensible, mature and facilitating ... (and masculinity as) ... silly
> selfish immature and demanding.' (1997a p 181)

She argues that many girls take up such characteristics as an integral part of their school persona thus winning the approval of other girls and theoretically that of the (female) teacher. This is not always successful however as she argues that many researchers have found that not only are such characteristics taken for granted in girls but that many teachers find them unattractive.

Thus Walkerdine argues that the successes and achievements of girls within education tend to be 'read' through what she describes as 'the just or only phenomenon.' (1989a p 268) Girls' achievements are often explained as being 'just' the result of hard work or 'only' due to attention to detail rather than to intelligence, creativity or brilliance. She reports that in her studies of mathematical abilities and attainments boys were very often described as having potential even if their achievements were generally poor as in the example of one boy described by his teacher in the following terms,

'..just about write his own name .... but quite bright...' (p 268)

whereas girls real successes were, 'refused as data,' (p 270) by teachers who sought to excuse or downgrade it in some way. Thus in a sample of thirty nine classrooms many teachers referred to boys' potential when accounting for poor performances yet she reports, no one reported potential in a girl!

The Importance of 'Bodies.'

Barbara Kamler (1997) studied the practice of 'morning talk' within a class of five year old children in a junior school. She comments on the importance of studies of the very early years of schooling arguing that processes such as that of gendering are much more visible at this stage as

compared to later in school life when they are less obvious and taken for granted. Following Bourdieu she is concerned with the formation of a schoolboy / schoolgirl habitus as a,

'set of embodied dispositions and predispositions realised in the discursive and bodily practices of being a student.' (p 372)

She demonstrates how 'morning talk' works on the body with the pupils seated in a circle with a specific routine and very firm rules for speaking. The teacher assumes control by deciding who speaks, when they speak and for how long, as well as interjecting comments and questions to the individual speaker and the group. A great deal of attention is paid to targeting pupils' bodies with repeated injunctions for pupils to place their hands on their laps, to cross their legs, button their lips, to focus their eyes on the teacher, close their mouths and so on. To be successful in this context pupils were required to produce the 'right bodies' and to listen to and respond to the teacher appropriately for a period of some forty five minutes.

She further comments however on the gendered nature of such practices noting the construction of a 'good girl' school habitus alongside the construction of boys as having 'relatively uncontrollable bodies. She argues that boys were named for not complying with the rules such as not sitting properly, whereas girls were only named for compliance. Thus boys who were complying and girls who were not were 'not seen / read / spoken or named in the teacher discourse.' (p 375)

Jordan provides further evidence of processes of differentiation and marginalisation occurring in the infant classroom based on the attempted regulation of 'bodies.' (1995) Of particular interest is her description of the

expectations of the school in terms of bodily demeanour /comportment / management, whereby children are expected to move quietly and gently and where children are punished for producing the 'wrong bodies.' Such expectations are again seen to be gendered thus she points to those who violate such expectations as overwhelmingly boys describing a frequently punished group of usually low achievers as comprising of about twenty-five percent of the boys. She argues quite sympathetically that,

> *'school must be a shattering experience for these boys. (because)*
> *All the kinds of behaviour and modes of expression they find*
> *comfortable are deemed unacceptable and they are subjected*
> *to a variety of public humiliations.'* (my emphasis) (p77)

She refers to these low achieving working class boys as embryo 'lads' (Willis 1977). Such pupils' alienation from and opposition to the school is no doubt being constructed in the earliest years of schooling through such interactions, punishments and 'humiliations' based on an inability / unwillingness to produce the 'right bodies,' bodies which girls and other 'sensitive and unaggresive.' (p78) boys are able to produce.

Kamler's and Jordan's studies demonstrate quite explicitly the ways in which the day to day practices of the school focus on the regulation of the body and also the gendered nature of such processes.

Conclusion.

Many of these studies reveal schools to be implicated in or to provide the setting for practices and interactions which embody forms of 'cultural politics.' Thus whilst schools may indeed be seen through a range of 'practices,' to support, encourage, develop and valorise certain

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manifestations of masculinity / femininity and to discourage others, it has been argued that they must not be considered simply as dominating institutions, manipulating and controlling pupils. Rather, forms of interaction within these institutions may be seen, to a greater or lesser extent, as being produced by *all* the participants (Jones A. 1989) with such 'productions' also drawing upon and being structured by wider societal power relations.

There is a need to attend therefore to the complexities and contradictions of the social locatedness of pupils and of schools, to recognise pupils' experiences of being positioned and of positioning themselves, within the various and often contradictory discursive practices they have encountered both inside and outside the school and the consequent 'baggage' which they bring to the classroom, seeing them as active agents rather than passive recipients. Indeed many of the studies referred to boys' attempts to construct or to achieve masculine identities for themselves, this often bringing them into conflict with each other with girls and with the school. Also discussed were studies which revealed teachers' expectations, attitudes towards, typifications and perceptions of, pupils and pupils' behaviour in relation to gender, much of which supported the view that the disciplining of pupils is a gendered practice.

A common theme or at least an important subtext in much of the work discussed was that of a potentially threatening and problematic masculinity with many studies referring either directly or indirectly to those elements of teacher pupil and pupil pupil interaction which are most likely to call forth a disciplinary response from the teacher. These focus largely on aspects of bodily control and demeanour and demonstrate the extent to which many of

the routine day to day practices of the school focus on the regulation of the body.

Such concerns are indeed implicit in much if not all of the literature discussed, for most forms of alienation, dissent or disaffection amongst groups of boys as well as gendered expectations or constructions of pupils' by schools teachers and pupils themselves have been seen to have bodily consequences or implications. Such a concern may be seen most obviously in the 'overdisciplining' of boys which many studies imply.

There are then appropriate or acceptable forms of 'embodiment' constructed within schools through myriad rules conventions and practices, the violation of which may perhaps be accorded or assume great significance and have profound implications for pupils' educational careers. Such practices expectations or constructions however may be seen to be gendered in nature with, for example, teachers focussing disproportionately on 'physical and noisy behaviour' as opposed to less 'active' forms of dissent, (Anstiss and Crozier 1995) with boys being, 'shouted at' rather than 'spoken to' (Cullingford 1993) sent out of the classroom and given detention. (Hurrell 1995) constructed as immature and 'allowed' to control physical space (Riddell 1989) viewed as 'naturally' disruptive and unruly (Robinson 1992) or as silly and demanding. (Francis 1997a) or as having relatively uncontrollable bodies (Kamler 1997)

Boys are often seen then as being actually or potentially unable / unwilling to submit to the particular form of regulated bodily comportment and control which is a central feature of the disciplined demeanour, expression and self management schools seek to produce in their students and are thereby perceived as threatening. The potential conflict between them and

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their teachers inherent in their seeming or actual inability / unwillingness to produce the 'right bodies' within schools emerges as an important concern for many of the writers in this area.

Chapter Four.
'Special Educational Needs.'

This chapter will chart the origin and development of the concept of special educational needs through its history as enshrined in legislation and government reports. This history will show many changes in terminology, vocabulary and policy, yet reveal a continuation / entrenchment, and even intensification of earlier approaches.

The Warnock Report.

Whilst the term, 'special educational needs' (Gulliford 1971) was in circulation before the publication of the Warnock report (D.E.S.1978) its widespread adoption and subsequent incorporation in legislation in the 1981 Education Act (D.E.S.1981) may be seen as largely due to the prominence given to the term by the committee. It was put forward as a generic term to describe difficulties experienced at school by some pupils, in opposition to, or as a corrective to the then prevailing view enshrined in legislation of 'handicap' and 'disability,' a view based clearly on a deficit model of the pupil. It sought to replace 'medical' with 'educational' definitions terminology and criteria in relation to such difficulties.

Wider changes within education (if only rhetorical ones) such as, for example, the moves towards comprehensivisation, mixed ability teaching and increasing interest in equal opportunity issues, contributed to a climate which demanded a more euphemised response to the perceived problems faced by pupils and schools, so that the categories of earlier legislation (MoE 1945) were metamorphosed into 'Special Educational Needs.'

Further, Warnock proposed a move away from the categorisation of the 'handicapped' and 'disabled,' rejecting such a sharp dichotomy in favour of the notion of a continuum of need and also of provision. (The term provision being preferred to what was formerly called treatment.) The focus was apparently to be widened, from a concentration on pupil deficits to a more dynamic and interactive notion of 'difficulties' which required due regard being given to the wider context in which the pupil found him/herself ie. a more ecological, or even social constructionist view.

However, whilst the abolition of statutory categories was recommended, pupils were still in many cases to have 'descriptive terms,' attached to them. Further whilst the report spoke the language of positive discrimination, integration and common aims for all children it also sought to include within its remit and describe as special a much greater number of pupils than had previously been so regarded. Thus administrators, teachers and others involved in education were asked to broaden the scope of their provision from the 2% or so of pupils who had been the recipients of special education under the 1944 Act, with Warnock recommending that policy and practice in this area should now be based on the assumption that up to 20% of the entire pupil population would experience 'Special Educational Needs' at some time during their school careers, thus greatly extending the concept to include many pupils in mainstream schools. Further, whilst a close reading of the report fails to support the notion that Warnock provided unambiguous support for a major change of policy in the direction of 'integration' (Barton and Landman 1993) it is nonetheless widely regarded as having changed the climate of debate in favour of such change. It is similarly credited with taking seriously the claims of parents to be included in the processes involved, through invoking the notion of parents as partners with professionals. (DES 1978 ch. 9).

Now, a document such as the Warnock Report is not produced in a policy or political vacuum but may best be seen as part of an ongoing 'political' struggle and as an attempt to contain conflicting interests and competing discourses relating to the different objectives pursued by those involved. This inevitably results in inconsistencies, contradictions and 'structured omissions' as manifested in the text itself revealing a plurality of 'meanings,' and consequently of 'readings.' Such a text then must not be read at face value simply as a 'plan of action' but as the compromised product of the interplay of political forces. (Codd 1988) Indeed, with regard to Warnock it may be seen that while the report may have contained some 'radical' elements these were more than outweighed by the countervailing force of alternative, contradictory discourses supporting the status quo.

The major criticism made of Warnock is that it too readily embraced the discourse of professionalism, (see for example, Kirp 1982, Fulcher 1989a) relying on notions of the superior expert knowledge, the benign influence, and the need to maintain the discretionary power, of the professional. This professional hegemony can be seen in every aspect of its deliberations and recommendations. Thus Kirp points to the subordinate status given to parents and other interested parties as revealed in the composition of the committee itself which, consisted almost entirely of educational professionals. Indeed of the twenty six members of the committee only one was the parent of a 'handicapped' child.(1982 p155) He further notes that despite the disproportionate number of non white children regarded as 'educationally subnormal' there were no representatives of 'non white' communities, nor was there a 'handicapped' person, nor indeed a lawyer who might have provided a 'rights' perspective on the issues under discussion in line with the approach in the U.S.A. This last point was taken

up later by Kirp when he noted the Warnock committee's 'horrified' attitude towards the litigation and administrative hearings common in the U.S.A. in relation to special educational issues in describing the interview he conducted with Mary Warnock who reportedly declared that,

'..there is something deeply unattractive about the
spectacle of someone demanding his own rights ....'
(quoted in Tomlinson 1996 p 180)

Thus, while the role of 'parents as partners,' particularly as part of the assessment process is recommended, the tone and emphases of such partnerships are not such as to enable parents to be involved in independent decision making but merely to support the work of professionals. This approach may be seen outlined in paragraph 9.6 where it is considered that the relationship sought,

*'is a partnership, and **ideally an equal one** .... professional*
help cannot be wholly effective .... unless it builds upon the
parents' own understanding of their children's needs and
upon the parents' capacity to be involved .... their child's
*welfare will depend upon the **extent to which they***
understand and can apply the measures recommended
by professionals.' (my emphases) (DES 1978 p 151)

However, as Armstrong points out real partnership implies the sharing of power and equal access to information used in decision making, whereas the Warnock model is merely that of an increased 'involvement' under professional control. Further the report's ignoring of such necessary conditions of partnership is regarded by him as at best naive and at worst, 'a disingenuous attempt to maintain the subordinate role of parents vis-a-vis professionals.' (Armstrong 1995 p17) Indeed, speaking some seven years later Mary Warnock herself considered that the notion of parents as equal partners as outlined in the report was something of an exaggeration and in

conflict with the notion of 'true professionalism' and that the latter was to be preferred, emphasising this point by concluding,

> *'even though educating a child is a joint enterprise, involving both home and school, parents should realise that they cannot have the last word. It is a question of collaboration not partnership.'* (my emphases) (Mary Warnock, Dimbleby lecture 1985 quoted in Galloway et. al. 1994 p69)

Warnock also declared its rejection of the notion of a sharp dichotomy between those pupils formerly categorised as handicapped and others, arguing rather for a continuum of needs and provision. This 'relativity' of needs implied a widening of the discussion in relation to any particular pupil to include the home background, school and curriculum. However such considerations were to be placed within the strictest limits, with the focus still on the individual and his/her 'access' to what was offered. Thus the move from deficits to needs still implied a 'lack' on the part of the pupil, a lack which needed to be remediated or compensated for through 'extra' provision. Moreover, the model endorsed by the report as the means by which the child was expected to gain access to this curriculum was based on a behavioural objectives approach with success being defined as the achievement / performance of 'normal' behaviour.

However such a focus on performance undervalues context and process, a focus on basic skills leads to a reduced curriculum and the individual nature of this model leads to little opportunity for collaborative learning (Barton and Landman 1993) all of which leads Swann to maintain that such an approach '... offers more opportunities for a process of segregation than the reverse..' (Swann 1983 Quoted in Barton and Landman op. cit.) Questions relating then, to the curricular and other arrangements which may generate or even exacerbate pupil difficulties leading to the calculation that 20% or

so of pupils may be considered 'failing' and the implications of this for the education system as a whole were rejected in favour of an approach which sought to find ways to change or adapt the pupil 'in need' on an individual basis. This was still essentially a compensatory, normalising approach grounded in notions of deficit. Indeed there is no indication of the implications of the more sophisticated model of 'difficulties' manifested or experienced by pupils which the report supposedly seeks to encourage, being used to inform their own considerations in this area! Thus as Mary Warnock herself concluded later,

> *'we assumed that a special need would be defined in terms*
> *of help a child might have if he was to gain access to the*
> *curriculum .... only occasionally did we think that*
> *the curriculum must be changed to suit the child.'* (1982 p56)

Further with regard to special schools there is a similar 'taken for grantedness' of pre-existing arrangements or practice and reluctance therefore to apply the insights which may be gained from a more social constructionist approach as evidenced in their simple conflation of attendance at or allocation to a special school with 'handicap.' (DES 1978 p 121) Indeed despite the stated intention to develop a new perspective, the language of handicap, deficit, disability and loss permeates the whole report. This means that when Warnock considers the question of 'integration' the issues are framed in terms of the dominant discourse of disability such as underpins its approach to the curriculum as described above ie. an assumption that the organisation of the 'mainstream' educational system is generally sound albeit in need of minor adjustments / adaptations. The debate then is presented as being concerned with changing the location of pupils, with such a possibility being dependent upon the provision of adequate resourcing, teacher training and other 'support.' This

together with the wholesale endorsement of separate provision, as evidenced by amongst other thing its approval of the I.L.E.A. statement that, special schools represented a form of positive discrimination, acts so as to reinforce the very model they claim in some senses to be abandoning. Barton and Landman consider that

> *'Warnock's failure to address the question of integration*
> *in relation to curriculum issues was a lost opportunity*
> *to challenge exclusive forms of discourse ... and to*
> *contribute to the realisation of a more equitable or*
> *less divisive, system of educational provision'* (1993 p45)

They also note the overwhelming evidence to the Warnock committee in favour of the retention of special schools. Integration is undoubtedly an extremely contentious issue, because it goes to the heart of mainstream educational practices and therefore interests, it also has profound implications for 'special' educational practices and interests, indeed Fulcher argues that, *'it* (integration) *is about discipline, curriculum and pedagogy, not about disability ...*(raising) *.. central issues in education ...* (and that) *... it is these issues rather than disability which constitute the real politics of integration'* (1989b p21) It is the failure to address these issues perhaps which led Warnock to comment shortly after the report was published that

> *'we fudged integration but we fudged it as a matter of policy.'* (1978)

The 1981 Education Act.

The 1981 Education Act (D.E.S. 1981) which came into force on 1st April 1983 is regarded as the government's response to the Warnock report and as the translation into legislation of many of its principles. Under this Act

the categories of the 1944 Act were abolished in favour of the term special educational needs, the legal definition of which being that the pupil should have a 'learning difficulty significantly greater than the majority' of children of that age or a disability which prevents the use of educational facilities 'of a kind generally provided' in schools for children of that age, with such difficulty calling for special provision to be made ie. provision which is different from or additional to 'that made generally for children of the same age in local schools.' (D.E.S. 1981) This definition has endured ie. has not been superseded by more recent legislation and was indeed given further endorsement in subsequent legislation and government reports. (for example, D.F.E 1993, DfEE 1997a p 8)

The Act laid a duty on educational authorities to identify such children and make appropriate provision for them by providing a 'statement of special educational needs' which set out the means by which such needs are to be met. Further the L.E.A.'s were charged with the duty to provide for such pupils within 'ordinary schools' providing such provision were to be 'compatible' with the 'efficient' education of other children and the 'efficient' use of resources and that the views of parents had also been considered. Other provisions related to the nature of the advice to be sought during the assessment procedures and the involvement and right of appeal of parents.

Heward and Lloyd-Smith distinguish between the substantive and the contingent measures contained within the Act, the substantive being those aspects which the local authorities were required to adopt, such as the statementing procedures, annual reviews, and abolition of formal categories; the contingent those aspects of practice and provision which the government merely wished to 'encourage' but for which no resources were to be made available. Thus they argue that 'while greater flexibility and

more integration had been popular rhetoric .. ... making it the basis of educational practice required radical changes,.' (1990 p 30) They observe however that such changes were not part of the Act, indeed aspects of the Act which might have encouraged such principles were not part of its substantive measures. This lack of prescription together with the 'elasticity' of the definition of 'special educational needs' and the failure to provide resources in relation to these particular areas lead inevitably to wide variations in the interpretation and implementation of the Act in these respects. The Act then, whilst empowering LEA's to move towards integration nonetheless did not encourage such moves, indeed the 'efficiency' clauses acted so as to support the status quo. Thus, given that LEA's already had separate special schools it would clearly be inefficient not to use them, further many of their pupils were referred to them because of their perceived effects on the efficiency of the education of other children.

In his handbook on the Act written for the 'Advisory Centre for Education,' Newell pointed to a number of ways in which the legislation fell short of that in existence in other parts of the world citing amongst other things, the reduced powers of appeal committees hearing 'special' appeals as against those hearing 'ordinary' ones. He also noted the weakness of the 'integrationist principle' which although incorporated in legislation for the first time was seriously undermined by the conditions imposed. Thus, he concluded that, the act did nothing to diminish the power of local authorities in relation to decision making in this area in favour of parents and pupils. Interestingly however, whilst noting that much of the debate on the Act centred around the lack of resources available for its implementation he argued that this ought not to be allowed to obscure what he termed, the most important aspect which was that of society's definition

of, and attitudes towards, disability. Indeed he pointed out that as the new law was due to come into force, that of the 156,000 pupils in England receiving 'special educational treatment,' 70,000 were labelled 'educationally subnormal' (medium) and a further 21,000 'maladjusted,' arguing that the,

'existence of both these categories stem as much from the needs and values of existing ordinary schools and local authorities ...... as it does from the 'special educational needs' of individual children.' (1983 p 1)

One detailed investigation into the operation of the 1981 Act sponsored by the D.E.S. and conducted by Goacher et. al. highlighted many difficulties, many of which had their origins in the circularity and vagueness of definition of the concepts of special educational needs and learning difficulties, manifested in wide variations between education authorities in the proportion of pupils for whom a statement of special educational needs was deemed appropriate and also many inconsistencies in the level or type of difficulty experienced by such pupils. (1988) However while the Act was able to support a wide disparity of interpretations and practices at local level based on differing circumstances, philosophies and histories of the various local authorities, certain common themes emerged.

Thus, they argued that assessments generally appeared to be conducted, with a greater awareness of available resources in mind, rather than on more educational grounds, characterising the statements produced by many such assessments as, 'bland and stereotyped,' and as being, 'so generalised as to commit the LEA to no particular resource.' (Goacher et. al. 1988 p152) They also found that the professionals involved were highly constrained in terms of the advice they felt able to give often being, 'forced to compromise good practice' ... in an effort to comply with resource limitations.' (ibid p 140) Also of note was their comment that statements tended, 'to pay little

attention to anything other than within child factors.' (p152) Indeed it would seem that the major recommendation in many statements of special needs were those to the effect that the ordinary or mainstream school was not the appropriate setting for the child. The real purpose and effect of the assessment of a special educational need being the removal or exclusion of the child, as in the following comment,

> *'the impression given by many of the statements we saw in the course of our research is that they were solely concerned with the relocation of children and that they were written......backwards. That is, the provision is decided, then the requisite formula is slotted (in).....to justify the placement.'* (p115)

Further the research highlighted a general continuity of practices in relation to the question of integration with those areas with a heavy investment in special schools finding it difficult to switch resources to other locations even had they wished to, with others continuing to provide more for pupils within mainstream as had been the case before the Act, arguing that the L.E.A.'s past history of services was a powerful inhibitor on the possibilities and direction of change. They also comment on the unequal balance of power between parents and professionals in the assessment process eg. parents were outnumbered and outsiders within the assessment group and often of lower educational status and social class, noting that a majority of the parents that they interviewed hadn't felt that they had been able to make a significant contribution to the process. Further in cases where the parents had disagreed with the decision of the L.E.A. none had appealed and the impression given was that the process had been experienced by them as coercive.

In major respects then, the report and the subsequent Act represented a continuation of what had gone before save with increased bureaucracy and different terminology whilst vastly raising the profile of such issues. (Gipps et. al. 1987) In some respects however the situation had changed quite radically, for the concept of special educational needs with its vagueness of definition together with the problematic claim that 20% of pupils were likely to experience such needs had become and continues to be a 'Trojan horse' within mainstream education. For as Slee puts it, its

> *'conceptual flabbiness .... presented a discursive
> opportunity to an established special education
> industry of considerable power and influence
> to move directly into the regular classroom
> to administer an increasing number of
> 'defective' or special needs children.* (1997 p 103)

Thus, this new term presented the possibilities for the legitimation of a vast expansion of special educational practices into mainstream settings. Now, Warnock had argued that the concept of special educational needs was based on notions of the relativity and context dependence of difficulties experienced or manifested by pupils as a corrective to assumptions about categorical differences between those who experience difficulties and others. However, due to the overwhelming presence within the same document of discourses of disability loss and impairment and other failures to challenge professional perspectives and practices based on such discourses it is hardly surprising that S.E.N. itself was to become another 'category,' and a 'broader superordinate one.' (Norwich 1993 p 45) Thus the S.E.N. pupil was to join the ranks of those subject to the new 'descriptive terms' leading to the expansion of 'special education' but now as Tomlinson put it,

> *'in changed forms and rationalised by ....
> .... the ideology of special needs.'* (1985 p 157)

The major difficulty with 'Special Educational Needs' relates to confusion over both definition and usage. Indeed, as Galloway et. al. point out, 'each of the three words, special, educational, and needs raises its own questions.' (1994 p14) They point to the dictionary definition of special as referring to that, 'of a peculiar or restricted kind' (p 14) and challenge the notion that the needs of the vast majority of children designated as special (ie. low achieving mainly working class pupils) are of this order, or indeed are anything other than 'absolutely normal' and consider that the task for the education system was 'quite simply to start meeting them.' (p 14) Similarly 'educational' may seem straightforward but leaves the wider context, eg. family etc untouched and so a focus on 'educational' needs may be misleading. They also argue that logically one cannot be said to need something unless one wants it and that whilst it is perfectly possible to say that as teachers or parents that we may want something for the child, that given the often stressful context in which such needs are designated, such decisions may indeed be based on the needs of those other than the child. (Galloway and Goodwin 1987)

Moreover, difficulties over the application of the concept to particular cases are equally problematic given the tautological, vague, circular and open-ended definition of learning difficulties under the 1981 Act which forms the basis for such applications. Indeed this definition was described by Thomas as 'anodyne nonsense' (1995 p107) he further argued that, 'this definition ... or non definition ... (was such that) ... in effect, anybody and everybody could be referred.'(p107) Indeed Mary Warnock herself writing some four years after the publication of her report referred to the, 'lack of definition' of her committeee's 'definition' of special educational needs arguing that,

' it (S.E.N.) carries a fake objectivity'... (further commenting that)
.. one of the main, indeed almost overwhelming,
difficulties is to decide whose needs are special,
or what 'special' means.... ' (Warnock 1982 p372)

This then was to lead almost inevitably to the conflation in practice of low attainment with learning difficulty and special educational need, with S.E.N. becoming a theory of educability and a euphemism for failure (Barton 1986) whilst diverting attention away from a fuller consideration of the context of such 'failure.' Further, Warnock's claim that up to 20% of pupils would experience special educational needs at some time during their career, however dubiously based (see for example Galloway et. al. 1994, Thomas 1995) was soon to become an expectation (Gipps et. al. 1987) and given such open ended definitions it was difficult to resist an ascription of SEN in the case of practically any pupil not making 'acceptable' progress. Further, the impetus to engage in such 'ascriptions' (identifications) was to increase markedly particularly after the passage of the 1988 Education Reform Act and was later to became codified under the provisions of the 1993 Education Act. Thus this concept was in most cases in which it was to be applied, devoid of intrinsic meaning becoming a 'marker' for an unacceptable level of performance, and thus an administrative category for managing and legitimating 'pupil failure.'

The 1988 Education Reform Act.

The 1988 Education Reform Act represented a major step towards the abandonment and dismantling of the post war liberal-humanistic consensus as to the nature and purposes of education (Tomlinson J.1989) and its

redrawing and recasting according to the orthodoxy of the 'new right,' privileging the dictates of 'the market.' An approach which advocated that schooling should,

> '... *no longer be theorised as a site of public investment*
> *.. (but) .. should be organised managed and administered as a site of*
> *private consumption ... exposed to the freedoms of the marketplace*
> *and the discipline of performance indicators...'* (Hamilton 1998 p 17)

Thus discourses based on targets, quality performance, human resource management, standards, consumption, competition, choice, good/bad (failing) schools/teachers, value for money and freedom, have come to the fore. Many writers have commented on the general background to the Act as being part of a continuum of measures and pressures designed to wrest power and influence away from educational professionals and 'experts' (who were cast in the role of self serving producer groups) and to subject them to the 'disciplines' of the market. (Chitty 1992, Simon and Chitty 1993, Whitty 1989).

The broader context for these changes may also be seen as part of what Esland describes as a, 'New Right' cultural revolution, (1996 p 26) affecting all areas of social policy over the past two decades (for example see Le Grand J. and Bartlett W. 1993). This is said to have involved the rise of the 'managerial state' which acting to resolve problems and contradictions in the economic political and social spheres seeks to 'managerialise' them, redefining them as 'problems to be managed.' with the use of terms such as 'efficiency' effectiveness, performance and quality working to depoliticise the issues thus displacing political and policy choices into a series of such managerial imperatives. (Clarke and Newman 1997 p 159)

The origins of such measures and arguments within education may be traced back to the so called 'Great Debate' on educational 'standards' initiated by the Callaghan government in 1976 and to the 'Black Papers' on education. (eg. Boyson 1997) The basic premises of this 'discourse of derision,' (Ball 1990) were that educational standards were either falling or were not high enough thus leaving many school leavers ill equipped to fulfil the demands of 'industry' for skilled workers. (The increasing 'youth unemployment' of the 1970's and onwards being presented as a 'supply' problem) Teachers and the 'educational establishment' were blamed, either for their supposed adherence to left wing political ideologies designed to 'level down' standards; to a 'progressive' educational philosophy largely associated with the recommendations of the Plowden Report; or to their giving too much attention to their own conditions of service at the expense of their pupils' interests. (Hillgate Group 1986, 1987, 1989, Knight 1990, Lawton 1994) The clear view was that the professionals had failed and that reform had to be imposed upon them through legislation.

The main provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Act introduced the National Curriculum and national testing, provided for the possibility of schools opting out of local authority control through seeking grant maintained status, and created a quasi-market in education, whereby schools were to be given control of their budgets through a system of financial delegation with the money allocated according to a system of formula funding, largely dependant upon the number of pupils on roll. Further, a system of open enrolment was intended to enhance parental choice of school, with that choice being informed by information such as the schools' National Curriculum Key Stage test results. Moreover, although special educational needs barely feature in the legislation, save only to introduce the possibility of exempting certain pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, the measures introduced were nonetheless to have

profound implications for those deemed 'special' through an increase in exclusionary pressures.

One of the major measures of the 1988 Education Reform Act was the introduction of the National Curriculum, a curriculum which according to the government's draft circular,

'all pupils, including those with special needs should have the opportunity

to gain the maximum possible benefit from....' (DES1988a)

Indeed the advisory document, 'National Curriculum; From Policy to Practice. (DES1989) was at pains to point out the statutory nature of the common entitlement of all pupils to the N.C. arguing in relation to the levels of attainment that, 'virtually' all pupils would be able to record progress through the levels, (para. 8.1) Moreover, the document, 'A Curriculum for All,' presented the National Curriculum as part of an ongoing progression of the widening of the rights of access for pupils to such a common entitlement, placing it as a continuation of the principles of previous measures such as the incorporation of pupils with severe learning difficulties within the education system, and the Warnock Report's declaration that the aims of education were the same for all children. (N.C.C.1989) Thus while sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Act gave the power to modify or disapply aspects or even the whole of the N.C. and the assessment arrangements for certain pupils under certain circumstances, there was nonetheless a clear expectation that the National Curriculum would be implemented for most pupils ie. in all but the most extreme cases of difficulties.

On the face of it, it would appear that the introduction of a curriculum to which all were entitled constituted progress towards a more comprehensive

educational system in that it would no longer be possible to deprive those pupils considered to have special educational needs of the same educational fare as was provided for their peers. (Galloway 1990 p 58) Such views were expressed by Russell who welcomed the notion of 'curricular entitlement' for pupils with special educational needs but expressed concern that it was possibly too easy for schools to obtain disapplications or modifications. (1990)

However, while there may in principle have been benefits to be derived from a common curriculum, further analysis of the nature of this entitlement, (even apart from those issues raised by a consideration of the wider context of its implementation), warns against such an optimistic view. The original curriculum was heavily prescriptive, overloaded, based on a normative linear model of progress in learning and a narrow view of assessment and therefore achievement. It was also based largely on a transmission model of (subject) knowledge as facts to be acquired, leading Dyson to comment that,

> 'Despite the rhetoric of 'breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation,' it is difficult to imagine how it could have been more narrowly and retrospectively academic, more exclusive in its emphases and more inaccessible in its demands. What children were entitled to therefore was not participation in meaningful educational experiences so much as confinement within a rigid and inappropriate hierarchy of knowledge.' (1997 p 154)

The question also arose as to whose curriculum this was, indeed Searle was later to characterise it as,

> *'....narrow and racist..* (observing that it had) *.. so little within it about black history and achievement ..'* (arguing that enforced adherence to it provoked) *.. much of the disruption, rebellion and defiance of large numbers of black people at school..'* (1996 p 41/2)

Thus teachers had far less control than formerly over the content and pacing of what was taught (or 'delivered') resulting in less flexibility to respond to the interests and needs of students, leading Norwich to argue that given a diversity of pupil needs such an entitlement would indeed become a constraint. (1990 p 18) Further, even though some modifications were later to be made in terms of the slimming down of content and simplification of testing procedures (Dearing 1994) and much later some relaxation in the prescriptive elements of the National Curriculum, the basic model remained and indeed remains, and is one which is exclusive and inaccessible to many students. It is a curriculum which is centred around the production of future workers for 'society,' that is a very narrow and instrumental view of the purposes of education. It puts subjects rather than students at the centre providing a narrow elitist academic base offering little in terms of diversity or variety. Indeed Searle considers what he describes as this,

> *'curriculum of disaffection ..* (to be a) *.. daily disincentive to imaginative and stimulating teaching ...* (undermining) *.. teaching as a creative act..* (turning it into a) *.. routine of prefabricated activity..* (1996 p 43/4)

Moreover it is driven by a particularly narrow view of assessment with 'high stakes' testing at its heart (Pollard and Tann 1993) with the obvious danger of the testing 'dog' wagging the educational 'tail.' This emphasis on simple output measures rather than on the intrinsic worth of the activities engaged in (Gammage 1992 p5) may be experienced as alienating by many pupils and particularly by certain groups. Thus, commenting on the likely effects of the underlying rationale of this competitive approach and the

narrowing concept of 'achievement' which it incorporates, on the actually or potentially less 'successful' member of the pupil community Kelly warned that,

> '... Properly competitive farmers do not feed up the runts of any litter, they certainly do not offer the same level of care and provision they give to the sturdy products ... (concluding that) .. The concept of equality of treatment is not compatible with that of competition...' (1990 p 51)

The combination of such curricular provision in the context of the 'marketisation' of education leading as they were towards the creation of a more competetive hierarchically structured schooling system through the encouragement of differentiation both between schools and between pupils were bound to have profound effects in terms of an increase in exclusionary pressures. Many writers commented on what they perceived to be a threat to existing practices in relation to the area of special educational needs. (see for example Weddell 1990, Thomas 1989) Thus, Heward and Lloyd-Smith whilst commenting on the difficulties of ending the 'rigid categorisation' and segregation of those with learning difficulties, as evidenced by the extremely tentative and varied progress in the implementation of the more 'positive' aspects of the 1981 Act, considered the 1988 Act to be a,

> '....development which threatens the new directions of special education policy (and one which) .. may reinstate ... former assumptions with greater force..' (1990 p 21)

The development of competition between schools to attract pupils through encouraging parents to act as 'critical consumers' would mean that pupils who, 'had S.E.N.' or were 'harder to teach,' (Fish and Evans 1995) were going to be seen as far less attractive prospects, (Barton 1993 p 36) since

their performance in the end of key stage assessments were likely to detract from the schools' position in the league tables and thereby their position in the marketplace, as parents chose 'successful' schools. Indeed, even a reputation for being 'successful' with pupils 'with S.E.N.' would later be seen to adversely affect the 'market position' of a school. (Gewirtz et. al.1995) Further meeting such pupils' needs, might also prove to be costly in financial terms and in terms of the time and energy required, given the 'intensification' of schooling involving massively increased teacher workloads attendant on the introduction of the National Curriculum. (see for example, Pollard 1994)

Thus for teachers, this educational 'Darwinism,' involving competing for the patronage of parents on the basis of crude and misleading indicators of performance such as the 'raw' scores obtained from government tests, with the ever present threat of school closures or teaching job losses as numbers of pupils fell was hardly conducive to the development within schools of more open evaluations of their practices in relation to pupils considered to 'have' special educational needs. Indeed as Weedon argued (1994) teachers' willingness to challenge their own practices were much less likely if the demands being made on them were unreasonable or unrealistic. (see also for example, Copeland 1991, Weddell 1988, Spalding and Florek 1989, Bowe et.al. 1992.) Andy Hargreaves also pointed to what he described as the,

'..sheer cumulative impact of multiple, complex, non-negotiable innovations on teachers time, energy, motivation, opportunities to reflect, and their very capacity to cope..' (1994 p 6)

He further characterised the changes as frantic in pace, and extreme in the disregard and disrespect shown to teachers. In the context of such remorseless change it would hardly be surprising if 'sheer survival' was not uppermost in the minds of most teachers at this time. Indeed the 'protective' culture which is likely to develop in such situations particularly in relation to pupils who may be less successful at school, is such as to encourage an increased reliance on the 'special needs pupil' discourse.

Thus, over the course of the next few years evidence from various surveys demonstrated an increase in numbers; of pupils referred for assessment, in those statemented, and in those excluded from schools. For example Evans and Lunt, (1994) in a number of surveys conducted by them at the Institute of Education found an increase in both the number and proportion of pupils being given statements in the majority of L.E.A.'s they sampled, further reporting that in half the L.E.A.'s the population of special schools had also increased on the previous year, and also that 87% of L.E.A.'s had experienced an increase in exclusions between 1991 and 1992. They argue that these trends indicated a decreasing capability of mainstream schools to respond to pupils with special educational needs. (ibid. p60) Another survey showed that in 1992/3, 39 (88.6%) of the 44 L.E.A.'s responding were experiencing rising numbers of referrals for statutory assessment. (Vincent et.al.1995) A survey of L.E.A. data published by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education which sought to determine the nature and direction of trends in integration (Norwich 1994) found that the overall percentage of children in segregated provision had increased from 1.47% to 1.49% since 1988 suggesting a reversal in a gradual decline apparent since 1982 arguing that such a trend was a direct result of the impact of L.M.S. and of the new testing regime

There had always been difficulties with the 1981 Act's linking of resources to a statement and its extension of the concept of S.E.N. to potentially 20% of the pupil population, in terms of the creation of ever increasing demands for resources. It soon became clear however, that the consequences of the Education Reform Act were to exacerbate such difficulties. Indeed at a time when schools were having to pay careful attention to their budgets in terms of a range of priorities set for them by the E.R.A. pupils with behavioural or learning difficulties were becoming less valuable 'Age Weighted Pupil Units.' requiring as they did, extra resources. Now while some weighting for S.E.N. was included in the formula for allocating funds, many school looked outside such resources to provide for their needs with the only way to guarantee such resources being a statement. This led to what Evans and Lunt described as an 'exponential growth' in the presence of support teachers and classroom assistants within mainstream schools assigned to individual pupils under the statementing procedures (1993 p60) This was occurring at a time when many schools regarded as having 'above average salary costs' under the L.M.S. staffing formula were having to contemplate cutting staff or reducing costs in some other way.

The pressures to invoke the 'special needs' pupil discourse in order to protect staffing and also to provide mitigating 'evidence' to contribute to a 'value added' debate in the context of the publication a schools end of key stage assessment results were clear. Now an obvious point to be made is that high perceived rates of learning difficulties within a school may well be a reflection on the school's teaching, organisation and resources rather than on the difficulties of individual pupils. However the prevailing climate was not conducive to such a school's engagement in open evaluations of its practices in relation to pupils perceived to have special educational needs with a view to moving towards a more inclusive approach, indeed the

reverse was the case. In this respect then the combined effect of the Acts of 1981 and 1988 led to the creation of a situation in which those schools who 'identified' the most pupils, and devoted sufficient energies and know-how to negotiating the assessment and statementing procedures received the largest share of resources. All other things being equal, the danger was that the least effective schools would receive the most resources and in a manner which rewarded their ineffectiveness! (Galloway et. al. 1994)

Thus, while SEN had been largely ignored or at best treated as an afterthought by those who framed the ERA. the difficulties caused by the operation of the 1981 Act in the new context were becoming more and more evident. A joint Audit Comm / H.M.I. report (1992) pointed to a number of difficulties and inconsistencies, not least of which were a,

> '..lack of clarity both about what constitutes special educational
> needs and the respective responsibilities of schools and
> L.E.A.'s ....lack of clear accountability by schools
> and L.E.A.'s for progress made by pupils...' (1992 p 1)

They also found nationally a marked increase in the number of statements issued in 1990 and 1991 in comparison with previous years, a trend which continued upwards for the L.E.A.'s they studied for 1992. They further commented that given that a threshold for issuing statements had not been established that such rates varied widely between areas, that is, from 0.8% to 3.3% of the pupil population in the areas studied. Such statements as were issued were said to be extremely vague and therefore open to interpretation as to the provision guaranteed, suggesting strongly that such vagueness was a deliberate strategy to avoid financial commitment on the part of the L.E.A.'s. Other enquiries also identified a clear need for a revision of the provisions of the 1981 Act in the light of subsequent changes

in policy, necessitating the development of national guidelines for special educational needs in order to ensure more consistent practices. (see for examnple, House of Commons Education Committee 1993)

The 1993 education Act and the Code of Practice.

·The 1993 Education Act. (D.F.E. 1993) dealt with a range of issues including the development of a Funding Agency for Schools, grant-maintained schools, attendance, and 'failing' schools. However, part III of the Act was concerned with special education and was seen as an attempt to address many of the issues identified above.

Amongst the various duties and responsibilities laid down in this legislation were those requiring governors of LEA maintained and grant maintained 'mainstream' schools to make provision to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs who were not the subjects of statements. They were also required to publish schools' SEN policies and annual accounts of SEN resourcing and to review the effectiveness of such policies annually. L.E.A.'s were to be responsibile for reviewing and coordinating SEN provision, formally assessing pupils who appeared to require specialist provision other than that provided by their schools, providing a statement of SEN for them when appropriate and ensuring that such provision as was set out in their statement was met. They were also expected to conform to a standard set of procedures in relation to the assessment process which itself should be completed within six months. They were also to ensure that the education for pupils in receipt of a statement of SEN should not take place in a special school unless this were to be incompatible with; a child

83.

receiving an appropriate education, the education of others, or the efficient use of resources.

Parents were to be allowed to challenge LEA's decisions, for example, a decision not to make a statement, the contents of a statement, a decision not to reassess, a decision to cease to maintain a statement, and outcomes of annual reviews. They were also able to request a particular special or mainstream school, a request which L.E.A.'s may refuse under certain circumstances. Parents were given the right to appeal against such decisions through a newly established Special Educational Needs Tribunal, with the judgement of such a Tribunal being binding on both parties.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the 1993 Act however, was that it legislated for the introduction of a 'Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.' (D.F.E. 1994) This was intended as a document of 'practical guidance' laying down a framework for future provision and practices in the area and which was to become in some senses a 'working manual' for those involved.

The Code laid out a five stage model of identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, with the first two stages being based on the resources of the mainstream school with specialist external support being provided from stage three onwards. It also required the drawing up of 'Individual Education Plans' from stage two with the success of such plans being monitored and reviewed regularly and suitable adjustments made. The general assumption was that, other than in very special circumstances, pupils who were seen to be experiencing difficulties were to be processed stage by stage with documented 'failure' at the level and type of intervention provided at one stage being a pre-requisite for 'progress' to a higher stage.

It was further made clear that each school should have a person with a designated responsibility for the co-ordination of special educational needs whose duties included the maintenance of an SEN register, recording and overseeing pupil records, liasing with parents and external agencies and contributing to the inservice training of staff. The Code also provided detailed advice on the formal assessment and annual review processes.

One immediate difficulty with the Code was its odd legal status ie. it was advisory rather than mandatory. However those to whom it applied had a duty to 'have regard' to its provisions with the further injunction that departures from such provisions would require justification, 'if challenged.' Those challenging might be parents, the Secretary of State or the SEN Tribunal. The only defence permitted to such a challenge was that the alternative arrangements made produced effects which were at least as beneficial as would have been produced by an exact following of the Code. (Baroness Blatch, House of Lords 29.4.93 reported in Morris et. al. 1993 p 55) This 'special' status provided a loophole however, in that only certain persons dissatisfied with a schools compliance or otherwise with the Code were permitted to make a challenge, for example, consumers of the services. It was not open for teachers for example to demand compliance through the provision of time and resources to enable them to fulfil its requirements. This for the most part prevented the possibility that the Code should be seen generally as financially binding on schools or government save for those relatively rare instances when practices were successfully challenged.

Indeed another problematic aspect of the Code was the fact that no extra resources were to be provided despite the considerable extra duties and workloads imposed on schools, teachers and particularly SEN coordinators

ie. the code was regarded as 'resource neutral.' The assumption was that good management was all that was needed and that adequate resources already existed within the system. (Fish and Evans1995) Thus Paragraph one of the Foreword to the code stated that its purpose was to,

> '..help schools and LEA's to obtain the best value from
> the considerable resources and expertise they devote to the
> education of children with special educational needs ..' (DFE 1994)

What is also noteworthy about such aims is the identification of the main issues to be addressed as that of value for money and the efficient deployment of resources thus implying provision for special educational needs to be fundamentally concerned with such considerations rather than wider educational issues. There is a taken for grantedness in the Code, an assumption that for the most part provision and practice in mainstream schools is unproblematic, with the traditional model of curriculum therefore not needing to be challenged. The issue then becomes one of fitting pupils into existing structures. It is a continuation / development, indeed intensification of the deficit model such is the increased focus on the individual through the various processes of identification / recording and development and monitoring of I.E.P.'s etc. Indeed, it would be very difficult to operate within the stage based procedures of the Code whilst attempting to give serious consideration to any other views as to the nature and origins of 'special educational needs.'

The Code requires the development of whole school policies as the responsibility of governors but with an expectation that the school as a whole should be involved. (para 2:10 DFE 1994) Such policies take time to develop relying as they do on effective 'ownership' and commitment of those involved if they are to effect working practices particularly in relation

to such a controversial area as SEN. The Code however ignores such issues (as indeed had much recent legislation and government initiatives) providing a simple list of items to be addressed thereby pre-empting any wider debates and consideration of alternative perspectives.

However, there is a sense in which the Code attempts to manage some of the contradictions between the '81 and the '88 Acts. Thus as Galloway et. al. point out (1994) the assumptions underlying the '88 Act were grounded in discourses of school and teacher effectiveness and failure. The argument was that some pupils failed because they weren't taught appropriately, or because teachers' expectations of their pupils were too low, or because schools may have been badly managed etc. The ostensible aim of the ERA therefore was to subject such teachers and schools to the 'disciplines of the market' in order that in a Darwinian sense their shortcomings would be exposed and that the weakest would cease to exist. However the ERA was inconsistent in its approach in that it retained the provisions of the 1981 Act, including its open ended and problematic definition of special educational needs, thus encouraging a continuation of the employment of a 'pupil failure' discourse on the part of schools.

Now whilst the Code itself is similarly grounded in such discourses, there is an attempt to encourage schools to look more widely at the methods and approaches used in relation to individual pupils if not to wider groups. Given the context of a massive increase in pupils being put forward for statementing one obvious intention of the Code was to minimise such requests by requiring teachers and schools to engage in a relatively lengthy and bureaucratic process of identification and 'progress' through the stages of the Code before statementing would be possible. Indeed the expectations of the authors of the Code were that an ever diminishing number of pupils

would be found at the higher stages. (para 2:23 op. cit.) The requirement then, that schools should be seen to be doing everything possible to meet the needs of individual pupils through identifying them and providing regularly reviewed I.E.P.'s before considering the possibility of statementing conformed to the logic of the teacher / school effectiveness discourse underlying the main provisions of the ERA.

There were two obvious difficulties with this approach however. Firstly, such processing itself was costly, bureaucratic and time consuming and was to come to be seen as increasingly so. (see for example, Bowers 1996, DfEE 1997a) Indeed the planning monitoring and reviewing involved often generated a great deal of paperwork with minimal impact on classroom practice with the impression that such procedures were designed more with accountability in mind than the needs of pupils Secondly, a major difficulty in responding to the diversity of student needs through a differentation of what was offered was that the parameters were firmly set by the narrowly academic, monocultural and elitist National Curriculum within the overall context of a system increasingly driven by pressures to increase measurable academic 'outputs.' The task for teachers under the Code then, continued to be that of modifying and adapting existing curricula and providing compensatory or additional support to pupils to seek to ensure their access to it. Once again all pupils were to be fitted into existing structures with the ever present threat of their being excluded if their differences could not be sufficiently normalised.

Several surveys and investigations into the workings of the Code were conducted over the next two years or so. (see for example, Roehampton Institute 1995, Evans et.al. 1996, Lewis et.al. 1996, OFSTED 1996, House of Commons Education Committee 1996)

Schools were seen to be facing many difficulties in their attempts to implement the Code, with criticisms largely concerning a lack of time and resources to do so. There were also concerns expressed as to the low status, difficulties of role definition, and massive workloads of those given such responsibilities in schools ie. SENCOs with OFSTED (1996) calling for better support by senior management teams of such personnel, and the Association of Educational Psychologists in evidence submitted to the House of Commons Education Committee identifying as their 'major concern' what they described as the 'unreasonable workloads' placed upon, and low status of, SENCO's, calling for them to be included in senior management teams within schools. (1996 p 20) Similar sentiments were expressed by John Wright of the Independent Panel For Special Education Advice who in his evidence to the committee, commented on SENCO's that,

> *'a lot of these people not only have not been trained for the job, they are not supported in the job as they are doing it now and many of them do not actually have non-teaching time anyway to do it.' (1996 p 3)*

The Warwick University report (Lewis et. al. 1996) commented on the many other priorities competing with the Code within schools and the difficulties of implementation in the light of these. Thus OFSTED noted the brevity of references to, and in some cases 'extreme reluctance' of schools to make any references to SEN at all, in their brochure for parents, observing that in their view,

> *'many schools fear that a reputation for excellent SEN provision can result in a school attracting even more pupils with SEN, and this, combined with the consequent performances in local league tables and the subsequent publicity, are not necessarily seen as being to the school's advantage.' (OFSTED 1996 p 18)*

Also of note in this report and indicative of the conflicting agendas and priorities which provide the context for their implementation of the Code were comments as to the lack of liason between schools as for example over common systems of record keeping as recommended in paragraph 6.30 of the Code. (DfEE 1994) This was said to due to their increased competitiveness with one another. Also, SENCOs in primary schools were said to be in difficulties over liasing with and recommending secondary schools to parents not only due to time constraints but to the fact that some secondary schools were wary of potential accusations of their 'poaching' pupils should they be so recommended. The contradictions between the requirements of the Code and that of the wider context of its implementation may be seen in their further comments that,

'Schools, and in particular, governors note that this requirement to liase closely with other schools over matters relating to special education is not always compatible with the spirit of entrepreneurial competition present in other legislation and in many DfEE initiatives.' (OFSTED 1996 p 34)

In essence then, to develop such cooperation between schools was to swim against the tide of the exclusionary and competetive pressures implicit in most other areas of policy.

Tony Bowers accused the Code of 'causing chaos' within Local Education Authorities in terms of the potential for conflict created between them and schools over the funding of SEN. (1996) Indeed the House of Commons Committee reported some confusion over the allocation of 'the additional SEN element' contained within LMS funds allocated to schools. This was said to have lead to disagreements in individual cases with schools claiming that they didn't have the resources to meet the needs of particular pupils

and authorities claiming that resources for SEN had already been allocated through the formula, although not necessarily separately quantified. (House of Commons 1996 p vii) Further, the Council for Disabled Children argued in their submission that in many such cases of conflict the perception of parents was that schools having not protected an element of their budget for SEN would point them in the direction of the authority with a view to requesting a statutory assessment thus adding to a, 'rising tide of (such) requests.' (p 37)

From the point of view of the authorities the problems identified were considerable requiring systems for making schools more accountable for their use of the delegated SEN allowance and a system of 'moderation' for allocation of pupils particularly to stage three of the Code. Further, the problem of 'perverse incentives' (Galloway et. al. 1994 Bowers 1996) was a very real one creating the danger that schools would simply see the stages as a resourcing ladder which pupils would need to be moved up in order to maximise the amount of money received from the authority. There was also the need to develop means of deciding just what level of support was required for individual statemented pupils. All of these factors were sources of potential conflict, with in Bowers' words schools being,

'tempted to try and work the system to get as much money as possible ... with L.E.A.s trying to block as much expenditure as possible on the grounds that the school's assessment criteria of need is questionable.' (1996 p 36)

The financial pressures on LEA's were considerable, eg. Lewis et. al. reported a 'medium sized' LEA's estimation that the cost of covering the teaching time support time and on-costs to enable all of its secondary schools to meet the guidance in the Code was £6,500,000 (1997 p 5) A

survey by Coopers and Lybrand (reported in Bowers 1996) found that in the two years up to 1996 there had been a 13% increase in the numbers of educational psychologists employed by L.E.A. s and a 42% rise in the numbers of administrative staff. They also found an 18% rise in the numbers of pupils with statements. Further the numbers of pupils at stage three of the Code had increased by 41%, those being assessed for a statement by 28%, and pupils with statements in mainstream schools by 47%. Bowers himself in a survey of three authorities reported that as much as 18% of the General Schools Budget was devoted to SEN spending 'in one way or another' and this in addition to the AWPU element for such pupils in mainstream schools.

A major source of uncertainty for L.E.A. managers was the Special Educational Needs Tribunal whose judgements were binding and further might prove extremely costly to authorites in the event of an upholding of a parental appeal. Thus Bowers detected a reluctance to allow cases to get as far as the Tribunal with evidence of authorities' preferring to 'cut their losses' and 'give more than should be given,' in order to avoid having to give more if a judgement went against them. (1996 p 34) Indeed evidence presented to the House of Commons Committee from Birmingham L.E.A. estimated costs of between £1,500 and £2,500 simply in preparing papers and for attendance for each case going to the Tribunal without any legal or further costs which might arise as a result of the judgement going against them. However they regarded it as important to try to 'hold a line.' (1996 p 26)

The Association of Educational Psychologists in their evidence also commented on these high costs but also on what they saw as the general unpredictability of the outcomes of such hearings due to the varied

composition and relevant experience of the Tribunal members. Further evidence as to the complicated political nature of such hearings were also alluded to in the same associations' evidence to the effect that the system favoured the well educated and articulate parent (House of Commons 1996 p 22) and from the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities who also commented on inconsistencies in Tribunal decisions and even in the conduct of hearings which they said encouraged an attitude that it was 'worth a go' to appeal. They further comment that the decisions of Tribunals were taken with no regard for the authorities' overall budget and question whether for example the paying of hundreds of thousands of pounds to provide an independent school placement for one child was an efficient use of resources for that authority, (ibid.p.19) (the so called Rolls Royce solutions.) (p 14) Other evidence was presented to the Committee accusing some local authorities of intimidation of their own staff into not appearing at Tribunals as witnesses for parents (for example B.D.A. p 31 I.P.S.E.A. p 64) or of limiting their advice when assessing pupils to a consideration of their needs and not to involve themselves in the recommendation of a particular form level or type of provision to meet those needs. (for example, I.P.S.E.A. p 67.)

On balance then the Code of Practice offered no new perspectives, but rather reinforced a pupil deficit approach discouraging therefore any attempts to give serious consideration to other views or perspectives as to the nature and origins of 'special educational needs.' Thus the values and principles underlying the prevailing discourse on SEN remained sacrosanct with the Code merely attempting to make the bureaucracy more efficient and to distribute resources more effectively. However, due to a variety of pressures demand for services and resources increased rapidly leading one education officer to sum up the situation as one in which it was possible to,

*'..... manage a special needs budget ... but trying
to control it .. (was).. something else entirely'* (quoted in Bowers 1996 p
33)

Further the new duties which schools were charged with meant greatly increased workloads particularly for SEN co-ordinators such that merely complying with requirements as outlined in the Code (whatever the vagaries and subtleties of local interpretation) such as for example working with their colleagues persuading them to persevere with possibly troublesome and difficult children at a time when they were being publicly judged on the basis of their examination and Key Stage Assessment results, was to have a disciplining effect creating many anxieties leaving no time to think in any depth about the issues and particularly to develop alternative perspectives even had there been a will to do so.

The Green Paper 1997.

In October 1997 the new Labour Government published a Green Paper (DfEE 1997) which in some senses attempted to manage the contradictions and iron out the difficulties identified in the operation of the Code and more importantly perhaps, set the agenda for 'special education' for the future. It was explicitly linked to their earlier White Paper Excellence in Schools (DfEE 1997a) and shared many of its assumptions and aims particularly those relating to the governments' 'standards agenda.'

The paper set out a number of aims for achievement by the year 2002. Amongst them were the following:-

A focus on early identification and intervention ... The general raising of standards, particularly in the 'early years,' such that **less pupils would need long term special provision.**

All parents were to be offered the support of a named person. Improved dialogue between parents and schools and LEA's sought and that this should be reflected in a **reduction in number of appeals to the SEN Tribunal.**

A revised SEN Code of Practice, simplifying procedures, minimising paperwork. More effective intervention particularly at stage 3 leading to a reduction in the proportion of pupils 'who need' a statement. **Numbers of statements to be 'moving towards 2%'** from the 'close to 3%' then identified. Some concern was expressed over the 'steep increase' in statements (up from 153,228 in 1991 to 232,995 in 1997), with questions asked as to whether the statement 'in its present form' was the best way to identify and meet the needs of pupils currently in receipt of them, or whether this 'might be achieved by some alternative means.' (p 37)

The promotion of 'inclusion' such that more mainstream schools would be 'able and willing' to accept children with a range of special educational needs reflected in an increase in the number of statemented children **'who would currently be placed in special schools' being educated in mainstream schools.** (DfEE 1997 p 8-9 my emphases)

While in overall terms the Green paper may be seen as motivated by attempts to save money, distribute existing resources more efficiently and to reduce bureaucracy, it also places a great deal more onus than previous such documents on teachers and teaching methods as both part of the problem and therefore solution to many of the problems identified. Perhaps because of this there is some confusion over the underlying concept of SEN employed.

Thus, if we look at the first chapter we find 'SEN' being used in both a relative / contextual sense and in an absolute sense, sometimes within the same paragraph! Now whether this is due to the usual blurring of normative and non normative categories or whether this implies a further distinction within the non normative category between those whom the authors consider to 'have' special needs in an absolute sense and those whom they feel schools 'need to identify' perhaps because of low attainment and whose difficulties they perceive to be iatrogenic in origin is not made clear. Indeed nowhere in the document is there an explicit attempt to clarify such issues.

However, paragraph two outlines the legal definition of special educational needs from the 1981 Education Act and seeks to 'clarify' this by arguing that in terms of the law it is possible for a child to be considered to have SEN in one school but not in another depending on local circumstances. Further, paragraph 4 goes so far as to argue that the government's policies on numeracy and literacy will lead to improvements in standards thus enabling schools to reduce the proportion of children **'they identify as having SEN'** and that as government policies take effect and feed through to the secondary phase they forecast that the number of pupils schools will **'need to identify as having SEN'** reducing to 10%.

Both phrases imply SEN to be relative and to be an administrative category perhaps resource linked and a means of targeting poor attainment. Indeed the primary issue addressed is not that of pupils 'with' SEN but of low attainments. The main implication however is that poor attainment may be tackled more effectively through improved teaching approaches as outlined particularly in the government's literacy and numeracy strategies. Thus the need to identify pupils is not a need of the pupils themselves but one of

teachers and schools and is linked to the appropriateness or otherwise of the teaching methods and approaches used rather than the pupil him/herself having a 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority...'

In paragraph 5 however we are told that 'we' need to 'get in early' to tackle **'educational disadvantage'** (whatever that is, perhaps yet another definition of SEN?) through early diagnosis and appropriate intervention thereby improving the prospects of children **with** special educational needs. Now given the use of terms such as diagnosis and intervention and the further use of the term special educational needs in its absolute sense we must conclude that it is the child who is the focus here and not the teaching methods employed. However within the same paragraph we are back to SEN in the relative sense when we are told that giving effective attention to early signs of difficulties can actually, 'prevent the development of SEN.' (p 13) It would seem also that 'educational disadvantage' rather than 'SEN' is another problem to be addressed. There are two redefinitions here of the problems to be addressed namely that of low attainment and educational disadvantage with the clear implication that formerly such problems had been addressed through identifying pupils as having special educational needs but that more appropriate teaching would render such identifications unnecessary.

There is an implicit assumption that in many cases the supposed need to identify then may relate to previous inappropriate teaching, leading to the conclusion that the pupil finds him/herself in the special category not because she/he **has** a 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority...' that is, not because he/she **has** a special educational need, but because she/he has been badly taught (or perhaps not taught in line with 'new' government prescriptions!) It is further assumed that a special

educational need is something that can be developed within school such that effective measures may be taken in order to prevent it developing.

However on the other hand whatever insights which may be gained through the employment of this more relative notion of practices which might lead to pupils needing to be identified as having SEN are soon forgotten in the rest of the document with the concept of SEN employed in subsequent chapters being wholly based on a notion of a child deficit with no hint as to the possible contribution the pupil's schooling may have had to the difficulties described. Thus for example, in chapter four paragraph eight pupils with SEN and children with disabilities are used interchangeably and pupils with SEN are constantly referred to throughout the rest of the paper.

Whatever the definitions or concepts of SEN employed however the solution to the problems identified were placed firmly within the context of an effectiveness approach through a reliance on the governments' policies to raise standards, in general. Thus references were made to the need to address individual children's 'basic skill deficiencies' so as to preempt the need for such pupils' requiring, 'statements of SEN and expensive additional provision...' (p 15) There was also the promise held out that due to government policies teachers would become adept at tackling reading difficulties leading to a situation whereby pupils with specific learning difficulties should be catered for in mainstream schools without the need for a statement. (p 16) It appears therefore that problems experienced by pupils whatever their origins, that is whether they be relative / contextual in origin or indeed are of the absolute variety are nonetheless amenable to the same solution namely governmental policies to raise standards.

This represents a definite shift in emphasis then, in that while the task for teachers in relation to pupils already identified as having SEN continues for the most part to be that of modifying and adapting existing curricula and providing compensatory or additional support to seek to ensure their access to it there is an increased focus on the importance of the overall educational offer, in having led (or not) to the need to identify the pupil in the first place with the promise that more effective teaching will lead to lesser numbers of pupils needing to be so identified.

However notwithstanding the change, in terms of the authors' of this papers' partial reconceptualisation of the nature and aetiology of SEN, what is actually offered, is more of the same, for the parameters are still firmly set by the narrowly academic, monocultural and elitist National Curriculum within the overall context of a system increasingly driven by pressures to increase measurable academic outputs. On balance then, while the widening of focus from the child to the wider context of the child's educational experience is to be welcomed, ultimately however the view taken in common with an effectiveness approach in general offers an extremely narrow focus. (Angus 1994, Proudford and Baker 1995, Slee et. al. 1998, Hatcher 1998a) The narrow mechanistic view of education embraced is one which ignores the social, economic and cultural complexities of schools and the communities they serve and indeed of the impact of other government policies post 1988 and is likely to lead to a further disadvantaging of those pupils most at risk of being processed as having SEN. (Slee 1998)

Indeed, to the extent that anything new is offered for example through the new standards policies, its lynchpins, the literacy and numeracy hours in primary schools involve the specification, almost minute by minute, of activities to be undertaken and objectives to be achieved, thus raising the

level of surveillance of both pupils and teachers and the routinisation and control of teaching to unprecedented levels further diminishing schools' and teachers' flexibility and discretion in responding to the diversity of their school communities.

Moreover, the atmosphere within which such policies were implemented may be judged by the Secretary of State for Education's characterisation of teachers who questioned their value as 'miserable sneering cynics.' (reported in The Teacher Nov. 1998 p 3) whilst the Prime Minister for his part, promised to, 'take on ..... vested interests' in the teaching profession by bringing about 'the most fundamental changes in the .. profession since state education began' (p 3) in order to push through government policies.

Indeed Hatcher described the approach of the new government as overtly coercive and representing an intensification of the authoritarian managerialism, evident under the previous administration, (1998a 493) citing amongst other things a junior education minister's public 'naming and shaming' of a number of so called failing schools as almost the first act of the government on attaining office, the decision to re-appoint the chief inspector of schools, whom he described as having been 'a central instrument of Conservative attacks on teachers,' (p493)and quoting from a speech made by the chief executive of the teacher training agency made the same month as the Green paper was published in which she promised that,

'soft hearted heads ..... too close to their
staff will be toughened up with new leadership courses.
They .. (will).. be taught how to drive their staff harder to
meet their personal and school targets..
(Anthea Millett quoted in Hatcher 1998a)

Again this attitude of suspicion and mistrust was hardly likely to encourage open and honest evaluations of practices and procedures and was rather more likely to lead to a further development / entrenchment of a protective response, involving a continuing if not increased reliance on the 'special needs pupil' discourse.

Chapter four is entitled Increasing Inclusion, however the concept of inclusion adopted is in all essentials based on older notions of assimilation and integration and perhaps may best be viewed as a tentative step in that direction if only rhetorically and therefore despite the new terminology offers little that is new. Thus we are told that the authors 'want to see more pupils **with SEN** included within mainstream ... schools..' (my emphasis) (P44) this to involve their being enroled in 'regular' schools and joining '.. fully with their peers in the curriculum and life of the school .. (and not to be)... isolated in separate units...' (p44) Even these integrationist / assimilationist declarations however are hedged around with qualifying phrases or 'clauses of conditionality' (Slee 1998) such as '..where possible...' and promises that current specialist provision should still be available in order to allay the fears of parents and others.

Thus paragraph four insists that the approach towards inclusion adopted, '....will be practical not dogmatic..' and will recognise that there may be different views on the 'sensitive issue' of where pupils 'with SEN' may best be educated, that schools and LEA's may be at different starting points, that parents will continue to have the right to express a preference for a special school and that there is a need to increase the skills and resources of mainstream schools and so on.

Such a non dogmatic approach and lightness of political touch, uniquely applied in this area of education policy is continued in the following Update newsletter (DfEE 1998a) on responses to the Green Paper which alludes to the many reservations expressed about the practicalities of inclusion, and employs similar arguments to those adopted over the past two decades in counselling caution, arguing in relation to such reservations that,

> *'..these are real issues; we accept that increased inclusion will need to be a gradual process, building on existing strengths. There is no question of placing children in schools which are not properly prepared and resourced to teach them..'* (DfEE 1998 p1)

The preparation and resourcing necessary is dealt with in subsequent sections where issues such as that of raising standards for all children with special educational needs. (p60) is seen as being best addressed through the professional development of teachers. This to involve their developing skills such as being capable of identifying pupils with SEN and differentiating their teaching practice appropriately with such skills being developed through enhanced initial teacher training and in further professional development and '...linked to clear expectations of the skills needed in different settings..' (p64) There are also measures mentioned including a new statutory code of practice which will seek to ensure that pupils with SEN but without statements, will be treated no less favourably than other applicants when they apply for admission to a school. Their attractiveness to such schools will be enhanced through the promise that the new flexibility allowed to LEAs in the publication of primary school league tables will provide more space for contextualising a schools achievements such that recognition is given to schools' raising levels of achievement of pupils 'with SEN' with the success of such schools perhaps celebrated through the award of a 'kitemark.'

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Ultimately however whatever the technical, logistical and bureaucratic changes, the overall approach reinforces a view that special education will continue to fulfil the role of supporting the normalising project of mainstream schools by helping to manage and contain the unpredictability and diversity manifested by those pupils who are most likely to qualify as its clients. Indeed the lightness of political touch revealed by the governments' self declared lack of dogmatism was indicative of its assimilationist approach and concern that mainstream schools' overall project remained sacrosanct.

This then is a reformist and limited notion of inclusion as assimilation and integration with no recognition of wider cultural or any other kind of politics, an approach which fails to engage with the complexities of either life in schools or the wider communities they serve. (Booth, Ainscow and Dyson 1997, Barton 1997) Thus there is no recognition of structural inequalities based on race, gender or class which may affect relationships within schools, nor is there any consideration of those mechanisms, processes and practices which may work to produce and confirm the devaluation, exclusion, otherness and marginality of groups of pupils and which may lead to their being identified and processed as having SEN nor is there a consideration of the inabilities of the education system to engage appropriately with the pupil diversity they represent.

The lack of such politics is evident when we consider way in which variations in patterns of identification and statementing are dealt with. Thus there is a recognition that the process is not an 'exact science' in that much space was devoted to an analysis of patterns of statementing 'behaviour' through the provision of various tables illustrating differences in the percentages of statemented pupils between the various Metropolitan

districts, between the New Unitary Authorities and Non-Metropolitan Counties and between Inner and Outer London. The document also describes variations between schools themselves in the proportion of children being identified as having SEN (p 38-9) Both of these 'issues' relating to patterns and rates of identification and statementing are considered worthy of note with the extent of the variation deemed to be in need of explanation and indeed action with subsequent sections devoted to the question of how to obtain 'greater national consistency' in order to change things. (p40)

However the much greater variations in the patterns and rates of identification and statementing as between boys and girls and also in relation to black pupils, and the class based nature of these processes are not even mentioned let alone do they qualify as an issue worthy of action. The document then is ostensibly gender, race and class blind and to that extent neglects or ignores the wider social context, with its main prescriptions being based on a 'school effectiveness' discourse. However in the final chapter on 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' it is stated that the term 'EBD' is applied '...to a broad range of people - **preponderantly boys...**' (p78 my emphasis) No explanation as to why this might be is attempted nor indeed is it followed up as an issue to be explained. It seems curiously to be a throwaway fact at first, perhaps an implicit recognition of a wider 'boys debate.' Again given that the overwhelming degree of this 'preponderance' must be known to the authors it seems curious therefore that this 'fact' is identified but not elaborated upon with much of the rest of the chapter being devoted to various strategies for dealing with and responding to the problems generated by such pupils for example early intervention, behavioural policies and so on.

These comments sit rather uneasily with the other strategies outlined and beg a number of questions. For example if pupils who are identified as having 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' (who are preponderantly boys) need to be located in some way within a 'wider society' and not simply within 'schools' then it is difficult to resist the argument that this is also the case for pupils identified as manifesting other forms and types of 'special educational need,' (also preponderantly boys.) Indeed by what criteria are such distinctions made? Thus if as the paper argues, '..we do not expect schools to solve unaided, problems which are linked to wider social issues...' (p 79) ie. if a political response is appropriate as in the creation of 'hope not disaffection' in relation to pupils who are identified as having EBD then why not a similarly based analysis in relation to others? To put it another way, if social processes and social context are considered part of the problem, and therefore solution in relation to EBD it would have been useful for the authors to outline to what extent and in what sense they consider this to be so and indeed why it is not considered to be the case in relation to other forms and types of SEN.

Conclusion.

The history of policy making and provision over the past twenty years or so has revealed a great deal of activity, from the Warnock Report of 1978, the 1981 Education Act, the Education Reform Act of 1988 the 1993 Act with its Code of Practice and the 1997 Green Paper. However despite the changes in administrative practices and the increasing rhetorical emphases on inclusion the underlying processes and practices remain the same and are ones in which a significant and ever increasing number of pupils find themselves in 'special' categories.

Indeed the task for teachers throughout this time has remained and continues to be that of modifying and adapting existing 'mainstream' curricula and providing compensatory or additional support to pupils to seek to ensure their access to it, all pupils having to be fitted into existing structures, with the ever present threat of their being excluded if their differences could not be sufficiently normalised.

Whilst the basic model has remained the same broader political changes have had the effect of reinforcing / increasing its usage not least of which having been those exclusionary pressures resulting from much recent legislation (D.E.S.1988, D.F.E. 1993) which have served to provide increased incentives for teachers to identify more and more of their pupils pupils as in need, and also to reinforce the notion of S.E.N. as being an individual problem. Thus, for example, the marketisation / commodification of schooling through such things as open enrolments, key stage assessments and the publication of exam results in the form of league tables, ie. 'high stakes testing' (Pollard and Tann 1993), and a teacher blaming political culture, has served to increase concerns amongst teachers. that pupils who have difficulties or seem 'harder to teach,' (Fish and Evans 1995) will adversely affect their scores at eg. end of Key Stage assessments and thereby their position in the marketplace, leading parents to choose more supposedly successful schools.

This educational 'Darwinism,' involving competing for the patronage of parents on the basis of crude and misleading indicators of performance such as the 'raw' scores obtained from government tests, has hardly been conducive to the development within schools of more open evaluations of

their practices in relation to pupils considered to 'have' special educational needs.

Thus, despite the rhetoric in relation to inclusion, 'special' education continues to thrive, with an increasing emphasis on *differences* between students, and practices which construct many such differences as deficits to be remediated and excluded rather than as diversity to be celebrated.

However many such supposed deficits may be seen to be substantially based on differences which have their sources in the wider society, hence the disproportionate identification for example of members of certain groups, such as working class boys. However despite some implicit recognition of this 'problem' the way in which the issue is framed serves largely to mask the nature of the processes which lead to their supposed failure by continuing to 'read' and 'treat' them substantially as the results of the deficiencies of individuals rather than the outcomes of or as related to, wider social and educational processes. It seems therefore that 'special education' continues to provide a means of managing and indeed legitimating their 'failure.'

This then is the developing context within which the perceptions, understandings and practices of those pupils, parents, teachers and schools who are the focus of this study must be located.

Chapter Five.
'To Twist The Stick ....' The Work
of Pierre Bourdieu.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural reproduction sets out to explain the association between education and social stratification. He argues that the social hierarchy within capitalist societies is maintained and continued from generation to generation, without the use of direct force or coercion, but through indirect and cultural mechanisms which serve to mask and misrepresent the process, both from those who benefit from it and from those who are dominated by it. These processes are accomplished through the normal, taken for granted practices of everyday life. Bourdieu also seeks to demonstrate the ways in which the dominated participate in, and create the conditions of, their own domination. Education is regarded as pivotal to these processes because of its contribution to the maintenance of 'symbolic violence.' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

The major themes of Bourdieu's theories as they relate to education will be presented in this chapter, focussing on the concept of habitus and particularly its embodied nature. The major criticisms of his approach will then be presented and discussed and a justification for using aspects of his work as the theoretical basis for the empirical study will be provided.

Bourdieu's work may be seen as founded on an attempt to overcome or transcend, the debate within social science representing a set of oppositions variously subsumed under the rubric of agency versus structure, or subjectivism versus objectivism. (Harker et.al.1990, Calhoun et.al. 1993, Brubaker 1985, Jenkins R. 1990) The agentic, subjectivist, side of the

debate representing an intellectual orientation to social science seeking to grasp the way the world appears to individuals and considering this to represent more or less adequate knowledge about that social world. The objectivist, structural, side focusing rather on the objective relations which are said to structure both practices and representations of those practices, and which are seen as being beyond the grasp / understanding of the individuals involved.

Bourdieu considers both orientations inadequate, arguing that whereas objectivism is able to produce knowledge of the social world which is not reducible to the knowledge of lay actors, it cannot grasp the link between the structures it elucidates and the practical actions of individuals, other than to see them as the working out of the model or structure developed by the analyst. Also, whilst subjectivism recognises that the consciousness and practical knowledge of the world possessed by individuals are important aspects of that social world they do not explore fully the objective conditions that may produce the subjective orientations to action they identify, rather the social structure is viewed as the sum total of individual acts and strategies.

Bourdieu attempts to transcend these problems through the development of a theory of practice, a theory of the mutual penetration of subjective and objective structures, where the interaction of the habitus and the field is the focus for the analysis of the practice of a group or individual. This approach has been variously termed structuralist constructivism or equally constructivist structuralism by Bourdieu himself (1989) and by Harker et.al. (1990) as generative structuralism.

This method of straddling or bridging the divide between the objective and subjective approaches to social science is described by Wacquant in the following way,

> *'First, we push aside mundane representations to construct the objective structures.... the distribution of socially efficient resources that define the external constraints bearing on interactions and representations. Secondly, we reintroduce the immediate lived experience of agents in order to explicate the categories of perception and appreciation* (dispositions) *that structure the action from the inside.. ..... although the two moments of analysis are equally necessary they are not equal: epistemological priority is granted to objectivist rupture over subjectivist understanding. ..... For the viewpoints of agents will vary systematically with the point they occupy in objective social space.'* (1992. p 11.)

We see then that Bourdieu considers the viewpoints of agents, which exist in the form of systems of classification, interpretations and definitions of situations, as secondary to and indeed deriving from the 'external' structures of society. He argues that there is a correspondence between these mental and social structures, a structural homology in which the mental schemata are nothing more than the embodiment of the social structure. Also these symbolic systems, these ways of classifying the world, are seen by him as not merely instruments of knowledge but instruments of domination, as social products which do not simply mirror social relations but are constitutive of them. (Bourdieu 1984).

Habitus.

Bourdieu's theory of practice has at its core the concept of habitus. Thus social life cannot be understood as an aggregate of individual decisions and actions, nor as determined by overarching social structures. Indeed this is seen as a false dichotomy serving to obscure the nature of our durable

immersion within the social world. Rather than being that of an individual as a subject confronting the world as an object, the relationship is seen as one of ontological complicity, (Bourdieu P.and L.J.D.Wacquant 1992 p128) or mutual possession, between the habitus and the world which determines it. (Wacquant p20.)

It is through the habitus that Bourdieu seeks to explain the coordination and regularity of agents actions as deriving from a 'practical mastery' of the social world rather than being the result of either a rational calculation or the following of a set of rules. The habitus is a *modus operandi*, a generative principle, the link that mediates structure and individual practice.

This practical mastery or practical sense is described by Bourdieu as analogous to the way in which a games player through experience comes to be able to anticipate and understand other players' moves and to develop her / his own through the development of a 'feel for the game' (1990 p 66) and declares the habitus to be,

> *'a system of durable, transposable dispositions*
> *which function as the generative basis of*
> *structured, objectively unified practices.'* (Bourdieu1979 vii)

These dispositions represent the class or more accurately familial culture as it is internalised by or embodied within the individual, and forms the basis of their actions in various settings or fields. They are *durable* in that they are ingrained within the body in such a way that they endure throughout the life history of the individual, *generative* and *transposable* in the sense that they are able to generate practices and perceptions in fields other than those in which they were originally acquired, and *structured* in that they reflect the social conditions in which they were acquired.

The habitus is regarded as the product of history inscribed within the individual in the form of schemes of thought, action and perception of that 'history' and operates as a guarantee of the 'active presence of past experience.' (Bourdieu 1979 P54)

The habitus of a group or class exists then, in the form of dispositions to think, feel, act and even move in particular ways and are an 'embodiment' within each individual of the sedimented historical experiences and practices of the class or group constructed in relation to the material conditions of existence experienced by them, and is inculcated as much by experience as by explicit teaching. Indeed, much of the effects of the habitus are revealed at a subconscious level, in the form of a taken for granted and altogether natural orientation, towards the world. This 'practical mastery' is said by Wacquant (1992 p19) to,

> 'capture the intentionality without intention, the knowledge
> without cognitive intent, the prereflective, infraconscious
> mastery that agents acquire of their social world ...'

An extremely important aspect of the habitus is its physical 'embodiment.' Thus Bourdieu refers to our 'practical sense,' as being 'a **quasi bodily** involvement in the world ...' (1990a p66) he also refers to the practical beliefs which orientate such involvement as being, 'not a state of mind ... but rather a **state of the body**.' (p68) He considers the body to be an important 'marker' of social location, whereby different social classes, class fractions or groups develop distinct orientations to their bodies and produce substantially distinct bodily forms which come to bear a particular symbolic value. (Bourdieu 1984) He argues therefore, that bodies may be regarded as

a form of physical capital and as such will posess differing exchange values within the various fields they enter.

He uses the term bodily hexis to describe the way in which social relationships and structures may be seen to be ingrained on the body and argues that this is achieved through the often unconscious teaching which comes from assuming a particular position within society.

It is through this pedagogic action, that 'bodies' become inscribed with the marks of social class and gender, 'marks' which through their symbolic effects may be seen as instruments of domination / subordination, such effects therefore not simply mirroring social relations but which may be seen as partly constitutive of those relations.

Thus, Bourdieu speaks of, 'mechanisms of domination (operating through) the unconscious manipulation of the body' (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992 p 115) He gives an example of gender differentiation when in discussing Kabyle society he refers to how male and female bodies are formed through aspects of their relative positions and interactions which can be read in their various movements and gestures. Thus the women are expected to walk behind their men with backs slightly bent but the men to walk upright looking straight ahead (Bourdieu 1990a p70) Elements of this social order may indeed be seen to quite literally 'form' the body, leaving its marks in the stooped backs of the older women.

He makes the further point that the resultant gendered habitus acts as to ensure the misrecognition of what are in effect the results of social processes arguing that,

> *'the work aimed at transforming into nature the arbitrary product of history finds its apparent foundation in the appearance of the body, at the same time as it creates real effects on the body and inside the brain ... (this) project of socialisation of the biological and of biologising the social ... reverses the relation between cause and effects ....'* (quoted in Fowler 1997 p136)

Taking an example from French society, he also shows how individuals' whole relationship to the social world may be revealed through a consideration of the manner and style in which he (sic) carries himself, his posture, demeanour, bearing, gait and so on, when he speaks of the timidity and lack of confidence of the petit bourgeois who gives himself away by his unease, his constant checking and (hyper)correcting of himself. This he contrasts with the 'bourgeois' who is at ease with himself and his body and whose confidence may equally be recognised in his deportment. (Bourdieu 1984 p207)

Bourdieu argues that we learn to take on styles of bodily deportment and practices which reveal and encode the subtlest nuances of social position. The important points made by him however are that these differences in deportment, in dress style, speech patterns and so on, are not 'natural' but are highly skilled accomplishments, the result of a labour of differentiation, achieved primarily through pedagogic action described either as 'diffuse education' which is the result of the individual's contact with or immersion within their immediate social group, or as 'family education' the result of explicit teaching / socialisation within the family. Further the resultant bodies become markers of social location and may be considered as mnemonic devices through which their possessors fundamental relationships to the social world may be revealed and to which may be attached a particular symbolic and exchange value within the various fields they may enter.

Now, whilst the habitus is disproportionately the product of early childhood experience (Bourdieu 1990 p 54) particularly that of unconscious family socialisation, it is continually modified by the individual's encounter with the world. Moreover, as circumstances or what we may call objective conditions change so too does the habitus attempt some compromise with these changed material circumstances (Harker R. 1990 p101.) Indeed Bourdieu characterises the habitus as an 'open system of dispositions' implying that it is ever open to the influence of experience. (Bourdieu P. and Wacquant 1992 p133) However he qualifies this notion of an 'open system,' declaring that the processes which have led to a particular habitus are relatively irreversible and that there is,

> *'a probability, inscribed in the social destiny associated with certain*
> *social conditions, that experiences will confirm habitus.'*
> (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992. p133)

Thus, whilst there are many references to the generative aspects of habitus, to the dialectic relation between the individual and the circumstances in which she finds herself, circumstances which may call forth a wide repertoire of possible actions, it seems however that the habitus 'tends' to produce actions which are ultimately reproductive rather than transformative.

Habitus and its effects are not revealed in the abstract but in relation to a particular situation, that is when individuals act they do so in specific contexts and settings, thus practices or perceptions are not products of the habitus as such but, that of an encounter between a habitus and a field.

Fields.

In describing fields Bourdieu uses the analogy of a game. Thus in playing a game we each bring something in the way of resources, motivations and expectations. We agree by playing, that the game is worth playing and seek to enhance our position within it. We 'read' the game and make our moves accordingly. Each game has its own specific logic or implicit and explicit rules. Fields are defined by that which is at stake, that which is played for within each of them. Players within the field therefore seek to preserve or improve their positions with respect to the 'defining capital' of the field.

In describing activities within fields Bourdieu employs the language of economics using terms such as capital, market and profit in a metaphorical sense. Within fields that are not economic in a narrow sense practices may not be directed towards an economic gain, but by analogy may more or less conform to a logic which is economic in a wider sense, insofar as it is directed at the increase or development of some kind of 'capital' (whether cultural, social or symbolic), (Bourdieu1986) or the enhancement of some kind of 'profit'. There is a link posited therefore between actions and interests. The actions and practices of agents are seen as being conducted in the pursuit of their interests, even when such actions or practices give every impression of being disinterested. This may be seen as an economy of cultural practices with groups strategising and competing for real and symbolic profits.

Fields, then are the various arenas within which struggles take place over access to the specific resources they contain, with individuals' and groups' positions within the fields' heirarchies relating to the perceived value of the resources and goods they possess in relation to the particular form of

capital promoted within each field. Thus individuals and groups bring their goods and resources (capitals), to the field as if to a market for investment, with activity being directed towards the accumulation of the form of capital promoted, sought after, or at stake within the field. However because 'the social world is accumulated history,' (Bourdieu 1986 p240) the various social groups possess differing levels of and forms of resources and goods (or capitals) to invest and also differing capacities to convert or transform these into the optimum form appropriate to the field in question, and then into economic capital. Thus the capital which subordinate groups bring to the field usually has less exchange value within that field than that brought by dominant groups. Therefore, the competition for the goods and resources promoted or at stake within the field is inevitably unequal and each field tends to reproduce the structure of the wider class society.

The Field of Education.

Bourdieu argues that there is a correspondence or structural homology between mental and social structures, between systems of classification, interpretations and definitions of situations and the 'external' structures of society. Indeed the dispositions of the habitus are explained as being derived in a rather direct way from agents' social locations. More broadly however, these ways of classifying the world are seen by him as not merely instruments of power but as instruments of domination, as social products which do not simply mirror social relations but are constitutive of those relations. (Bourdieu 1984)

He employs the term **'symbolic violence'** to describe the imposition of such classificatory systems of symbolism and meaning on groups, individuals or classes in such a way that they appear or are experienced as legitimate.

(Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) He also uses the term **'cultural arbitrary'** to refer to the specific culture of any particular group. By this he means that in an anthropological sense all cultures are relative, equally valid and therefore equally 'arbitrary' despite the fact that they are valued differently in social fields. The inculcation or imposition of a cultural arbitrary comes about as the result of pedagogic action. Bourdieu refers to three types of such action, *diffuse education*, which comes about as the result of the individual's contact with or immersion within the milieu of their immediate social group, *family education*, which comes about as the result of explicit teaching / socialisation within the family and *institutional education*, which relates to the child's experience within the education system. (Jenkins 1992 p105). Disproportionate influence is given by Bourdieu to the first two forms of pedagogic action which are responsible for the distinctive way of viewing the world and one's place in it of the various social groups or classes. This is the primary habitus, which can never be fully discarded and will continue to exert influence even though it may be overlaid by a secondary habitus, the outcome of further pedagogic action within educational institutions. (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977)

Bourdieu's theory of the part played by the education system in cultural and social reproduction places great emphasis on the concept of **cultural capital,** which whilst closely linked to the concept of habitus nonetheless has a broader application. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital can exist in three forms; in **the embodied state,** ('as long lasting dispositions of mind and body'), **the objectified state** (in the form of cultural goods) and **the institutionalised state** (in the form of educational qualifications). (Bourdieu 1986 p243) Thus whilst habitus refers to 'embedded' social structures that relate directly to and perhaps define a person's general dispositions and whilst cultural capital can be seen to incorporate those

habitus derived dispositions, it can also be extended to refer to the outcomes of the individuals experience within particular fields. Cultural capital in this context then, can be said to refer to the current value placed upon a person's habitus within the field of education.

Thus, on entry to school one might expect the child's habitus and cultural capital to be more or less the same, however Bourdieu's theory allows for the possibility of change, for the balance to be modified throughoutt the child's school career, through the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge commensurate with a degree of success within the educational system. It must be said however that the overwhelming emphasis in Bourdieu's theory is on the reproductive rather than the transformative potential of these processes.

Reproduction in Education.

In the prologue to *Les Heretiers* Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) discuss the methods used by the Omaha Indians to choose new sorcerers, positions of great prestige within the community. The method is one of ostensibly open competition for such positions. Candidates are expected to spend some time in the wilderness awaiting a vision, and then must return and tell of what they have seen. These accounts of visions are judged for authenticity by current sorcerers who invariably come to judge members of their own kin to have those visions which qualify them to become sorcerers themselves!

Bourdieu's work as applied to education may be seen to involve a similar attempt to chart or demonstrate the social origins of judgements of 'worth' within modern societies   though in this case as expressed through conceptions of 'academic attainment.'

119.

Bourdieu argues that a hierarchical relationship obtains within society between various groups, classes and cultures and that it is the cultural arbitrary of the dominant social group that is adopted as the legitimate culture of the schools and the education system. This adoption is secured through the processes of struggle over the symbolic power that characterises the field of education and is a part of the wider class struggle within society. Further, this cultural arbitrary is presented as culture itself as neutral and as universal thereby masking the power relations within society that permit its imposition to be successful. Moreover, this is experienced as legitimate and as positively valued for the most part. It is in this sense that he asserts that the schools are involved in the promotion of symbolic violence, defined as the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning upon groups such that this imposition is perceived by the recipients as legitimate. Bourdieu argues however that no pedagogic action is or can be neutral universal or culturally free.

He argues that the education system facilitates the legitimation and peaceful reproduction of the social hierarchy by locating the source of educational differences as expressed in educational outcomes, in neutral events or qualities external to the basic relations of power and authority which makes up the hierarchy, thus misrecognising the consequences of those power and authority relations as the consequences of those neutral qualities instead.

Thus the arbitrary nature of cultural transmission in the educational system is not recognised and schools thereby assume firstly that they are culturally neutral or universal institutions who are equally 'available' to all pupils whatever their backgrounds, and following on from this that they differentiate between pupils only on the basis of equally neutral and

universal characteristics such as ability, aptitude, perseverence, giftedness, and so on.

According to Bourdieu, this naturalising of the culture of the dominant group as school culture means that success within education depends on a familiarity with or acculturation to the language and cultural codes of the school, putting at a disadvantage individuals whose habitus does not reflect the cultural arbitrary of the dominant group. This is a system therefore where the cultural competencies and qualities needed for success are never defined, but remain implicit. Because they are implicit, unexamined and taken for granted they are not, indeed could not, be taught. Schools therefore 'examine what they do not teach' (Bourdieu 1977) and those whose habitus prepares them for the 'mysteries' of schooling appear to be naturally gifted. In this way the social distribution of cultural capital appears to be a natural distribution of personal qualities and abilities. (Atkinson and Delamont 1985)

The incompatability between the habitus that the schools take for granted and that possessed by pupils from subordinate social groups is such that pupils from these groups experience less success than those whose habitus is such that they are already attuned to or socialised into the culture, values, assumptions, patterns of interaction language use and expectations in terms of bodily hexis, of school culture. Thus those pupils who possess the appropriate cultural capital are rewarded with success, success which is misrecognised as being the result of superior abilities rather than a mere artefact of the way schools operate within a class society.

In both cases, that of success, and of failure, it is the pupils' familiarity with the dominant cultural arbitrary that is being assessed. In this way Bourdieu argues the,

'educational system ... transforms social classifications into
academic classifications, with every appearance of neutrality.'
(Bourdieu 1977 p387)

Nash characterises Bourdieu's theory as a model of educational exclusion by neglect, whereby schools systematically ignore the habitus and cultural capital of pupils from subordinate social groups. (Nash 1990) Further, teachers perceive a lack of continuity between home and school and employ notions of the readiness or lack of it for school knowledge in relation to pupils which express an implicit bias against those pupils who demonstrate knowledge, behaviours or attitudes that are not reflective of the culture of the school.

The imposition of the cultural arbitrary of the dominant social groups within the field of education may in Bourdieu's terms be seen as the creation of a market in cultural capital in which a single and particular habitus becomes the norm, thus disadvantaging and devaluing all others. Accordingly the field of education will tend to endow the practices, actions and responses of pupils belonging to subordinate social groups as of comparatively low value as compared to the members of more dominant groups.

Bourdieu argues that within any field, agents (pupils in this case) take into account the market conditions within which their contributions will be received and valued by others. In this way the pupils' assessment of these likely responses operate as internal constraints in anticipation of the likely value that their products will receive. Therefore, all such efforts are to some

extent euphemised or modified by a form of self censorship through a process of anticipation.

Thus those who possess the appropriate habitus will feel at home at school, will experience no discontinuity, or dissonance between their values, actions, preferred patterns of interaction, use of language, expectations in terms of bodily hexis and so on and that valorised by the school, or as Bourdieu puts it,

'when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water,' it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted.'
(Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992)

He argues that the experience of the social world of the school will be rather different for members of the dominated classes and will be such that they will be very much like fishes *out* of water. They will *feel* and *be*, *intimidated*. This intimidation being exerted through the minutiae of everyday interaction, through words, gestures, movements and intonations of domination and powerfully suggestive of a sense of place and of limits to those whose habitus predisposes them to decode the relevant signals and understand their veiled social meaning. (Kraise B. 1993) A confrontation by such acts of symbolic violence may invoke a response in such pupils of 'not for the likes of us.' Bourdieu refers to this euphemised response of self-censorship as the 'dynamic of the causality of the probable.' (Bourdieu 1977) This unconscious calculation, or 'subjective expectation of objective probabilities,' he argues, often leads members of dominated groups to opt out of educational and other competition by anticipating a possible future for themselves and acting accordingly. Thus certain eventualities are felt possible or reasonable, others unlikely or even impossible these revealing a rough correspondence between such

aspirations or expectations and what social scientists would recognise as the probable objective futures for members of these groups. (Brubaker 1985)

It is in this sense therefore that Bourdieu argues that the dominated classes are complicit in their own domination, with pupils and their families adjusting their aspirations and ambitions in line with what they intuitively perceive are their probabilities of success.

Thus according to Bourdieu,

> *'objective limits become a sense of limits .... which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded.'* (Bourdieu 1984 p471)

This is 'making a virtue out of necessity' and is said to lead pupils from dominated classes to opt out or to choose 'safe' rather than more ambitious courses and career options even when they do meet with a measure of success and serves to further reinforce the reproductive effects of the interaction between their habitus and the field of education.

Criticisms of Bourdieu's Theory.

In general terms, perhaps one of the greatest difficulties in approaching Bourdieu's work is the nature and style of his writing, a style which is described variously as complex, intimidatory, obscure, opaque and abstract and has led to many complaints of inconsistencies and ambiguities in both the definition and use of his major concepts. (see for example, Jenkins 1992 p. 10 Harker et.al. 1990 p219 Nash 1990 p. 444 Connell B. 1983)

Bourdieu's response to such criticisms is to declare that a complex reality can only be represented by a complex writing style as in the following comment,

> 'you know when I write, I fear many things, that's to say many wrong readings. That explains the complexity of my sentences ... I try to discourage in advance the wrong readings that I can often predict. (Bourdieu 1993a p.4)

He has also commented that he doesn't care much for 'professorial definitions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p 95) and argued that the theoretical instruments that he has produced in the course of his empirical investigations, such as the concept of habitus, were produced not to become the subject of theoretical commentary, nor to be analysed as if they were definitive, precise, and without ambiguity, but are more like a set of thinking tools, to be put to use in new research, and he compares his works to, 'gymnastics handbooks' meant to be used for exercise. (Bourdieu 1993) In the light of some criticisms of his work he takes his critics to task for misunderstanding his intentions, claiming that whilst his purpose has been the production of 'open concepts' meant to guide empirical work he accuses his critics of reading his work in a 'theoretical' or theoreticist vein,' and further for often not considering his work as a whole, but for relying sometimes on a single publication, claiming that as a result, they criticise a distorted representation of his work and not the work itself. (Bourdieu 1990 p107)

Many commentators indeed agree that the search for precise and final definitions in Bourdieu's work is misplaced. Thus Brubaker writing in 1993 considers his earlier attempts to pin down or provide a precise meaning for habitus (1985 op.cit.) mistaken. He considers Bourdieu's project to be the

inculcation in us, his readers, of a particular sociological habitus, a particular way of looking at the world, and of doing sociology. Harker et.al. (1990) consider that his work is best evaluated by using it in empirical enquiries. This is echoed by Hage who warns against approaches to Bourdieu's work which consume it as social theory rather than using it critically to generate empirically oriented sociological work. (Hage G. 1994 p420) Wacquant also considers the importance of Bourdieu's work to lie not in any of his particular concepts or theories but in the methods by which he produces and uses them, that is his modus operandi not his opus operatum. (1992 p.ix preface) Indeed Nash whilst describing Bourdieu's presentation of his theories as 'riddled with contradictions ellipses and evasions..' nonetheless accepts that it is actually his substantive work that, '..forces us to recognise his real status..' (1999 p 179)

One aspect of Bourdieu's *modus operandi* involves an approach to problems which he describes in terms of the Maoist slogan 'twisting the stick the other way,' (Bourdieu 1993a p.2) which Brubaker describes in the following terms,

> *'Because sociology must routinely contend with false but powerfully
> entrenched beliefs it may be necessary to exaggerate or ironise or
> polemicise in order to, "arouse the reader from his doxic slumber,"
> (1987 p68) ... to "employ symbolic violence against symbolic violence" ..
> to "break the circle of belief." (Actes 1975 p3)'* (Brubaker 1993 p217)

This aspect of his work has led to many criticisms of the sort perhaps best exemplified by Alexander who criticises Bourdieu for his profound pessimism and his apparent disdain for the efforts of social reformers to create a better society. (Alexander J.C. 1995 p192.) Waquant explains however that Bourdieu's emphasis on the conservative reproductive function of education may best be seen as a corrective to the overly

optimistic climate which prevailed when much of it was written, a climate where the ideas of achievement, meritocracy and the 'end of ideology' held sway. He argues that Bourdieu chooses to focus on those aspects and processes that are most hidden from view and which indeed gain their efficacy from such invisibility, arguing such a focus to be 'a self conscious scientific principle informing all of this work.' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p80)

Other difficulties in interpreting Bourdieu's work relate on the one hand, to the incomplete and non-sequential translation of his work, and on the other to the sheer breadth of it, leading some commentators to warn of the dangers of incomplete and disjointed readings. (Garnham N. and Williams R. 1980) Indeed Fowler argues that many of the criticisms made of his work would be impossible to sustain were the critics and those who consume *their* work to be familiar with his complete works. (Fowler B. 1997 p7)

Not withstanding these difficulties however, this section will consider the main substantive criticisms of Bourdieu's work and a justification for using aspects of his work and the extent and nature of the deployment of his approach, as the theoretical basis for the empirical study will be provided.

The Habitus.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been the focus of much discussion and criticism, with Alexander describing it as deterministic, ambiguous and too loosely defined (Alexander J.C. 1995 p. 136) and Sewell seeing it as being 'agent proof' (Sewell 1992 p.15). Brubaker, criticises it for its vagueness and seemingly endless versatility, (Brubaker R. 1985 p.760) whereas

Cicourel also finds it an extremely difficult concept to pin down. (quoted in Reay D. 1995 p357). Others however, praise what they see as an exciting and subtle concept (Collins 1993 p.126 Lemert C. 1990 p.299) with Miller and Branson considering habitus to describe the individual as 'a constant improviser in an ambiguous and partially understood world.' (Miller and Branson 1987 p.218)

However, even some of those who are sympathetic to Bourdieu's project nonetheless share similar concerns. Thus, whatever the specific details of the various criticisms levelled at Bourdieu's theories, whether they relate to ambiguities of definition or usage of the various concepts and terms, or to the links between them in forming the overall theoretical structure, these criticisms may be seen to coalesce around the main charge of determinism.

Fowler sums up the general thrust of many of the arguments when she accuses Bourdieu of depicting the habitus of the dominated classes as 'defensive and the product of a colonised sense of inferiority.'(Fowler B. 1997 p4-5)

In similar vein Jenkins takes Bourdieu to task for his explanation of how the dispositions of the habitus lead individuals to act in a way that reproduces the social structure through his notion of the causality of the probable or the subjective expectation of objective probabilities. He argues that Bourdieu is unclear about the processes by which individuals identify and come to accept the probability of this future, and that the implications of this mechanism seems to render the dominated classes incapable of imagining the possibility of any social change. (Jenkins 1992 p28)

'The Friday Morning Group' (Harker et. al. 1990) also find the notion of agency contained within Bourdieu's writing to be flawed and comment on the seeming lack of choices available to agents Alexander shares these sentiments and characterises Bourdieu's 'agency' as, 'self neutralising.' (1995 p136)

More specifically, many of these criticisms centre on the deterministic implications of the notions of practical mastery and unconscious strategising, as a means of describing the actions of individuals and also to the nature of the link between such actions and the habitus of the class or group of the individual.

Habitus is the central means by which Bourdieu attempts to account for actions in the social world, actions which are viewed as practices having the double nature of being both regular and improvised. This social action as regulated improvisations, is seen as expressing a practical mastery of the social world described as the feel for the game. Bourdieu develops this emphasis on the habitus as practical mastery as part of a critique of rational action theory which he regards as providing an under socialised view of action.

Such an approach he argues approach derives from the ignoring of history, both of the individual and of various collectivities, classes, groups and societies and mocks it as providing a naive and one dimensional model which implies,

> 'an imaginary universe of perfect competition or perfect equality of opportunity, a world without inertia, without accumulation, without heredity or acquired properties, in which every moment is perfectly independent of the previous one, every soldier has a marshal's baton in his knapsack ..(where).. at each moment anyone can become anything....' (Bourdieu 1986 p241)

Bourdieu's intention in using the analogies of the feel for the game and that of practical mastery is to give a sense of the unreflective and habitual nature of much social action. Thus agents are said to behave / respond in a particular situation, relatively unthinkingly and without reference to a body of knowledge, doing what feels right, bypassing rational calculation in favour of a following of dispositions.

This according to Bourdieu is because one's place in the world and one's understanding of this is developed through the experiences of everyday life and is in large part unconsciously derived from these experiences. The resultant production of a socially competent performance in whatever context this manifests itself then is seen as not something of which the agent is aware in the sense of being able to give a full explanation of her behaviours / actions but rather derives from a thoughtlessness of 'habit and habituation.' (Jenkins 1992 p.76)

Thus, Bourdieu's concept of habitus grants a primacy to the intangible unconscious effects of one's experience of the social world such that it influences in large part one's actions and responses in various contexts. However he also talks of such actions as 'strategies,' but does not use this term in the conventional sense where it implies conscious purposive action, rather, he employs a notion whereby the action of an individual may be said to have the 'effect' of pursuing or fulfilling the strategy of the group and which may be done without a conscious strategising on the part of the individual. This therefore, is an 'unconscious strategy,' whereby reason is seen as immanent in practices but is not to be located in consciously calculated decisions. The difficulties of sustaining the theoretical oxymoron of an unconscious strategy (Alexander J.C. 1995) implying that the practical

logic of the dispositions and therefore in effect much / most? social action is beyond consciousness leads Jenkins to accuse Bourdieu of an over reaction, in his rejection of rational action theory. He maintains that at an experiental level we 'know' that agents 'do' make decisions and attempt to act upon them and that therefore any theory which purports to account for social action must recognise this, or be considered, as one sided, and therefore inadequate, as those which maintain that, conscious decision making is all we need to understand. (Jenkins 1992 p.74.)

Thus, the model of practice which emerges from the above criticisms is one which apparently denies the importance of conscious rational action on the part of the individual and implies a determinism which the notion of strategising fails to counter.

Further, the habitus is said to be an embodiment within each individual of the sedimented historical experiences and practices of the class or group, constructed in relation to the material conditions of existence experienced by them, and is a *modus operandi*, a generative principle, the link that mediates structure and individual practice, thereby forming the basis of individuals' actions within various settings or fields.

Some critics however consider Bourdieu's use of habitus to refer to the characteristics of both the group and that of the individual to be problematic, that is between habitus as a collective phenomena the product of a group's collective history, and habitus as the manifestation of that history within the embodied dispositions of an individual member of that group. The question of the nature of the link between these two manifestations of habitus is discussed by Jenkins (1992) who distinguishes between Bourdieu's emphasis on the objective nature of the habitus when

referring to the group, that is a phenomenon with potentially deterministic features, and its more open subjective and creative nature when referring to the individual where it allows for an element of flexibility. Ultimately however, he regards Bourdieu as not providing a satisfactory account of the way in which the individual may overcome her primary habitus and adjust to changing social conditions. This last point is taken up by LiPuma who also points to the underdevelopment of the relationship between social classification (class) and agency in Bourdieu's account, criticising it for providing no explanation of what he terms the 'relative' internalisation of habitus, that is, the process by which or conditions under which of how some individuals are seemingly able to overcome or transform their habitus and other apparently not. (Lipuma 1993 p 24)

Nash (1990) echoes these concerns, he identifies three different aspects of habitus. These are the *collective* habitus which he describes as the unifying cultural code for the group, the *dispositional* habitus, which is the code as it is internalised or embodied within individuals in the group, and the *manifest* habitus which is the practice of a characteristic style. The first two aspects of habitus are held to refer to those generally recognised aspects of any social or cultural group and their influences on individual members' sense of themselves of their community and of their place within society. The third aspect is said to represent the potential for individuality and change. However he argues that the model is ultimately deterministic because of the precedence given in Bourdieu's theories to the first two elements of habitus. He also considers what he perceives as Bourdieu's emphasis on the way in which the practices of individuals realise the strategic ends of their cultural group to be an inadequate way of accounting for the actions of individuals.

This point he returns to in a later paper where he refers to the,

> *'profoundly inexplicable mechanism* (whereby) *those brought up within the class are supposed to have internalised a habitus with the objective chances of that class built into it...'* (1999 p 178)

commenting further and echoing the criticisms of LiPuma and Jenkins that there is within Bourdieu's theory,

> *'no explanation of why this rather than that individual is included amongst the successful .. '* (p 178)

However, in Bourdieu's defence it may be said that whilst he does indeed grant primacy to the unconscious effects of individuals' experience of the social world on our actions he also allows for the possibility of other sources of action arguing that the habitus is but,

> *'one principle of production of practices among others and although it is **more frequently in play than any other** .... it may be superseded ... by other principles such as rational and conscious computation.'* (Bourdieu 1990 p108) (my emphasis)

Thus he argues that reflexive analysis may allow us to overcome and control the first inclinations of the habitus through altering our perceptions and understandings of situations and thereby changing our actions accordingly. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p136) Many difficulties remain with Bourdieu's position however, for the circumstances under which such a 'conscious computation' or an inhibition of the inclinations of the habitus may be brought into play are regarded as fairly circumscribed and exceptional. (1990 op.cit. p108) What he cannot escape from therefore is the charge of at least a 'soft determinism,' in his work, a position which is

implicit in every qualification he puts on the supposed, open system of dispositions, which is the habitus. (see for example Bourdieu 1992 p133)

For example he states on the one hand that the habitus 'is durable but not eternal,' but on the other, 'that there is a probability inscribed in the social destiny associated with definite social conditions, that experiences will confirm habitus.' (Bourdieu 1992 p133) He also states that 'Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it..' yet further down the same page talks of the *relative irreversibility*' of the 'generative preference structures that constitute habitus,' argues that all experiences are, 'perceived through categories already constructed by prior experiences," and posits therefore, 'a relative closure of the system of dispositions that constitute habitus.' (p133)

Habitus, Cultural Reproduction and Education.

Nash (1990) characterises Bourdieu's theory as one which implies the neglect, devaluation and refusal to recognise, the culture of students from dominated groups at school in favour of the promotion of the arbitrary culture of the dominant group. Thus it is the school's refusal to develop a universal pedagogy, one which would take nothing for granted, which leads to the failure of pupils from dominated groups and which privileges those from groups who are ready for school as evidenced by their possession of the appropriate habitus.

He disagrees however that such a universal pedagogy is a practical possibility and considers it inevitable that some pupils will arrive at school better prepared for the experiences school has to offer. Rather than support

the notion of the cultural arbitrary, he refers to what he terms the necessary culture of the school and speaks also of, the 'culture of literacy and science,' (op.cit. p 437) and the schools' 'literate culture.' (p438) He argues that the division of labour in society is such that certain groups will inevitably posses such culture (if only as a means of earning their living) and that therefore their offspring will tend to be advantaged by this. He argues that given this state of affairs the development of a pedagogy which would be fair to all groups would be impossible, and that attempts to allow children not familiar with the culture of the school to catch up could only be achieved by deliberately holding back those already advantaged. (op. cit. p 437)

However while Nash refers to the necessary rather than the 'arbitrary' culture of the school he nonetheless concedes the existence of, and indeed accounts for the possession of, such culture by certain groups who are thereby advantaged by it. In a sense it does not matter whether he calls school culture 'arbitrary' or necessary it is its possession by one group based as Bourdieu would argue on the experiences and practices of this group constructed in relation to the material conditions of existence experienced by them which is important. Indeed Nash seems to be arguing that while it may indeed be the arbitrary possession of one group it is in his view nonetheless necessary, thus offering no alternative to a system which acts as to compound the disadvantages suffered by one group. Moreover the difficulties of constructing a 'universal pedagogy' do not invalidate Bourdieu's argument that current practices disadvantage those who do not have a familiarity with this 'school culture.'

Nash also offers a partial explanation for 'educational outcomes' in his allusion to the requirement for certain universal and independent cognitive competencies within education, arguing that some forms of socialisation

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produce children who do not have such competencies and that to fail to recognise this is blinkered. (Nash 1990 p437) He further refers to the need to distinguish between forms of behaviour and a lack of cognitive structures which are the result of familial incompetence or neglect and those which relate to the cultural arbitrary and which may therefore be amenable to teaching.

However, the usefulness of such a distinction is questionable within the context of current schooling practices for given the existence of a 'school culture' (whether it be 'arbitrary' or necessary) and this 'culture's' disproportionate possession by certain groups, the question arises as to what extent and with what degree of accuracy we can separate the influences or effects of 'familial incompetence..' on particular pupils from that of their lack of familiarity with school 'culture' and indeed what practical effect this would have.

Connell's (1983) criticisms are much broader however, he accuses Bourdieu of providing an account which fails to connect with the reality of people as 'makers of their own lives ..(and)... not just ...(as).. bearers of a structure....' (p153) which he argues an adequate theory must provide. Similar points are made by many other writers who have focussed on his educational writings. (see for example Sharp 1980, Archer 1983, Giroux 1983, Willis 1983 and Jenkins 1982) These earlier criticisms centre on charges that Bourdieu's account is deterministic, mechanistic, functionalist and ahistorical, and provide therefore an inadequate account of changes at the level of the system as well as failing to incorporate an appropriate measure of agency at the level of the individual. (Jenkins 1992)

For example and in relation to the last point, Connell (1983) criticises Bourdieu's emphasis on the primary pedagogic 'work' carried out in the family arguing that he provides an inadequate account of how children are influenced by their parents' attitudes and educational experiences criticising what he regards as Bourdieu's assumption of a more or less 'harmonious absorbtion' (p 152) of parental attitudes and behaviours. He argues that such attitudes and behaviours may indeed exert a powerful influence on children but that such inter generational transmission may also be characterised by misunderstandings, crises, rejection and conflict.

However habitus was never meant to indicate such a process in relation to parental or any other attitudes. Indeed Bourdieu takes great pains to point to the improvisatory aspects of the habitus, (1990 p 108) thus while certain aspects of the habitus may seem to lead to deterministic conclusions, to interpret it as referring simply to an 'harmonious absorbtion' on the part of the child of attitudes and behaviours is to misunderstand Bourdieu's intention.

More widely, Archer takes issue with Bourdieu's breadth of application of the term 'cultural arbitrary.' She argues that he initially recognises that not all of the things taught and learned in schools are culturally arbitrary, in his declaration that pedagogy is, 'symbolic violence **insofar as** it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power,' (my emphasis) ('Reproduction' quoted in Archer M.S. 1983 p201) however she argues that he appears to forget the qualifying 'insofar as' in favour of an approach in which,

*'....education is regarded as **nothing but** the imposition of a cultural arbitrary ... (and) educational knowledge ... **nothing but** a saturate of class culture ...'* (p201) (my emphases)

She argues that most educational systems involve, a mixture of objective knowledge and instrumental training as well as 'cultural arbitrarinness' which means that Bourdieu's arguments fail to address 'a large part' of educational activities.(ibid p203)

However even given Archer's argument that a 'large part of educational activities,' may not be considered to be culturally arbitrary she nonetheless accepts that a proportion (perhaps a majority?) may be so described. Thus it may be appropriate to ask as to what might be considered a 'critical mass' in such a context. That is what amount, degree or proportion of 'cultural arbitrariness' is required in order for this to have a detrimental and cumulative effect on other aspects of schooling. Further given that any such 'arbitrariness' would be suffered by members of those subordinate groups whose historical relationship to the educational system may be described as that of 'failure,' then surely *any amount* of such 'arbitrariness' would be likely to compound such a disadvantage and is therefore a matter of great concern.

Archer, further criticises Bourdieu's general approach on the grounds that he neglects the education system within which the processes he purports to account for take place. This is said to involve three major assumptions on his part, those of 'penetrability,' 'complementarity' and 'homogeneity.' (1983 p196) Thus she argues that Bourdieu assumes the education system to be

'a completely permeable social institution ... ever open to and reflective of social structure, whose influence penetrates educational practice directly.'
(1983 p197)

She argues that he stresses the functional requirements of educational systems in terms of their roles in inculcation and reproduction, and neglects

their social origins by taking the relationship between the control of the education system wider patterns and forms of control to be a matter of fact rather than the result of a power struggle or struggles between competing groups. In this way she argues, educational politics tend to disappear. (1983 p204)

She regards a further assumption in Bourdieu's approach to be that the education system and the activities carried out within it always **complement** the interests of the dominant class or group. Again, politics vanish from the scene, there is no allowance for the possibility that the balance of power within education at any one time may not be in alignment with the balance of power in society.

A further assumption relates to Bourdieu's claim that his theories are universally applicable. Archer argues that despite this claim he has in fact incorporated features of the French national system as the norm whilst simultaneously neglecting that which is distinctive about the system. She argues that there is therefore a tendency in his theories towards an artificial **homogeneity** of educational systems in order to sustain the 'universal applicability' of his work. (1983 p 216)

Many researchers however, despite such reservations as expressed above about the status of Bourdieu's work as an overall or unified theory of educational practices, have nonetheless adopted or 'adapted' (Reay 1998 p 32) elements of it in order to illuminate a range of issues.

For example, in relation to teacher training, Atkinson and Delamont (1985) suggest that the issue of the 'tacit' or 'indeterminate' as opposed to the

'technical' knowledge requirements of professional training for teaching may be analysed in the light of Bourdieu's concept of the habitus. Grenfell (1996) uses Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field in order to analyse students responses to the teaching models and school organisations they encounter in their initial teacher training. Maguire (1999) acknowledges Bourdieu's description of the ways in which physical embodiment bears the imprint of social class and the differential valuations such an embodiment may encounter in various fields, in her analysis of a postgraduate student's failure to produce the 'right body' in the context of her teaching practice.

Hatcher (1998) criticises accounts of pupil choices at various transition points in their schooling which are underpinned by rational action theory, using Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, the cultural arbitrary and habitus to do so, arguing that Bourdieu provides,

'a way of thinking which powerfully illuminates the process by which social reproduction can take place routinely and unplanned..' (p 19)

Initially criticising Bourdieu for his denial of the significance of 'rational action' within his model of the habitus, he nonetheless goes on to quote Bourdieu's 'objections' to such charges, accepting ultimately that at what he terms 'the margins' of his model there does exist such a possibility. He argues for a theory of agency and choice making in education for pupils and parents which whilst informed by 'culturalist' insights nonetheless allowed for the possibility of rational decision making and acknowledges Bourdieu's contribution to the development of such a model.

Reay and Ball (1997) picking up one of Bourdieu's central themes of the 'self elimination' from competition of members of subordinate groups analysed the making of choices of secondary schools on the part of pupils

and parents. They argue that the choices working class people make, should be interpreted in their appropriate contexts and on their own terms rather than being seen as simply inadequate in middle class terms and demonstrate how Bourdieu's concepts may be used to understand such processes.

In an earlier paper Reay (1996) had used habitus to demonstrate how power relationships in and around schooling acted so as to inhibit the actions of the working class women in her research. More recently she has used Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, habitus and field as a means of analysing the particular resources and understandings women use in their efforts to support their childrens' schooling. Hers is an adaptation rather than an adoption of Bourdieu's concepts, their role explained as being '..conceptual tools rather than an overarching framework..' (1998 p 32) She elaborates on her interpretation of habitus considering it to be a concept which is difficult to demonstrate empirically but which can be used to,

> '..focus on the ways in which the socially advantaged play out the attitudes
> of cultural superiority and inferiority ingrained in their habitus in daily
> interactions...' (Reay 1998 p 33)

She also comments on the ways in which the habitus is embodied history and can be used to analyse the ways in which individuals' personal histories may be seen to influence current attitudes and actions. Elsewhere she has used Bourdieu's concept of habitus as a means of studying peer group interactions in primary school classrooms (1995, 1995b) and the manifestations of power amongst pupils in relation to race and gender as well as to social class. 141.

talk' within a class of five year old children in a junior school. Her concern was with the formation of a schoolboy / schoolgirl habitus, as a,

'set of embodied dispositions and predispositions realised in the discursive and bodily practices of being a student.' (p 372)

She demonstrated particularly how 'morning talk' worked on the body and the gendered nature of these processes arguing for the importance of studying the attempted development / formation of such institutional habituses particularly in their initial stages when such practices appear to be more visible and less taken for granted.

Conclusion.

The previous sections have outlined and discussed some of the major criticisms of Bourdieu's work. The question arises therefore as to the overall value of the concepts and ideas he puts forward. However whilst it may be argued that there are tendencies or assumptions in his work leading to charges of at least a 'soft determinism' and a consequent lack of 'politics' many of his critics nonetheless accept that he has made an important contribution to debates in this and other areas conceding that they themselves have not offered plausible alternatives to explain the significant differential educational experiences and outcomes which members of different social classes experience, whilst others have used his concepts to good effect in a range of contexts.

The criticisms therefore should not detract from the conclusion that Bourdieu has provided an important framework worthy of further critical study and empirical research. Thus whilst there are many difficulties with the concept of habitus it may nonetheless be seen to advance the debate

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concerning the relationship between the individual and society in its linking of group membership to attitudes, aspirations and thereby actions. For example, the notion of the 'causality of the probable' may indeed be read as having deterministic, fatalistic implications but on the other hand may also be seen to provide a plausible explanation for actions and attitudes, reminding us that working class experiences of middle class institutions are not middle class ones, by relating such actions and apparent aspirations to the limited opportunities *actually* available to individuals, understanding such actions therefore on their own terms rather than as evidence of a 'culture of poverty' or a patholgised version of a middle class norm. His point that the effects of the habitus continue to work even when the objective conditions of its emergence have given way to new ones also enhances our understanding of such attitudes and actions. Again whilst there are those who emphasise the deterministic aspects of the habitus it may be that such an emphasis underplays its improvisatory aspects, which Bourdieu also emphasises, indeed it must be remembered that Bourdieu developed the concept of the habitus as an attempt to overcome such determinism.

More widely Bourdieu's emphasis that schools are not culturally neutral and objective institutions but rather promote the culture of the dominant classes, and his employment of the metaphor of the various forms of capital, in showing how value may be ascribed to the various cultural forms within society, may be seen to further our understanding of how cultural differences are interpreted as cultural deficiencies within schools thus leading to differential educational attainments relating to the membership of various groups is worthy of further critical study and empirical examination.

The argument then is that whilst Bourdieu's work is flawed in many respects, he nonetheless provides an extremely plausible and powerful account of the ways in which the education system may contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities. Indeed the question of the relationship between the membership of particular groups in society and such memberships' influence on educational experiences and outcomes for individuals whilst perhaps not as straightforward as Bourdieu's account of the habitus implies continues to be an extremely important area of concern.

The question this study addresses is that of whether the concept of habitus and particularly its physical embodied nature can within Bourdieu's overall schema be employed to advance our understanding of those exclusionary cultures, practices and processes within schools whose most obvious manifestation is the devaluation and marginalisation of some pupils, particularly white working class boys on the grounds of their having special educational needs. It is to this question and to how this may be accomplished that the next chapter is addressed.

Chapter Six.
Research Methodology.

Introduction.

The research is concerned with the threatened or actual removal of pupils from mainstream settings, achieved and legitimated through practices subsumed under the rubric of S.E.N. and seeks to explain the over-representation of white working class boys amongst such populations. The general processes of identification and subsequent allocation to non-normative special categories, (Tomlinson 1982) are argued to be both class and gender biased, and also to represent the placement of pupils so identified along a continuum of exclusion, it being an indication of the failure in conventional terms of the pupils so identified. The focus of this study however, is on the more extreme end of this continuum that is those circumstances where the male pupil's continued membership of mainstream settings is either under threat or is no longer deemed possible.

The issues addressed by this study are then political. In relation to the area of social life under consideration it seeks answers to questions such as 'who gets what, how, when, where, why and with what consequences?' (Barton 1997 p231) It has been argued by many writers that special education has essentially concerned itself with *differences* between students and historically has acted so as to construct many such differences as deficits to be remediated and excluded rather than as diversity to be celebrated. Further many such supposed deficits may be seen to be substantially based on differences, which have their sources in the wider society, making their political nature even more apparent. The concern of this study is that of

identifying, naming and challenging those exclusionary cultures, practices and processes within schools whose most obvious manifestation is the devaluation and marginalisation of pupils, particularly white working class boys on the grounds of their 'having' special educational needs.

It is a central argument of this thesis that practices organised around notions of S.E.N. and implicitly disability, serve as major mechanism for managing and legitimating the educational failure of (amongst others) large numbers of white working class boys. Of course this failure in itself, needs to be accounted for by a consideration of those mechanisms, processes and practices, which work to produce and confirm the devaluation, exclusion, otherness and marginality of members of this group whilst simultaneously masking the inabilities of the education system to engage appropriately with the pupil diversity they represent. The aim of the research then is to examine the applicability of Pierre Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural reproduction and particularly his concept of the habitus and its embodied nature, as a means of illuminating such processes and explaining such outcomes.

Bourdieu's theories have been rehearsed, discussed and criticised in a previous chapter, however his central argument is that the differential educational outcomes / attainments of pupils belonging to different social groups are largely due to the discontinuity between home and school experienced by members of these groups. The question to be addressed then is that of how far and in what sense such arguments could be validly employed, developed and extended to account for the disproportionate number of white working class boys identified as having Special Educational Needs thus either 'qualifying' their membership of mainstream settings and possibly putting such membership under threat, or actually

ending such a membership through the allocation of these boys to special schools. The study is based on the hypothesis that such identifications and processing may be seen as a most stark and obvious indicator of a discontinuity between the needs and interests of the child and the educational experiences offered by the school. It is also hypothesised that the nature of this discontinuity is gendered, resulting in different consequences for male and female pupils.

Teachers' Accounts.

The study was designed to generate data which might illuminate and evaluate Bourdieu's claims and also to provide for the possibility of extending his insights to the particular issues identified. This took the form of qualitative, in depth semi structured interviews (McCracken G.D. 1988, Holstein and Gubrium 1995, Kvale1996), with thirty six teachers from eight schools, five special (2 M.L.D. 1 E.B.D. and 2 Delicate) and three mainstream, in an attempt to gain detailed contextualised knowledge of the processes by which pupils may have been identified as having special educational needs within mainstream schools and then possibly allocated to special schools and of the assumptions, perceptions and understandings of those teachers in special schools at the 'receiving end' of these processes.

Schools and teachers.

School	Pupils on Roll	Teachers Interviewed
M.L.D.	68	3
M.L.D.	126	4
E.B.D.	25	4
Del.	120	3
Del.	128	4
Main.	400	6
Main.	440	6
Main.	420	6

Interviews were designed to capture teachers' views, perceptions, definitions and working theories, of special educational needs through the explanations, evidence, justifications etc. employed by them when accounting for what they did, and how they acted in relation to their pupils. With regard to teachers in special schools the concern was with the kinds of explanations, evidence, arguments and justifications they employed when accounting for the actual presence of the pupils in their schools and also how they accounted for the gender imbalance.

With regard to mainstream teachers the concern was with the processes and contexts within which pupils come to be identified initially as having special educational needs and their consequent processing. Again they were asked to account for the gender imbalance evident in such processes.

Both sets of teachers were asked to provide background information on those pupils in their schools through a direct reporting on this by the special school teachers and indirectly by mainstream teachers through their accounts of the communities served by their schools, their relationships with the parents of pupils and particularly those of the parents of pupils identified as having special educational needs. (See interview schedules/ guides in Appendices)

However, the position within the overall system of provision is somewhat different for special and for mainstream teachers and data generated from interviews may therefore be expected to reflect this.

Thus, the position of special school teachers is one where in spite of their supposed expertise they generally play no part whatsoever in the allocation of pupils to their schools! It is mainstream teachers who start the process of identification and set in motion the train of events which eventually may lead to statementing and allocation. Special school teachers are frequently presented with the outcomes of often lengthy such processes as a *fait accompli*, For example a well documented case containing evidence usually from more than one classteacher, a headteacher, educational psychologist, perhaps other professionals, of difficulties and deficiencies, relating to a particular pupil, with the final decision on placement usually having been made by a panel of experts. Their pupils then, are those who are already

seen as in some way casualties of the mainstream education system and for whom a different means to achieving ostensibly the same educational ends is recommended by, and indeed enshrined within, their statements of special educational needs. Teachers in special schools may therefore be expected to differ from their mainstream colleagues in ways which reflect their pupils' profiles and the positions of their schools within the overall education system particularly in terms of the institutional meanings which it is *their* project to realise. (Clough 1995) They are in a position however to provide very detailed data on those pupils for whom membership of mainstream settings has been considered inappropriate.

Mainstream school teachers on the other hand have been at the 'sharp end' of the many changes in education policy over the past ten years or so, (see chap 4) indeed recent legislation (D.E.S.1988, D.F.E. 1993) has served to provide increased incentives for these teachers to identify more and more pupils as in need, and also to reinforce the notion of S.E.N. as being an individual problem. Thus, for example, open enrolments, key stage assessments and the publication of exam results in the form of league tables, ie. 'high stakes testing' (Pollard and Tann 1993), and a teacher blaming political culture, has served to increase the concern amongst teachers that pupils who, 'have S.E.N.' or are 'harder to teach,' (Fish and Evans 1995) will adversely affect their scores at eg. end of Key Stage assessments and thereby their position in the marketplace, leading parents to choose more supposedly successful schools. This relentless increase in exclusionary pressures has led to massive increases in numbers of pupils identified, leading to the number of pupils with statements in mainstream schools increasing from 62,000 in Jan 1991 to 134,000 in January 1997 and to some 1,201,400 pupils in England alone, for the school year 1996/7 (DfEE 1998)

identified as having SEN under the procedures of the Code of Practice introduced by the 1993 Education Act. (DfEE 1994)

However that which applies to both sets of teachers and which signals the importance of and indeed a justification for the focus of this study on teachers' accounts is the power and discretion exercised by them in terms of their day to day running of their classrooms their interactions with pupils and thus their influence on and 'closeness to the action' in relation to the processes which are the concern of this study.

Teachers are clearly involved in the exercise of power in relation to pupils and their families. Their perceptions, understandings, personal and cultural investments in the institutions in which they work and that of their institutions in them, have real effects, forming the basis of their actions within these contexts. (Clough 1995) Such actions for example as those of mainstream teachers who are able to identify pupils and to have considerable influence over the process of the allocation of pupils to special schools, on the basis of their understandings as to what constitutes a difficulty in schooling amounting to a special educational need. Thus they are able to say 'this is just such a pupil' and be taken seriously. Special school teachers are available as experts to be called upon, to take over the education of such pupils in segregated settings and indeed usually act so as to confirm the earlier judgement that such provision is necessary. Further the professional status of both sets of teachers adds weight to such decisions. (Tomlinson 1996)

Teachers then, act on their perceptions, views, understandings and definitions, they have power and discretion, their actions have consequences, moving events and shaping lives. (see for example,

Weatherley and Lipsky 1977, Goacher et. al. 1988, Fulcher 1989a, 1989b, Ball 1990, 1994, Riseborough 1993, Ridell and Brown 1994) Indeed, the whole notion of policy being made at the level of politicians and administrators with teachers and others in education being involved merely in implementation is criticised by many writers, such as Fulcher (1989a) and Ball. (1994) Weatherley and Lipsky (1977) regard teachers as 'street level bureaucrats' arguing that the various adjustments, accommodations and coping mechanisms made at the point of the delivery of a service by such personnel as teachers actually constitutes policy making. According to this view the lowest levels of the policy chain are seen to assume perhaps the greatest importance with the higher levels acting as merely circumscribing actions at street level albeit in important ways.

Such approaches undoubtedly point to the discretion and power of teachers and the consequent importance of an attempt to get at the subjective meanings, understandings and interpretations which they attach to the structures actions and processes through which they live their professional lives, in order to understand the complex reality of and processes within schools.

However, this power of teachers to act, whilst important, can be overstated, for it may be that this power amounts to no more than the exercise of discretion in heavily circumscribed circumstances. Thus in discussing the space in which teachers make secondary adjustments to policy enactments, Ball warns against a naive optimism which, 'may obscure the discursive limitations acting on and through those adjustments....' (1994 p23) This view may itself be overstated of course but nonetheless is a useful corrective to an overemphasis on the freedom, discretion and power of teachers. At its strongest it posits teachers as 'captured by the discourse'

(Bowe *et al* 1994) as routinely and unthinkingly caught up in largely taken for granted theories and assumptions, assumptions which remain unquestioned, in discursive practices, which may be viewed as self perpetuating loops, which provide teachers with knowledge which itself is reproduced and reaffirmed through their practices, practices which themselves are only made possible through the framing assumptions of that knowledge, itself.

Further, the spaces within which teachers are able to make secondary adjustments (Ball op. cit.) have undoubtedly been reduced in recent years (see chap 4). Indeed teachers may be seen as having being subjected to various systems of administrative rationality, including a shift from professional / collegial styles of school governance towards more authoritarian managerialist ones, in the name of efficiency and effectiveness. (see for example Hatcher 1998) Increasingly normalising judgements (Foucault 1977) have been turned upon them in the form of inspections, and their professional appraisal resulting in judgements about their competence. Such judgements often come to form the basis of confessional style (Foucault 1980) appraisal interviews, which in revealing the 'truth' about them, leads to self understanding on their part thus forming the basis of their 'subjectification' through target setting designed to encourage professional development, Similar processes operate at the level of the whole school. Such processes undoubtedly have a powerful disciplinary effect. In this context it would seem that to posit alternatives to the prevailing paradigm may indeed be to 'think the unthinkable.'

There is a tension here between a view of teachers as conscious, powerful actors who have and make choices on the one hand, and on the other as being objects or products of a process of professional socialisation, as

captured by the discourse, as cultural dopes being unaware of 'what is really going on' ie. of not thinking reflexively and being able to develop what Cole refers to as a discursive consciousness, (Cole 1984 p 60-61) or even as being cowed by an authoritarian managerialism.

Of course any or all of these views may be important in providing possible insights into teachers' accounts of their practices, and of their views, perceptions, definitions and working theories, of special educational needs and the various explanations given, evidence produced, justifications employed and so on when accounting for what they do, and how they act in relation to their pupils.

Indeed such accounts may probably be seen as a complex amalgam of at least these three views / positions and indeed of other unaccounted for factors including those related to aspects of personal biography, and this notwithstanding those difficulties / complexities associated with the method of data generation employed ie in depth semi structured interviews. The most obvious response therefore must be to view teachers and their accounts from a plurality of positions.

There is also a need to consider what may be called the respondents' 'accounting practices' (Brenner 1985 p 150) For example it may be the case that given the prevailing political culture of a search for supposed failing teachers, schools and education authorities, teachers may regard it as too painful, disturbing, or simply unwise professionally, to think too deeply or otherwise 'put their heads above the parapet' and to articulate oppositional views to the prevailing public consensus. However their accounts may equally be seen to contain defensive self justifcatory elements in relation to such a consensus.

Research Design and Researcher Role.

The choice of research method was related largely to the research problem in that a qualitative interpretive approach seemed the most appropriate way of exploring teachers' views, perceptions, motivations, relevances and understandings of both the immediate and the wider context of their work. The judgement was made that such an approach would be more likely to produce insights into the ways in which the teachers interpreted their experiences and interactions and generated further behaviours, to capture the complexities and provide for a far more rounded understanding of the social worlds of the schools than would for example the decontextualised methods of traditional large scale forms of social research.

What was sought, was a detailed examination of the ways in which these teachers made sense of what they were doing within their classrooms and of the resulting outcomes of their engagements with their pupils. This was to include an analysis of their broader educational and social philosophies, including their assumptions about their pupils' positions within wider structural relations and the implications of these. The major focus however was on their understandings and practices in relation to special educational needs and the importance such a concept had assumed within their professional lives. It was an attempt then to gain detailed contextualised knowledge of the processes involved in the identification of pupils as having special educational needs within mainstream schools and also an attempt to obtain similarly rich detailed and contextualised data on the social world of special schools and of their major organising principles, philosophies and practices.

Given the interpretive framework, other decisions had to be made in respect of the design of the study. The decision was made that notwithstanding the recommendations in favour of an observational study such as a reduction of reactivity and other kinds of resistance and also the variety of data such an approach might produce that an interview study would be more likely to generate the kind of data required.

Indeed interviews are able to generate data, that are not always accessible or obtainable by other means and which also produce the hard data of transcripts in the respondents actual words, untainted perhaps by the interpretation of an observer. Further such data may be available in great depth and detail and would allow for the direct consideration of issues which many months in the field might fail to elicit naturally. It may also be the case that such data is more maneagable than much that may be produced through an observational study. However such studies do confront a range of problems which observational studies do not, for example such as the limiting nature of just one kind of data as opposed to the variety of information of all kinds obtainable by observational methods. However certain safeguards against the distorted and limiting views or perpectives which such a reliance might produce were built into the research design and my role within this.

Thus the research was designed to capitalise not only on my twenty three years classroom experience as a teacher of pupils 'with' special educational needs, and the undertandings generated by such experiences, ie teaching at S.L.D., E.B.D., M.L.D., and Delicate, schools and also in mainstream primary and secondary schools but also on my knowledge of the actual schools chosen for the study and of the teachers within them. Thus, thirty

six teachers were interviewed, eighteen from special schools and eighteen from mainstream.

There were five special schools. I had held full time posts at three of them, having been a class teacher at one, the head of the primary department at another and second deputy and head of lower school at another. Staff at the other two schools were known to me and I to them due to my role within the education authority as a moderator/auditor for key stage assessments, which involved my having worked within the classrooms of and also of having delivered INSET to their year two teachers.

The schools were all of non-normative designations comprising of one for E.B.D. pupils, two for M.L.D. pupils and two for Delicate pupils. One of the schools was situated in an outer London borough, the other four in inner London boroughs. All of these schools were extremely well established as serving their particular designations in their areas, the newest school being twenty three years old. However one of the Delicate schools was considering dropping its designation altogether and one of the M.L.D. schools was in the process of being re-designated as a National Curriculum Support school. The E.B.D. school and both of the M.L.D. schools were primary schools, whereas the Delicate schools were all age 5-16 schools. Of the eighteen teachers interviewed, seven taught at M.L.D. seven at Delicate and four at E.B.D. schools. Fifteen of them had previous experience of mainstream schools, there was also a strong bias in this sample of teachers who in terms of both their previous experience and their current roles described themselves as teachers of primary aged children. (twelve teachers).

There were three mainstream schools. I had recently completed a temporary two term contract as a reception class teacher and continued my association with a fairly extensive supply work relationship at one school, had been known as the head of the primary department of the local M.L.D. school at another and had had cause to liase with teachers at that school in that capacity and had worked as a supply teacher there, and had worked with teachers in my moderating capacity and as a supply teacher at the other school.

Eighteen teachers were interviewed, the sample comprising of six teachers, incuding the special educational needs coordinators, from each of these three large Primary schools. Two of these schools were situated in inner city boroughs the other being located on the city fringes. Given the centrality to the study of the relationship between white working class pupils and specifically boys and the education system, two schools were chosen which unambiguously served such a population the third school whilst serving a relatively mixed community had the interesting feature of a tendency towards a perceived polarisation between the populations served.

My previous working relationships with the schools and teachers provided me with many advantages not only over a study consisting solely of interview data but also in some respects over an observational one. Indeed I had been a total participant at these schools, at some for months and at others for years. I was known to most of these teachers then, as a class teacher, as an ex colleague, indeed in some cases as a continuing sometime colleague in a supply teaching capacity, indeed as 'one of them,' albeit now working part time in order to complete a research degree. I was therefore in a relatively privileged position, being extremely well placed, as Gans has

argued, to understand the pressures and emotional and social investments and incentives influencing and acting upon people in these situations. (see Smetherham 1978 p 99)

As a *former* total participant at these sites however my position was not quite as described by Gans, indeed my understandings were in danger of being out of date, partially / selectively remembered and simply no longer relevant to current situations, particularly given the pace of change in education recently. On the other hand my involvement with these schools was in some cases maintained throughout the course of the research though not concurrently with interviews and I was also a 'total participant' at other very similar sites, ie working as a class teacher at both special and mainstream schools throughout the whole course of the research. I was relying to some extent then on my previous knowledge / observations of and participation within these various sites to contextualise and make comprehensible my interviews with teachers.

There were of course, both potential advantages and disadvantages in such a relationship. On the plus side there appeared to be no resistance and perhaps less reactivity than there would have been had I been a total stranger. I felt that I had credibility in the eyes of respondents in that I had quite literally done some of the jobs that they were now doing and reporting on and had indeed been faced with many of the same problems difficulties and dilemmas. Further there was a sense in which their accounts of practices undertaken were less likely to be at variance with their actions because at another time I had actually *seen* them in action and indeed had been party to such actions as a colleague. Thus whilst many of them had spent hours in my company as a fellow teacher I only appeared to them as a researcher for between forty five and ninety minutes. Perhaps the reactivity

generated was more akin to that between colleagues than that between researcher and respondents. Further I was able to use my 'insider' knowledge of the schools to make judgements as to whether what was being told to me was plausible / sensible in the light of what *I knew* of the situations described and indeed was able to follow up any perceived discrepancies distortions etc. during the course of interviews. I was also in a position to make judgements as to the balance / representativeness of the individuals interviewed from each school in order to rule out those who might have provided less typical, more idiosyncratic or unusual perspectives.

However there were difficulties with this situation. The only method of data collection applied *as part of the research* was that of in depth semi structured interviewing, for this was not an observational study. Indeed the knowledge obtained through my various roles within these sites as a 'total participant' was not collected in any systematic fashion or subjected to the usual protocols of data generation / collection / analysis as it would have been had participant observation itself been an integral part of the study. Such knowledge therefore as I had derived from my more general experiences at these sites had to be treated with great caution on my part and with an awareness of its origins and nature, including a recognition that it had been generated / developed at another time and in relation to other agendas, issues and concerns. On the other hand it was my previous experience of these very schools and others like them much of which pre-dated the study which undoubtedly played an important part in my professional and intellectual development in that it raised issues questions and problems which this research is an attempt to address.

Again my very familiarity with the various sites might very easily have led to the danger of a naivete in relation to such issues as respondent reactivity. Indeed there was a need on my part to consider very carefully what they 'knew' about me in my previous or other existence as a colleague. What had they perceived as my concerns, values, assumptions, practices, relationships with pupils and parents etc. and how might this knowledge of me effect their responses? Would they then be simply reworking old 'scripts' with me based on previous conversations / interactions? In the light of this would I be able to encourage or allow them to manufacture distance both from me and what they knew / expected of / from me, and also of course from themselves from their situations in order to develop a critical awareness of issues and matters with which they had a 'blinding familiarity' (Marcus and Fischer 1986 quoted in McCracken op. cit.) in order to develop a discursive consciousness?

In this position there is a tendency for researchers to 'go native' by over identifying with respondents, to be unable to make such familiar situations 'anthropologically strange' A danger of taking too much for granted, and assuming that they already 'know what is going on' at sites and merely seeking confirmation of this, an assumption of shared meanings with teachers and a substitution of their own understandings and experiences for those of respondents. Again the very familiarity of such situations may lead to the missing of important data due to a lack of distance / imagination.

However such problems whilst very real are not insurmountable and required a response involving a reflexive awareness of them and concerted effort to subject my role and actions in the research process to a critical scrutiny in the light of them.

This also extends to an understanding that the actual process of research can *never* be objective, neutral or detached from the evidence / data generated. Indeed as Barton argues research is a 'social act' (1998 p 29. see also eg. Kincheloe 1991., Carlspecken 1996., Blair 1998., Griffiths 1998)

Indeed the very notion that one can have unmediated contact with or otherwise tap into the or a truth as a 'pure informational commodity' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p 18) by asking the right questions and in the right manner, by following a particular objective protocol thus demonstrating what Clough and Barton refer to as the '..clinical nature, the sterile cleanliness of the instruments..' used and where a good study is identified by the distance from or lack of presence of the author in the final report, is profoundly naive.(1995 p 3/4)

Such a naive realism or naive objectivism (Scott and Usher 1999) tends to neglect the way in which theoretical assumptions inform descriptions and explanations. (Hammersley 1992) Indeed the researcher and her/his values assumptions and relevances are inevitably present in all aspects of the research as indeed may be the imprint of various social forces and research conventions, in their shaping of definitions of knowledge and of enquiry itself. (Kincheloe 1991, Clough and Barton 1995)

Thus a conception of the researcher as a 'thinking reflexive practitioner' (Mason 1996) or indeed as the research instrument her/himself (McCracken 1988) is viewed as one of the major strengths of qualitative research. It does however call for accounts produced through such methods to be fully reflexive not only in practice but also in their reporting, including that of an acknowledgement of the research values guiding the study. (Troyna and Carrington 1989, Griffiths 1998) Thus Griffiths argues that such an

acknowledgment not only helps others to judge the work but operates as a guard against bias, as opposed to an approach which in its refusal to acknowledge an ethical or political position in some sense claims a neutrality which it would be impossible to deliver.

The 'Active Interview.'

Much of the literature on semi structured interviewing warns of the dangers of various forms of reactivity and of potential sources of bias. (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989, May 1993, Dane 1990, Silverman 1985, Denzin 1989). These sources of bias, or 'invalidity' (Denzin 1989) are said to include, researcher effects, the characteristics of the researcher / interviewer, characteristics of the respondent / interviewee, and the nature of the researcher / respondent relationship. (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989)

Commenting on the reactive effects of interviewing Denzin (1989) warns of the 'deliberate monitoring of self' which being interviewed can create (p116) Moreover, such impression management whether conscious or relatively unconscious, is seen as only a part of the problem, with all interviewees regarded as to some extent misinforming the interviewer. Thus respondents are said not to be conscious of all the motives for their behaviour, indeed some will actually be mistaken about their behaviour itself! Croll (1986) while noting that what people say they do is not always the same as what they actually do considers that this misinformation is not neccessarily deliberate but may arise from factors such as a tendency towards a rationalisation of previous actions, selective memory and sometimes the difficulty of the topic

Of course interviews are social events, whereby an interviewer and an interviewee establish a relationship. What the interviewee tells the interviewer will depend on her / his perceptions of the interviewer and the enquiry, as well as upon how she / he interprets the questions, and how she / he wishes to present her / himself.

Further a major source of bias in interviewing is said to relate to the characteristics of the interviewer and those of the interviewee with the key variables of age, class, ethnicity and gender all said to play play a crucial role. (May 1993). There is also by the very nature of the enterprise of interviewing an asymmetry of power whereby the researcher is seen as being 'in charge' of the process. (Kvale 1996) In discussing the difficulties and pitfalls of this kind of interviewing McCracken (1988), argues that it demands a complex relationship between investigator and respondent and warns researchers of the extent to which respondents make judgements and thereby react to the interviewer based on a wide range of cues, related to appearance, speech patterns, the description given of the research project, institutional affiliation and so on and that this can dramaticaly effect the responses given. Based on a reading from this 'semiotic exercise' (p 26) it is argued that interviewees provide a version of the information that they think is appropriate, which may involve being unduly helpful and attempting to anticipate and deliver what she / he feels the interviewer wants to hear, or it may of course involve the opposite of this!

A recognition of such possible pitfalls and dangers and an attempt to account for, or allow for them in the conduct of interviews and the analysis of the data generated, would seem to be the most obvious response. However whilst issues such as bias and reactivity need to be considered seriously, their very existence point to the 'active' nature of the interview

encounter and the futility of attempts to neutralise them in an attempt to free them from bias. Indeed according to Holstein and Gubrium the notion of bias itself could only apply to a context in which respondents were seen as having a ready formed store of knowledge which might be in danger of being tainted or spoiled by the interview process. (1995)

In contrast to such a position they elaborate on the notion of the active interview which views respondents not simply as vessels of answers, or repositories of knowledge, but see them as '...constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers..' (1995 p 4) According to this viewpoint, in answering questions, in giving accounts of what they do, feel, think, how they act and why, interviewees will themselves be discovering something, be engaged in their own process of reconstruction. They argue that respondents posses '..a fund of knowledge that is simultaneously, substantive, reflexive and emergent..' (p6) with the task of the researcher being to tap into, activate, stimulate and cultivate the respondents' interpretive capabilities, in order to help them to gain access to such a fund.

This requires far more than a supposed dispassionate questioning, but rather a range of strategies and techniques, some of which may be listed, eg. a sympathetic identification with the respondent, a non judgemental attitude, sometimes a deliberate naivete, non directional questioning, a repositioning of the respondent when appropriate to encourage a shifting of narrative positions in order to address topics from various points of view and so on. Such a list as provided here is far from exhaustive, indeed it only begins to deal with the possibilities. Thus a useful way of thinking about the 'skills' involved is provided by Kincheloe's comments on advantages of the investigator as research instrument. Thus he argues that;

'..human instruments .. almost unlimited in their capacity ...
sensitive to subtle, hard to categorise dimensions of social
life ... can synthesise information, generate interpretations, and
revise and sophisticate those interpretations at the site the
enquiry takes place...' (1991 p 29)

McCracken (1998 p 18) also uses the metaphor of the 'investigator as instrument' arguing that researchers use their own intellect, imagination and experiences of the world in order to interpret and analyse data but warns that such 'intimate acquaintance' may provide both insights and 'blindness' in equal measure.

Such strategies and techniques and others in use in the heat of an interview rely to the utmost extent on one aspect of what might be called the craft of the researcher. (Kvale1996) Indeed such an approach to data generation relies on these abilities to 'generate interpretations' and to 'revise and sophisticate them,' during the course of the interview in order to pursue the underlying focus and agenda of the research as appropriate. Moreover what is also required is an awareness of the dynamics involved and the multiplicity of factors and forces at work, particularly that of the effect of the researcher on the data generated, and a commitment to build such an awareness not only into the ongoing conduct of the interviews but also into the subsequent analysis and reporting.

Ethical Concerns.

The ethical concerns surrounding most studies are said to be those related to isues of informed consent, deception, privacy, confidentiality and the

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possibly harmful consequences of the study. (see for example, Dane 1990., Punch 1994) Given my fairly close relationship with the respondents and the resultant extra trust and confidence in me generated by this, such issues were particularly pertinent.

All interviewees were given written assurances of the total anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and during the course of each interview it was made clear that there was no obligation on them to answer any *specific* questions, if they chose not to ie. they were able to decide what information to share. Moreover confidentiality was enhanced by the fact that there was no prolonged presence of a 'researcher' at the sites and no 'official' negotiation of access, indeed the only people who knew that interviews were being conducted at all were the respondents themselves. Further an explanation and assurances were provided as to the *only* uses to which their responses were to be put, ie. that they would be analysed and reported on, in the form of a research thesis and possible journal articles / papers but again in totally anonymised and therefore 'untraceable' form.

In this way also it was difficult to see what possibly harmful consequences for the respondents or their pupils / schools, would or indeed could result. Moreover my impact on the setting as a researcher was minimal as I supposed was my impact on the interviewees. Thus neither the setting nor the respondents could be said to have been changed or disturbed through the experience eg. as would have been the case for example had they induced feelings of worry, embarrassment, inadequacy, loss of self esteem and so on in the respondents. (Dane 1990) Indeed some interviewees reported that the opportunity to talk at length about the matters covered was experienced by them as in some ways therapeutic; further it was also said that some of the issues raised had led to an increased awareness of

them provoking staffroom discussions which may or may not have led to their more formal consideration at some future time, thus in both cases such effects as were experienced were reported as being beneficial.

However one of the ethical concerns to be considered particularly given the values informing the research was that of the possibility of both deception and betrayal of respondents. Now the research was conducted 'on' one group of people ie. teachers, but 'for' another group ie white working class boys, indeed whilst it was teachers who 'spoke' it was not my primary intention to give them 'voice.' (Griffiths 1989) However more broadly speaking and following the points made by Troyna and Carrington in answer the question as to 'Whose side are we on?' (1989) in the conduct of such research it may be seen that the research did comply with their injunction that,

> '.. the researchers preeminent commitment should not be to black
> or white youth, teachers or administrators, but to the fundamental
> principles of social justice, equality and participatory democracy...' (p
> 208)

Thus the concern of the study was that of identifying, naming and challenging those exclusionary cultures, practices and processes within schools only *one of whose manifestations* was the devaluation and marginalisation of white working class boys on the grounds of their 'having' special educational needs, but which of course had wider implications and constituted therefore a more general critique of violations of principles of social justice involving manifestly unjust practices leading to inequitable 'outcomes' for other groups also. Indeed the research was only 'for' white

working class boys to the extent that they were devalued and marginalised by the processes and practices identified.

The research then was a test of the assumption that in a real sense 'harm' was being done to these boys in that any disadvantages they may have suffered due to their position within wider structural relations was being compounded particularly by the ways in which schools responded to their differences to an idealised middle class norm. One of the implications of this was that the teachers whom I interviewed were in some sense complicit in this, albeit unwittingly, indeed this was a major focus of the research.

The issue is important in relation to the notion of the informed consent of the respondents, for whilst they were perfectly happy to discuss a wide range of issues as indicated relating to both classroom processes and other background features including that of their pupils relationships to wider social structures they were not informed of the theoretical framework within which their responses would be analysed, a framework which would in most essentials seek to test or challenge their perceptions and understandings.

However some such deceptions are inevitable, indeed the giving of certain information to respondents, by alerting them to the enhanced significance which might be attached to particular remarks or responses would certainly have a reactive affect and thus distort the data. Thus Griffiths (1989) gives several examples of such minor deceptions employed by some prominent scholars which were justified for similar reasons, including her own work in collaboration with Alfrey on gender issues in relation to computers in schools when a decision was made by them, 'to make it look as if the research was not particularly about gender...' (p 40) when it manifestly was.

There is of course a fine line to be drawn between a commitment to ensure the fully informed consent of participants in research and a judgement made whereby in such circumstances the benefits of the 'knowledge' obtained are seen to outweigh any potential harm that may be done to respondents. Now in view of the commitment to ensuring the total anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and the consquent lack of any possible harm to respondents such minor deceptions may further be justified on the ground that the research was 'emancipatory' in intent ie. it sought to uncover or outline what may be called the subtleties of such oppression / disadvantage as was being visited upon a particular group in order that its 'invisibility' to those affected and to those in a position to act so as to remediate the situation might be removed. (Carspecken 1996)

Research Validity.

The validity of a study depends on many features of course, not least perhaps, and as a starting point, the extent to which in relation to the research questions posed, that the researcher is actually looking in the right places or asking the right questions. This refers to the conceptual and ontological clarity of the study, relating to assumptions about the actual mechanics of the processes which one seeks to account for or otherwise explain and the issue of whether the analysis actually gets at the kinds of issues and concepts it claims to get at. (Mason 1996)

Hammersley describes it thus,

> *'..validity.. refers .. to the accuracy with which a description*
> *of particular events ... represents the theoretical category*
> *that it is intended to represent and captures the relevant*
> *features of these events..'* (1992 p 67)

He makes a further comment here on the reliability of a study as referring to,

'.. the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned
to the same category by different observers or by the
same observer on different occasions..' (op. cit 67)

He is referring here to various judgements made during the course of data generation / analysis such that on the one hand that a particular description offered or comment made in an interview for example might appropriately be given a particular coding or assigned to a particular category and secondly that such an assignment could reasonably be supposed to be made by another researcher or indeed made again by the same researcher should a similar / identical example / instance occur. Moreover the various codings / categories have to be justified as relevant and themselves fit in to the overall argument. Such considerations are often referred to in more positivistic accounts of the research process as relating to the operationalisation, of concepts.

Other aspects of validity relate to the use made of the data generated ie. how it is interpreted and analysed, in order to provide an account or explanation. Mason (1996) regards such validity to be contingent on the 'end product' of the research itself, this to involve an account or justification as to how this was arrived at ie. an actual spelling out of the basis upon which particular interpretations were made. Thus she argues one must never take one's interpretations for granted or regard them as self evident but must be constantly justiying the steps and processes through which one's interpretations are made. What one is aiming for of course is not an absolute truth but a defensible knowledge claim involving a justification for

one's own interpretation particularly in relation to other potential relatively plausible interpretations of the data.

Kvale argues that a useful strategy is that of examining the possible sources of invalidity (1996 p 242) of one's acount ie to be continually checking how trustworthy, plausible or indeed credible it is through a consideration of the various potential sources of bias, this to include an account of those '..controls applied to °counter selective perceptions and biased interpretations..' (p 242) Amongsts such controls or tactics / strategies used in this study, were those of a checking for representativeness, checking for researcher effects, a weighting of the evidence, looking for negative evidence and a checking out of rival explanations. (Miles and Huberman 1994 p 263-274)

Finally Hammersley suggests the criteria of plausibility and credibility as a means of evaluating the claims of qualitative research, whereby such claims are considered plausible if they are consistent with existing knowledge in the area and credible in terms of the likelihood of freedom from 'serious error..' (1995 p 75) of the processes or procedures which produced them, that is, the design and conduct of the research.

Analysis.

It is a moot point as to when data generation ends and analysis begins, for in practice it is very difficult to separate the two indeed it is more appropriate to view research interviews as involving the *simultaneous* generation and analysis of data. Thus interviews were active in nature and intention involving the researcher in being quite explicit at the outset as to what the research questions were and therefore which questions they were

addressed to. This involved a constant, monitoring, reviewing and interpreting of data during the course of interviews themselves, in order to pursue the underlying focus and agenda of the research as appropriate.

Part of this involved an effort to ensure that the data adequately covered the ground and also some preliminary interpretations during the course of interviews and a 'playing back' of aspects of this to respondents in order to verify these interpretations or clarify points made and to follow up any perceived discrepancies or inconsistencies with other accounts and so on. However not all the data presented was of equal weighting in terms of the research questions addressed by the study. This was partly due to a need to widen the scope of interviews as described earlier so as to avoid possible reactive effects and therefore a distorting of the data, and also as a means of placing the theoretical analysis within a wider social context.

An important consideration here was that of the validity of the interviews, that is the relationship between the questions asked and the linkages to the issues at stake. This requires a demonstration that in relation to the research questions and the resultant propositions for analysis, that I was indeed looking in the right places, asking the right questions and covering the appropriate ground.

Interviews were conducted with the aim of generating data which might serve to support the usefulness or otherwise of Bourdieu's concepts, particularly that of habitus and its gendered embodied nature as a means of accounting for the disproportionate number of white working class boys identified as having special educational needs thus either qualifying their membership of mainstream settings and possibly putting such membership

under threat, or actually ending such membership through the allocation of them to special schools

The resultant data was to be analysed using a conceptual framework provided by Bourdieu's theories, by being sorted and coded into responses, (direct statements, gestures, inferences from intonations etc. or other such contributions) relating to a set of propositions or indications, as to those elements of reported teacher / school / pupil encounters and of wider processes and practices, which Bourdieu's theories implied would be present in the data. A rationale and explanation for the propositions has been provided in chapter nine.

The propositions were divided into three groups in order to aid data generation / analysis providing a slightly different focus for each one, these were, School Habitus, Habitus and Class / Family strategies and Habitus and its Gendered Embodiment. It must be recognised however that there is a considerable overlap between these categories, and they might well have been organised differently. It was hypothesised that Bourdieu's theories would be seen to be applicable to the situation of the pupils in question if the data supported the propositions as outlined. The propositions were that the data would provide evidence of :-

School Habitus.

(1) A location of the sources of differences in educational outcomes in 'neutral' events or qualities external to the basic relations of power and authority within society.

(2) An assumption in favour of the neutrality and universality of school culture, including a belief that schools operate equal opportunity policies which involve high expectations for all and that they distinguish between pupils only on the basis of attributes and qualities identified in (1) above.

(3) Schools' involvement in assessing their pupils' participation or otherwise in a specific culture, lack of familiarity with which is taken as evidence of a lack of ability, or of a cultural deficiency rather than cultural difference.

Habitus and Class / Family Strategies.

(4) Parental actions and orientations will reflect a scepticism towards or failure to subscribe to a belief in the supposed meritocratic and benevolent nature of schooling with this being taken by teachers as evidence of pathological traits such as laziness or lack of ambition.

(5) That such actions as may be taken in support of their children's schooling by members of subordinate social groups will be lacking in effectivity compared with those taken by members of dominant social groups.

Habitus and its Gendered Embodiment.

(6) Evidence of the schools involvement in the production and valorisation of particular forms of bodily control, expression and self management, with those produced by pupils from subordinate social groups constituting a form of 'physical capital' which has less 'exchange value' within schools, than that produced by the dominant classes and is thereby interpreted negatively by teachers.

(7) The lack of congruence between the bodily forms produced by members of subordinate social groups and those forms which the school valorises is 'gendered' in nature, with greater significance of and lack of continuity between the two forms being ascribed to male pupils.

Let us consider the ground covered and its relationship to these propositions for analysis. The two schedules / guides used respectively for the special and mainstream school interviews (see appendices) were piloted on a number of teachers in locations other than those used for the research. While many of the questions dealt directly with the areas of family, class, gender and embodiment and the respondents perceptions of their importance in relation to the cultural milieu of the school, interviews were wider ranging than this and required responses covering their understandings and perceptions of a number of issues and their descriptions of practices within the field of special education.

However while these broader questions generated useful contextualising data in themselves they also elicited responses which dealt in great detail with the main issues at stake. Indeed the pilot interviews had shown that these were the areas that most exercised teachers, with such questions often acting as triggers for the respondents to discuss what appeared to be concerning them in relation to their schools and pupils. Moreover many such questions involved supplementaries or probes which asked for details of individual examples, histories or cases which again had the tendency to generate this kind of data. Thus it was often the case that for example a special school teachers account in response to a single question as to why a particular child may have been allocated to her school, or a mainstream teachers acccounting for his school's position in the local league tables had the potential to provide data covering many of the propositions as outlined.

The data was presented in two chapters as a detailed account of the ways in which these teachers made sense of what they were doing within their classrooms and of the resulting 'outcomes' of their engagements with their

pupils. This included descriptions of their broader educational and social philosophies, including their assumptions about their pupils' positions within wider structural relations and the implications of these. The major focus however was on their understandings and practices in relation to special educational needs and the importance such a concept had assumed within their professional lives and similarly such understandings and practices in relation to gender. It was an attempt then to present detailed contextualised knowledge of the processes involved in the identification of pupils as having special educational needs within mainstream schools and similar such data on the 'social world' of special schools and of their major organising principles, philosophies and practices.

The data was then analysed in order to investigate the researcher's prediction that Bourdieu's concepts and theories could be applied to and thus help illuminate the classed and gendered nature of processes of the identification of pupils as having special educational needs of non normative categories and presented in chapter nine.

Chapter Seven.
Interviews: Mainstream Schools.

Interviews were conducted with the aim of generating data which might serve to support the usefulness or otherwise of Bourdieu's concepts, particularly that of habitus and its gendered embodied nature, as a means of accounting for the disproportionate number of white working class boys identified as having special educational needs. They were designed to capture teachers' views, perceptions, definitions and working theories, of special educational needs through the explanations, evidence and justifications employed by them when accounting for, what they did, and how they acted in relation to their pupils.

What was sought, was a detailed examination of the ways in which these teachers made sense of what they were doing within their classrooms and of the resulting outcomes of their engagements with their pupils. This was to include an analysis of their broader educational and social philosophies, including their assumptions about their pupils' positions within wider structural relations and the implications of these.

However not all the data presented was of equal weighting in terms of the research questions addressed by the study. This was partly due to a need to widen the scope of interviews so as to avoid possible reactive effects and therefore a distorting of the data, and also as a means of placing the theoretical analysis within a wider context. Further, aspects of this contextualising data may be seen as being useful and interesting in its own right, apart from the concerns of the study.

1. Schools and teachers.

Eighteen teachers were interviewed, the sample comprising of six teachers, including the special educational needs coordinators, from each of three large Primary schools. Two of these schools were situated in inner city boroughs (schools A and C) the other being located on the city fringes.

This study seeks to explain the disproportionate identification of white working class boys as having special educational needs within schools. Given the centrality to the study of the relationship between this group and the education system, two schools were chosen which unambiguously served such a population ie. schools A and B, the third school whilst serving a relatively 'mixed' community had the interesting feature of a tendency towards a polarisation between the populations served.

School A. The background information contained in its recent Ofsted report described the school thus:- '... many of the children have only one parent in the home .. currently 61% of the children who have school dinners received a free school meal ... (school situated) .. in the midst of a large area of council housing ... no industrial or commercial outlets nearby .... few immediate leisure facilities....'

This was a large Primary school of some 400 pupils situated in an inner London borough in the middle of a council estate bounded on all sides by extremely busy arterial roads. Despite the profile of the borough which indicated a significant proportion of ethnic minority children living within its boundaries, the estate was almost entirely populated by white residents this being reflected in the school's pupil population. While the majority of houses were rented from the local authority a number were owned by their residents. The houses all had gardens, the majority of which were well kept

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as indeed were the houses and there were many cars in evidence parked in the local streets.

The school buildings dated from the 1930's when most of the estate was built and were generally in a rather scruffy and dilapidated state though 'sound' enough to provide a secure and warm environment for teaching. The classrooms, the hall and other public spaces in the school were always bright and cheerful with pupils' work displayed imaginatively and colourfully.

School B. The background information contained in its recent Ofsted report described the school thus:- '..serves the community of the large (named) council estate .... Most of the pupils attending the school come from families with unfavourable social and economic circumstances and many have backgrounds which are disadvantaged .. proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 55% ... No pupils for whom English is a second language .... the attainment of most pupils when they start school is well below average ... information from the L.E.A.'s accredited baseline indicates that current year one and reception scored an average of 25% compared with the (L.E.A.) average of 45% ..... overall 60% of the pupils are on the school's register of pupils with S.E.N. .....'

This Primary school of some 440 pupils was situated on a large council estate, on the fringes of a small town some twenty miles from London. Virtually all of the pupils came from the estate, which appeared to be in a very poor state of repair, a significant number of properties being boarded up, much evidence of vandalism and graffitti with abandoned and burnt out cars on the streets.

The school was the result of an amalgamation in 1993 between an infant and a junior school and occupied a split site with the separate departments for Key Stages One and Two remaining some 400 metres apart on opposite sides of the playing fields of a large secondary school which shared the same campus. The buildings were in a very poor state of repair and indeed original design and were poorly insulated, being noisy, 'too cold / hot' (depending on the season) with leaking roofs. Despite the best efforts of the teachers the school appeared run down and scruffy.

School C. The background information contained in its recent Ofsted report described the school thus:- '...serves a wide range of families from across the socio-economic spectrum and is regularly oversubscribed ... local housing varies from large privately owned single occupancy houses to local authority estates .. currently 118 pupils are eligible for free school meals which is 26.6% of the pupil population.... about 21% of pupils live in single parent households....'

This large primary school had 420 pupils and was situated in an inner London borough very near the centre of '....... village' an area of very expensive shops, restuarants and large open spaces, with a range of property types including some of the most expensive housing outside of the centre of London. The school itself however was bounded on one side by a small 'low rise' council estate many of whose residents also attended the school.

The school was built in the 1960's on the side of a hill and was a split level tiered collection of buildings. It was generally in a good state of repair and

decoration, with much evidence of the teachers' efforts to provide a bright and cheerful environment for learning.

2. Background Information / Characteristics.

Respondents were asked to provide accounts of the communities served by their schools and to comment on the implications for teaching and learning (if any) of the characteristics identified and also about the relationships between parents and the school.

School A. .. Accounts of the surrounding communities focussed on features such as housing, employment / unemployment, numbers of free school meals and also of 'single mothers.' All teachers mentioned the fact that the school was located on a large council housing estate one of them qualifying this by providing further information to the effect that the majority of houses had gardens, this she contrasted with other areas in the borough which had high rise developments. She considered that because of this feature, the school didn't appear to be located in a particularly deprived area commenting further that,

'... you look at other areas of the borough ... where there would be seen to be greater problems ..high rise flats ... and yet we do have similar problems despite that...'

Also of note in relation to housing was the stability of the population, and its consequent 'whiteness.' with all teachers mentioning the lack of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds which was contrasted to the borough's overall profile and the substantial numbers of pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds living within its boundaries. This brought forth comments such as that of one teacher who described this feature in terms of it being *'...quite a closed community..'* or another who saw it as *'..a strange set up really ...*

sort of separated from anywhere..' Indeed three of the teachers used the term 'strange' in relation to this feature. Further information as to the *'..static nature..'* of the local population were provided by accounts of parents who themselves been pupils at the school now bringing their own children and also of grandparents who again had been pupils themselves and the comment in relation to this that *'... families tend to stay put..'*

Mention was made of the high proportions of free school meals as an indication of *'..a pretty poor area..'* and one of *'.... fairly high unemployment..'* but also comments on an 'alternative economy' operating locally which was described by one teacher as involving *'..sort of casual cash in hand jobs.. wheeler dealing .. that sort of thing...'* Another in mentioning such work commented on its effects on the 'motivation' of many of her pupils arguing that in relation to the parents involved,

> *'I suppose they're doing alright for themselves...* (and in relation to their children that) *.. they're not going to do fantastically well at school anyway .. I mean what they can do is not going to make enough difference to make it worth while ... so they don't care... they see dad making a few bob on a quick deal or an afternoon's work..'*

In similar vein another teacher commented on the lack of jobs in the area and consequent lack of 'role models' for the children, regarding the estate as a 'non working environment' and further doubting whether the parents,

> *'..see the benefits of education in the same way parents who have got a job would see the work of education .. to get the child a job...'*

Single mothers and very young mothers were also mentioned as relevant background features of the local community, features which were sometimes cast in negative terms through comments such as *'...too young really .. still children themselves...'* and *'....you get a twenty five year old,*

and she's got a nine year old daughter..' but also mentioned was the *'..very supportive..'* extended family networks which were made possible by the stability of the population.

Class was mentioned by all respondents with the local area mostly being described directly as in *'...a white working class council estate..'* or in a rather more roundabout, tentative and almost apologetic manner as *'..well I suppose it's um.. well... um.. working class really...'* or *'..well it's sort of working class .. if you like..'*

All of the teachers considered there to be profound implications for teaching and also for relationships with parents arising from the 'background features' they identified.

In considering such implications many were drawn to compare the school either with others they had worked at or with those attended by their own children. Much was made of what they perceived as a lack of skills and experiences of pupils prior to their attendance at school and also of their attitudes towards the schooling they were receiving.

One teacher in contrasting her experiences at the previous school in which she had worked, one that she described as being located in a *'very sort of middle class area,'* commented on the difficulties of teaching her new charges thus,

> *'really it's the experiences that the children haven't had before they come to school... and their extreme lack of language development ... we're having to put more in ... you know we're trying to go back... I mean you can't really ... but we're trying to go back and fill in gaps ... that they've missed...'*

However, she felt unable to spend much time 'going back' and giving the pupils what she felt they needed due to various pressures such as that of,

'the curriculum... literacy hour.. and so on.. (further commenting that) .. you can't do the things that you could before .. before I could arrange picnics for children and nice things like that .... things that they hadn't really experienced ... and I'm finding it a lot more difficult to teach these .. um .. underprivileged children ... because we're having to teach in a much more formal and rushed way ... much more heavily timetabled....'

Others made similar comments on the, *'poor skill levels'* of pupils arriving at school and lacking such 'skills' as the *'ability to hold a pencil..'* to *'sit still for five minutes...'* to *'..hold a conversation..'* and so on. One teacher declared that she had eventually become sickened by the pressures put on children by their parents at her previous school but now felt that at this school she was,

'..at the other extreme where the parents are not particularly interested in their children's education..'

Many teachers described what one referred to as *'..a kind of culture thing..'* which involved a distancing from the school and from the teachers on the part of parents other than on fairly formal occasions such as parent consultative evenings. This was not to say that relationships were strained particularly but rather that interactions were not actually sought out by the parents as one teacher described it,

'.. most of our parents are .. well as long as you're not sending them home or expelling them .. you know... they keep away from you ... I mean parent response can be a problem...'

The lack of an easy relationship between teachers and parents was described by another teacher who talked of her 'nervousness' in approaching parents especially when,

'...they are in the playground in sort of groups .. you know .. and if I have to approach them ... you have to get a parent on their own by calling them away ... it is hard.. I find that quite difficult really..'

Lack of parental involvement had its 'upside' for the teachers however, this revealing itself in comments on the lack of 'stroppy' or 'pushy' parents that they had experienced at other schools, parents who were said to 'know their rights' and were seen as selfishly pursuing them often at the expense of other pupils and sometimes the sanity of the teachers. In contrast to them, the kinds of 'problems' which these parents brought up were reported as being largely of the following order, *'things like .. you know .. he hasn't got anyone to play with ..'* or as another teacher put it,

*'...lost jumpers ... she didn't get her milk yesterday... rather than you know .. complain that she didn't have her reading folder last night or .. you haven't heard him read this week .. you know not **educational** issues ... when we do it's really unusual...'*

While lack of parental involvement was often put down to a lack of interest, many perceived that parents often felt uncomfortable and unsure of their ground in discussing school matters with teachers partly due to their own 'poor' educational attainments. Also and perhaps linked to this were their judgements of parental expectations as in the following comments,

'...most of them say they want their children to do well ..but I think they've got historical .. they endemically are rather nervous about schools anyway ... you're looking at lifetime habits passed down through generations ... there's something very deep there in terms of habit that is incredibly difficult to change ..... I think they think that it's probably not possible.. (success in education).. *from that background .. it's not for us ...you know?'*

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Most teachers whilst mentioning a lack of parental involvement nonetheless observed that they achieved a 'very good turnout' at parent consultative meetings with most reporting at least 90% of parents attending. Parents were also said to support 'sponsored events' and 'non-educational' occasions such as sports day and Xmas concerts. However this attendance was seen to indicate a fleeting interest or a mere, *'...going through the motions...'* on the part of such parents in that commitments made during such meetings such as the promise to for example, *'..hear him read at home three times a week...'* were not adhered to.

Others formed the impresion that the parents saw very little or no role whatsoever for themselves in the education of their children seeing it as solely the province of teachers. Also in many instances parents' understandings of how they were expected to 'support' their children were seen to be at variance with those of the teachers'. Some respondents reported what they preceived to be a 'falling off of interest' as pupils progressed through the year groups from an initial 'keenness' when children arrived at nursery or reception. This was described variously as parents losing heart when their initial hopes for their children were not seen as being fulfilled, others commented on misunderstandings of what was expected based on, *'gaps in their own..* (the parents') *education..'* with many examples provided, including one teacher's account of a parent who had thought her daughter had done well in completing a 'dot to dot' alphabet sheet at home when the *'..whole purpose of the sheet.. had been to learn the letters ...'* the teacher explained,

'..the dot to dot was just a fun bit to make it more interesting... but she (the parent) *said .. she's done all that .. she's good isn't she? ... she thought that's all that was expected ... it's low expectations like that ... we have to fight against....'*

Others were led to comment on parents' expectations of the reading process whereby when they read at home they expected their children to be able to 'read every word' and were unhappy about them 'looking at the pictures' in order to give themselves cues / clues, with some reports of parents 'covering over the pictures' in order to make sure their child was not 'cheating' when reading.

Again expectations as to the duration and extent of involvement of parents were commented on when a 'syndrome' was identified by one teacher whereby,

> *'..parents are interested when they're learning to read .. and then once they think they can .. well that's it! ... they wouldn't read to their children as a kind of continuum until they're twelve or thirteen ... whereas maybe middle class people would ... they wouldn't consider reading ... you know, Narnia or Roald Dahl or something ... the children are on their own really....'*

Other teachers reported some success in that they recognised 'what was possible' for these parents and asked them for the kind of support they felt they would be able to 'deliver,' thereby sending home,

> *'the sort of homework where ... you could sit your child down and give them a sheet of paper ... you didn't have to do anything with them ... no research type stuff ... no open ended work ... just worksheets ... spellings ... and such....'*

School B .. As with the previous school accounts focussed on features such as housing, employment or the lack of it, poverty and of numbers of free school meals, of single and of young mothers. Whilst the school served a large council housing estate, it was actually located on the fringe of it, as one teacher explained,

'..we're bounded on one side (of the school site) *by S.... Road, which has
beautiful detached and semi detached houses ... but we never see any of
those children whatsoever!... we have the delightful residents of the K...
estate on the other side of the road coming here...'*

The financial poverty of the area featured more prominently in their
accounts with teachers reporting large numbers of pupils eligible for free
school meals, of many parents claiming 'income support' with the vast
majority of them being unemployed. There were said to be classes of twenty
seven pupils but having only one child paying for a school meal, and of
another class of similar number where the teacher reported that she'd,

*'.. only got .. you know about four children who've got one or other of
their parents in any kind of employment ... the others have no-one..'*

There were other indicators of this poverty with reports of pupils arriving at
school with,

*'..shoes that aren't fit to be worn..... clothes that aren't fit to be worn .... if
they have clothes that don't have holes in ... well they are usually washed
out .. handed down beyond reason ... so that tells a story..'*

The area, which was located on the fringes of the city was contrasted by
many with what they believed were the greater problems of other areas,
thus whilst they reported high levels of crime, particularly burglary and car
theft, they believed the area to be *'..free of drugs, prostitution .... that sort
of thing ... not like an inner city area..'*

Again as with the previous school there was a stability of population which
was remarked upon, with second and third generations of pupils attending
the school, large extended families living locally and with many cousins and

step brothers and sisters in the school. Further whilst this population was almost entirely white, this was not mentioned for given the profile of the borough this was not remarkable. The 'strangeness' of the area was a feature of their accounts however, with comments such as,

'..it's like an island up here ... people live and die here .. bring up their kids .. who bring up their kids without moving anywhere or actually doing anything...' or as another commented, *'.. it's almost like a ghetto.. this estate., there are no through roads..'*

The term working class was not used at all in their accounts of pupil and parental backgrounds, however that of middle class was used extensively and invariably as a means of contrasting their pupils' experiences with that of those from, *'..more normal backgrounds..'*

Thus as with the previous school these respondents considered there to be fairly profound implications for teaching and for relationships with parents arising from the background features they identified, none of which were presented in a positive light.

Thus most of these features were said to hinder them in their attempts to do *'..their proper jobs..'* as one teacher explained teaching pupils from such backgrounds,

'.. makes it more challenging .. they have a lot of social needs that you have to pick up on before you ever start the business of teaching the three R's ... a whole package that they bring with them that needs sorting out...'

Some of these accounts which involved sharing their perceptions of the home lives of their pupils were remarkable for their frankness and negativity with a number of anecdotes and also apocryphal stories being made to stand

in for 'real' events or evidence, such as a 'typical meal time' as described by one teacher who reported,

*'...you hear stories of when the food goes on the table... basically you have to go for it .. and fight to get it ... and if you don't.... well you go hungry .... that's an extreme example ... I can't justify it ... but **you do hear these things..**'*

This was contrasted with an account of her behaviour, 'at the table,' thus,

*'..whereas if you think about your own values .. **when you sit down to the table** ... you have time at the table ... the meal is all sorts of social structures... you wait to be served .. you're offered your food... you ask to get down from the table ... you don't have these.. here... I don't think they even sit down to the table to eat ... sort of food on their laps .. I'm waffling!'*

There were many other comments contrasting their pupils lives with an idealised middle class norm as in the example above, there being many references to a lack of 'structure' and 'routine' in pupils' homes. This was said to make them less able to conform to the routines and conventions of school. Thus they were lacking in 'social skills' as evidenced by their inability to 'wait for their turn' or to 'listen to others.' They were also said to be *'...inarticulate.. not used to talking to adults..'* unduly argumentative and aggressive, leading to situations whereby as one teacher put it *'..you know ... all arguments end with a fight ... they see no other way of sorting it out..'*

Pupils were also said to be lacking in other skills which were seen as necessary prerequisites to a successful school career. Firstly there were those skills which related directly to the kinds of activities undertaken in the classroom, as one teacher explained,

'.. a lot of them come in having not seen a book or picked one up and looked at the pictures .. a lot tell me they haven't got paper and pencils at home to write with or draw with...'

Further, general background knowledge and experiences were cited by three teachers as features in which the pupils were seen as deficient. Children's worlds were said to be very limited with many of them said to hardly ever 'get off the estate' as one teacher explained,

*'they're not taken out much .. they get all their information off the T.V. ... they don't go anywhere ...like we might take **our children** to the Zoo or something ... but they've missed all that .. they've never seen a seaside some of them .. for instance .. today in the library session I asked one of the children what an owl was and how would she look it up in the library ... and she **didn't even know what an owl was** ... you know you're going way back...'*

These experiences or lack of them that characterised the backgrounds of their pupils led one teacher to declare that it would be almost impossible for them to 'catch up' with 'normal' school progress, unless they were very bright indeed, for she said that in her own family she had *'done so much'* with her children before they'd even been to school, and continued to support them now, and she went on to ask,

'where do we learn how to bring up our children? ... from our mothers I suppppose.. it's a .. a sort of middle class instinct... now my pupils....don't get any of that...'

The majority of parents were described variously as being uninterested in their children's progress, as having extremely low expectations for them or as being unwilling or unable to 'support' them at school. One teacher commented on parents as follows,

'...their expectations are very low ... too low sometimes... and limited to their own experiences... they see a job as an achievement ... any kind of job .. that's about the limit of it .... I've got L.. in my class ... bright as anything really... he could go to the Grammar school .. but a sort of inverted snobbery ...wouldn't permit them to even consider it ... a tragedy really...'

A 'falling off of interest' in their children's progress as they got older and also in regard to their younger children was another charge levelled at parents, with 'extremely large families' being seen as a relevant factor by many. Thus parents were said to have 'heard it all before' by about year four or by the time their third or fourth child attended the school.

Attendance at parental consultative evenings was generally said to be poor with most teachers reporting less than 50% of parents 'bothering.' Again the relationships were not said to be easy with many of the younger parents being said to 'carry a lot of baggage' in relation to their own schooling as one teacher commented,

'they don't know how to talk to you ... you have to be very careful what you say .. to make sure they come back next time ... many of them don't like you .. because they remember teachers from their secondary schools ... that's their experience of teachers...'

Not all parents were to be blamed however, indeed some were seen as trying to help but being unable to do so due to their own poor educational attainments. This sometimes meant that they were unable to read with their children at home because their children's reading levels had outstripped theirs. Sometimes they were reported as reacting strongly and negatively to requests to help due to the frustration they may have experienced at simply being unable to do so. One account given by a teacher relatively new to the school described an encounter with a parent who when she introduced the possibility of 'supporting' her son at home reportedly,

'.. got there before me .. before I could say it.....jumped in and said .. I know what you're going to tell me.... I'm not going to do it.. (the teacher continued) I just kind of thought .. Christ!... she could at least try ... turns out that she went to R... (special school) herself ...and can't read very much at all.....'

There were a few parents who were treated very sympathetically, those who were seen to be trying to 'keep their heads above water' in extremely difficult circumstances and who 'wanted better' for their children but they were said to be the exceptions and very low in number. Indeed of the six teachers only three reported more than two of the pupils in their classes read at home with their parents three time a week with the highest number being six in one class. Some parents were said to want to do more but seemed unable to because of the pressures of bringing up large families, there always being something else to do.

School C. As with the previous two schools, indicators such as housing, employment, numbers of free school meals etc. also featured in their accounts of the surrounding community. The school was said to have a very mixed catchment with extremes of wealth and poverty variously described thus,

'pretty um .. half and half .. very middle class 'village' children ... and more working class... more um social problems...'

or,

'our intake goes from .. more of a middle class.. um ..area of families ... and a council estate where there's more of a working class ethos..'

or,

'we have a lot of children off the local council estate... then we serve the rest of the B.. community.. with parents who have professional jobs...many of these children will be going on to private education..'

Some of the children were said to come from families who were 'very well off..' and others fom those who had '..very little indeed..' who also suffered from unemployment and whose children were entitled to free school meals.

Four of them reported having worked as schools with less mixed intakes serving what they variously described as, *'more um deprived . sort of..'* or *'.more council estate type housing..'* or, *'..very poor run down..'* areas, which they contrasted with their current positions. One of them reported working at a school whose catchment area was a large high rise estate and which she comments, *'..therefore came with a lot of discipline problems..'* this she compared with her current situation about which she reported, *'..I do feel I actually teach here..'* Another reported problems at his previous school, due to the, *'..geography of the area..'* by which he meant its location in a 'poorer' part of the borough, which mirrored the previous teachers comments in that he assumed such a location led naturally and unproblematically to such phenomena as, *'bad discipline problems .. actual fighting in classes .. '* regarding it as much harder to teach in, *'.. purely because of the intake..'* Another teacher reported that at his previous school which had been in a, *'fairly .. no very poor area..'* that the main pressures had come from the pupils' very bad behaviour, and the 'apathy' of the parents. However at this school he felt that many of his pupils were *'fairly responsive in class'* but that the downside was that some of the parents were *'too pushy and demanding..'*

Now, the teachers reported the school's intake as relatively mixed or even as 'half and half' as between those of 'wealthier,' 'professional' or 'more middle class families' and those from 'poorer' backgrounds, however when they were asked to consider the children in their own classes a slightly different picture emerged. Thus, the figures for each of the six classrooms

included no more than eight pupils in any of them from what they described as coming from middle class backgrounds with six such pupils in two of them and only five in one of them, this within the context of a classroom average of twenty nine pupils overall ie. approximately forty one pupils out of a total of about one hundred and seventy five. This was confirmed by one of them who considered the 'profile' of the school to have changed over the past few years from a more even balance to one where she now considered at maximum twenty five per cent of pupils to come from middle class backgrounds.

However whatever the actual figures, teachers spent a disproportionate amount of time talking about such families, families whose presence loomed very large in their professional lives due to what they perceived as the various pressures they were said to place on them through demands made and the feeling that they were *only too ready* to criticise them and further because of what they perceived to be the attitude of the headteacher and at least part of the senior management team towards these parents.

One teacher described the relationship thus,

'... they are in a position to demand stuff from us... the balance has gone too far... they are in control rather than us being professionals... we are undermined .. .. I've been in other schools where this sort of thing has been knocked on the head .. but not here ...I think the two halves are treated differently..'

Others spoke of making sure that certain children were definitely, 'heard read' at school or whose books were always marked up to date or who always had someting 'interesting' in their trays whatever else was happening because of the expectation that parents would ask to see such items or records as a way of checking up on what their child was doing, one

commenting that this 'monitoring' was done *'..in the nicest possible way of course..'* adding *'..but the threat is always there..'* Such parents were also said to ask to see teachers planning perhaps for the half term ahead in order to be able to supplement and support what was being offered by the school. One teacher said she tried to stay,

> *'you know .. one step ahead of them... I do find myself thinking ... I must have this written down somewhere because some parent is going to ask me some day where it is or what we've done... I find myself spending a great deal more time with the parents of the middle class children ... they're always in the classroom after school...'*

This was said to lead to what one teacher described as a 'knee jerk reaction' on the part of teachers in order to keep such parents happy, further commenting that,

> *'... I suppose if a parent is concerned and asking a lot of questions then you respond to it in the class... even if not knowingly and deliberately ... you do find yourself keeping a sort of extra eye out for the child and making sure that what you give them is .. you know.. appropriate ... so those children come to the spotlight definitely.. and if you think about it ... then it has to be detrimental to other children...'*

Parents of pupils from poorer backgrounds then, despite being in a numerical majority featured hardly at all in their accounts of the community served by the school save in the sense that they were the 'other' parents whom they didn't seem to be overly concerned with or perhaps as a group were not seen as a priority. Thus whilst parental involvement was said overall to be at a fairly high level, as measured particularly by the attendance at parent consultative evenings and the activities of parents' organisation known as the 'friends of..' the school, comments were made that it tended to be always certain parents who put themselves forward thus one teacher commented,

'you get the same parents who come to all the curriculum evenings and parents consultations ... but we really have to encourage parents to come at the other end of the spectrum.. I know some are interested.. but they're very sceptical about coming in to meetings .. some parents take over and hog them...'

The reasons for non attendance at parents evenings were variously described as being due to some parents not identifying with the '..school as an institution...' or because they simply, '..couldn't be bothered..' However the attendance overall was said to be very good with one teacher saying that sometimes she is *'..surprised by who does come ... and you think .. oh good .. It's nice to see them here..'* further commenting however that *'...some of these parents feel a little out of it here.. like they don't know what to say to you ..'*

2. Special Educational Needs.

Respondents were asked a range of questions relating to special educational needs including their understandings / definitions of the concept and their views as to its usefulness as a means of accounting for the difficulties experienced by some pupils, the practicalities of applying it in their schools including the criteria they employed when 'identifying' pupils and the broader consequences of such identifications.

School A... more than 50% of the pupils at the school had been placed on the SEN register, with some teachers regarding it as a 'category' which was so all encompassing as to be almost meaningless and in danger of overuse. One argued that,

'.. we've got such a high incidence .. you know .. we could do an IEP on virtually every child in the class on one thing or the other .. it depends on how you define it..'

There were almost as many 'working definitions' of S.E.N. or 'criteria for identification' of pupils as having S.E.N. in use as there were teachers interviewed. One common theme to emerge was that poor attainment was crucial, whatever its cause or origin. Thus if a pupil was seen to be 'failing,' then they either **had** special educational needs as some defined it or they needed to be identified, registered and processed **as having** special educational needs if only to show that the teacher had recognised that the standard attained by the pupil was not high enough and was doing something about it. There was some confusion however in that they were not sure as to whether they ought to be comparing pupils with others in the school or with a wider perhaps national standard however arrived at, such as eg. the governments' 'expected' levels at the end of Key Stages. Thus while some were aware of such standards they were found to be difficult to operationalise in practice, as one teacher commented,

' .. we've had children come from other schools who are supposed to have had special educational needs ... but who pale into insignificance compared with the children we've got.. now given that.. then I suppose we ought as a school to be identifying a lot more... but we've got such ridiculously high numbers now .. where does it stop?..'

In practice then, pupils were compared with others in the class but with a further implicit element which related to wider standards though not in any systematic way. Further it was left largely to the discretion of the individual teacher to determine whom they would identify, however pupils were seen as being most likely to be identified at an earlier age with many teachers particularly further up the school eg. in years five and six 'inheriting' large numbers of pupils who had been identified earlier, in fact it was considered unusual for pupils to be identified in the junior part of the school for most had been so in the infants.

The reception teacher described an assessment procedure for pupils when they first arrived at school involving them engaging in such activities as *'...writing their names.. building a tower with bricks..'* and in being observed interacting with other children in role play, commenting that,

> *'..children who **come in with nothing** ... I mean I shouldn't really say that .... but that's how it compares to others .... children who can't draw a figure .. who can't write a letter ... are usually special needs children ... who remain special needs children .. it's as simple as that .. it seems to me..'*

A number of children were said to be placed on the register as a result of such assessments. Another teacher in describing the criteria she used, spoke of looking at pupils whose performance, *'..varied tremendously from the norm..'* of her class, together with her *'gut instinct..'* continuing by saying that,

> *' I'm afraid that I don't read any of the leaflets coming round about the **actual** definition... because I use my own .. because I've found it useful..'*

Whatever the vagaries of the identification process however and the difficulties of deciding on just what criteria to use, how to apply it and the danger of 'overuse' most teachers employed the term SEN in an absolute sense to indicate their belief in the existence of a large group of children whose 'capacities,' 'capabilities' or 'abilities' were said to be such such that they formed a distinct group and whose needs they considered simply couldn't be met by engaging them in the day to day activities of the classroom. They were said therefore to need provision that was 'extra' and also 'special' for as one teacher put it,

> *'.. they **are different** .. they need different treatment ... they can't seem to learn... by the same vehicle ie. me.. as other children ... are able to learn by...'*

They were then asked about the kind of skills needed to teach various pupils in their own classes, pupils whom they identified as having real difficulties. Some of them regarded such pupils as beyond their expertise with one giving an example of one of her pupils commenting that,

> '.. he's not making any progress with the work I am able to give him however differentiated I make it..'

However, whilst there were exceptions as indicated above, most teachers spoke of the context of the classroom as contributing in many ways to pupils' difficulties, particularly the lack of individual attention they felt able to give, arguing that in many cases, all their pupils needed was, as one teacher described it,

> '.. ordinary input like attention, praise .. someone to sit with them ... keep them on task.. keep them going ..tell them they're doing well..'

This was the kind of attention and support that could be provide by 'extra pairs of hands' in the classroom, working under their direction on tasks and activities prepared by them, the class teachers. As another teacher declared,

> '.. there's no mystery to it ... but we can't do it all ourselves .. because these kids are all over the place if you don't sit on them!..I literally can't do it myself ....because I'm sharing myself between the other twenty eight children...'

However they were also clear as to the kinds of difficulties that could be 'helped' this way, one teacher spoke for many when she argued that,

> '.. if the special needs are not behavioural, then I can cope... if it's a learning difficulty full stop .. I can give the help ... with support.'

The clear message being that those with 'behavioural difficulties' were the source of most anxiety to these teachers in terms of their abilities to 'contain' them within the classroom.

Many of the problems they experienced were put down to external pressures whether those of an 'overloaded' curriculum or that of the setting of 'unrealistic' targets for them by their headteacher or the education authority. There were many positive views expressed about the idea of a National Curriculum as a means of achieving *'..some sort of consistency..'* across schools but there were many reservations expressed about the form it had taken and of what they now saw as the additional burden of the literacy hour. As one commented,

> *'...there are many good things in the N.C. and in the literacy hour .. the*
> *main problem for me is overload .. if it were streamlined and realistic..*
> *We're a mixed class.. we're following the year one programme (Literacy*
> *Hour) ..that's like fifty odd blends in a term! .. and I'm thinking are they all*
> *going to work at these? ... I don't mind them giving me what to do .. I'm not*
> *so cynical that I don't think I can't improve .. or learn .. I just wish there*
> *wasn't so much of it.... I can't fit everything in... so what I do ... like*
> *everyone else ... I lie .. what I'm writing down on my plans ... I'm not*
> *doing...'*

There were further comments as to the *'..increased pace..'* at which they were expected to teach, the way in which *'..things had speeded up..'* providing a *'..sense of rush..'* and of it *'...feeling very pressured all the time..'* There were complaints about the various targets for achievement that they had been set, targets which they felt were unfair and unrealistic. One commented in relation to such demands,

> *'.. I'm working as hard as I can.. I don't know anyone who isn't at our*
> *school..we're all doing our level best... we do worry ..but I don't know what*
> *else we've got to give ... the job as described sometimes is unmanageable ..*
> *all you can do is your level best....'*

They were asked to consider what purpose was served by their identifying pupils as having special educational needs and therefore to examine their motivations in doing so. One reason given was as alluded to earlier, that of accountability ie. the need to be seen to be monitoring the progress or lack of it of their pupils and further to be seen to be responding. One teacher of younger children saw it as important to attempt to '..*nip things in the bud..*' even to the point of over-identifying particularly those with behavioural problems, of whom there were said to be many. She disagreed with the views of the senior management of the school who as she explained,

> '..*think that the older children should have the help ... because of their behaviour problems... whereas I think you know... that if they helped these children when they first come in.....*'

She considered that many behavioural problems were ignored when the children were little because they were much more manageable but that this was simply 'storing up trouble' for the future.

One major main reason for identifying pupils was as a strategy for obtaining extra help, if not in their classrooms then in the future,

> '..*to get help for them .. in the long term.. the register is so slow moving..... if you get them on it now.. then they can get the help eventually...*'

There was an implicit assumption that they were helping teachers further on in the pupils' school careers as well as the pupils themselves. These teachers whether they were 'further up' in their primary school or perhaps later in secondary schools would benefit from classroom assistant time or even 'outside support' to help them to 'cope with' these pupils. Indeed there was said to be a 'push' in the later years of Key Stage Two to demonstrate the need for the formal assessment and statementing of some of their pupils in

preparation for their transfer to secondary schools, the consensus being that as one teacher explained,

'.. we know them, and we've coped as best we can .. but they won't survive in secondary without that extra support ... and we tell their mums that too ... and they say .. yeah . great ..'

A further reason however related to what they saw as the unfairness of *'..expecting more and more..'* of them as teachers and the increasing pressures they were being put under with target setting. It was a means as one teacher put it of,

'showing these people what we have to work with .. the kinds of difficulties we are coping with day in day out..'

At the same time however there were criticisms of the paperwork involved in the processing of IEP's which was seen by some as an unnecessary burden and as a 'government stalling mechanism' to avoid providing resources. One teacher commented that she knew her children very well but that she didn't,

'..always have things written down.. (and continued).. but I think that's why I'm there .. every single day .. it's galling as a teacher .. that they can't accept my judgements..'

School B.. This school also identified a large proportion of its pupils as having special educational needs ie. some 68%. Whilst there were comments as to the 'wooliness' of the concept, the dislike of 'putting people in boxes' or to the 'use of any jargon,' it was nonetheless seen as a 'useful shorthand' way of describing pupils without having to, *'..describe in detail what's wrong with the person ..'* as one teacher put it. Indeed the notion of

something 'being wrong with' the pupils so identified was a recurrent theme at this school but there was also a real sense of them using the procedures in order obtain extra resources for the school.

Moreover, many pupils were identified as having special educational needs very soon after they arrived at the school on the basis of scores derived from the L.E.A.'s own baseline assessment procedures. These procedures were further seen as a means of demonstrating to a wider audience such as the education authority and also Ofsted the very difficult nature of the task facing the school in raising the levels of achievement of the pupils in order to meet targets set. Indeed information from these assessments indicated that their current year one and reception classes obtained an average score of only 25% compared with an authority wide average of 45% a fact which was mentioned by five out of the six teachers interviewed.

The identification of low scoring pupils as 'having special educational needs' simply on the basis this procedure was justified on the grounds that it demonstrated the need for extra support whatever the causes or nature of the low attainment. It was also argued that from previous experience that while they hadn't used a formal test before, many activities similar to the test items had been used and that they had been found to be very useful predictors of future performances and achievements.

Pupils whom they regarded it as necessary to identify were variously described as those who had a need, *'above and beyond .. what was considered normal for that age..'* or who *'needed more one to one help in order to get on..'* or had specific difficulties *'. like not reading but ... can do other things like maths..'* or those who *'.. have attitude problems ...... don't like authority..'*

Now given the vast numbers identified ie. almost seven out of every ten pupils, they found it difficult to justify a definition which included references to such students experiencing greater difficulties than others in the class so that many said they also worked with an idea of a wider standard though not in a formal way, rather they relied on their common sense and on their earlier experiences at other schools. All of the teachers reported that levels of achievement had been higher at other schools they had taught at. One teacher described visiting an ex colleague who was marking some children's work from her school, he continues,

> '.. it was a shock to see how good it was compared with ... the children from our school .. it really brings it home to you ... what we've got here..'

Others talked of having to remind themselves of what it would be like if they taught in '...a more normal area..' and what that standard would be, as one teacher said, '. I have to keep relating that in my mind .. otherwise I think we're doing ok and ... actually we're not doing ok.'

Whilst all teachers operated with a notion of special educational needs in an absolute sense as referring to things that were 'wrong with' individual pupils there was also an awareness of the various aspects of the school context which led to the inclusion of pupils within the category.

Thus there was a feeling expressed by many that the identification of pupils was an essential part of obtaining as one teacher put it, 'what these kids need to get on .. small classes .. one to one support... more time spent on them...' Another spoke of it as her 'duty... to fight for them ... to get the resources..' and spoke of,

> '.. the pressure to identify them early .. to get the money which comes .. a year or two behind .. that everyone else is fighting for... the support you need..'

Whilst they may have experienced various pressures to identify pupils as a means of bidding for extra resources they all felt that their identifications were justified by the 'poor performance' of the pupils so identified, with one teacher commenting that she wouldn't give anyone the 'label' of special educational needs *'..if I couldn't justify it .. if I didn't have the evidence...'*

Some teachers however saw the problems manifested by their pupils as far too great to be solved by the provision of extra resources and teacher time etc. Rather these problems were said to be social in origin relating largely to their pupils' home backgrounds, problems which they felt only able to 'scratch the surface of' and which related more to,

'the home... society ... their whole view of what its all about .. you know .. not like the government thinks .... like whether we use phonics enough.. '

There was much talk of meeting parental needs ie. the problems faced by pupils were seen to be directly a result of 'poor parenting' whether it was in terms of their not reading with their children at home (something which assumed great significance in their accounts) or whether it was other aspects of their attitudes and behaviour such as the example given by one teacher of a pupil whom she regarded as having behavioural difficulties, as she reports,

'.. I'm sure Jordan gets his stroppy nature from his mother ...you know she is raring for a fight on most occasions really.. yes .. with anybody .. with authority...'

They were asked about the kinds of skills required to teach many of those whom they identified as having special educational needs. Most considered that while they may have had a significant number of pupils who had 'really special needs' the majority of those whom they identified would probably

have been able to cope if the classes had been a lot smaller and if they had had individual attention. Some of them were described as extremely distractable as in one teacher's description, as follows,

> '.. I can sit at a table with four children in my class ... and they will not look at me .. you know.. even though I'm saying .. now look at me .. you don't look over there .. I'm teaching you this now ... to learn you've got to look at me .. as soon as something takes their eye they're away..'

The recent moves towards more whole class teaching with plenary sessions was regarded as disadvantaging some of their pupils as one year six teacher explained,

> 'the children with behaviour problems do find the sitting with me looking at a book difficult .. because if I'm looking at the book I can't be looking at them..they find it an ideal opportunity to give someone a nip... when we move on in the literacy hour and I tell them what to do next ... they're lost.. they simply can't follow what I've been saying .. they just can't listen in a big group..

They regarded themselves skilled and well enough trained in order to give most of their pupils with special educational needs what they needed, which seemed to amount to roughly the same work as was given to other pupils but in smaller quieter groups where an adult would be able to sit with them and keep them on task, perhaps repeat the explanation to them as to what it was they were supposed to be doing and give them some help when they got into difficulties. There were however a large number of pupils whom they felt needed 'expert,' and 'skilled' help, such as some of those distractable pupils described above, but also many of those whom they described as having behaviour problems. There were also some others who were described as having been 'neglected' at home to the extent that they didn't function very efficiently at all in the school. These pupils were often

the ones whom they were in the process of pushing to have formally assessed.

As with the previous school the teachers in the later years were concerned about how their pupils would fare at secondary school. One teacher commented on a number of boys in her year five class describing her aims for them in the following terms,

'.. I don't think we're after high attainments ..just trying to fit them into secondary schools without being thrown out basically ... we're after giving them basic life skills .. just to survive ...

Many teachers complained of the paperwork involved in the writing of IEP's and the extra record keeping involved in the identification of so many pupils. Clearly the SENCo couldn't hope to be involved in the way intended by the Code of Practice so the teachers were thrown back on their own devices as one of them argued,

'..I'm doing my own IEP's for level three .. it means a lot of paperwork.. it's worth it though ... because I'm aiming for some of these children to be statemented .. I don't know whether it's right or wrong ...I just feel that's the best I can do for them .. to get them extra time.. all the proper help in secondary school .. you know for exams .. with scribes and everything if necessary...'

The National Curriculum and the Literacy hour barely featured in their accounts, rather they were part of the taken for granted backdrop to their work. Comments were made however to the effect that politicians constantly blamed them whatever they did and with these same politicians now telling them *'..exactly what to teach and how to teach it..'* as in the literacy hour they surely couldn't continue to blame them *'..if it went wrong..'* There was an element of demoralisation and resignation in their

responses in that none of them said that they felt such an imposition as in any way to be an affront to their professional competences, indeed they reported being too busy surviving from day to concern themselves with such issues.

School C. .. This school identified approximately 23% of its pupils as having special educational needs. The category was seen as a useful and meaningful one by all the teachers, this being qualified however by comments as to its being '... *a bit of a label for children..'* and with warnings to the effect that teachers needed to be careful in the application of the concept because of the difficulties of distinguishing between those whom they considered to need identifying and what one teacher termed *'..other bordeline cases..'* Most related it to those pupils who were seen to be failing or having problems as a result, but in contrast to the first two schools four of these teacher mentioned those who were variously described as *'the able child..'* or *the gifted ..'* those *'..with special talents .. like musical abilities...'* or *'..high flyers..'* with concern expressed by one of them that *'..the Code doesn't acknowledge such children..'*

With regard to the application of the concept this was said to be in the hands of individual teachers with no school wide criteria in operation. One teacher commented that identifications on the whole tended to be based on *'..the gut reaction of the teacher..'* although in effect the causes related largely either to a *'..lack of progress or a behaviour problem...'* Most teachers spoke of pupils who *'.caused concern..'* and who therefore needed monitoring more carefully than others. The SENCo reported that the school was hoping to move towards what she described as 'objective' criteria such as a 'baseline test' upon entry to school whereby pupils *'..would be placed on the register if they failed to achieve a certain level ...'* They were also

beginning to use criteria such as *'..level of reading book reached in year one...'* and *'...a phonics test and things like looking at approaches to reading..'* in years one and two.

Two of the teachers mentioned school priorities as important features in identification, such as the decision during that term to focus on spelling. This meant that as one teacher explained,

> *'..we have decided that spelling can greatly affect a child's performance and that's what we are currently targeting our special needs on .... those children that fit the bill and need support in that area ... get put on the register..'*

The Identification of pupils was seen as useful in demonstrating that the teachers *'knew what was going on ..'* in their classrooms so that they couldn't be accused of complacency in relation to lower achieving pupils and further that they wanted all their pupils to do well and to be seen to be working towards this aim. Some said however that this often led to an over-identificaion of pupils but that this was justified given these wider concerns on the grounds that it was better to err on the side of an over zealousness in identifications rather than be accused of neglect. One further commented that whatever the difficulties with judgements as to who fell into the category of SEN that she could justify the identification of each and every one in her class, even those who were *'just there for monitoring really.. you know even those are being monitored for a reason...'*

The value of such monitoring was attested to by most of them with one teacher arguing that,

> *'..if a child is identified .. then they are more in the forefront of that teachers mind .. you know they're going to help the child... set targets ... I'm convinced the children do better even on stage one..'*

There were a number of competing concepts of special educational needs in evidence with SEN being used in both an absolute sense to signify a group of pupils who were seen as '..*different .. with very real and severe needs over and above ... what others have ..'* and a group seen to be experiencing perhaps temporary difficulties, or falling behind slightly who were considered '.. *perfectly normal really ...'* but for whom their identification and therefore monitoring was considered necessary for reasons of accountability. With regard to the former group however, their education was considered to require '..*some thought..'* and was often regarded as being beyond the competence of all teachers without perhaps extra training or a great deal of experience, with teachers therefore requiring what one described as '..*a good understanding of what a special needs child is all about... and how you can therefore meet their needs...'*

Again as with the previous schools what was described as the '.*lack of time in .. teaching these days..* ' was said to create a lot of difficulties for such children who were said to be liable to fall further and further behind as they moved up the school. Also they argued that for many such children their problems would have been lessened had the teachers been able to '..*spend more time on them..'* or perhaps be able to delegate a classroom assistant to do so under their supervision. Thus whilst certain children were seen to have '*very real needs..* ' they were not seen to require specialist teaching in a technical sense but rather the presentation of similar tasks as to other children but under closer adult supervision and support. As one teacher summed up,

'...*you know the main difficulty is time.. we've got primary helpers in all our infant classrooms and we're trying to introduce them into the juniors .. I think we're asking a lot of them .. but it does make a difference to the children...'*

However they all regarded 'behavioural difficulties' as presenting particular problems which they considered themselves to be least able to manage within school. They reported that such pupils were moved up the stages as *'soon as they could be..'* because of their potentially disruptive effects on the other children, one teacher declaring that they were *'...protecting the entitlement..'* of these other children.

The question as to who the 'identified' children were, in this school of comparatively 'mixed intake' emerged when teachers discussed the relationships they sought to establish with the parents of the pupils so identified. Thus, extra contact was sought with these parents, this taking the form of a meeting with the SENCo when the pupil was identified and further meetings to monitor the child's progress. At the first meeting the parent was expected to sign a contract agreeing amongst other things to read with their child four times a week, they were also advised as to other ways in which they might help and support their child. However as the SENCo explained when referring to a sample of year one children

'.. the contract hasn't worked at all...out of sixteen children... every single parent attended a meeting.. but only three read with their children... the rest failed .. letters were sent home ... spellings were sent home ... but they didn't do them..'

Various reasons were put forward for the failure of such contracts with one teacher considering that the parents didn't see teaching as their responsibility and preferred to leave such things to the school, another was of the opinion that parents were *'..unable to organise their lives to give their children even five minutes a day.'* The SENCo however said that of the sample referred to above that many of these parents either weren't readers themselves or if they were, had what she described as educational

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problems and that this pattern was repeated throughout the school. She said of the children on the register,

'..its about ninety five per cent working class.... who don't see the importance .. I think a lot of it is they can't organise their lives .. .. they can initially .. promise something like reading at home ... but they can't sustain it ... can't keep it going ..'

The small percentage of pupils on the register who were described as middle class were said to comprise largely of those who were either statemented for milder physical difficulties such as an example given of one girl with cerebral palsy or a number who had either been diagnosed as having dyslexia or were in the process of being so diagnosed. There was some discontentment expressed in relation to many of these parents with comments such as one teacher's who said of a pupil in her class,

..' this child has had a lot of help from B... (education authority) parents say he's dyslexic ... been very difficult .. a nightmare ... solicitors ... he hasn't had a test or diagnosis or anything ... puts his b's and d's the wrong way round so they say he's dyslexic..'

The school however had decided to identify a group of children as having specific learning difficulties fom the next term and to give them extra small group support. Only those pupils whose reading was seen to be out of line with other attainments and abilities were able to qualify for this extra support however leading to the conclusion of one teacher that the school was being forced into setting up this group in the hope of pre-empting requests from their middle class clientelle for diagnoses of dyslexia.

4. Gender and Special Education.

Respondents were asked a number of questions relating to patterns of identification in relation to gender and also to provide data on those pupils whose presence in their classrooms caused them most concern in terms of their abilities to maintain their membership of a mainstream setting.

School A... Teachers were asked to provide details of numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs in their classes. Overall this school identified more than half of their pupils. However whilst all of the teachers were able to specify exactly how many pupils in each of their classes had been identified, none of them were able to give figures as to the gender breakdown without stopping and going through the names individually. The actual figures produced showed nearly twice as many boys as girls in three classes with ratios of eleven boys and six girls identified in one and nine to four in another and twelve to five in another The three remaining classes had ratios of more than two to one with figures of fifteen to four, twelve to five and thirteen to six. From the six classes then out of one hundred and three pupils identified there were seventy three boys and thirty girls.

Most of them said that they knew that there were a lot more boys identified in the school and therefore weren't surprised by the actual figures, figures which it hadn't occured to them to count before. In line with this they they reported that while they may have been concerned with the overall numbers of pupils they found it neccessary to identify as having special educational needs the gender imbalance itself hadn't been an issue for them. Three teachers however mentioned what they variously referred to as *'.. boys becoming an issue..'* or *'.. failing boys..'* or *'. a lot of publicity about boys not doing as well as girls at the moment..'* an issue or a problem which they

felt that their headteacher and the education authority would no doubt expect them to make some response to in the future.

There was a sense in which they felt that little could be done about this imbalance however, it seemed to be treated as yet another taken for granted aspect of schooling as much a part of the natural order of things as female meals supervisors and secretarial staff and male schoolkeepers. One teacher explained,

'I suppose it's just accepted .... the kinds of conversations we have in the staffroom ... we say it always seems to be more boys ...in trouble or fighting or not doing their work ... and then nothing else happens .. it's a sort of taken for granted thing really... I mean if I really think about it ... we're always talking about boys..'

A variety of explanations were put forward for boys disproportionate appearance on the SEN register some of which involved physiological / psychological theories such as one teachers explanation as follows,

'..in fact the linguistic side of the brain ... develops very well and earlier in the female ... whereas the motor side of boys brains .. the more physical stuff ... develops early ... so there's a sort of mismatch .. so that for many boys school is difficult .. because they're into this run around physical stuff .. and school doesn't allow that ... and girls .. with finer sorts of motor skills ... and an interest in words and all that .. girls find school easier than boys...'

In line with such theories were arguments to the effect that girls initially matured much more quickly than boys and therefore that nothing could, or perhaps should, be done to intervene in what were seen as 'natural' developments. Obviously boys 'immaturity' led to difficulties for them and their teachers, but things were said to work themselves out eventually, with boys 'catching up' in the later years of schooling. One teacher after providing just such an account of differential rates of maturity of boys and

girls, concluded thus, *'...but who does well at university ... and in jobs?.. .. not girls!...'*

Others however while noting the same difficulties for boys in 'conforming..' or knuckling down..' put forward more social explanations for such difficulties, including aspects of their home backgrounds and particularly parental attitiudes and expectations. Indeed such arguments often existed alongside and in combination with physiological ones without apparent contradiction. Thus, parents were said to treat their sons very differently from their daughters with boys being expected and encouraged to be active and to, *'get out of the house and do something'* rather than stay home as one teacher explained,

'..we have a lot of parents of boys who would not expect them to read in an evening in the summer... would rather they be out kicking a ball .. but the girls would be sitting down with a paper and pen you know drawing .. writing and things... I better be careful not to generalise but ... girls generally fit the kind of drawing writing home based thing ... whereas the boys would be active...'

Others spoke of boys being out, playing football, riding their bicycles or just hanging around together in gangs *'..even in the winter..'* whereas girls were generally said to stay in.

All teachers identified aspects of boys demeanour, behaviour, interests and skills which were said to result either from such background features or to be more deep seated in physiological or psychological differences between boys and girls. Many of these differences related to boys physical attributes and were said to result in school being 'difficult' for them. As one teacher explained,

'...when the boys come in to school their expectations are very different from the girls .. the girls see their roles as their mothers on this estate ... as generally compliant .. you wouldn't get in this school.. girls who were given train sets... it would be Barbie dolls .. quieter kinds of play ... so the girls get used to that kind of .. that quiet kind of play .. whereas the boys .. you know... they do noisy things... I had a class today and somebody decided they wanted to throw their clay up and down like a ball .. It was a boy! .. that's not acceptable .. it's not on really.. we can't have that in a class of thirty ...none of the girls did that .. they all sat there very nicely..'

The link between 'unacceptable behaviour' and an identification as having special educational needs was made by a number of teachers with comments such as that of one who reported that the boys on her SEN register were *'..you know.. 'boys' boys ..'* or as another put it *' my..SEN boys are ..really macho .. really 'hard' .. wanna play football ... wanna play rough fighting games... and so on..'* They were said to engage in a number of 'irritating' and 'frustrating' activities eg. making unneccessary noise, such as scraping chairs, calling out, talking out of turn, or of being out of their seats or in the wrong part of the classroom, not getting on with work set, also of employing a range of time wasting tactics such as constantly sharpening pencils or borrowing rulers and of arguing with and abusing other pupils.

Another teacher reported spending a disproportionate amount of time on such boys to the detriment of higher achieving girls whom she regarded as having neglected during her two years at the school. However she demonstrated, *'..a very positive'* relationship with such girls through giving them various responsibilities, describing her approach as follows, *'..letting them feel that they've got a role to play in my day to day running of the classroom...I can do that for them..'* Some teachers argued that they felt that boys were disadvantaged due to the lack of male teachers in Primary education, teachers whom they felt could act as role models for them and who also might have a different range of strategies for 'handling' them. In

pusuit of this line of argument one teacher considered that she had an 'easier relationship..' with the girls in her class describing her approach as, *'..quite mumsy at times..'* and that this was a personna that girls responded to positively.

School B. Teachers were asked to provide some details on those pupils whom they had identified as having special educational needs. A very large number of pupils were identified ie. some 60%. which meant that some respondents found it easier to call to mind those whom they hadn't considered it neccessary to identify! What emerged however was that while overall there was a simple majority of boys over girls on the register, that the higher up the stages the greater was the disproportion in favour of boys identification. Thus the overall figures for the six classes were, ten to eight, twelve to ten, eleven to eight, thirteen to ten, twelve to eleven, and eleven to ten; boys to girls. However at stages two and three there was quite a marked and disproportionately large number of boys in evidence. Thus for the first class, of the eight girls identified five were at level one two at level two and only one at level three whereas for the ten boys from this class, only one was at level one with six at level two and four at level three. This pattern was repeated for the other five clases. Overall then sixty nine boys and fifty six girls were identified in these six classes, however at stage one the figures were thirteen boys and twenty nine girls; at stage two there were thirty boys and eighteen girls and at stage three thirty four boys and nine girls. It would appear then that those seen to be 'causing the most problems,' experiencing the greater difficulties and requiring the most support were boys.

Again as with the previous school this was considered unremarkable by teachers and largely taken for granted. They reported that it was not an

'issue' that had either been raised at a staff meeting or more informally in staffroom discussions. Some did report however that whilst they recognised that boys were getting 'a lot of attention,' or more of the 'extra outside help,' that accompanied a registration at stage three of the code of practice, they nonetheless considered that this was actually needed due to the difficulties experienced by these boys.

As to explanations for boys disproportionate appearance on the SEN register there was a mix of the physiological and the social in reasons given, similar to those given in school A above. Thus some argued that girls matured more quickly than boys and that this manifested itself in a more 'mature and sensible' attitude towards schoolwork, as one teacher argued,

'...the girls will at least have a go ... even if they can't do it.. they will ask for help and accept it when it's given... but the boys .. well they're all over the place .. if they can't do it .. they just give up and muck about... they haven't got the stickability.... if they can't do it... whoosh!... they just blow up...'.

One respondent reported reading in a newspaper that, girls had *'..a gene for social graces..'* something which she saw confirmed in her day to day interactions with girls and boys, particularly in girls 'willingness' or 'eagerness to please,' whilst boys in her view *'.really need to learn those things..'* Now while she referred to this in a slightly 'tongue in cheek' manner she nonetheless continued in similar vein declaring that after many years in teaching she had become less and less sympathetic to what she termed environmental arguments as a means of explaining differences between boys and girls declaring that,

'.. I know it isn't popular... but for me personally I see evidence before me of big big differences .. it just can't be explained by the effects of peoples attitudes towards them.... I've got lots of boys in my class who won't talk to you or can't hold a pencil properly .. that's not attitudes that have caused that .. it must be biological...'

Much of what was said focussed on the different ways in which boys and girls were said to be prepared for the kinds of activities they were expected to engage in in schools through aspects of their 'upbringing,' ie allusions were made as to the kind of things they 'got up to' outside school with reports of some fairly young boys being observed to be *'..out playing ... till all hours..'* whereas girls were again said to be *'.indoors with their mums..'* The arguments turned around notions of active boys and passive girls. Again another teacher reported what she perceived to be the extent of parental encouragement or expectation of such behaviours thus,

'they (the parents) *quite like that.. you know.. I mean I may be wrong . but there's a kind of feeling that this is what boys do .. they don't want their boys at home .. they wouldn't be comfortable .. they really wouldn't see that as acceptable behaviour for a boy .. I mean it's a generalisation but they'd think there was something wrong if they had a boy who wanted to read all the time.. you know .. really odd..'*

In similar vein another teacher reported her belief that many of the boys in her school were encouraged by parents to be 'tough,' to stand up for themselves and to fight if neccessary in order to show they could 'look after themselves.' She also reported that in her words,

'..a lot of them come to school with the attitude that women are inferior ... which disadvantages them at school when most of their teachers are female ..(laughs) *... not very clever really... but seriously ... they have voiced it .. not about me ... but they've said about women in general.... they've talked about you know.. dad beating mum up ... I've had mums coming in about boys ... you know.. hitting them at home..'*

Classrooms were described by these teachers as places where children were expected to settle down to work, to be quiet and well behaved, things which were seen as being difficult for 'these boys,' as one teacher commented,

'I know where these kids are coming from ... so I don't mind a litle boisterousness ... I can cope with that ...but some of them can't sit still and concentrate for two minutes...'

Teachers described making great efforts to interest the boys in what was offered by *'..pandering to their gruesome tastes..'* as one teacher put it when describing some English work she had prepared on horror stories for her class but she concluded,

'..well some of them did some nice work .. but when it comes down to it .. boys just don't want to sit down and learn anything do they?..I don't expect miracles ... but there's a kind of willingness to participate... to learn .. to want to know ... you know a basic curiosity ... that is missing with them...'

Another teacher described the attitudes to their work of many boys who were said to be very self conscious about their work and would try to cover it up and not show anyone, commenting that,

'..a lot of them are perfectionists ... they don't like writing it down in case they're wrong ... they don't like writing in their wordbooks before they come up for the word especially if they know it's wrong..'

There were further examples given of boys who were said to act as if they didn't care about their schoolwork, especially in front of their friends but, who actually appeared to enjoy being successful in certain areas, as in the case of Brian who as his teacher explained,

'..doesn't show that he cares at all ..' but if you get something that he knows he can do he'll work like anything to do it.. he got onto the money section of his maths book today ... he finds that easy ... in two minutes he'd done two pages and they were all right ... but he didn't want to make a thing of it...'

There were many comments to the effect that what was actually being offered in school to these boys was not entirely appropriate to them or rather that they were unable to 'access it' because of what were regarded as fairly fundamental differences in boys attitudes skills aptitudes and interests, again the active nature of boys was contrasted with the relatively passive nature of girls. Boys were said to have a great deal of excess energy that they simply needed to get rid of, as one teacher argued,

'...boys would be much more interested if there was more practical .. hands on kinds of teaching... with pulleys and wheels and magnets and batteries ... and even gardening and stuff like that .. you know really active stuff... they don't want to sit down and read about Biff and Chip and Kipper... they'd rather be up and doing things with their hands...'

Now there were boys who were said to be quiet and those who were seen to be trying their best but they were in a minority and further weren't particularly successful either. They were sometimes described as odd, isolated or as 'withdrawn into themselves.' Others spoke of the difficulties for such boys of surviving in the school, one teacher describing the boys in her class as being divided into two groups, the larger of which had a *'..gang mentality, wanting to be tough and all the rest of it...'* and others whom she described as *'complete loners ... just sit there saying nothing..'*

A teacher of older children in the school related boys attitudes to school with wider structural relations and particularly the high levels of unemployment on the estate, and the general lack of ambition and depressed expectations to which she felt this led. She argued that these boys felt that

they were only in school because they had to be because it was the law and that for some of them it was *'a bit like going to the dentist .. but every day for ten years!...'*

School C. Teachers were asked to provide details of those whom they had identified as having special educational needs. Unlike the previous two schools, numbers were low enough for them to readily recall these pupils. There were forty two children who had been identified within the six classes, of these, thirty one were boys and eleven were girls. The ratios for each of the classes were, four to one, three to one, seven to three, five to three, seven to two and five to two, boys to girls. Again this imbalance was not regarded as an issue as such, but concern was nonetheless shown over the lack of progress and poor behaviour of a significant number of boys. They described a set of attributes, including those of a general demeanour, set of attitudes and level of skill development which they said were shared to a certain extent by all boys but were present in more extreme form in those whom they had found it neccessary to identify as having special educational needs. These differences between boys and girls were explained at least in part as being due to what they supposed were differences in rates of maturation.

One way in which this was said to manifest itself was in boys different or rather indifferent attitudes to many school activities ie. of 'not caring' as much as they might over their work. As one teacher commented,

'boys just don't seem to care what their work looks like ... they just like say ..'I've done it!' ... whereas a girl would be like 'Is that right... should I do some more?' .. I think it's probably my approval they're after ... but boys don't care...'

Further, both the kinds and the quality of play engaged in by boys and girls were cited by one teacher as further evidence of a lack of maturity which was also seen as not fitting them for school, as one teacher observed,

> '.. girls are much more imaginative ... they play shops and houses.. schools and dollies ....and then they talk to their dolls whereas boys get a car and go Brrrm... Brrmm.. or they want to fight and hit each other.. girls become all imaginative and chatty .. they want to grow up quickly .. become teenagers ... but boys aren't bothered'

As with the other schools similar accounts were provided in support of notions of the active boy and the passive girl and comments as to the origins of such dispositions with one teacher referring to her friend's twins, one boy and one girl thus,

> '..they are treated exactly the same ... bought the same toys... given the same opportunities ... the girl draws and writes and reads books ... the boy will play and do physical things and jump around more ..... they are naturally like that...'

There were other accounts in similar vein where teachers gave examples of their own children, where sons were said to have taken longer than daughters to achieve finer motor skills particularly relating to 'pencil control' and also were also said to be much more physically active than daughters. They provided many comments as to boys restlessness and impulsiveness in the classroom and the need to 'train them to .. actually sit down and listen .. to take an instruction ... to stay on task..'

Alongside such explanations were those which demonstrated that such predispositions on the part of boys were also to a large extent reinforced or encouraged by their experiences within their homes and families. Further whilst all boys were said to possess such inclinations to some degree ie. to

be 'overly' active, impulsive, less interested in producing work which looked 'good,' and in seeking the approval of the teacher etc. it was those boys whom they found it neccessary to identify as having special educational needs who were said to be at the more extreme end of a continuum of such dispositions / inclinations etc. and therefore more difficult to 'control' thus causing more problems within the classroom. Moreover given the evidence cited in a previous section of the 'backgrounds' of such pupils which was reported by the SENCo as being 'about ninety five per cent working class' comments in relation to boys soon became occassions for teachers' pathologising of such backgrounds. Thus there were references to, *'macho behaviour.. thuggery really..'* encouraged by fathers and by mothers, of some of the boys, this particularly in relation to a number of recent 'bullying' incidents at the school. There were also further references to the 'disorganised nature' of pupils homes and the resultant lack of organisational abilities, self control and self discipline on the part of these boys.

Indeed the 'special needs support' which was provided was seen by some to be less effective for boys than for girls and for the very reasons of lack of organisational abilities etc. cited above. There was said then to be a far greater turnover on the special needs register for girls than for boys as the SENCo commented,

> *'..often the girls who come on to the special needs programme shift out very fast .... you can get them very quickly to a point where they don't actually need any more support.... whereas we find the boys get stuck... they stay in ... don't make the same level of progress ... they just plod along....they haven't got the 'systems' to take that support away ... to situations where they have to work independently...'*

In essence then these boys were said to be less able to make use of support provided, due in large part to their social backgrounds, backgrounds which

failed to provide them with the neccessary experiences of an orderly settled and organised existence at home. The implicit assumption here being that such experiences would better enable them to benefit from the 'systems' and organisation of school.

Thus as with previous schools there were phsiological / biological arguments used in tandem with more social explanations. Much was made also of the poor behaviour of the vast majority of those identified. Indeed there were very few examples provided of boys whom they considered to have special needs' eg 'learning difficulties' which weren't accompanied in one way or another by 'poor' behaviour. Often the link was considered to be causal even if the direction of causation was not always clear to them ie. whether poor behaviour 'caused' learning difficulties' or vice versa. However in many cases they felt that attributes variously described as, '..an inattentiveness...' or 'lack of focus..' or, '..lack of concentration ...' or '..inability / unwillingness to settle to work..' were at the root of these boys' difficulties.

Some teachers considered that what they perceived to be boys' interests were not sufficiently catered for with comments on the '..lack of information books in classrooms..' and on the prevalence of topics which were assumed to appeal more to girls. One teacher listed the topics which her class had been engaged in over the previous eighteen months or so demonstrating that much of the work covered had,

'..been on you know... nature.. plants.... flowers... animals ... Victorian homes.
..our school. .... and so on.. more girl oriented things...'

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Another teacher argued that boys interests were actively discouraged, reporting that most of the boys in her class were interested in football, yet during the world cup and even within the context of a 'fairly neutral topic like Europe..' she hadn't covered this subject at all. She comented that,

> '..what we are saying to them is we're not going to write about football...
> or about adventures and chases and shooting and that sort of thing .. it
> strikes me though that maybe we've gone too far ...we do actually
> discourage
> what they really really enjoy.... perhaps we should be using those interests
> to improve them educationally..'

The gendered nature of various subjects was referred to by other respondents with one of them anticipating a forthcoming science module on electricity commenting that,

> 'the boys will all be up there for it... it's horrible gender stereotyping .. but
> they will .. and we'll get the batteries and wires out .. and the girls will
> have a little go .. and not like it .. but the boys will be really there ...'

Recent changes including pressures on schools to meet various targets were alluded to by one teacher who considered that boys found it far more dificult to sit down and do their work and that such problems were increasing because they were being,

> 'more and more..forced back to sitting at desks with .. fixed timetables ..
> set lessons .. less investigations .. less moving around the clasroom..'

In Summary.

The drawing of 'conlusions' the making of inferences and the overall analysis of the responses outlined in this chapter will, along with those

generated from interviews with special school teachers, be the task of chapter eight where such responses will be analysed using a conceptual framework derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. However this section, notwithstanding the risk of oversimplification, will briefly revisit and restate a number of themes which emerged from interviews.

As with the teachers in special schools much reliance was placed on a 'deficit' model of the pupil in accounting for the nature and aetiology of pupils' difficulties in schooling. This was the main if not the only perspective to be employed by these teachers. The source of such problems as were experienced by pupils were quite firmly located within them and particularly in their 'background characteristics' such accounts giving a privileged status to individualistic, psychologistic and social pathological, explanations of school failure Indeed with regard to the latter, much time was spent in outlining the supposed detrimental effects on their pupils' learning and progress which resulted from various deficiencies in their backgrounds.

Thus whatever the vagaries of the identification processes, the difficulties of deciding on just what criteria to use, of how to apply it and the danger of 'overuse,' most teachers employed the term SEN in an **absolute** sense to indicate their belief in the existence of a large group of children whose 'capacities,' 'capabilities' or 'abilities' were said to be such such that they formed a distinct group and whose needs they considered simply couldn't be met by engaging them in the day to day activities of the classroom.

There was also much confusion evident in terms of definitions and criteria with almost as many 'working definitions' of S.E.N. or 'criteria for identification' of pupils as having S.E.N. in use as there were teachers interviewed! However the most common theme to emerge was that of poor

attainment being crucial, whatever its cause or origin. Thus if a pupil was seen to be 'failing,' then they either **had** special educational needs as some defined it or they needed to be identified, registered and processed **as having** special educational needs if only to show that the teacher had recognised that the standard attained by the pupil was not high enough and was doing something about it. Indeed the need to be accountable in this way assumed a great deal of importance in their accounts with teachers showing a heightened awareness of possible audiences for their actions and practices and the resultant 'outcomes' of their efforts. It was also the case however that such identifications often served as attempts to influence the amount of resources available to 'meet the needs' of their pupils and as therefore a bid for funds.

All three sets of teachers considered themselves to be working in very difficult circumstances seeing this as being caused by a range of pressures external to the classroom, whether it were the unpreparedness for school success of their pupils due to their home circumstances, or to unrealistic targets for their pupils set for them by managers or politicians. Again this perceived pressure acted as to encourage the identification of pupils as having special educational needs.

A disproportionate number of boys were found to have been identified as having special educational needs, this disproportionality increasing at the higher levels of the Code of Practice. There was a sense in which they felt that little could be done about this imbalance however, it being treated as yet another taken for granted aspect of schooling and not really a problem in itself although there was much anxiety expressed about the difficult behaviour of many boys.

As to explanations for boys disproportionate appearance on the SEN register there was a mix of the physiological and the social in reasons given, but all agreed that such reasons were relatively deep rooted. Perhaps the major theme running through all of these accounts was that of the active boy and the passive girl. Boys were seen as being much more physical and active within school and outside whereas girls were held to be relatively inactive and still. This assumed significance in their accounts in that they saw 'schooling' as in some senses 'rewarding' the more passive demeanour of girls whereas boys' more 'active bodies' constituted a problem for them and which needed to be brought under control.

Thus their different experience within their families as well as 'natural' differences between them meant that boys had and indeed continued to be encouraged to be, out and about riding their bicycles playing football etc. and were discouraged from sitting at home engaging in more passive activities were said to result in far more difficulties for boys in 'settling down' to work and simply physically conforming to the requirements of the classroom, whereas girls were said to be more 'practised' in the 'skills' of a relatively quiet deportment as evidenced in greater ability to sit still and for example listen to a story. Girls were also said to have had more direct experience of the kinds of activities which were a part of the early years curriculum involving skills of fine motor coordination as in the ability to hold and 'control' a pencil and so on. Boys' lack of experience of such activities and conformity to broader 'physical' requirements of the classroom were said to lead to all sorts of difficulties, notably disciplinary ones though also impacting on their academic work, leading to their falling behind, and having to be placed on the special needs register as a result.

Chapter Eight.
Interviews : Special Schools

Interviews were conducted with the aim of generating data which might serve to support the usefulness or otherwise of Bourdieu's concepts, particularly that of habitus and its gendered embodied nature, as a means of accounting for the disproportionate number of white working class boys identified as having special educational needs and thereby allocated to these special schools. They were designed to capture teachers' views, perceptions, definitions and working theories, of special educational needs through the explanations, evidence and justifications employed by them when accounting for, what they did, and how they acted in relation to their pupils. Of particular interest were the ways in which they accounted for the actual presence of their pupils in their schools and of the gender imbalances which characterised them.

What was sought, was a detailed examination of the ways in which these teachers made sense of what they were doing within their classrooms and of the resulting outcomes of their engagements with their pupils. This was to include an analysis of their broader educational and social philosophies, including their assumptions about their pupils' positions within wider structural relations and the implications of these. However not all the data presented was of equal weighting in terms of the research questions addressed by the study. This was partly due to a need to widen the scope of interviews so as to avoid possible reactive effects and therefore a distorting of the data, and also as a means of placing the theoretical analysis within a wider context. Further, aspects of this contextualising data may be seen as

being useful and interesting in its own right, apart from the concerns of the study.

It must be noted that the majority of the pupils who attended these schools had already been seen as in some way 'casualties' of the mainstream education system, whereas for others, their attendance at mainstream had never been considered possible. For all these pupils then, a different means to achieving ostensibly the same educational ends as their mainstream peers had been recommended by and indeed enshrined within, their statements of special educational needs.

Accounts provided by their teachers within these special schools may therefore be expected to differ from those of their mainstream colleagues in ways which reflect their pupils' 'special' profiles and the positions of their schools within the overall education system particularly in terms of the institutional meanings which it is *their* project to realise. (Clough 1995) They were in a position however to provide very detailed data on those pupils for whom membership of mainstream settings had been considered inappropriate.

Schools and Teachers

Eighteen teachers were interviewed, representing five different schools of non normative designations. (Tomlinson 1982) One school was designated for E.B.D. two for M.L.D. and two for Delicate pupils.

The teachers ranged in age and experience from two who had taught for four years to another who was close to retiring age having taught for more

than thirty years. The majority, however had between eight and eighteen years experience. Fifteen of them had also taught in mainstream schools, there was also a strong bias in favour of those who in terms of their previous experience and current roles described themselves as teachers of primary aged children. (twelve teachers).

The EBD school was situated in an outer London borough. It had been established in the early 1970's and had very recently moved into new premises surrounded by playing fields. There were twenty five pupils on roll all of primary age. The catchment area of the school was the southern part of the borough, there being a similar school to serve the northern end. Four teachers were interviewed from this school.

The M.L.D. schools were situated in inner London boroughs and served the primary age range. They had both quite recently been reorganised or rather 'phased.' That is while they had previously been all age 5-16 schools they had anmalgamated with their twin all age M.L.D. schools in their respective boroughs and now contained only the primary aged pupils from both schools. Thus each of these boroughs now had a primary and a secondary M.L.D. school whereas they had previously had two all age M.L.D. schools.

One of them contained 68 pupils and was housed in a building dating from the late 1960's which was in a very good state of repair, it having recently been refurbished. It was surrounded by high and medium rise housing and was close to a very busy noisy road. It's catchment area was the whole of the borough. Three teachers were interviewed from this school.

The other one was much larger having 126 pupils on roll. It was housed in an older building dating from the 1930's situated in the middle of a council estate of similar vintage, it having originally been used as a primary school which served the estate. Again it's catchment area was the whole of the borough. Four teachers were interviewed from this school.

Both of the 'Delicate' schools were all age 5-16 schools and served the whole of their respective inner London boroughs. They were of very similar size and vintage, one having 128 and the other 120 pupils on roll and both being housed in buildings dating back to the early 1970's in very good states of repair. One however was situated very close to a major arterial road close to shops and businesses, the other in a rather quiet, 'leafy' residential area. Three teachers were interviewed from one of these schools and four from the other.

Pupil Designations and Descriptions.

The findings reported in the tables below represent teachers descriptions / understandings of the terms used to describe pupils attending special schools both in general terms of the designations of the schools, ie.M.L.D., E.B.D. and Del.and also in terms of the pupils actually attending their schools. They were asked what they understood by the terms, and whether they found the categories relevant or helpful.

The responses are grouped into categories reflecting attributes identified by the respondents. These were, 'slow learning', 'inability to cope (child)', 'inability to cope (school)', 'bad behaviour', 'withdrawn behaviour', 'low I.Q.', 'normal I.Q.', 'poor backgrounds', 'lack of basic skills / attainments',

'emotional factors', and 'medical problems'. The figures indicate the number of respondents who mention factors relevant to the categories when discussing a particular term.

There are five tables, representing, 1. pupil descriptions (all teachers) 2. pupil descriptions ('M.L.D.' teachers) 3. pupil descriptions ('E.B.D.' teachers). 4. pupil descriptions ('Del.' teachers). 5.teachers descriptions of 'their own pupils' (all teachers).

Table 1.
Pupil Descriptions (all teachers) (N = 18)

	M.L.D.	E.B.D.	Del.
Slow learning	15	2	4
Inability to 'cope' (child)	12	13	12
Inability to 'cope' (school)	8	13	8
'Bad' behaviour	8	16	4
'Withdrawn' behaviour	8	0	6
Low I.Q.	13	0	0
Normal I.Q.	0	8	0
'Poor' backgrounds	16	4	5
Lack of 'basic skills'	17	9	8
'Emotional' factors	8	18	7
Medical problems	3	3	18

Table2.
Pupil Descriptions (M.L.D. teachers) (N = 7)

	M.L.D.	E.B.D.	Del.
Slow learning	5	0	0
Inability to 'cope' (child)	7	4	4
Inability to 'cope' (school)	4	7	1
'Bad' behaviour	6	7	0
'Withdrawn' behaviour	2	0	3
Low I.Q.	4	0	0
Normal I.Q.	0	4	0
'Poor' backgrounds	7	4	0
Lack of 'basic skills'	7	3	1
'Emotional' factors	6	7	1
Medical problems	3	0	7

Table 3.
Pupil Descriptions (E.B.D. teachers) (N = 4)

	M.L.D.	E.B.D.	Del.
Slow learning	4	0	0
Inability to 'cope' (child)	4	4	4
Inability to 'cope' (school)	4	4	1
'Bad' behaviour	0	4	0
'Withdrawn' behaviour	1	0	2
Low I.Q.	4	0	0
Normal I.Q.	0	4	0
'Poor' backgrounds	4	4	0
Lack of 'basic skills'	4	3	1
'Emotional' factors	1	4	1
Medical problems	0	2	4

Table 4.
Pupil Descriptions (Del. teachers) (N = 7)

	M.L.D.	E.B.D.	Del.
Slow learning	6	2	4
Inability to 'cope' (child)	1	5	4
Inability to 'cope' (school)	0	2	6
'Bad' behaviour	2	5	4
'Withdrawn' behaviour	3	0	1
Low I.Q.	5	0	0
Normal I.Q.	0	0	0
'Poor' backgrounds	5	4	5
Lack of 'basic skills'	6	3	6
'Emotional' factors	1	7	5
Medical problems	0	1	7

Table 5.
Teachers' descriptions of their own pupils (N = 18)

Slow learning	11
Inability to 'cope' (child)	15
Inability to 'cope' (school)	14
'Bad' behaviour	16
'Withdrawn' behaviour	3
Low I.Q.	4
Normal I.Q.	4
'Poor' backgrounds	16
Lack of 'basic skills'	16
'Emotional' factors	15
Medical problems	12

With regard to these descriptions we need to consider both the nature of the descriptions themselves, and the way in which they were applied to the various pupils.

If we consider the eleven categories generated, it is apparent that apart from 'normal I.Q.' and 'medical problems' which might be considered neutral attributes, the others are negative descriptions, they are all descriptions of deficiencies, 'slow,' 'inability,' (twice) 'bad,' 'withdrawn,' 'low,' 'poor,' 'lack,' 'emotional.' They are seen as having 'failed' usually in their previous schools due to their lack, of those characteristics needed for success, in those schools, and are defined therefore, in terms of that which they lack, that which separates them from their normal peers. These children are seen as having deviated from the norm, and as having, different, lesser abilities; (dis)abilities.

These accounts then employ a perspective, which locates the source of difficulties as within the child, thereby giving a priveleged status to individualistic, psychologistic and social pathological, explanations of school failure.

Let us now consider the manner in which these explanations were applied to the various pupils. If we consider **table 1.** we find a fairly wide range of attributes applied to all designations with certain of them featuring more prominently in relation to particular groups.

Thus **M.L.D.** pupils were more likely to be described in terms of being, slow learning, having low I.Q.'s, with family backgrounds which do not provide appropriate support, and of being unable to cope with school, they

were also considered to be lacking in basic skills, and having low attainments.

E.B.D. pupils were described most often in terms of their bad behaviour which was characterised variously as being disturbed or disruptive, these terms being used interchangeably by some respondents. They were also seen as being unable to cope with school, and of schools being unable to cope with them. They were seen, however, as falling within the normal range of intelligence and of sometimes being of above average intelligence.

Delicate pupils were considered to be those with medical difficulties requiring fairly close supervision which led to their being unable to cope in mainstream schools.

There would appear from these accounts to be fairly clear differences between the designations in terms of the prominence of certain attributes, the only one which they share to the same degree being that of an, inability to cope, in mainstream schools. This general tendency to emphasise certain attributes in relation to particular designations is even more pronounced if we compare teachers descriptions of their own pupils with the overall picture, and with others' accounts.

Consider the case of M.L.D. pupils. They are described by 'E.B.D. teachers', (table 3.) in terms of being slow learning, unable to cope with school, school being unable to cope with them, having low I.Q.s, poor backgrounds and lacking basic skills, (4,4,4,4,4,4. mentions out of 4 respectively) Emotional factors and behaviour barely featured, and medical problems not at all. They were described by 'Del teachers', (table 4.) as slow learners, with low I.Q.'s, poor backgrounds and lacking basic skills, (6,5,5,6

mentions out of 7 respectively). Again emotional factors and behaviour barely featured and medical difficulties not at all.

If we look at 'M.L.D. teachers', descriptions of their own pupils (table 2.) we find a far wider and different spread of attributes. Inability to cope, poor backgrounds, and lack of basic skills were most prominent (7, 7, 7, mentions out of 7). 'Bad' behaviour, and emotional factors, were also extremely important, in their accounts, (6,6, mentions respectively), in fact behavioural and emotional factors were given more prominence than slow learning and low I.Q. (5,4,respectively), factors which in other teachers accounts featured most prominently.

Consider the case of **E.B.D. pupils,** they were described by M.L.D. teachers (table 2.) primarily in terms of the school's inability to cope with them, their, 'bad', behaviour, and in terms of emotional factors, (7,7,7, respectively, out of 7.) The child's inability to cope, it's poor background, normal I.Q. and lack of basic skills, also featured though less prominently in their accounts, (4,4,4,3 respectively). They were described by, Del. teachers, (table 4.) primarily in terms of emotional factors, bad behaviour, and the child's inability to cope, (7,5,5. respectively, out of 7), there were references to 'poor' backgrounds, and lack of basic skills, but these featured less prominently, (4,3 respectively).

If we look at 'E.B.D.teachers' descriptions of their own pupils (table 3.) we again find a wider spread of attributes. Inability to cope, 'bad' behaviour, emotional factors, were given a great deal of prominence, (4,4,4. out of 4 respectively), as they were in other teachers accounts, but they also give

prominence to 'poor backgrounds' and to lack of basic skills, (4,3. respectively).

Consider the case of **Delicate pupils.** They were described by 'E.B.D. teachers', (table3.) mainly in terms of an inability to cope, and as having medical problems, (4,4, out of 4. respectively), lack of basic skills, the school's inability to cope and 'withdrawn' behaviour were also mentioned, (1,1,2, respectively). They were described by 'M.L.D. teachers', (table2.) mainly as having medical problems, and being unable to cope, (7,4. out of 7 respectively), and as exhibiting, 'withdrawn' behaviour (3).

If we look at 'Del. teachers' descriptions of their own pupils we find a far wider spread of attributes, to a much more marked degree than was evident for the other two categories. Medical problems, featured prominently (7out of 7), so did lack of basic skills, the school's inability to cope, poor backgrounds, and emotional factors, (6, 6,5,5.respectively), bad behaviour, slow learning and the child's inability to cope also featured, (4,4,4. respectively).

From these descriptions then, we can see that there appear to be, 'general', accounts in circulation within special education, in relation to the different designations of 'special' pupils, which show a concentration on particular attributes of the pupils so designated, in line with the notion of differentiation and specialisation. These, however, are to a greater or lesser extent, contradicted by the 'actual' accounts given by teachers of their own pupils, which give prominence to a far wider range of descriptive terms and show a marked tendency in practice away from differentiation and specialisation.

Thus, if we consider **teacher's descriptions of their own pupils** (table 5.) we find that the special school population in general, share a large number of attributes. Indeed that which they have in common is far more evident and prominent in these accounts, than that which differentiates them in terms of their designations. We find that 16 teachers (88%) describe their pupils as having 'poor backgrounds', 'lacking basic skills', and having 'bad behaviour', 15 teachers (83%) describe their pupils in terms of 'emotional factors', and as having been, 'unable to cope', at their previous schools, 14 teachers (77%) consider their pupils' previous schools as being 'unable to cope', with them, 12 teachers (66%) mention medical problems, and 11 teachers (61%) describe their pupils as slow learners.

In summary then, this special school population as described by it's teachers, would appear to be far more homogenous than its separation into separate schools and their attendant designations would seem to imply, and is characterised as being badly behaved, lacking basic skills, being largely influenced by emotional 'factors' and coming from poor backgrounds.

This homogeneity came to the fore when teachers were describing their pupils in 'general' terms as they might to a 'layperson'. Most teachers produced accounts which were an amalgam of descriptions of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attainments, which led pupils to 'present' variously as,

> (having) *'..trouble settling down to work....getting their work out...*
> *.I can't do it miss....when they only did it yesterday..'*

or as another teacher put it,

> *'they have had failure before....they lack confidence.....beginner readers at the age of ten....'*

Much was made of their pupils physical presence, as in,

'fidgety .. always on the move ... can't sit still .... not on task ....
turning around ... talking ... shouting out .... rocking in their chairs
... tripping each other up ... physically aggressive towards each other..'

others were said to be,

'totally lacking in social skills ... don't know how to behave ...
can't wait .. can't take their turn .... can be extremely rude
... blank you .. when you're trying to talk to them ...
unable to interact socially.'

There were many references to pupils previous experiences either at home or at school, where pupils were considered to have,

'had a hard time....not a very good deal at mainstream,'

or in a number of cases had been,

'damaged emotionally....perhaps the parenting wasn't all it should
have been....and it snowballs....when they get into schools
they're unable to concentrate....and do what they should be doing.'

One teacher considered that he was,

'teaching the children no-one else wants to teach....they couldn't
cope with mainstream school and need specialist teaching.'

There were many accounts of 'bad' behaviour, including temper tantrums, running out of classrooms, throwing of furniture, abusive language, and so on, and whilst the more 'extreme' examples came from the 'E.B.D.' teachers there were a great many incidents reported from both the 'M.L.D.' and 'Del.' teachers.

Mentions of medical / physical problems were of such things as epilepsy, eczma, and asthma, but also of pupils inability to work appropriately whilst at school due to their,

'feeling unwell....having one cold after another....not eating properly .. staying up half the night watching television'.

What was completely missing from these accounts however, was any description which constituted an elaboration on the notion of, 'special,' need in relation to their particular designation, or of a, 'special', response on their part to any particular need which might be attendant on their inclusion in such a category. Thus whilst their general descriptions, reffered to categorical differences between pupils in terms of their 'attributes' and 'needs,' their actual descriptions, of their own pupils both in general and in particular failed to support these notions.

Further, with regard to the relevance or usefulness of the various categories, there was a widespread agreement that they referred to real phenomena, ie. pupils whose needs or difficulties could be described in terms of these categories, and who for the purposes of teaching ought to be grouped together. ie as a discrete group, separate from both 'mainstream' pupils, and from other pupils with 'special needs'. This opinion was expressed both in terms of their own category, and in terms of the other categories.

As one teacher put it,

'having been in special schools for some time it's easier for me to describe children in terms of these designations, because they conjure up a certain picture'.

There was no sense of a continuum of needs, and a consequent blurring of boundaries in their conceptions of what might be an appropriate placement, and any blurring, which they did experience in their professional lives in terms of the pupils who were allocated to their schools, was a matter of some regret, a 'tendency' to be resisted, and was often accounted for in terms of pupils being 'incorrectly placed'. This was put in the context, of the need to maintain existing boundaries, because of the,

> 'very different needs of pupils...of different types.... what is appropriate (provision)
> for an M.L.D. child....will not be appropriate for a child with E.B.D..'

The above quoted teacher went on to voice her concerns over recent referrals of pupils to her 'Delicate' school,

> 'we (now) take anything that comes our way, anybody who doesn't fit in at mainstream school.........has failed at mainstream....if they are not 'off the wall' E.B.D. or absolutely M.L.D......we take them....no rhyme nor reason'.

Placements.

Not surprisingly, all of the teachers in the study considered that they had pupils who would benefit from being placed in a school of a different designation, either in a different special school, or in a mainstream school. These pupils made up a significant minority of their class groups, (11 teachers ie. 61% mentioned three or more, 15 teachers 83% mentioned one or more).

Within the M.L.D. and Del. schools they were of two types, firstly those whose profiles were such that they were considered to be, incorrectly placed, and needed to be moved on with some urgency, and secondly, those

pupils whose profiles were such, that, whilst it was possible to accomodate them, the resultant changes necessary to achieve this were considered to be such as to change the character of the school, and to introduce what they considered as an unacceptable broadening and dilution of their offer. Within the E.B.D. school however, their only concern was over a number of pupils whose problems were such that they considered that their needs could best be met in mainstream.

Let us consider these **E.B.D. teachers** first. There were a number of pupils whom they regarded as having low attainments, perhaps at the same level as might be expected from pupils who would attend an M.L.D. school, however they were firmly of the opinion that their pupils would derive no benefit from attendance at an M.L.D. school, due to their perceived higher abilities, even if these were not matched currently by their attainments. In relation to a number of pupils in his class one teacher expressed it thus,

> *'no they shouldn't go to an M.L.D. school....I think they're all capable*
> *of achieving a reasonable standard if the behaviour disorder*
> *could be confronted....if they could learn strategies to get*
> *round their problems'.*

These were often the same pupils whose behaviour would be, as another teacher put it,

> *'impossible to deal with in an M.L.D. school.....they just wouldn't have the strategies.....they're not used to dealing with that level of disruption'.*

Also, for reasons of behaviour, they were sure that no Del. school could cope with any of their pupils.

There were however a number of pupils whom they regarded as being inappropriately placed in special education, and who could with sufficient support, cope well in mainstream. They explained these pupils' allocation to them in terms of the pressures on mainstream schools, including large class sizes, National Curriculum assessments, and a lack of time available to deal with pupils' problems.

Let us consider the **M.L.D. teachers** next. A major complaint on their part was a perceived deterioration in the behaviour of pupils referred to them, as expressed by one teacher,

> *'I'm not used to working with kids like this.....I'm not trained,*
> *.....you would have to get to the roots of their behaviour...*
> *.you can't teach them when they've got these terrific problems*
> *....you have two or three children out of control in a class....*
> *and they actually stop the learning going on'.*

A teacher from another M.L.D. school expressed it thus,

> *'the discipline element is very hard to enforce....you seemingly*
> *can't get through to them at all.......you don't get any warning*
> *....then all of a sudden they just flare up.'*

In line with the above comments there were pupils whom they felt needed access to the kind of support that could best be provided in an E.B.D. school. They talked of counselling skills, emotional support, and time set aside to work through their problems. However there were also those who felt that attendance at an E.B.D. school would not be appropriate due to the kinds of role models available to them which would make their own behaviour worse, so that even if they felt that the particular pupil was incorrectly placed with them, they were prepared, albeit reluctantly, to do what they could with them. An example was provided by one teacher,

'..in that year group I had two pupils who should have gone
to E.B.D. really....but I concluded after a year with them
that had they gone, then their problems would have worsened.
.......it was a terrible year though....we all suffered.'

There were also references to pupils who might be more appropriately placed at a 'Delicate' school. These were pupils who were regarded as brighter than their peers, yet still in need of a protected environment. This view was given added impetus due to the view that given recent admissions of difficult pupils, they saw their schools as providing a less protected environment than previously.

There were many examples quoted of pupils who in their opinions ought not to have been referred from mainstream, or who were perceived as being best placed there, as described by one teacher,

'there's a couple of them in here that I think could go back to
mainstream....children that have just come here in years five and six
....the reports that came with them said that they had a bad image
of their learning, but I don't see that'.

An example from another teacher,

'he came from mainstream just this year...we wonder why he's
with us...streets ahead ...any task you set...he'll just get on
and do it....be finished first.'

Another teacher expressed her opinion as to why certain of her pupils might be better off in a mainstream school in the following terms,

'when pupils come here from mainstream ....an initial euphoria..
..success where they've previously failed .... after a while there
tends to be a deterioration in their behaviour because of
the kinds of models they are exposed to...the more positive models
they would be mixing with at mainstream are denied to them.
....a disadvantage.'

Finally, let us consider the **'Delicate' teachers.** These teachers were extremely concerned, as were the M.L.D. teachers, about the perceived deterioration in the behaviour of the pupils referred to them, and who were thereby considered to be incorrectly placed, one teacher described her tutor group in the following terms,

I've got three autistic...behave in a very bizzare fashion....four E.B.D.
....other kids with epilepsy.. cerebral palsy.....medical conditions like
cystic fibrosis...and what happens is that 'X' .... decides to wind everyone
up and ruins the lesson for everyone...of course 'Y' joins in and the whole
thing deteriorates..they just shouldn't be here, they should be in E.B.D.
schools.'

Again there were parallels with the M.L.D. teachers in that even though they considered a number of their pupils to be '..E.B.D. not Del ...' there was some reluctance expressed to the idea of them being better off at an E.B.D. school. The arguments were of two sorts, firstly in terms of the kinds of role models that they would be exposed to, as in the words of one teacher,

'I and my colleagues would be better off if some of them went to an
E.B.D. school but I'm not sure that they would....I think it would
exacerbate their behaviours because they would have worse role models.'

There were also criticisms expressed over what they considered the offer to be at many E.B.D. schools by teachers who had had some experience of these schools, as expressed by one teacher,

'in theory they would be better off in that the staff would be better able to understand the needs of the kids but on the other hand I've not got a lot of confidence in most of the E.B.D. schools I've had anything to do with....emphasis on ... boundaries.....token economies and so on ....which doesn't get to the root of their problems.'

There was however, a general feeling that an increasing number of pupils had behavioural difficulties that were not being helped by their current placements, and that this had a negative effect on the education of the other pupils in the school, who were seen to suffer because the pupils with behavioural difficulties were able to, in the words of one teacher,

'set the agenda,...... we have had to change what we do ....change what it is possible to do, because of these kids....we spend so much time settling them down.....particularly after breaktimes, when arguments carry over from the playground into the classroom that half the lesson is gone before you start.'

There were also pupils for whom it was felt that a placement in an M.L.D. school would be more appropriate. Again there were parallels with M.L.D. teachers wishes to transfer some of their pupils to Del. schools. Their reasoning was identical! They felt that an M.L.D. school would provide, in the words of one teacher,

'a safer environment....some of them are freaked out by the fact that some of the new pupils who have got emotional problems are quite hostile....the teacher will tend to deal with the most disruptive. ...and the others....'the wallflowers' will tend to lose out.'

Other pupils however, were regarded as incorrectly placed due to their lack of ability, and that for this reason they were unable to make progress. The need to relocate these pupils in M.L.D. schools was explained in the following terms by one teacher,

'because in M.L.D. schools the curriculum is presented in a much

more simplified version....they are able to access the curriculum and
be successful in a much more structured way..... whereas here (Del.)
certain aspects of learning are taken for granted.... and things aren't
broken down enough for some children.'

There were others however who were considered to be more appropriately placed in a mainstream school because the supposed difficulties that they were said to have were not apparent in the context of the Del. school, and it was felt , in the words of one teacher, that,

'had his mainstream school tried a little harder with him..then he
wouldn't be here now...he could perfectly well manage in
mainstream with just a little support.....yes he can be difficult...
.a little precocious....but he's not 'Delicate.'

There were examples given of pupils who had been referred to them and had functioned extremely well to begin with, but who had begun to exhibit various problems, both in terms of their schoolwork and their behaviour. This was explained as the negative effects of being exposed to 'poor role models,' and it was felt that a disservice was being done to these pupils by their continued attendance at the Del. school.

Another reason for the view that some pupils would be better off in a mainstream setting was the increase in size of teaching groups particularly in the Del. schools, as one teacher put it,

'we have such large groups these days.... there isn't much differentiation
goes on.... half of the kids I teach would be beter off in
mainstream with specialist support.'

With regard to the causes of incorrect placements, many of the explanations are implicit in the sections and quotes above, particularly those that contain accounts of misdiagnoses, and also those which imply attempts on the part

of some mainstream schools to offload problems. However there were also accounts which included attempts on the part of administrators to save money, along with headteachers' attempts to keep the schools relatively full, and thereby protect jobs, particularly their own!

Many of them felt that their opinions were not listened to, as one teacher put it,

> 'the statementing doesn't appear to be done by any 'professional' ... a job done by an officer at the Town Hall....an officer with one eye on the budget for special needs.... now we are a lot cheaper than an E.B.D. school....we're also a lot 'nicer'....on paper at least.'

This last comment from a teacher at a Delicate school brought in the question of parental choice, with the view being expressed that the designation of school was important, as another teacher rather eloquently put it,

> 'if I had a school bus arrive at my door in the morning and I had to explain this to my neighbours....and I had the choice of telling them that my son was either 'thick,' 'mad,' or 'Delicate,' I know which one I'd choose, however 'thick,' or, 'mad,' he might actually be!'

With regard to the question of the reasons for the continuation of incorrect placements, political explanations were much in evidence, relating perhaps to the financial implications of a move, eg. the E.B.D. school had two pupils whom the staff felt would be better placed in a boarding school, the cost of which was far in excess of day school provision. Alternatively, the need to protect jobs was mentioned, as one teacher put it,

> 'they should be elsewhere..but it's not politically sound to say it at the moment......if we lose them, we lose money.'

Another reason for the failure or reluctance to correct mistakes once an allocation to a special school has been made was summed up by one teacher as follows,

'the placement has been agreed and the child has gone on roll at a special school ... often after a quite lengthy and arduous statementing process.... a lot of parents breathe a sigh of relief..... feel they are getting some kind of specialist provision and are reluctant to consider .... alternatives ...to go through all that again.'

As can be seen from the above accounts, these teachers operated with fairly rigid categories, there was a great deal of concern shown over the maintenance of boundaries, and much anxiety expressed over their blurring which was seen as an ever increasing tendency, and one to be resisted. Thus, they sought to define in clear terms the kinds of pupil they felt able, or indeed willing to teach. They did this by defining the kind of offer they felt able to make at their schools, in terms of their experience or expertise, and by developing an argument based on the degree or type of differentiation, it was possible or desirable to make within one school or classroom. They also reported using such arguments in their 'negotiations' with educational psychologists and others in their attempts to resist the increasing imposition on them of pupils whom they regarded as innapropriate for entry to their schools due to their bad, disturbed, or disruptive, behaviour.

The National Curriculum.

With regard to the National Curriculum, many respondents mentioned the fact that they were obliged by law to follow it, and that this included the assessment and reporting arrangements. Four teachers mentioned it as an

entitlement which they sought to deliver, and that it gave an indication, as one teacher put it,

> *'of what we should be attempting to achieve with our pupils....*
> *keeps us in touch with mainstream.'*

This entitlement however was hedged with qualifications, such as that of the child,

> *'accessing the National Curriculum at a level and in a manner appropriate*
> *to them.....we use it for guidance anyway..... I do what I can with the*
> *National Curriculum....and for those who I know won't develop from it,*
> *they have their own programme that I think is appropriate for them.'*

Many teachers expressed critical views, considering the National Curriculum to be, overloaded, too prescriptive and implied that it was a hindrance to meeting the 'real' needs of their pupils, as in the following comment,

> *'now instead of following the childs' individual needs as we always used*
> *to do in special schools.... we chase the National Curriculum ....I would*
> *like to spend much more time on basic literacy and numeracy skills ...*
> *those skills they need to develop .... and leave out some of the more*
> *obscure elements of the foundation subjects.'*

Another teacher expressed the view that after the initial panic over the implementation of the National Curriculum, things were now beginning to settle down,

> *'it's getting easier.... 'Dearing' was an improvement .... I should think*
> *that all special schools have lost their way over the past few years ...*
> *but I think we'll get back ..... to meeting our kids' needs as we see them*
> *... and not being as concerned with the paperwork.'*

There were also a number of positive comments implying that the National curriculum had led to a broadening of the curriculum,

'in some ways it's been a benefit in that we now do things like science in special schools.... and that's got to be good .... but I do think it's taken the emphasis away from the individual child and their needs.'

The majority of positive comments were tempered, as was the above quote, by some criticisms which implied that it was the teachers in the classrooms, who were best placed, and able to decide, what their pupils' needs were, and how to meet them.

This view was expressed rather forcefully by one teacher in the following terms,

'the National Curriculum makes it much more difficult to provide the secure environment that these children require.... they have failed in mainstream... failed with the National Curriculum ... and we are confronting them with their failure ....by giving them more of the same in a special school .... and not what they actually need.'

Similar misgivings were expressed by all respondents about the Key Stage Assessment arrangements, which were felt to be unfair in requiring teachers to make categorical judgements about their pupils' attainments in terms of a national scale. This was felt to work to the disadvantage of pupils, as explained by one teacher,

'..some children no matter how hard they try .... will only ever be working towards level one.... or perhaps at the lower levels for a very long time.... perhaps a level way below their age level .... the National Curriculum doesn't take account of the effort that the individual has put in for seemingly no recognition ... because it doesn't show up ...'

Therefore, underpinning their general scepticism regarding the National Curriculum was the notion that aspects of it were unfair to their pupils and that they, the teachers, were in a far better position to decide on what was appropriate for them. Many of them saw the National Curriculum as having failed their pupils, and they sought therefore, not to give their pupils 'more of the same,' more of the kind of curriculum offer they had received at mainstream, but something different, something more in line with what they needed, with obvious consequences for the notion of an entitlement curriculum, which they also espoused. They sought to apply their experience and expertise.

However this notion of a specialist approach, to meet the needs of individual pupils was often invoked, yet not supported in any detail. Further, to the extent that they did outline particular content or methods and techniques, such as a concentration on 'the basics' or on 'social skills,' or perhaps 'breaking down' tasks for presentation to pupils, they were not particularly specialist in a sophisticated or abstract sense, but were rather based on a commonsense understanding of what might be required, and well within the capability of a non-specialist or mainstream teacher, given enough time and space.

It would seem that the most important aspect of their expertise was their experience, the fact that they were used to teaching certain types of pupil, knew what to expect of them, and felt able to give them the time and space, in order to learn at their own pace. Indeed one of the reasons for the anxiety expressed by many of them was a perceived diminution in this time and space as a result of increasing class sizes and the influx of more difficult pupils. Thus, expressions of expertise and specialisation collapsed into rather vague accounts of aspects of organisation, such as the removal of

pressure on pupils and teachers' ability to tolerate, what in terms of mainstream provision would be seen as a rather different agenda.

Special Schools?

There was almost unanimous support for the existence of special schools, though this endorsement was sometimes accompanied by expressions of regret that such schools were necessary, as in the following comment,

> *'in an ideal world we should have inclusive .... I think it would cost*
> *a terrific amount of money and would have to be extraordinarily*
> *well planned .... but meanwhile I think we've just got to keep special*
> *schools because we're supporting those who really need the support.'*

The 'fact' that many of their pupils had 'failed' in mainstream was cited by many teachers as a reason for the continued need for special schools, as one teacher commented,

> *'children have suffered as a result of being in mainstream .... being*
> *mocked,*
> *.... children are very cruel if a child has genuine learning difficulties ....*
> *they are going to be ridiculed.'*

or as another put it,

> *'my pupils would not achieve in a mainstream setting .... either because*
> *they wouldn't be able to access the curiculum, or socially, ... they*
> *would have an horrendous time .... persecuted .... they might be in a*
> *class of twenty-five or more .... they wouldn't get the sort of*
> *teacher input needed.'*

The sort of input which was needed wasn't seen to be available in mainstream schools, in the words of one teacher,

*'my children would go under in mainstream .... I don't think mainstream
teachers know very much at all about.... special needs children ... whereas
our school is totally geared to these children.'*

This gearing of the schools involved the provision of specialist teaching
according to the needs of the pupils. Thus M.L.D. schools were seen as
modifying their approach, as follows,

*'more pre-skills on offer..... breaking it down into smaller steps, far more
than the National Curriculum does .... the expectation would be to go
up just a little at each step.'*

Delicate schools were perceived as catering for more able pupils than
M.L.D. and accordingly had to make less adaptations / modifications, as
another teacher commented,

*'out of these three types of special school .... Delicate schools are the
ones that should be run more closely to a mainstream model, with extra
medical help or care ... intensive help for those kids who are away a lot.'*

E.B.D. schools were seen as requiring the smallest teaching groups, and to
have the most able pupils, yet to need to modify what they offered more
than the other two schools, as in the following comment,

*you need a great deal of structure .... you have a very tight behavioural
model ....but the curriculum is more limited because you're always
negotiating over behaviour.'*

What was interesting about these accounts was their generality, in that they
referred in the abstract, to kinds of approaches, to kind of pupils, in kinds of
schools; schools which in reality, and according to their evidence, didn't
actually exist, at least in such pure forms. Also, the kinds of accounts given
of the offer at each of the schools was broadly the same, whether it was a

teacher who actually taught in a school of the designation being discussed, or a teacher who taught at a school of a different designation.

Thus, alongside their critique of mainstream provision, they gave accounts of what they regarded as the positive aspects of special school provision.The priorities of special schools were said to be more in line with the 'needs' of their pupils. There was much emphasis on the small intimate nature of special schools, specifically designed to meet the needs of particular kinds or designations of pupils, emphases which did not sit particularly well with earlier criticisms of increasing class sizes, and a tendency towards heterogeneity in groupings.

Smaller teaching groups meant that teachers were able to,

'focus on individuals .... give them work that they can actually do ... they find that they can do what the others do .... feel happier.. and therefore learn ..... the whole thing about a special school is to build their confidence .... concentrate on the things that they can do and not on the things they've failed at .... work at their pace.'

It was also felt that teachers at special schools knew their pupils more intimately than was possible in a mainstream school,as one teacher put it,

'you know each one individually ..know what they can do ... know what they need to do next ... know their moods, ... you should know their families as well .... the intimacy of a special school .... it all helps ... and the trust that you can build up .... and from that trust you can work miracles.'

The teachers were mentioned as experts or specialists by most of the respondents with, in the words of one of them,

'increased knowledge of how children learn .... of how to approach certain children .... win them over ....sort out their problems.'

Teachers were also seen to posses certain personal qualities, as in the comments of another teacher,

'you have to be a special kind of person to do this work ..... you have to put up with a lot sometimes, ...not everyone could do it.'

Their priorities were also said to be different, more in line with the needs of their pupils, as expressed in the following comments,

'we put far more emphasis on nurturing children .... celebrating their achievements, and success, ... if they are part of a mainstream school and their successes are not recognised, they are always going to be comparing themselves with other children who are going to be more successful academically .... in special schools the pressure is off them.'

or as another teacher put it,

'the pressures on mainstream teachers are totally different .... it would be special school teachers who would kick up a fuss and say, to hell with the paperwork, ... I'm actually here for the children.'

As mentioned above, support for the existence of special schools was less than unanimous, there were a small number of dissenting voices, but their expressions of dissent were couched in terms such that the general principle of special schools was upheld. Thus, it was their current operation that was at fault and not their existence as such that was criticised, as in the following comments,

'if we were really a specialist school .... and we were highly trained .... and able to meet or even understand the needs of the kids then that would be fine .... I've worked in (special) schools where that was the case .... but these days with the way things are going I don't think it's possible .... the kids are different .... the groups are bigger ..'

Perhaps the most critical comment was expressed by the following teacher,

'I don't think that a lot of kids do as well in special schools as they would do in mainstream schools .... but somehow there's a level of denial and a pretence that creates the impression that everything's fine .... so they (the pupils) have an easier time in other words .... that's why kids 'do better' they're not pressured as much .... they're not stretched.'

Thus, there were a number of strands to their arguments in favour of the existence of special schools. These reasons may be summarised as including, the existence of special educational needs on the one hand, and of the inability of mainstream schools to cope with or meet these needs on the other. Also, prominent in their accounts were the notions of differentiation and specialisation, the idea that certain pupils have 'needs' that can only be met through the provision of special measures, involving specially trained and experienced teachers.

Underlying all their accounts, however, was the idea that they were *'here for the kids,'* and, *'supporting those who really need the support,'* supporting children who have, *'suffered as a result of being in mainstream.'* These opinions were often accompanied by expressions of regret that special schools were 'necessary.' In support of these values they spoke of the need to 'protect' their pupils from mainstream experiences, and also from a National Curriculum, which was 'overloaded,' 'prescriptive' and failed to meet the 'real needs' of their pupils. These 'real needs' were to be judged by them and included, *'nurturing children'* also, *'celebrating their achievements'* together with, *'giving them work that they can do,'* within the context of small intimate classes.

There was however, evidence of some insight into the contradictions and inconsistencies in what they were saying, for example. from their own

accounts, the small intimate classes did not exist, they were not able to deliver their preffered 'offer' due to an 'inappropriate' mix of pupils etc. There were indeed a small number of dissenting voices who openly criticised their schools, and who mentioned, *'children not being stretched,* and there being, *'a level of denial,'* in evidence, and also of it, *'not being politically wise,* to air certain criticisms.

However, most of the difficulties were said to be due to circumstances that were local, and recent, thus the contradictions between the 'idea of a special school' and the reality of their own schools didn't serve to undermine their beliefs in the value of special schools in general.

Pupil 'Backgrounds.'

Their pupils' 'backgrounds' featured quite prominently in these teachers accounts of their pupils, and were usually characterised in negative terms, ie. they were generally said to be 'poor' in some way.

With regard to economic factors, they were asked information relating to school meals, housing and occupations. All of the respondents were class teachers or had tutorial responsibilities for a group of children, which involved administrative duties such as registration, including that for school meals, they also had pupils' addresses, and had contact with parents through home - school diaries, annual review meetings, and had met practically all of the parents of the members of their tutor groups. They were in a good position therefore to give reasonably accurate information, in relation to school meals, housing and parental occupations.

With regard to free school meals, the eighteen teachers interviewed, were responsible between them, for some 208 pupils, of whom136 or 65% 'qualified' for, and claimed, free school meals.

With regard to housing, the information was not as complete or reliable, there were a large number of pupils who were known to live in local authority housing, because their addresses indicated this, there were however, a number of pupils whose addresses were such that it was not possible to say whether their parents were 'owner occupiers' or were renting their accomodation. They indicated however that they were fairly certain that some147 or 70% lived in local authority housing.

Similarly, for occupations, completely accurate information was difficult to come by, they had to rely on pupil records which usually showed occupation only at the time of pupil referral, and on what the pupil or parent might have told them. The figures could only be estimates therefore, and there would be some difficulties over whether parents were currently in or out of work. However they were able to say with some accuracy the kinds of work engaged in when parents were in work. A large number of pupils, were said to have parents who were unemployed 98 or 47%. Of the others, the vast majority were said to be in unskilled or semi - skilled work, a number of occupations were mentioned such as, cleaner, building worker, labourer, shop stores work, gardener, shop assistant, bus driver, care worker, gas fitter, and hospital porter.

There were a very small number of parents who were in better paid 'white collar' professional or semi - professional occupations, 3 at the E.B.D. school and 11 between the two Delicate schools, but none were mentioned at the M.L.D. schools.

In an economic sense therefore, the background of these pupils can be said to be 'poor' for the most part, with 65% of them qualifying for free school meals, at least 70% living in rented local authority housing, with approximately 47% unemployed, and most of the others engaged in unskilled or semi - skilled work.

The general perceptions of the parents of the pupils as expressed in terms of their willingness or ability to 'support' their children generally, painted a pessimistic picture ranging along a continuum from those who were 'deliberately' unsupportive, as in the following comments,

'some of the parents don't care as long as we keep them
out of their hair for six hours a day .... and don't complain too much
about them .... they just keep a low profile,'

to those who would like to be supportive but weren't seen as being capable of doing so, as in the words of another teacher,

'some of them really try .... but they don't know how to help their kids, ...
a lot of them have difficulties reading and writing and so on themselves ....
and they are often not very articulate .... so they can't get what they want
out of the system.'

There were comments relating to the wide catchment areas of special schools, which meant that parents often had to travel a long way to visit the schools, and that many of them didn't have cars, and some were said to be unable to afford the bus fares.

Much was made of the 'lifestyles' of pupils as being in some way inadequate to the task of 'preparing' pupils for school, and of supporting them when they were there. Pupils were said not to be 'ready' for school in that they lacked skills, attitudes and experiences which it was considered they ought

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to have developed in the home. Homes were said to be disorganised and lacking in discipline, as one teacher commented,

'for some of these kids we (the teachers) *are the first people who have said No! to them ... the first people who have expected them ... I mean really expected them to do as they are told ... and to have insisted that they do it.'*

Mealtimes, at home, or rather the 'lack' of regular mealtimes, when the, *'whole family could sit together, talk and share a meal together,'* was seen as an important factor, indicating in their view a lack of organisation in the lives of these pupils, and by implication something that made it difficult for them to fit in with *any* routine, particularly those of the classroom.

The *'lack of books in 'these' homes,'* featured in a number of teachers' accounts, younger pupils were said not to know *'how to hold a book up the right way'.* There were complaints of parents not reading books sent home from school with their children, who were said to spend all their time watching television or playing computer games, sometimes until late at night.

One teacher gave an example as follows,

'he hadn't brought his (PACT) book to school with him ...he said he didn't have time to read it ... it turned out that he was watching videos with his brother until about midnight .... then he watched the end of the film 'The Shining' on T.V. ... now I know that that didn't finish until gone half past twelve ... the next day he's irritable and tired ...falling asleep in my class.'

There was also said to be a lack of *'appropriate role models'* for many of the pupils to identify with, there were stories of older siblings, who were unemployed with time on their hands to get into mischief, many absent

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fathers, some drunken fathers, single mothers with 'lots of boyfriends,' and the 'lack of stability', this involved was seen as a contributory factor to many of the pupils' difficulties. Many of the boys, were said to have little respect for women teachers, an attitude for which their 'backgrounds' were cited as the main cause.

Thus, much space was devoted to pathologising pupil backgrounds, as discussed above, which were seen as not providing *'appropriate support,'* for the pupils, support which might increase their chances of 'success' within the system, support which was perhaps necessary in order to achieve success. In summary, these backgrounds were described entirely in terms of negative 'indicators' such as, irregular mealtimes, lacking books, parents who didn't care, parents who did care but were ineffective, and other 'destabilising' influences such as absent fathers, fathers who were sometimes drunk or violent, and other 'inappropriate' role models. Implicit in these accounts were assumptions relating to an 'ideal' background, which would have a positive effect on pupils abilities to benefit from what was offered at school, presumably one with 'positive' role models, books, regular mealtimes and so on.

Gender : Why Boys?

In all of the schools the overwhelming majority of pupils were boys, as the table below shows.

Table 6.
Gender and Special Schools.

School	Designation	Pupil Nos.	Boys	Girls
A	M.L.D.	68	47	21
B	M.L.D.	126	83	43
C	E.B.D.	25	24	1
D.	Del.	120	86	34
E.	Del.	128	88	40

Thus, the total number of pupils at the five schools was 467 of whom 328 or 70% were boys, and 139 or 30% were girls. The E.B.D. school only contained 1 girl out of a school populatiom of 25. If we take out the figures for this school we are left with a total population of 442 of whom 304 or 68% were boys and 138 or 32% were girls.

Apart from the E.B.D. school being almost entirely male, the proportions for the M.L.D. schools, and the Del. schools are broadly similar at 69% and 65% boys at the two M.L.D. schools respectively, and 71% and 68% boys at the two Del. schools respectively.

Whilst some of the teachers had 'noticed,' and noted this imbalance, others seemed relatively unaware, and unconcerned, with responses such as,

'yes, I suppose that there are a lot more boys ... I've never really thought about it .... I mean I know there are more boys .... you get to expect that.'

The overwhelming preponderance of boys was part of the taken for granted nature of working in these special schools, a fact to which many responded pragmatically, with comments such as that of one teacher,

'well there's nothing we can do about it .... we don't make these decisions .... we're at the receiving end.'

When asked to account for this imbalance a fairly consistent set of reasons were given. One set involved a range of medical / biological 'predispositions,' as in the following accounts,

'there are lots of chromosomal and genetic disorders that are carried by females, but only show up in males ... things like haemophilia ... boys are more prone to birth complications.'

or,

'I suppose it's the old adage that girls progress ... girls mature at a far younger age ... boys tend to catch up later.'

and,

> *boys are supposed to have more difficulties linguistically .... more language problems ... they tend to fall down on reading too .. because of this, ... more prone to dyslexia.'*

Of the eighteen respondents, seven mentioned difficulties of this nature, four however, mentioned parental expectations, as a reason why boys 'difficulties' were picked up on, as in the following,

> *'well I think .... expectations for boys are higher .... and it's noticed more if they're not reading .... when they are younger I think sometimes girls are overlooked because people ... parents may not have the same high expectations of them as boys.'*

The most common set of explanations however, given by all the respondents referred to boys' 'psychological characteristics' and their 'effects,' as in the following comments,

> *'it's due to the psychological make up of males and females .... when a boy experiences a difficulty .... has a special need .... he tends to 'act out' his problems and become more aggressive, ... more of a problem for the teacher.'*

and,

> *'with boys their emotions are more on their sleeve, so you know where you're at .... they can be devious too .... but the emotions come up to the surface more easily.'*

One teacher was 'sure' that,

> *'there must be some sort of psychological reason ... which has probably been researched by people like Rutter .... why girls often tend to become introverted .... and boys exhibit more 'acting out' behaviour.'*

The behavioural consequences of these 'characteristics' were put forward as the main reasons for referral, thus,

'boys by their nature are much more visible in class .... kind of pupils who are picked up on quickly .. the girl who sits in the corner, is not noticed . ... not provide a behaviour problem for the teacher .... is less of a problem.'

As alluded to in the above quote, there was much concern that girls' needs were being neglected, as in the following comment,

'the way pressures are in mainstream .... you are not going to get upset .. .. about the girl who is sitting in the corner saying nothing, and that girl could be the victim of abuse, ... could have problems every bit as great as the boy at the front of the class who is throwing things at you.'

Girls were held to posses certain positive characteristics which, none the less, seemed to work 'against their interests' in terms of having their needs met. Many teachers mentioned girls' strategies for 'making themselves invisible,' and for coping, indeed the possession, or otherwise, of these strategies were seen to be crucial, if not decisive in terms of accounting for the preponderance of boys in special schools. As one teacher put it,

'I suppose girls are better at coping with their special needs .... better at masking them .... better at developing coping strategies .... so they don't come to professionals' attention quite so readily.'

This coming to the attention of the professionals, and the manner of the 'coming' is of course a crucial part of the equation, and provides the incentive for the mainstream schools' addressing of the problems presented, if only to ensure the smoother running of those establishments.

As to the manner of the coming to the professionals' attention, there were many accounts given of disruptive incidents whilst at mainstream, in the histories of their pupils, including threatening and abusive behaviour

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towards both staff and other pupils, acts of violence, truancy and vandalism, also generally disruptive and uncooperative behaviour.

To the extent that the imbalance between the numbers of boys and girls being referred to them was an issue, it was so firstly in terms of a supposed neglect of the needs of girls within mainstream, this however was not something that they felt they could do anything about, because they were at the receiving end of the process of allocation. Secondly, however there was a concern expressed about the implications for teaching at their schools of this imbalance.

Their major concerns revolved around the difficulties of managing these boys' behaviour and of providing 'space' for the minority female pupil population, and the majority female staffs within the MLD and Del schools, as expressed by one teacher,

> 'a lot of the boys have a fundamental lack of respect for the women and the women teachers .... the boys seem to occupy a greater space .... not just physically, but their presence is more powerful than the girls .... the majority of pupil issues that come up for discussion at staff meetings are about the boys .... it also makes you feel slightly uncomfortable as a woman .... I would prefer it if there were more girls .... feel more relaxed ... a lot of these children's backgrounds are such that there are very few male role models around for them to engage with .... it might be more helpful if there were more male members of staff.'

One male member of staff at another school however, considered himself to be battling against, in his words,

> 'the idea that these kids need male teachers ... parents come to me and say 'I'm glad he's got a man teacher because he'll listen to you .... having a woman teacher is a bit like still having his mum,' and I have to stress that we all work as a team together and have the same standards and same methods and so on .... it's difficult ... actually sometimes they (pupils) can see you as more of a challenge if you're a man.'

The patterns within mainstream, whereby boys were said to push themselves forward demanding the attention of the teachers, were seen to repeat themselves within the context of the special school, as one teacher expressed it,

'it tends to be the pupils that 'act out' .... that come forward with challenging behaviour .... everything tends to be pitched at them, ... so the needs of other pupils don't get met ... and the girls tend to fit into the category of those pupils whose needs don't get met .... as long as they're quiet and sit there, whether or not they're learning.'

The implications of the gender imbalance were spelled out in the following terms by one teacher,

'classes are much harder to manage, girls are calmer usually .... boys are very aggressive towards each other .... as they become older and move up through the school they become more individual .... they don't like sharing ....forever name calling .... they don't seem to have any rapport .... whereas girls tend to partner off with their peers .... get on better.'

The problem of some girls not having any 'peers' was a problem mentioned by many respondents, with accounts of classes containing ten boys and two girls being common. Very often special measures had to be taken to ensure that some girls had some 'space' and some 'company,' as the following teacher reports,

'I had a class last year with only one girl .... special arrangements had to be made for 'social interaction,' she did P.E. with another class and sometimes other sessions ... particularly if there was a lot going on behaviour wise.'

There were accounts also of some girls who were able to 'stand up for themselves' or 'give as good as they get,' indeed there were said to be a

small number of very disruptive, aggressive girls at each of the Delicate schools, and one (the only girl on roll) at the E.B.D. school. These were seen in some ways as being 'worse' than the boys, as in the words of one teacher,

'girls tend to suppress their emotions more .... so when they do bubble up to the surface you've really got trouble .... got a real problem on your hands.'

Even more invisible than the 'invisible girls' in these teachers' accounts, were the quieter, more conforming, relatively well behaved boys, which, when pressed, teachers said, formed a significant minority, at the M.L.D. and D.E.L. schools. These pupils were often at the receiving end of some of the more disruptive boys aggressive behaviour, some however, were simply left alone. It was often these pupils whom they felt would be better off elsewhere, and who were cited by M.L.D. teachers as being better off in a Del. school, and by Del. teachers as being better off in an M.L.D. school! The E.B.D. school was said not to contain any such pupils, as one teacher commented,

'for some reason we don't have them.... it's the children who are deeply disturbed in a violent manner, we are coming up with now.'

Thus, the fact that the majority of the pupils at their schools were boys, was considered fairly unremarkable by most of these teachers, it was rather part of the taken for granted nature of working in special schools.

Further, the reasons given for the imbalance were such as to locate the causes within the individuals concerned, and were based on an essentialising and naturalising of the differences between boys and girls. The most common explanation referred to boys 'psychological' characteristics, and

their effects. Boys were seen to react to difficulties in an aggressive way, usually by behaving in a disruptive manner, which brought them quickly to the attention of the teacher, and provided an incentive for those difficulties to be addressed in the interests of the smooth running of the mainstream school. Girls however were seen as better able to cope with, and or, mask their difficulties. It was therefore boys' lack of coping strategies which led to their being allocated in greater numbers to special schools, which manifested itself mainly in 'bad behaviour.' An interesting corollary to this argument was their belief in the existence of a large pool of girls in mainstream schools who probably had learning or other difficulties such that their attendance at a special school might be appropriate, but whose needs were not being met, due to the boys pushing themselves forward, and taking up the available resources. They did however believe that these boys had 'special educational needs,' it was often their allocation to their particular special school that they took issue with.

Therefore in these accounts it is the pre-existence of a 'special educational need' which leads to the 'bad' behaviour, which, in turn, results in the 'need' being met by an allocation to a special school. As with their explanations of 'special educational needs' in general, this explanation emphasises individual 'defecits.' In these cases, in terms of both a 'special educational need' and a reaction to this, which involves a further 'defecit,' in the case of boys, that of a lack of coping strategies.

Thus the prevailing discourses through which they accounted for the phenomena under study did not allow them either to problematise the concept of special educational needs in general, its application to their pupils nor indeed the supposed direction of causation between poor behaviour and a special educational need. Thus pupils were said to have a

special educational need which resulted in poor behaviour rather than poor behaviour which resulted in the ascription of a special educational need.

In Summary.

The drawing of 'conlusions' the making of inferences and the overall analysis of the responses outlined in this chapter will, along with those generated from interviews with mainstream teachers, be the task of chapter eight where such responses will be analysed using a conceptual framework derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. However this section, notwithstanding the risk of oversimplification, will briefly revisit and restate a number of themes which emerged from interviews.

Perhaps the major theme was a dependence on the 'deficit' model of the pupil. This was the main if not the only perspective to be employed by these teachers. The source of pupils' difficulties in schooling were quite firmly located within the child, thus giving a privileged status to individualistic, psychologistic and social pathological, explanations of school failure.

There was also a strong emphasis on the need for differentiation and specialisation between the various special schools in their arguments for the presence of certain attributes in relation to particular designations of 'special' pupil and the need therefore for such pupils to be placed in the appropriate special school. Categories were reified, with pupils being spoken of as, 'being M.L.D.' or 'not M.L.D.' or even as 'E.B.D. not M.L.D.' as if such categories and ascriptions to them were almost entirely unproblematic.

However, when teachers described the pupils actually attending their own schools, prominence was given to a wide range of descriptive terms showing a marked tendency in practice away from the differentiation and specialisation which they argued was neccesary.

Thus they regarded a significant and increasing number of pupils to have been placed in the 'wrong' special school and sought to resist such tendencies by attempting to outline in clear terms the kinds of pupil they felt able, or indeed willing to teach. They did this by defining the kind of 'offer' they felt able to make at their schools, in terms of their experience or expertise, and by developing an argument based on the degree or type of differentiation they considered it possible or desirable to make within one school or classroom.

They reported using such arguments in their 'negotiations' with educational psychologists and others in their attempts to resist the increasing imposition on them of pupils, most of whom were boys and whom they regarded as inappropriate for entry to their schools due to their bad, disturbed, or disruptive, behaviour. Indeed the 'dumping' on them of such pupils, emerged as perhaps the most important theme and certainly a cause of much anxiety for these teachers far outweighing any other concerns they may have had, such as for example those relating to the National Curriculum.

It would seem likely that teachers who perceived themselves to be under such pressures would find it difficult to embrace alternative perspectives regarding the nature and aetiology of difficulties in schooling experienced by some pupils. Rather such a situation seems bound to encourage /

entrench a 'protective response' involving a continuing if not increased reliance on the 'special needs pupil' discourse.

Not surprisingly in the light of this there was overwhelming support for the existence of special schools, but a small number of dissenting voices, however expressions of dissent were couched in terms such that the general principle of special schools was upheld. Thus, it was their current operation that was said to be at fault and not their existence as such that was criticised. Again, the changing composition of their schools as outlined above was a main source of such dissent.

The National curriculum was accepted grudgingly as a *fait accompli* something they were obliged to work with and whilst some welcomed aspects of it, spoke of it as an 'entitlement curriculum' the majority complained of its inflexibility considering it to be overloaded, too prescriptive and a hindrance to meeting the 'real' needs of their pupils.

Their pupils' 'backgrounds' featured quite prominently in their accounts of their pupils, and were usually characterised in negative terms, generally said to be 'poor' in some way. Indeed in an economic sense using the most readily available indicators this was certainly the case, with 65% of them qualifying for free school meals, at least 70% living in rented local authority housing, approximately 47% unemployed, and most of the others engaged in unskilled or semi - skilled work.

However pupils' and their families' 'lifestyles' were pathologised as being in some way inadequate to the task of 'preparing' pupils for school, and of supporting them when they were there. Pupils were said not to be 'ready' for school in that they lacked skills, attitudes and experiences which it was

considered they ought to have developed in the home such homes being said to be disorganised and lacking in discipline.

The overwhelming preponderance of boys was seen as part of the taken for granted nature of working in these special schools, something which had not been considered an issue or problem at all. When asked to account for this imbalance a range of explanations were put forward all of which fitted into the pupil deficit model.

However despite their anxieties over what they perceived as an increasing number of referrals to them of 'disruptive' boys they were in no doubt that such boys actually 'had' special educational needs. Thus in their accounts it is the pre-existence of a 'special educational need' which leads to the 'bad' behaviour, which, in turn, results in the 'need' being met by an allocation to a special school rather than bad behaviour leading to a posible identification of a pupil as having special educational needs. As with their explanations of 'special educational needs' in general, this explanation emphasises individual 'defecits.' In these cases, in terms of both a 'special educational need' and a reaction to this, which involves a further 'defecit,' in the case of boys, that of a lack of coping strategies.

Thus the prevailing discourses through which they accounted for the presence of these boys did not allow them either to problematise the concept of special educational needs in general, its application to their pupils nor indeed the supposed direction of causation between poor behaviour and a special educational need.

Chapter Nine.
Analysis

Bourdieu argues that the differential educational outcomes / attainments of pupils belonging to different social groups are largely due to the discontinuity between home and school experienced by members of these groups. The purpose of this study is to explore how far and in what sense such arguments could be validly employed, developed and extended to account for the disproportionate number of white working class boys identified as having Special Educational Needs thus either 'qualifying' their membership of mainstream settings and possibly putting such membership under threat, or actually ending such a membership through the allocation of these boys to special schools. The study is based on the hypothesis that such an identification and subsequent processing may be seen as a most stark and obvious indicator of a discontinuity between the needs and interests of the child and the educational experiences offered by the school. It is also hypothesised that the nature of this discontinuity is gendered, resulting in different consequences for male and female pupils.

This chapter will examine the relevant findings of the data chapters in relation to a set of propositions for analysis relating to those elements of reported teacher / school / pupil encounters and of wider processes and practices, which Bourdieu's theories imply would be present in the data and which were outlined earlier in the research methodology chapter. The propositions were divided into three groups in order to aid the analysis by providing a slightly different focus for each one, these were, School Habitus, Habitus and Class / Family Strategies and Habitus and its

Gendered Embodiment. It must be recognised however that there is a considerable overlap between these categories, and they might well have been organised differently. It was hypothesised that Bourdieu's theories would be seen to be applicable to the situation of the pupils in question if the data supported the propositions as outlined. The propositions were that the data would provide evidence of :-

1. School Habitus.

Bourdieu argues that economic and social domination is masked both from the dominant and the dominated through processes of misrecognition which legitimate it through essentialising and naturalising social position. He argues that schools take the habitus of the dominant group as the only 'proper' sort of habitus, but treat all children as if they had equal access to it, which clearly disadvantages children from groups other than that whose habitus is 'embodied' in the school. Bourdieu's account therefore is of a system where the cultural competencies and qualities needed for success are never defined but remain implicit. Because they are implicit, unexamined and taken for granted, they *are not*, indeed *could not* be taught. By responding only to those pupils who are 'ready,' and refusing to develop a pedagogy responsive to the rest of the school population the system is said therefore, to evaluate what it does not teach, and those whose habitus prepares them for what to others are the 'mysteries' of schooling, appear to be naturally gifted. In this way Bourdieu argues, the social distribution of cultural capital is misrecognised as a natural distribution of personal qualities and abilities.

The propositions in relation to this section are, that the data will contain evidence of :-

(1) A location of the sources of differences in educational outcomes in 'neutral' events or qualities external to the basic relations of power and authority within society.

(2) An assumption in favour of the neutrality and universality of school culture, including a belief that schools operate equal opportunity policies which involve high expectations for all and that they distinguish between pupils only on the basis of attributes and qualities identified in (1) above.

(3) Schools' involvement in assessing their pupils' participation or otherwise in a specific culture, lack of familiarity with which is taken as evidence of a lack of ability, or of a cultural deficiency rather than cultural difference.

Proposition 1.

(1) A location of the sources of differences in educational outcomes in 'neutral' events or qualities external to the basic relations of power and authority within society.

It is clear from the way in which the special school teachers characterised their pupils, that for the most part they *did* account for their presence in their schools, and therefore of their specific educational outcomes in terms of categories which may indeed be described as neutral vis a vis the basic relations of power within society. Their explanations employed terms such as slow learning, low I.Q. emotional, bad behaviour, medical problems and so on in order to account for this. Indeed it would be difficult to overstate their reliance on such explanations with pupils also being described in terms of what they were said to lack, such as basic skills, and a general ability to 'cope' with school.

Similarly within mainstream schools, teachers accounts of the reasons for pupils' identifications and placements on SEN registers relied heavily on

their supposed deficiencies. In many cases students were seen as being qualitatively different from others in terms of their ability to learn and to progress at a supposedly normal rate or to achieve at a particular level without a substantial extra input of teacher time. It was also said necessary to modify the presentation, timing, pacing, expected outcomes and so on of tasks for these pupils, something which was not judged necessary in relation to others.

However, there were also many references from both sets of teachers to pupils' supposedly poor backgrounds. Thus pupil lifestyles were very prominent in their accounts of why some pupils were said to fail and others to succeed. There were assumptions of a lack of support, on the part of certain parents, and therefore of a consequent lack of readiness / preparedness or even interest in what was seen as the agenda of schooling on the part of these pupils. Such assumptions and their linkages with pupil failure in the broader sense did in fact connect the position of pupils within the larger society to their attainments. Thus it was the *family backgrounds*, of some pupils which were seen to be major contributory factors to their low attainments, so in that sense the wider relations of power within society were seen to have a profound impact, for such families were not randomly distributed amongst the general population but were described as being located within the poorer and least powerful sections of society.

In fact teachers were very aware, perhaps too aware, of their pupils' various locations within the wider society, seeing in many cases a close relationship between this and their subsequent and continuing attainments or lack of them. The attainment levels of pupils at mainstream schools and the schools' subsequent position in local league tables was frequently explained through being linked to the 'character' of the communities they served. In this

respect therefore it may be argued that Bourdieu underestimates the extent to which teachers understand the linkages between pupils' social locations and their educational attainments or lack of them.

However the way in teachers explained such linkages was consistent with Bourdieu's account of a location of differences in educational outcomes in factors which are considered external to wider power relations, for the pathologising of the family backgrounds of the pupils encountered in their schools served to de-politicise and individualise pupils responses. Thus they regarded such pupils and more importantly their families whose influence was considered of such importance, not to be *different due to*, social location, but as *deficient and therefore located*, in a particular social position. That is, according to this argument, it was their various and continuing deficiencies which led to their occupation of a subordinate status within wider social relations and which in turn contributed to the relative failure of their children within the school system.

Propositon 2.

(2) An assumption in favour of the neutrality and universality of school culture, including a belief that schools operate equal opportunity policies which involve high expectations for all and that they distinguish between pupils only on the basis of attributes and qualities identified in (1) above.

This proposition links to the manner in which the processes of domination are, masked from and misrecognised by, the participants through the taken for grantedness of the values, assumptions, attitudes, patterns of interaction and so on embedded within school life. Bourdieu argues that the success of the legitimation of such power can be seen in its tacit rather than explicit endorsement by the school system, ie. doxa. Further whilst Bourdieu does

not mention equal opportunity policies in themselves, the schools' belief in the even handedness of its dealings with its pupils are important assumptions in his account.

Such assumptions as are outlined in this proposition may be seen to be firmly embedded in the common sense and professional understandings of these teachers. Thus, there was no sense in which the actual criteria by which their pupils were judged were regarded by teachers as in any way implicated in their pupils' failures. The performances expected of pupils, and in terms of which they were evaluated were considered to be appropriate, indeed self evident. There were descriptions of how their pupils fell short of what was required of them both in general and in particular, descriptions which focussed on attainments and abilities in various areas of the curriculum and more widely, such as levels of reading abilities, language competence, understanding of mathematical concepts, their motivation, persistence, attitudes to learning and so on. However this simply was the necessary culture of schooling and while the National Curriculum was seen as lessening teachers discretion and flexibility to respond to pupil interests it was more or less taken for granted.

There was some acknowledgement of the way in which pupils from particular backgrounds might feel more at home at school. This was expressed however in terms of those who were more able or willing to learn and behave appropriately, with an implicit assumption that such notions described the necessary preconditions for learning and was linked to various supposed deficiencies in pupils' home backgrounds and in their own abilities and behaviours.

The mainstream teachers considered that what was offered to pupils was potentially equally available to all and whilst they recognised that those

from particular backgrounds found it easier to experience success, this was put down to either superior abilities or more supportive families rather than being seen as a bias in what was taught or how it was taught, or indeed in terms of a more nebulous 'cultural milieu' within their schools. However there was much concern expressed at the supposedly rushed pace at which they were expected to teach, particularly in terms of what they perceived as their pupils' different starting points on arrival at school.

In this sense they recognised a certain inbuilt unfairness to many of their pupils, but the overwhelming tendency to pathologise such pupils' backgrounds tended to lessen the impact of this criticism. Again their critique only related to the pace of teaching and whilst there were concerns about 'curriculum overload' the content itself was seen as uncontroversial for the most part.

For the special school teachers particularly, the benevolence and universality of their offer was a strong underlying assumption in their accounts or at least ostensibly so. Indeed, they considered what they termed as the 'gearing' of their schools to the particular needs of their pupils in the broadest sense to be something to which they gave a great deal of thought. They regarded the special school as in some respects a haven where pupils would feel more at home, would not be pressured, would be protected from the competition of the mainstream school and where they could, supposedly, learn at their own pace and be rewarded and praised for their efforts and achievements rather than simply judged on their absolute attainments. For these special school teachers meeting the individual needs of their students in this way implied not only the neutrality and universality but also the benevolence of their offer.

However this was only theoretically so and reflected an ideal. The data also revealed a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst these teachers relating to what was perceived as their lessening ability to accomplish this 'gearing.' There was said to be less flexibility to respond to pupils interests, pace and style of learning and so on, due to the increasing pressures of the National Curriculum, particularly but most of these criticisms related to what they perceived as an 'overloaded' curriculum not one that was regarded either implicitly or explicitly as in any sense culturally arbitrary!

Many teachers referred to their schools' equal opportunity policies, mentioning policies on race, gender, disability and bullying, but race and gender in particular. Teachers expressed a commitment to these policies, to acting in line with them and the values they were said to embody. However many mainstream teachers particularly, reported that such considerations had been downgraded as a result of an increased emphasis on target setting and the raising of educational standards and expressed a reluctance on their part to raise such issues themselves lest it be seen more widely as special pleading on their behalf in order to excuse poor results for which they felt they were being increasingly held responsible.

There was evidence however, through their references to such policies, that they nonetheless recognised the possibility in theory that schools could in some senses and however unwittingly, be biased in their operation and curriculum, specifically that they could be sexist and racist. Thus the idea of a cultural discontinuity or dissonance was not totally alien to them, but this was something which was seen as for the most part of marginal importance. Leaving aside the possibility of overt racism or sexism on the part of teachers or pupils, the general impact or effect of such a discontinuity as might have been embodied within the curriculum for

example or in relation to their dealings with pupils face to face was not seen as particularly decisive or important in determining pupil outcomes. The mainstream teachers in particular were in thrall to an effectiveness discourse which had consistently played down such considerations. Whilst it may be a disservice to them to say that they merely paid lip-service to equal opportunity issues it would not be unfair to say such concerns were a very low priority, indeed *their* pupils' backgrounds were seen as something to be overcome rather than celebrated or dwelt on in any way.

Thus, the conception of equal opportunities embodied in their practices and accounts was limited in both nature and scope particularly in relation to those pupils who are the focus of this study. On the one hand they concerned themselves with the provision of positive images and role models as a way of building self esteem in pupils, as in accounts given of such things as assemblies about Martin Luther King Jnr. of Women Scientists, of festivals such as Diwali and of challenging racial and gender images and stereotypes, giving attention to sexist and racist language and so on. However, on the other hand, whilst they employed theories of gender and race involving notions of culture, they lacked a theory of class, indeed they were unable to conceive of what a class issue might be.

Their schools operated therefore on the level of what might be called, a selective class blindness, there being no parallel assemblies for example which might have sought to celebrate working class culture, indeed to the extent that such a phenomenon was recognised at all, it was only implicitly so and treated as a pathological version of mainstream / middle class / school culture. Moreover to the extent that teachers responded to a 'cultural' difference in their white working class pupils it was in terms of a deliberate ignoring of it, or seeing it as something which needed to be

overcome in order for such pupils to experience success in school, it being seen in extremely negative terms. Their response then was that of a declaration that they treated all pupils the same and had high expectations of them whatever their backgrounds. (These of course were the very same backgrounds that figured in their earlier accounts of *why* their pupils failed.)

Thus, issues related to girls and ethnic minorities were seen as in some sense political and requiring a response which recognised these pupils as members of a group and in some ways disadvantaged due to this membership and therefore as a legitimate concern of an equal opportunities policy. However issues relating to white boys were individualised. For example while certain boys were seen to have had a raw deal due to poor backgrounds and so on boys as a class were seen as a problem to be controlled. Indeed boys were more likely to be demonised as the source of many of the attitudes and practices their equal opportunity policies were seeking to address and were seen as the perpetrators of injustice and inequality with any disadvantages they may have suffered being brought upon themselves.

To the extent therefore that such phenomena were considered to warrant a response at the level of policy, it was not considered the province of the equal opportunity policy but rather that of a behaviour policy in order to secure the governance of these boys. Thus, issues of social justice and equity were considered to have been addressed and indeed dealt with under the rubric, and within the auspices of their equal opportunities policies, maintaining a belief in the even handedness and benevolence of their schools.

Proposition 3.

(3) Schools' involvement in assessing their pupils' participation or otherwise in a specific culture, lack of familiarity with which is taken as evidence of a lack of ability, or of a cultural deficiency rather than cultural difference.

Here perhaps begins the real test of Bourdieu's theories, in that whilst an expression, an action, or an apparent organisation of a school system, in line with the assumption of the neutrality of the criteria by which pupils are judged and equally that of the neutrality and universality of school culture, is consistent with Bourdieu's account, it is also consistent with the *actual* neutrality of these phenomena! The real point and force of his argument is in the claim that they are not neutral or universal phenomena but partial and arbitrary.

Bourdieu argues that the schools' practices embody the habitus of the dominant group, misrecognising it as universal and equally available to all, this putting those pupils whose habitus is not that of the dominant group at a disadvantage. The almost inevitable failure if only in comparative terms of those so disadvantaged is read by the school as due to the pupils' lack of such attributes as ability, intelligence, motivation, application and so on. The focus is on the failure of the child and not on the failure of the school to provide an appropriate educational experience, one which takes nothing for granted. Bourdieu argues however that the criteria by which pupils are actually judged whilst ostensibly those seemingly neutral attributes identified by the school are actually related to their pupils participation or otherwise in the specific culture embodied within the school.

Indeed, it was in the pathologising of pupil backgrounds and parental skills, attitudes, beliefs and actions as causal factors in pupils' failure, in many cases through the organising concepts of readiness and support, factors which were said to have a great influence on the development or otherwise of those positive skills and attitudes considered for school success and the overwhelming coincidence that these very pupils were according to other data collected, amongst the poorest sections of the community that the schools' affinity with the dominant cultural arbitrary may be seen.

The cultural arbitrary embedded within the school is said to embrace the habitus of the dominant class or group, being the natural home for its members' dispositions to act and behave in particular ways, where they are likened to fish in water.

There was much evidence from special school teachers that their pupils whilst at mainstream schools had been very much like fishes out of water, indeed still were, *even* at the special school, where much effort was reported as being expended in order to ensure that their educational 'offer' was more likely to accommodate these pupils' supposed interests, learning styles, pace of learning and so on and where the ethos was said to be more accepting of such diversity as these pupils were said to represent leading to a lessening of pressure on them and a more explicit valuing of their achievements.

Of course by the time they had arrived at these schools they had experienced much 'failure' and undoubted frustration so that even if there may have been some lessening of this, in overall terms this was only relatively so.

Similar accounts were provided by mainstream teachers of those pupils whom they had found it necessary to identify as having special educational needs' general lack of ease at school. For both sets of teachers there was an implicit and sometimes explicit set of 'positive' attributes which were seen as contributing to school success. This involved various skills, experiences, attitudes, behaviours and general demeanours including particularly a recognition of and a relatively willing compliance with or involvement in the agenda of schooling, compared to which many pupils who had been identified as having special educational needs were seen as lacking. Further, such attributes were frequently explicitly linked to particular pupil backgrounds.

Moreover such explanations, in relying on notions of a lack of support from parents and a consequent lack of readiness / preparedness on the part of some pupils contain an implicit admittance that the culture and practices of the school are less than universal, not equally available to all, and that such practices do indeed depend on and are a continuation of, the kind of support provided by certain backgrounds and therefore tend towards the exclusion of others. It is in this way that certain pupils are able to gain an advantage due to the continuity between their home and school experiences. In this sense, it may not matter whether this school culture is necessary as well as being 'arbitrary' it is its prior possession by one group and the schools' understandings and practices based upon it which are important.

Thus it is in the construction of the child indentified as having S.E.N. as the 'other,' and perhaps their literal casting out to the special school or their marginal or qualified membership of mainstream settings and the rationale for this, which may be seen as important indicators of the skills, values, assumptions, patterns of interactions and so on valorised by the school. For

it is those very attributes which confirm and define the otherness of the special pupil which simultaneously confirms and defines the norm.

Of course while Bourdieu does not focus explicitly on the earlier years of schooling which most of the data generated by this study covers, it seems reasonable to assume that these earlier years would be the ones where the influence of the primary habitus would be at its strongest and further that such an influence is likely to have a relatively strong initial effect and probably an enduring one, in terms of the setting up of patterns, precedents and expectations for the future development of pupils' educational trajectories.

Much evidence was provided from mainstream school teachers of pupils who had been placed on SEN registers within an extremely short time of arriving in reception classes as a result of their performances on various forms of baseline assessments. Moreover such identifications were said by some to be useful predictors of future performance often leading to an expectation that pupils would spend their school careers as 'special,' if only because the supposed lack of care / support which had led to their low scores on such assessments was almost inevitably to be maintained throughout the pupils' school careers. Such pupils were 'condemned' almost as soon as they started school with their performances either accounted for in terms of a lack of ability / intelligence or a lack of parental support, either explanation leading to rather pessimistic predictions or indeed expectations for future performances / attainments.

Such assessments quite unashamedly test what the school has not taught, with success in them depending overwhelmingly on pupils' previous experiences usually in the family. In these cases, a level of attainment which

could be explained as deriving in no small part from a pupil's lack of those experiences which are more common in the families of dominant groups operated as a means of differentiating between children, with such a level of performance being stigmatised as deficient, the pupil seen as not measuring up to a norm and therefore as in need. Moreover, whilst such assessments are of fairly recent vintage other evidence was produced which showed that before their adoption large numbers of pupils were routinely identified as having special educational needs by very similar criteria at very young ages with most who were going to be so, having been identified within the first year or two of formal schooling.

Some teachers expressed reservations about such practices but nonetheless felt forced to engage in them due to what they perceived as increasing pressures to meet targets for pupil attainments within their schools or more usually to account in some way for their failure to meet such targets.

In two of the mainstream schools there was evidence produced to the effect that such outside pressures led to targets for attainment which were perceived as unrealistic and therefore led almost inevitably to an overidentification of pupils as being 'special,' for the 'norm' as defined or described in terms of these targets was immediately seen as being beyond their pupils given the distance they needed to travel in order to meet them. Pupils were not accepted for what they were, or who they were, but were judged as deficient in relation to this norm, a norm which assumed a starting point which could only have been achieved by those with the requisite previous experiences and skills developed elsewhere, namely within their families. In the third mainstream school with a substantial number of pupils from fairly priviledged backgrounds it was said that the monitoring / policing of the educational offer by parents from such groups led to a norm

being established which again automatically led to 'others' being seen as 'special.'

Of course such backgrounds were seen as continuing to have a negative impact through their pupils lifestyles values etc. They felt that they were having to compensate for these. This is a picture then of an implicit understanding on the part of teachers that starting points are not the same that some pupils arrive at school with an advantage and that they are for the most part able to maintain this advantage through the continuation of the kind of support which privileged them in the first place.

Thus these pupils were not admitted to be in possession of or acting in accordance with a 'culture,' a response related to their position in the social structure and whose hopes aspirations and understandings of possibilities were somehow related to that position. Theirs was not a response to the school at the level of culture, but a deviant version of a middle class norm. It is this norm which is embedded in teachers' assumptions and school practices which is the central reference point by which all pupil responses are judged and in relation to which pupils from subordinate groups are found to be wanting and therefore in need.

2.Habitus and Class/Family Strategies.

Bourdieu argues that the habitus of a group or class is the 'embodiment' within each individual of the sedimented historical experiences and practices of the class or group constructed in relation to the material conditions of existence experienced by them. He regards the habitus as the product of

history inscribed within the individual in the form of schemes of thought, action and perception of that history and producing orientations and dispositions to action in relation to it.

The history of members of dominated social groups will invariably be that of failure within schools for Bourdieu argues that the incompatability between the habitus that the schools take for granted and that possessed by pupils from subordinate groups leads to pupils from such groups experiencing less success than those whose habitus is such that they are already attuned to or socialised into the culture, values, assumptions, patterns of interaction, language use and expectations in terms of bodily hexis and so on, of school culture. Accordingly the field of education will tend to endow the practices, actions and responses of pupils belonging to subordinate social groups as of low value as compared to the members of more dominant groups.

He further argues that within any field, agents (pupils and parents in this case) take into account the market conditions within which their contributions will be received and valued by others. In this way the pupils' assessments of these likely responses operate as internal constraints in anticipation of the likely value that their 'products' will receive. Thus those who possess the appropriate habitus will feel at home at school, while others will often feel and be, intimidated, such intimidation being exerted through the minutiae of everyday interaction, through words, gestures, movements and intonations of domination and which are said to be powerfully suggestive of a sense of 'place' and of 'limits' to those whose habitus predisposes them to decode the relevant signals and understand what may be regarded as their veiled social meaning.

Bourdieu argues that a confrontation by such acts of symbolic violence may invoke a response in such pupils of 'not for the likes of us,' referring to this euphemised response of self-censorship as the 'dynamic of the causality of the probable.' (Bourdieu 1977) This unconscious calculation, or 'subjective expectation of objective probabilities,' he argues, often leads members of dominated groups to opt out of educational and other competitions.

It is in this sense therefore that he argues that the dominated classes are complicit in their own domination, whereby pupils and their parents are said to adjust their aspirations and ambitions in line with what they intuitively perceive are their probabilities of success.

The propositions in relation to this section are, that the data will contain evidence that:-

(4) Within subordinate social groups pupil and parental actions and orientations will reflect a scepticism towards or failure to subscribe to a belief in the supposed meritocratic and benevolent nature of schooling with this being taken by teachers as evidence of pathological traits such as laziness or lack of ambition.

(5) Such actions as may be taken in support of their children's schooling by members of subordinate social groups will be lacking in effectivity compared with those taken by members of dominant social groups.

Propositions 4 and 5.

There was a perceived commonality of response on the part of members of subordinate social groups to the schooling that was offered, a response that was interpreted by teachers in very negative terms for the most part, with parents described as having low aspirations and pupils often considered to

be uininterested and poorly motivated. Indeed it would be difficult to overstate teachers' dependence on such explanations as a means of accounting for pupil attainments, or lack of them including their identifications as having special educational needs and / or their allocation to special schools.

Thus much evidence was produced of both parental and pupil action and often inaction which was said to indicate a lack of interest, commitment or investment in what was referred to as the agenda of schooling. Many comments were made about lifestyles, attitudes and basic orientations to school which cast certain families and their children as the 'other' in relation to this agenda. Pupils and families were judged in relation to an ideal of a student who was well motivated, interested and above all able, one whose parents had high expectations and who were willing and able to provide 'appropriate' support. In relation to this many pupils and their families were found wanting.

Indeed it was said that there was no sense in which these pupils and their families saw school as in any way providing a salvation or an escape from their 'probable' futures, rather school was something to be endured, holding many negative feelings for pupils as well as for parents.

Whilst parents and pupils were blamed for their supposed lack of aspirations, teachers understandings of these phenomena did involve explanations 'in mitigation' which cited such things as low morale or demoralisation perhaps due to high unemployment, the lack of previous experience of success in education of parents and the phenomenon of a settling for something which was known. Indeed it was said that the kind of futures which pupils and their parents projected for them didn't depend on success in education at all for this simply couldn't be depended upon, such

plans and projects as were implicitly expressed depended to a great extent on the vagaries of local employment markets and the possibilities of personal or family connections there, rather than on the seemingly much less dependable prospect of relying on the possibility of 'qualifications' to secure a future.

Thus in some respects pupils' and parents' responses including their hopes, aspirations and understandings of possibilities for their children were understood as relating to their position in the social structure. However such insights into the motivations and understandings of pupils and their families as were produced were more than oughtweighed by the overwhelming tendency to pathologise responses thereby individualising and depoliticising them. Indeed even those ostensibly most sympathetic to and understanding of the situation of such parents and pupils nonetheless implied that their continuation in such situations was due in no small part to what they perceived as their laziness, lack of ambition and therefore unwillingness to even attempt to overcome such disadvantages as they may have suffered. Their responses and actions were interpreted not as making sense or having value on their own terms but as a deviant and inadequate version of a middle class norm.

However, whilst evidence was produced which may have indicated such a lack of confidence in the potential benefits of education for their children on the part of many parents and a perceived concomitant lack of support for children based on this, there was also much evidence to support other interpretations, such as that of a lack of parental confidence in their own abilities and in some cases failed attempts to provide effective support based on inadequate understandings or a simple lack of the requisite skills on their part.

The main indicator a of supposed parental lack of interest cited by most teachers was that of the seeming unwillingness of parents to engage their children in 'shared reading' activities in the home. Linked to this many parents were also reported as seeing no role for themselves in teaching their children, 'preferring' to leave it all to the teachers. Others were said to simply go through the motions of attending parental consultation evenings where they would promise to help their children and then either not doing so or doing so inconsistently. Indeed the degree of support and commitment necessary and the importance of it continuing throughout the pupils' school careers was something which many parents were said to totally understimate with teachers citing evidence from previous schools of the intensity of support provided by parents from what was sometimes termed 'more normal' backgrounds.

Of course what was also required from parents was the right kind of support, this requiring an appropriate understanding of the tasks involved and the necessary skills to carry them out. However there were many reports of the extremely low levels of educational attainment and consequently negative experiences of schooling of many parents, with some being said to read at a very rudimentary level themselves, meaning that many of them were simply unable to support their children. It was also the case that such parents were seen to lack confidence in their dealings with teachers and in their abilities to evaluate, question or criticise what was offered by the schools. There were also many examples given of parental efforts to help children which were seen to be unsuccessful due to parents' misunderstandings / misinterpretations of the nature of the tasks involved.

Some such parents were said to be confrontational when approaching schools and others and to lack the requisite social skills in order to

negotiate in support of, or otherwise represent their childrens' interests. There was also a great deal of evidence demonstrating mutual awkwardnesses, feelings of unease, and a social distancing between many parents and teachers which in many cases was said to result in misunderstandings and miscommunications and which contributed to a dissipating of whatever energies and efforts were expended by these parents.

This contrasted sharply with accounts of middle class parents at previous schools in which respondents had worked and also of those at one of the research schools who in their turn were criticised for being too effective in influencing the education offered to their children, such that many were seen to pose a threat to teacher autonomy! It would seem that these parents were able to deploy their social and cultural capital in order to exercise real power within the school on behalf of their children sometimes gaining disproportionate attention and teacher time for them.

3.Habitus and its Gendered Embodiment.

The concept of habitus encompasses a range of attributes, however one aspect, the implications of which have received very little attention, is that of its physical gendered embodiment. Now whilst Bourdieu does not refer directly to these aspects in his educational writings, such a focus may be a useful way of providing insights into the issues addressed by this study.

For Bourdieu an extremely important aspect of habitus is its physical embodiment. He considers the body to be a significant marker of social

location, arguing that different social classes, class fractions or groups may be seen to develop distinct orientations to their bodies and to produce substantially distinct bodily forms, forms which bear a particular symbolic value both within their groups and more widely. It is also clear particularly from the numerous examples he gives that gender is a fundamental aspect of this embodiment. Thus Bourdieu argues that an individual's whole relationship to the social world may be revealed through a consideration of their bodily dispositions including such characteristics as the manner and style in which they carry themselves, their posture, demeanour, bearing, gait and so on. The body is seen by him as a kind of mnemonic device which operates as a means of encoding the most subtle nuances of social location and distinction.

An important point made by Bourdieu is that such differences, produced as 'bodies,' are not 'natural' but are highly skilled accomplishments, the result of a labour of differentiation, deriving from the individual's contact with or immersion within their immediate social group, and also the result of explicit teaching / socialisation within the family. It is in this way then that bodies are said to be inscribed with the marks of social class and gender, thus becoming a form of physical capital.

The development of this argument in relation to the educational outcomes which are the concern of this study relates to an important property of this physical capital, as indeed of all capitals, and that is its potential convertibility into other forms of capital, in the context of schooling, social and cultural capital.

Now according to Bourdieu it is the cultural arbitrary of the dominant group that is adopted as the legitimate culture of the school and education

system, an adoption which is secured through the processes of struggle over symbolic power that characterises the field of education and which is part of the wider class struggle within society. Bourdieu argues that the practices within the field of education create conditions in which a single and particular habitus becomes the norm, thus disadvantaging and devaluing all others. Accordingly the field of education tends to endow the practices, actions and responses of pupils belonging to subordinate social groups as of low value as compared to the members of more dominant groups.

The argument therefore is that the physical capital produced by the dominated classes will have less exchange value within the field of education than that produced by the dominant classes. That is, educational practices will act so as to delegitimise and devalue the physical capital of members of the dominated classes thus having a detrimental effect on such pupils' prospects of success in schooling.

The propositions in relation to this section are, that the data will contain evidence of :-

(6) The schools involvement in the production and valorisation of particular forms of bodily control, expression and self management, with those produced by pupils from subordinate social groups constituting a form of 'physical capital' having a low exchange value within education.

(7) The lack of congruence between the bodily forms produced by members of subordinate social groups and those forms which the school valorises is 'gendered' in nature, with greater significance of and lack of continuity between the two forms being ascribed to male pupils.

It may be seen in the light of such a focus that it is in these pupils' referrals to special schools or their statementing or progression to the higher stages

of the Code of Practice within mainstream schools and the extent to which the rationales for such actions are argued to depend on, lay stress on or may be perceived to be influenced to a significant extent by, such pupils' apparent lack of conformity to particular forms of bodily control, expression and self management that schoolings' commitment to and valorisation of such forms may be seen. Such outcomes reveal the extent to which the day to day practices of the school focus on the regulation of the body.

Propositions 6 and 7.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance which pupils' deployment of their physical resources / capital and the impact this had on their relationships both with teachers and with one another assumed in the accounts given. Indeed such characteristics were not only mentioned more often than any learning or other difficulties pupils' may have been said to have, but they were also discussed at greater length. Thus there are appropriate or acceptable forms of 'embodiment' including the use of space, constructed within schools through myriad rules conventions and practices

There were numerous references to pupils' bodily demeanour, control and self management, these invariably taking the form of complaints about their seeming inability or unwillingness to conform to the schools' requirements by producing the 'right bodies.' Such a 'lack' on the part of pupils was linked quite firmly in the majority of cases to their membership of subordinate social groups and the supposed lack of discipline and regulation which were said to characterise such backgrounds.

However, while there was evidence that some girls 'produced bodies' that were not valued within schools, the problems presented by boys in this

respect were seen as so overwhelming that any presented by girls were of marginal concern in both the special and mainstream schools. Indeed in contrast with the boys many girls were praised for their relative willingness or ability to conform.

In this respect then the study findings tend not to support the claim that such bodies as are produced by *girls* from subordinate social groups have a low exchange value within education. Indeed even when girls were seen to 'fail' as evidenced either through their allocation to a special school or their identification as having special educational needs their bodily control, expression or self management were not cited as being relevant to such outcomes, whereas for boys such aspects were often considered central. However this need not invalidate Bourdieu's claim particularly given the context of the study, which may have failed to test such a proposition adequately, for both sets of respondents seemed so preoccupied with boys and the problems they were seen to present that it was very difficult to generate sufficient data in relation to girls. What was clear however is that there were different valuations placed on girls' and boys' physical capital in these contexts with girls' being seen as having a much higher value than that of boys from the same group. In contrast that of boys was generally accorded an extremely low value this being said to have a profoundly detrimental effect on their educational careers.

Thus special school teachers' accounts of their pupils, gave great prominence to aspects of their bodily comportment, expression and self management focussing on what were seen as their deficiencies and lack of control in these areas. The special school populations studied were comprised partly of those pupils who had started their educational careers

there, the majority however had previously attended mainstream schools. There were many references to the previous 'bad behaviour' of many of their pupils whilst in mainstream, with this often being seen as a crucial or even decisive factor in the decision to send them to a special school. Indeed the argument was presented that, very often the pupils' very identifications as having special educational needs and their relatively rapid progression to statementing and subsequent allocation to them had depended to a great extent on these factors. This argument was applied equally to pupils allocated to Delicate and M.L.D. schools as to those to E.B.D. schools where perhaps such considerations would be expected to be more common.

Further, not only were their pupils often said to have 'histories' of bad behaviour, but such behaviour was seen as continuing, indeed even intensifying during their attendance at the special school. Thus, the whole special school population was characterised by its teachers in terms of its lack of conformity to or violation of school norms relating to bodily control, with practically all teachers describing pupils attending their schools as badly behaved. Of course by no means all pupils were said to 'offend' but sufficient numbers did so for them to feel it appropriate to characterise their populations in general in this way. However a crucial feature was gender, with boys being singled out not merely as the worst offenders but sometimes as the only ones. Thus when teachers spoke of their *pupils* being badly behaved it was their boys to whom they were referring with girls getting relatively few mentions.

Within mainstream very very few of those identified as having special educational needs were destined to be allocated to special schools, however a significant number were processed through to the higher stages of the Code of Practice with some having been statemented and others being seen

to require a relatively high level of support / intervention compared with others in these schools. It is with this population within mainstream rather than the generality of those identified as having special educational needs that this study is concerned.

Now in relation to this group of pupils there were very many references to the behavioural difficulties they were said to display and their more general inability or unwillingness to produce the 'right bodies' within the classroom and school. Indeed whereas teachers' accounts of pupils at the earliest stages of the Code of Practice offered more rounded and detailed descriptions of pupil difficulties, covering a range of pupil 'attributes,' those of this particular population focussed much more on their supposed deficiencies in the area of bodily comportment, expression and self management such deficiencies often being seen as decisive or at least crucial factors in their progression through the stages of the Code of Practice to their current levels. Many teachers reported that they found such deficiencies particularly difficult to deal with, this leading them to seek help more quickly than would otherwise have been the case. Again boys figured almost exclusively in their accounts, with very few girls featuring at all.

Both special and mainstream school teachers described such pupils in very similar terms. The norms which they were said to violate were related to what were seen as the general conventions of the classroom and school, without which good order and the basic agenda of schooling was considered to be impossible. Thus pupils were said variously, to be impulsive, inattentive, not to listen to instructions, not to sit up straight, not to give appropriate eye contact, to be unable to get their work out and remain on task and so on. They were also said to be restless, scraping chairs, tapping pencils, talking out of turn, sprawling over desks, using their

bodies in an aggressive manner and in some cases to be confrontational towards teachers and violent towards one another.

Further, whilst those described as 'badly behaved' were said to be at the more extreme end of a continuum of such behaviours, virtually all of the pupils in the special school and many in the mainstream schools, invariably boys, were said to manifest at least some of them to some degree. They were said either to be unwilling or very often unable, to conform appropriately and sometimes to be incapable of learning how to do so.

It was perhaps the most important characteristic attributed to many pupils and was seen as representing in some cases an extremely tangible indicator of and a perhaps wilful demonstration of an opposition to, or an alienation from, schooling and in others quite simply a lack of a skill or set of skills. Indeed the 'ability' to submit oneself to the practices and disciplines of the school particularly to the extent that such practices and disciplines involved the production of a particular 'body,' was regarded as something which was on a par with other skills such as the ability to 'hold a pencil' or a 'book the right way up,' with such a lack of their development / presence often being attributed to inadequate or inappropriate prior experiences.

There were three main reasons given for pupils' seeming inability or unwillingness to produce the 'right bodies' within schools. There were those pupils within special schools who were said to have had such negative experiences at their mainstream schools that they were now seen as totally alienated and therefore engaged in disruptive and anti social behaviour as a response. There were others in both special and mainstream schools whose behaviour was accounted for in terms of a psychological disturbance,

perhaps the result of physical or mental abuse within families, low self esteem or other such reason.

The vast majority of pupils in both types of school however were said to have great difficulties in conforming to those elements of regulated and disciplined bodily comportment which schools expected, due to a lack of experience or training in such elements in their home backgrounds. It was not so much that they were 'badly' behaved but rather it was said that that they didn't know 'how' to behave within the context of school.

Thus, very many such pupils were said to come from families characterised as being disorganised, undisciplined and lacking regulation. Their homes were said to have no set mealtimes or bedtimes, inconsistent discipline regimes and indeed very little in the way of routines or a regulated existence which children would be expected to fit into and thereby gain experience of conforming to such expectations. It was said therefore that the conventions of school whereby children were expected to sit down for extended periods of time and engage in and maintain attention to a particular task was very much outside their experience, something which initially came as a 'shock to the system' for them perhaps and which they found difficult to cope with. Such difficulties were often seen to result in the school invoking disciplinary interventions / procedures in relation to these children at an early stage in their school careers thus setting up patterns and expectations for their continuing educational trajectories.

However whilst pupils' home backgrounds featured prominently in their accounts of why pupils seemed unable or unwilling to conform to the schools expectations in terms of producing the right 'bodies,' the most common explanation running through all these accounts was that of gender,

with boys being seen as by far the worst 'offenders.' Indeed boys formed the vast majority of pupils in the special schools, and of those on the higher stages of the Code of Practice within mainstream schools, a fact which was itself accounted for by many as being largely due to their disruptive and poor behaviour, this being regarded as an almost exclusively male attribute.

Now within the special schools but to a much lesser extent in mainstream, some girls were also seen to present difficulties, in terms of their bodily control, expression and self management, they were sometimes said to be, inattentive, unable to remain on task without prompting, tending to talk too much at times, to be fidgety, sometimes cheeky and so on. However, this was seen as far less troublesome and oppositional to the smooth running of the schools compared to the difficulties presented by boys which were seen as both qualitatively and quantitatively different such as to dwarf any such problems presented by girls.

The sources or origins of such difficult behaviour were accounted for partly in terms of 'natural' differences between boys and girls but were also located within their locality and family backgrounds and the kinds of problematic masculinities such backgrounds were believed to produce. Thus while much of this discourse individualised pupil responses, with some boys seen as being 'psychologically damaged,' as being in need of counselling and so on, it was nonetheless the case that such responses as were in evidence from these boys were also characterised as typical of those of boys from their particular backgrounds. Their behaviour then was located firmly within the possible repetoire of responses or dispositions of boys from their backgrounds. Indeed such tendencies or dispositions, as were identified such as those of aggressiveness, a physical restlessness, violence, a 'macho exterior' and so on were seen as an integral part of the collective masculinity

which these pupils were seen to embody, originating in their families and the local working class culture.

Such backgrounds were said not to equip these boys with the appropriate 'coping skills.' Of course in this context the coping skills referred to were those of conforming to the very particular requirements of school, variously described as being the production of relatively compliant, quiet and still 'bodies,' the classroom being a place where loud voices, quick movements and an apparently aggressive demeanour was completely unacceptable. Indeed many respondents elaborated on the notion of the active boy and the comparatively passive girl pupils' backgrounds were said to produce. Girls were said to be encouraged to engage in relatively quiet activities thereby developing bodies that were used to being still for extended periods thus fitting them more appropriately for school. Boys on the other hand were said to be encouraged to be active, to base their lives outside the home, usually on the street playing rough games, riding bicycles, playing football, and so on, resulting in a restlessness and a need to be physically active on the part of many of them this being considered a poor preparation for the requirements of the classroom..

Conclusions.

This chapter set out to test or examine the applicability or otherwise of a number of propositions derived / developed from a reading of Bourdieu's work as a means of illuminating or explaining the disproportionality in the numbers of white working class boys being identified as having special educational needs. These propositions were related to those elements of reported teacher / school / pupil encounters and of wider processes and practices, which Bourdieu's theories implied would be present in the data.

The analysis sought to emphasise the gendered embodied nature of the habitus within Bourdieu's overall schema, as a means of providing insights into the issues addressed.

In general terms it may be seen that the propositions as outlined did have both general and specific applicability to the issues at hand providing for an extremely plausible interpretation of the data and thus a powerful means of understanding the ways in which the education system may contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities. Further, while teachers' accounts may have been characterised by insights and understandings enabling them to relate their pupils' positions within wider structural relations to their responses, outcomes and 'progress' within the education system; such insights were nonetheless, neutralised, rendered invisible or masked by the prevailing discourses they employed pathologising pupils and their backgrounds thereby 'misrecognising' those relationships by individualising and de-politicising their responses.

Thus, the reasons given for pupils' identifications and allocations to special schools or their placements on SEN registers relied heavily in teachers' accounts on their supposed deficiencies, deficiencies which theoretically at least and according to the prevailing discourses through which they accounted for them might have occurred in random fashion throughout the pupil population.

However they did not and there was also a ready acceptance therefore that such pupils did come overwhelmingly from particular backgrounds with this being seen by these teachers to form part of the explanation for the deficiencies themselves, not least because these very pupils were according to other data collected, amongst the poorest sections of the community

Teachers revealed then an understanding (indeed an acute awareness) of the sense in which their pupils' locations within wider structural relations impacted upon their attainments or lack of them within school. Such an understanding however was limited to accounts which pathologised these pupils' backgrounds as being inadequate to the task of preparing pupils for school and supporting their efforts when there.

Again teachers in mainstream schools expressed much concern at the supposedly rushed pace at which they were now expected to teach, particularly given what they perceived as their pupils' different starting points on arrival at school due to their lack of previous 'appropriate' experiences, a concern which recognised a certain inbuilt unfairness to many of their pupils. However the overwhelming tendency to pathologise such pupils' backgrounds tended to lessen the impact of this criticism.

Moreover, the idea of a cultural discontinuity or dissonance, or the ways in which pupils from certain backgrounds might feel more (or less) at home at school was not totally alien to respondents, indeed this was understood by them as having some applicability to pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and also to girls. However this was not seen to be so in relation to white boys and in any case was not considered to be particularly decisive or even important in determining pupil outcomes, indeed mainstream teachers in particular were in thrall to an effectiveness discourse which had consistently played down such considerations.

On the other hand however and despite the 'denials' of the importance of background features, the prevailing discourses through which teachers acounted for the various outcomes which are the subject of this study were

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such as to cast these very pupils as the 'other' in relation to the agenda and practices of schooling.

Further, such pupils were not admitted or considered to be in possession of or acting in accordance with a 'culture,' a response related to their position in the social structure and whose hopes aspirations and understandings of possibilities were somehow related to that position. Theirs was not seen as a response to the school at the level of culture, but as a deviant version of a middle class norm. Indeed the prevailing discourses of schooling were ones which normalised middle class experiences, thus reinforcing Bourdieu's emphasis that schools are not culturally neutral and objective institutions but rather promote the culture of the dominant classes

Moreover, to the extent that such discourses recognised such a phenomenon as working class culture it was only implicitly so and was treated as a pathological version of mainstream / middle class / school culture. Thus, to the extent that teachers responded to a 'cultural' difference in their white working class pupils it was in terms of a deliberate ignoring of it, or seeing it as something which needed to be overcome in order for such pupils to experience success in school, again reinforcing Bourdieu's argument on how cultural differences are interpreted as cultural deficiencies within schools.

This for example revealed itself in the pathologising of pupil backgrounds and parental skills, attitudes, beliefs and actions as causal factors in pupils' failure. Pupils and families were judged in relation to an ideal of a student who was well motivated, interested and above all able, one whose parents had high expectations and who were willing and able to provide

'appropriate' support. In relation to this many of these pupils and their families were found wanting.

Of course what was also required from parents was the right kind of support, this requiring an appropriate understanding of the tasks involved and the necessary skills to carry them out. However there were many reports from teachers of the extremely low levels of educational attainment and consequently negative experiences of schooling of many parents, with some being said to read at a very rudimentary level themselves, meaning that many of them were simply unable to support their children. Such mitigating factors however did not serve to lessen the implied criticism and negative judgements made in relation to this group as a whole.

Teachers' accounts of their pupils, also gave great prominence to aspects of their bodily comportment, expression and self management focussing on what were seen as their deficiencies and lack of control in these areas. Indeed it would be difficult to overstate the importance which these pupils' deployment of their physical resources / capital and the impact this had on their relationships both with teachers and with one another assumed in the accounts given, this revealing and indeed reinforcing the extent to which the day to day practices of the school focus on the regulation of the body. Further these accounts were such as to delegitimise and devalue the physical capital of these pupils such that they may be seen to have had a detrimental effect on their prospects of success in schooling.

Moreover such characteristics were not only mentioned more often than any learning or other difficulties pupils' may have been said to have, but they were also discussed at greater length. This often took the form of complaints about their seeming inability or unwillingness to conform to the

schools' requirements by producing the 'right bodies.' Such a 'lack' on the part of pupils was also linked quite firmly in the majority of cases to their membership of subordinate social groups and the supposed lack of discipline and regulation which were said to characterise such backgrounds. Moreover, a crucial feature was gender, with boys being singled out not merely as the worst offenders but sometimes as the only ones. Indeed when teachers spoke of the *pupils* whom they had identified as having special educational needs being badly behaved it was their boys to whom they were referring with girls getting relatively few mentions. Further such behaviour was often reported as extremely influential if not decisive in ensuring these boys' relatively rapid progress through the stages of the Code of practice.

However the 'ability' to submit oneself to the practices and disciplines of the school particularly to the extent that such practices and disciplines involved the production of a particular 'body,' was regarded as something which was on a par with other skills such as the ability to 'hold a pencil' or a 'book the right way up,' with such a lack of their development / presence often being attributed to inadequate or inappropriate prior experiences.

Further, the sources or origins of such difficult behaviour were accounted for partly in terms of 'natural' differences between boys and girls but were also located within their locality and family backgrounds and the kinds of problematic masculinities such backgrounds were believed to produce. Their behaviour then was located firmly within the possible repetoire of responses or dispositions of boys from their backgrounds. Indeed such tendencies or dispositions, as were identified such as those of aggressiveness, a physical restlessness, violence, a 'macho exterior' and so on were seen as an integral part of the collective masculinity which these

pupils were seen to embody, originating in their families and the local working class culture.

Again we have an understanding of the sense in which such behaviours may relate to pupils' positions in wider structural relations, in this case as a more physical manifestation of aspects of these boys cultural backgrounds deriving from their contact with or immersion within their immediate social group. However as with other aspects of their background features their lack of conformity to the particular forms of bodily control, expression and self management, their inabilities to produce the right 'bodies' within school whilst being placed within a wider context which on one level may have led to an understanding of their responses were nonetheless pathologised again as a deviant version of a middle class norm.

Chapter Ten.
Conclusions

This study sought to explain differential educational outcomes related to gender and class, specifically that of the relative failure of white working class boys in schools as indicated by the disproportionate identification of members of this group as having Special Educational Needs and their possible allocation to special schools or their occupation of a marginalised status within mainstream on the basis of this.

It was suggested that practices organised around notions of S.E.N. and implicitly disability operate as a mechanism for managing and legitimating the educational 'failure' of (amongst others) large numbers of white working class boys. It was also argued that an alternative account was needed, one which could explain that 'failure' through identifying the various mechanisms, processes and practices, which work to produce and confirm the devaluation, exclusion, otherness and marginality of members of this group whilst simultaneously masking the inabilities of the education system to engage appropriately with the pupil diversity they represent.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu was employed in order to attempt such an account. The study then was an attempt to test and also to develop Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural reproduction and particularly his concept of habitus and its physical gendered embodiment, as a means of illuminating the processes involved in the generation of such differential outcomes.

The Problem Outlined.

In chapter two evidence was presented from both segregated and mainstream settings of the existence of an over representation of white working class boys amongst the populations of pupils identified as having special educational needs. Further, such evidence was later echoed by the findings reported in the data chapters of this study which revealed similar patterns of identification and allocation. Moreover, despite this phenomenon being long standing and enduring it was seen to be for the most part unproblematised. However, within the small number of recent writings to have recognised the phenomenon there was at least some acknowledgement that patterns of identification and referral may not simply have been related to the supposed individual deficits of those so identified but may have been linked to a wider social context and therefore were in some senses political. This was seen for example in Male's (1996) work in relation to the referral of black boys to MLD schools and also in the claim that girls were not receiving sufficient resources within mainstream schools as in Green (1993) and in Daniels et.al. (1999) Again the empirical data for this study revealed a similar awareness amongst teachers of the possible linkages between such patterns and wider perhaps more 'political' considerations in their references to gender and race.

However this was not seen to be the case in regard to white working class boys. Indeed such boys were more likely to be demonised as the source of many of the problems identified and considered as at least partly if not wholly responsible through their behaviour for any disproportionality or inequality identified. There were then many allusions in this work to boys' physicality through references to their 'aggressive behaviour' and 'demands for attention' and so on. There was also a relatively straightforward linkage

made between such behaviours and boys' disproportionate identifications as having special educational needs and / or their allocations to special schools. Indeed these were for the most part the very boys who were regarded as being unable or unwilling to submit to the particular form of regulated bodily comportment and control which is a central feature of the disciplined demeanour, expression and self management schools seek to produce in their students and who were therefore perceived as threatening with the identification of such boys as 'having' special educational needs being seen as a possible means of quietening them or securing their governance.

Perhaps for these reasons, it was seemingly not possible within prevailing discourses to cast such pupils as in any sense disadvantaged. Thus white working class boys' disproportionate membership of categories which for other groups such as black boys, would be seen to signal a disadvantage (eg. attendance at an MLD school) was something which for the most part was regarded as unremarkable and taken for granted in their case. Similarly their disproportionate identification as pupils with special educational needs, a category which at the very least is an indication of a lack of progress or failure in conventional terms at school, was again simply taken for granted and certainly not regarded as an 'equal opportunity' or political issue.

Moreover this literature echoed the findings to emerge from the empirical work conducted as part of this study which also found that the disproportionate identification as having special educational needs within mainstream and the overwhelming, indeed almost exclusive presence of such pupils within special schools to be again something which was a 'given,' part of the generalised expectations of teachers in mainstream and a simple 'fact of life' for those working in special schools.

The notion of a potentially threatening and problematic masculinity was also a common theme or at least an important subtext in much of the work discussed in chapter three with many studies referring either directly or indirectly to those elements of teacher pupil and pupil pupil interaction most likely to call forth a disciplinary response from the teacher. These focussed largely on aspects of bodily control and demeanour and again demonstrate the extent to which many of the routine day to day practices of the school focus on the regulation of the body and also of course, the extent to which those unable or unwilling to conform are boys.

Such concerns were then implicit in much if not all of the literature discussed, for most forms of alienation, dissent or disaffection amongst groups of boys as well as gendered expectations or constructions of pupils' by schools teachers and pupils themselves may be seen to have bodily consequences or implications. Such a concern may be seen most obviously in the 'overdisciplining' of boys which many studies imply and also in their construction as having relatively uncontrollable bodies, as reported in some studies and implicit in others.

This literature alludes constantly to those appropriate or acceptable forms of 'embodiment' which are constructed within schools through myriad rules conventions and practices and also the extent to which their violation may be accorded or assume great significance and have profound implications for pupils' educational careers. Such practices expectations or constructions were however seen to be gendered in nature with for example, teachers reported as focussing disproportionately on 'physical and noisy behaviour' as opposed to less 'active' forms of dissent, (Anstiss and Crozier 1995) with boys being, 'shouted at' rather than 'spoken to' (Cullingford 1993) sent out of the classroom and given detention. (Hurrell 1995) constructed as

immature and 'allowed' to control physical space (Riddell 1989) viewed as 'naturally' disruptive and unruly (Robinson 1992) or as silly and demanding. (Francis 1997a) or as having relatively uncontrollable bodies (Kamler 1997)

Indeed the potential conflict between such boys and their teachers, inherent in their seeming or actual inability / unwillingnes to produce the 'right bodies' within schools emerged as an important concern for many of the writers in this area. Again such concerns were echoed by the teachers interviewed as part of this study, whose accounts of their pupils gave great prominence to aspects of their bodily comportment, expression and self management focussing on what were seen as their deficiencies and lack of control in these areas. Indeed it would be difficult to overstate the importance which these pupils' deployment of their physical resources / capital and the impact this had on their relationships both with teachers and with one another assumed in the accounts given.

The inability or unwillingness of schools and teachers to tolerate the 'failures' or even presence of those pupils who would not, or could not, conform to an increasingly narrowing agenda within education emerged as a major theme in chapter four which discussed and described the history of policy making and provision in relation to 'special educational needs' over the past twenty years or so.

This history revealed a great deal of activity, from the Warnock Report of 1978, the 1981 Education Act, the Education Reform Act of 1988 the 1993 Act with its Code of Practice and the 1997 Green Paper. However despite the changes in administrative practices and the increasing rhetorical emphases on inclusion, the underlying processes and practices were seen to remain substantially the same and are ones in which a significant and ever

increasing number of pupils found and indeed find themselves in 'special' categories.

Moreover, the task for teachers throughout this time remained and continues to be that of modifying and adapting existing 'mainstream' curricula and providing compensatory or additional support to 'identified' pupils to seek to ensure their access to it, all pupils having to be fitted into existing structures, with the ever present threat of their being excluded if their differences could not be sufficiently normalised.

Of course whilst the basic model was seen to remain substantially the same, this was a period of rapid and profound political change, such changes having the effect of reinforcing its usage through an increase in exclusionary pressures resulting from much recent legislation. These changes served to provide increased incentives for teachers to identify more and more of their pupils as in need, and also thereby to reinforce the notion of S.E.N. as being an individual problem.

This educational 'Darwinism,' involving competing for the patronage of parents on the basis of crude and misleading indicators of performance such as the 'raw' scores obtained from government tests, was argued to be hardly conducive to the development within schools of more open evaluations of their practices in relation to pupils considered to 'have' special educational needs indeed it was rather more likely to lead to a further development / entrenchment of a protective response, involving a continuing if not increased reliance on the 'special needs pupil' discourse.

Indeed an important theme to emerge from the data collected for this study was the extent to which respondents revealed an almost constant concern to

ward off or pre-empt the possibilities of criticism of them and their practices and their heightened awareness of possible audiences for their actions and practices and the 'outcomes' of their efforts. The overall impression given was that of greatly increased pressure on them as teachers and the sense of injustice they felt. It seemed to them that they were in a sense being held almost solely responsible for their pupils progress or more importantly in most of these cases lack of it.

Such concerns were seen to have led to practices which constructed increasing numbers of pupils as 'having special educational needs' with SEN becoming simply an administrative category, serving to mark a particular level or type of performance. Thus according to this reasoning and these practices if for example a pupil was not reading at an 'appropriate' level, then she/he either **must have** a 'special educational need.' or **must be identified as having** one if only to show that the teacher recognised that there was a 'problem.' Further such 'identifications' may also be seen to serve as a means of bidding for extra resources, or to provide evidence to contribute towards the 'value added' debate in relation to a schools' Key Stage Assessment 'results.'

Such practices may well have led to an 'intensification' of teachers' usage of such discourses as would shift the blame for 'failure' elsewhere as manifested perhaps in the extreme 'frankness' of many of their comments about their pupils and their families. Thus teachers relied overwhelmingly on a 'deficit' model in accounting for the nature and aetiology of pupils' difficulties in schooling. This was the main if not the only perspective to be employed by them. The source of such problems as were experienced by pupils were quite firmly located within them and particularly in their 'background characteristics' such accounts giving a privileged status to

individualistic, psychologistic and social pathological explanations of school failure. Indeed with regard to the latter, much time was spent in outlining the supposed detrimental effects on their pupils' learning and progress which resulted from various deficiencies in their backgrounds.

So, despite the increasing rhetorical emphases throughout these years, firstly on integration and latterly on inclusion, 'special' education continued and continues to thrive and indeed grow, with perhaps an increasing emphasis on *differences* between students, and practices which construct many such differences as deficits to be remediated and possibly excluded rather than as diversity to be celebrated as would be the case within an approach which attempted to be truly inclusive.

Moreover, many such supposed deficits may be seen to be substantially based on differences which have their sources in the wider society, hence the disproportionate identification of members of certain groups, such as working class boys for example. However despite some implicit recognition of this 'problem' the way in which the issue is framed serves largely to mask the nature of the processes which lead to their supposed failure by continuing to 'read' and 'treat' them substantially as the results of the deficiencies of individuals rather than the outcomes of or as related to, wider social and educational processes. Therefore 'special education' continues to provide a means of managing and indeed explaining / legitimating their 'failure' whilst misunderstanding the nature of that 'failure.'

An Explanation Provided?

As to an understanding of the nature of that failure, an approach was developed which attempted to make the link between such failures and

wider social and educational processes, one which viewed schooling as a form of cultural politics, seeing such 'politics' as being intimately linked to wider structural relations. To this end the work of Pierre Bourdieu was employed.

Bourdieu argues that the differential educational outcomes / attainments of pupils belonging to different social groups are largely due to the discontinuity between home and school experienced by members of these groups. More widely he emphasises that schools are not culturally neutral and objective institutions but rather promote the culture of the dominant classes. He also employs the metaphor of the various forms of capital, in order to show how value may be ascribed to the various cultural forms within society, in order to make the argument as to how cultural differences are interpreted as cultural deficiencies within schools and may thus lead to differential educational attainments relating to the membership of various groups.

The study focussed on his concept of habitus and particularly its gendered embodied nature as a means of illuminating the processes involved in the generation of such outcomes. Whilst Bourdieu does not focus directly on these aspects in his educational writings, they are nonetheless regarded by him as extremely influential. Indeed he considers the body to be an important 'marker' of social location, whereby different social classes, class fractions or groups develop distinct orientations to their bodies and produce substantially distinct bodily forms, forms which come to bear a particular symbolic value.

His argument therefore, that bodies may be regarded as a form of physical capital and as such will posess differing exchange values within the various

fields they enter seemed particularly relevant to the situation of white working class boys whose 'identifications' as having special educational needs and whose 'failures' within the field of education are often strongly associated with their inabilities or unwillingness to 'produce the right bodies' within schools.

An attempt was made therefore to utilise / develop this aspect of Bourdieu's work within the context of his overall approach as a means of explaining or at least providing some illumination on the problem of these boys' supposed failures.

The study was designed to generate data which might illuminate and evaluate Bourdieu's overall claims in relation to the way in which the education system is said to respond to pupils from particular backgrounds and also to provide for the possibility of extending his insights to the specific issues identified, in particular the gendered embodied nature of the habitus. It took the form of qualitative, in depth semi structured interviews with thirty six teachers from eight schools, five special (2 M.L.D. 1 E.B.D. and 2 Delicate) and three mainstream, in an attempt to gain detailed contextualised knowledge of the processes by which pupils may have been identified as having special educational needs within mainstream schools and then possibly allocated to special schools and of the assumptions, perceptions and understandings of those teachers in special schools at the 'receiving end' of these processes.

The resultant data was analysed using a conceptual framework provided by Bourdieu's theories, by being sorted and coded into responses, (direct statements, gestures, inferences from intonations etc. or other such contributions) relating to a set of propositions or indications, as to those

elements of reported teacher / school / pupil encounters and of wider processes and practices, which Bourdieu's theories implied would be present in the data.

It was then argued that the propositions as outlined did have both general and specific applicability to the issues at hand providing for an extremely plausible interpretation of the data and thus a useful means of understanding the ways in which the education system may contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities and specifically those at issue here. Indeed the analysis was able to show how dominant discursive practices within education act so as to promote the culture of the dominant classes and to delegitimise the value of the cultural capital of working class groups and also how the social distribution of cultural capital is misrecognised as a natural distribution of personal qualities and abilities thereby essentialising and naturalising social position.

Indeed, whilst Bourdieu's work provides for an understanding of how the class based and gendered discontinuity between homes and schools contributes to the generation of differential outcomes he is further able to show how such processes are 'masked' from participants. Thus, even though teachers' accounts may have been characterised by insights and understandings enabling them to relate their pupils' positions within wider structural relations to their responses, outcomes and 'progress' within the education system; such insights were nonetheless, neutralised, rendered invisible or masked by the prevailing discourses they employed, pathologising pupils and their backgrounds thereby 'misrecognising' those relationships by individualising and de-politicising their responses.

Teachers were seen to reveal on the one hand an understanding (indeed an acute awareness) of the sense in which their pupils' locations within wider structural relations impacted upon their attainments or lack of them within school. On the other hand however, such an understanding was limited to accounts which pathologised these pupils' backgrounds as being inadequate to the task of preparing pupils for school and supporting their efforts when there.

Most importantly in relation to the concerns of the study, an aspect which was found to be crucial even decisive sometimes in determining boys' identifications and or allocations to particular 'special' categories such as their lack of conformity to particular forms of bodily control, expression and self management, or their inabilities to produce the 'right bodies' within school were firmly located by teachers within these boys' localities and thereby emanating from their family backgrounds and the kinds of problematic masculinities such backgrounds were believed to produce.

Indeed, such an 'ability' to submit oneself to the practices and disciplines of the school particularly to the extent that such practices and disciplines involved the production of a particular 'body,' was regarded as something which was on a par with other 'school friendly' skills such as the ability to 'hold a pencil' or a 'book the right way up,' with such a lack of their development / presence often being attributed to inadequate or inappropriate prior experiences, experiences which were seen as gained through membership of particular groups and which moreover were gendered in nature.

However despite such arguments / insights there was a lack of sympathy, empathy or real understanding of these boys' situations for according to the

prevailing discourses they were not admitted or considered to be in possession of or acting in accordance with a 'culture,' a response related to their position in the social structure and whose hopes aspirations and understandings of possibilities were somehow related to that position. They were not valued for who they were or what they were. Theirs was not seen as a response to the school at the level of culture, but as a deviant version of a middle class norm.

Indeed it was this norm in all its aspects which was seen to be embedded in teachers' assumptions and school practices providing the central reference point by which all pupil responses were judged and in relation to which pupils from subordinate groups were found to be wanting and therefore invariably in need. Therefore to the extent that teachers recognised or responded to a 'cultural' difference in their white working class pupils it was in terms of a deliberate ignoring of it, or seeing it as something which needed to be overcome in order for such pupils to experience success in school.

The prevailing discourses and practices of schooling therefore were seen to be ones which normalised middle class experiences, again reinforcing Bourdieu's emphasis that schools are not culturally neutral and objective institutions but rather promote the culture of the dominant classes and with such consequences as have been the subject of this study.

In Conclusion.

That such discourses are readily taken up by educational professionals when accounting for the performances of their pupils may be not surprising in that

they find their echoes in similar such 'blaming' discourses applied to themselves and their own 'performances' as teachers.

Indeed in recent years teachers have being subjected to various systems of administrative rationality, involving a shift from professional / collegial styles of school governance towards more authoritarian managerialist ones, in the name of a supposed 'efficiency and effectiveness.' (see eg. Hatcher 1998) Increasingly, normalising judgements (Foucault 1977) have been turned upon them in the form of inspections, and professional appraisals where their competence has often become the issue and in the near future where pay will depend on their and their pupils' abilities to 'perform' as required.

Further the intensified media and political campaigns in recent years in the service of a new setlement around legislative changes creating a 'market economy' in education have placed teacher performance / competence as a central feature of the 'debate.' Thus for example the phrase 'incompetent teacher' was reported as featuring in no less than 373 newspaper articles between 1994 and the beginning of 1999. (T.E.S. 5th March 1999)

Such a context undoubtedly has a powerful disciplinary effect on teachers such that to posit alternatives to the prevailing 'effectiveness' paradigm may indeed be to 'think the unthinkable.' Indeed many of the respondents in this research expressed a reluctance to raise such issues themselves lest it be seen more widely as special pleading on their behalf in order to excuse poor results for which they felt they were being increasingly held responsible.

Thus, the educational politics of recent years have constructed issues relating to pupils' membership of wider groups and location within society

as irrelevant or at most peripheral to their performances within schools. An attempt has been made to remove such considerations from educational debates and to replace them with a narrow mechanistic view of education, one which ignores the social, economic and cultural complexities of schools and the communities they serve. Moreover the accompanying legislation of these years has also had the effect of magnifying the consequences of the unequal social power whose relevance such an approach denies! This has led almost inevitably to a further disadvantaging of those pupils most at risk of being processed as having SEN.

This study of course has placed considerations of unequal social power at the centre of the agenda and has claimed to demonstrate their continuing relevance. The research then was 'emancipatory' in intent, seeking to uncover or outline what may be called the subtleties of such disadvantage as was being visited upon a particular group in order that its 'invisibility' to those affected and to those in a position to act so as to remediate the situation might be removed. (Carspecken 1996)

Although the outcome of this particular piece of research may of course not be taken as definitive in relation to the questions at issue, it may nonetheless be the case that a range of points have been made and supported which make a contribution to our knowledge of the area studied. Thus notwithstanding the fact that particular cases are always 'unique instances,' (Stake 1994) the argument here is that given a commonality of features and conditions within special and primary schools that researchers in other schools could quite usefully draw on this study.

Of course the credibility of many of the claims may best be judged by the extent to which they 'make sense' or are plausible in relation to existing

theory and knowledge in this area and also the extent to which other practitioners 'on the ground' feel they are relevant and applicable to other schools in similar circumstances. Should either or both of these criteria be satisfied in full or partially then to the extent that this is so, it is hoped the study will in some way provide a means of illuminating current practice and perhaps form the basis for further empirical and theoretical work.

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Interview Schedule / Guide
Special Schools

1. Personal details.

How long teaching?

Where trained?

Qualifications?

'Special' qualifications?

Kinds of schools taught in? eg. mainstream? designations of special etc..

2. Children who have been identified as having special educational needs have usually been described in certain ways including fairly formal designations such as M.L.D. or E.B.D. or Delicate, can I ask you what you think about these descriptions / designations?

Firstly in general do such descriptions serve any useful purpose etc?

What do you understand by the term M.L.D? (helpfulness or relevance of term?)

What do you understand by the term E.B.D? (helpfulness / relevance?)

What do you understand by the term Delicate? (helpfulness / relevance?)

3. Your work at this special school.

What particular responsibilities ?

Description of your pupils. (in general and also examples, histories, cases)

Do you consider any of your pupils to have learning difficulties? If so what proportion do have such difficulties and how do these difficulties manifest themselves ? (examples, histories, cases)

Do you consider any of your pupils to have emotional difficulties?

If so what proportion do have such difficulties and how do these difficulties manifest themselves? (examples, histories, cases)

Do you consider any of your pupils to have health difficulties? If not what proportion do have such difficulties and how do these difficulties manifest themselves? (examples, histories, cases)

How would you describe children at your school to a lay person? Do you consider any of your pupils to be incorrectly placed at this special school? (examples, histories, cases)

Do you think any of your pupils would be better off at an M.L.D. school?

If yes why? If no why not? (examples, histories, cases)

Do you think any of your pupils would be better off at an E.B.D. school?

If yes why? If no why not? (examples, histories, cases)

Do you think any of your pupils would be better off at a Delicate school?

If yes why? If no why not? (examples, histories, cases)

Do you think any of your pupils would be better off at a Mainstream

school?

If yes why? If no why not? (examples, histories, cases)

4. Move on to discuss the parents of pupils, and particularly the extent to which they are representative of parents in general, or whether they are drawn to a disproportionate extent from particular backgrounds and if so whether there are any implications arising from this.

Contacts with parents, and how closely are you able to work with them? What kinds of contacts, who initiates them. Attendance at parents consultative meetings? curriculum evenings? Parent teacher association? What are the factors influencing this? (examples, histories, cases)

Proportion of your pupils qualifying for free school meals?
Proportion of your pupils living in local authority housing?
Proportion of your pupils have parents who have jobs which might be described as proffessional? skilled? semi-skilled? unskilled? unemployed?

5. Types of special schools and their rationales in terms of their supposedly distinct offer in meeting the needs of their client group.

Can you describe the differences between M.L.D. and Delicate? (curriculum offer, ethos, aims and objectives etc.)

Can you describe the differences between E.B.D. and Delicate? (curriculum offer, ethos, aims and objectives etc.)

Can you describe the differences between M.L.D. and E.B.D? (curriculum offer, ethos, aims and objectives etc.)

Value of special schools in general?

Do you believe that we should keep special schools of the types we have been discussing? (as opposed to a more integrationist or inclusive form of provision)
If yes why? If no why not?

Case for spec schools. What is distinctive about special schools which enables them to meet the needs of their pupils in a way that these needs may not have been met in a mainstream school? Case against (probe do they in fact meet these needs? If yes how? If not why not?)

How has the National Curriculum and it's assessment arrangements affected what and how you teach? (An entitlement? a burden? etc. a mixture of both?)

(Examples in general and in relation to particular pupils / groups of pupils)

Do you regard any of your pupils as being inappropriately placed in a special school and if so what has led to this situation and its continuation?
(examples, cases histories?)

6. One of the characteristics of special schools of the types we have been discussing is that there is a marked imbalance between males and females with boys outnumbering girls often by a proportion of 2:1 and sometimes by many more.

What are the figures for this school?

Why do you think this imbalance occurs?

Have you personally considered this to be an issue?

If yes what conclusions did you reach and / or actions did you take?

Have you as a staff considered this to be an issue?

If yes what conclusions did you reach and / or actions did you take?

Is it possible that boys over representation is indicative of a measure of overidentification? ie. are some boys being wrongly

identified as having SEN and allocated to special schools? If so how and why? (examples, cases histories?)

Might it be the case that girls' under representation is indicative of a measure of underidentification? ie. are there girls who perhaps should be identified but are not for whatever reason? If so how and why? (might there be differences in the criteria applied?)

Do you perceive any differences in the types of special needs identified in boys and those in girls? If so what are they? (examples, cases histories?)

What are the implications for teaching (IF ANY) of having the gender balance such as it is at this school? why?

In what ways (IF ANY) would the school be different if the gender balance amongst the pupils were to be the reverse of what it is eg. girls outnumbering boys by at least 2:1 why?

What is the gender balance amongst the teaching staff at the school?
In what ways (IF ANY) would the school be different if the gender balance amongst the teaching staff were to be the reverse of what it is?

Interview Schedule / Guide.
Mainstream Schools.

1. Personal details of respondents

How long teaching?

Where trained?

Qualifications?

'Special Needs' quals / experience?

Number and types of schools taught in, and also ages 'years' of children taught, posts of responsibility etc.?

Particular responsibilities in this school?

2. Description of this school.

Overall size, class sizes, number of teachers, general organisation, management structure, posts of responsibility, senior management etc.

Description of community served by the school? Proportions of pupils qualifying for free school meals, kinds of housing, unemployment, employment? ethnicity? What if any implications for teaching? for example compared with other schools worked at.

Have you worked in schools serving different communities? how does this school differ?

How would you characterise the schools' relationships with parents / guardians? Attendance at Parents evenings 'Friends Of' / P.T.A.? Other contacts P.A.C.T. diary? Interaction with parents ... kinds of interaction subjects discussed? ie academic /

behavioural / other (probe for examples cases histories) etc.
(probe for class aspect?)

School brochure? Mission statement / school ethos as described in brochure or rather more informally (staffroom culture) What staff as a whole feel is important? How is this put into effect?

3. Special Educational needs.

The term SEN has been / is used to refer to a wide range of difficulties experienced by children to include those who attend special schools on the one hand to many more who attend mainstream schools and who may be at various stages along a continuum of processing from stages one to four or even five with a statement.

What do you understand by the term SEN? (ie. in the abstract or ideally or theoretically as opposed to the way in which it might be interpreted in any particular context.) ..discrepancies between this and how the term is operationalised or put into practice in the school?

Do you find the term helpful or relevant? (why? or why not? examples cases histories)

Different types and degrees of SEN? How many different 'labels' or particular syndromes or conditions are you aware of being in use in the education system? (this as sort of background noise to

be drawn upon if neccessary to interpret your work with individuals.)

Does your knowledge awareness of these categories inform your work in any way ie. do you find yourself interpreting pupil responses / behaviour in terms of these categories? eg I think he/she's Dyslexic, Autistic MLD ADHD Dyspraxic etc.?

Are you aware of the different types and categories of special schools and if so what if anything do you understand by their designations?

To what extent are you happy with / have taken on board / have made a reality in your school etc the notion that every teacher is or should consider themselves to be a teacher of pupils with SEN?

If there are difficulties with this notion then what are they and how could this idea become a reality?

National Curriculum

The National Curriculum ... often spoken of as an entitlement ensuring consistency of content for all etc. whereas others might think of it as a constraint and reducing teachers flexibility and discretion and lessening their ability to respond to what they see as the needs of their pupils, What are your views on this issue? Do you have enough flexibility etc. .... literacy hour ..numeracy hour? will it make your job easier? is it helpful or not.?

What would you say are the good and bad aspects of the N.C. (you may feel there are no BAD or no GOOD of course)

1988 ERA

the same legislation which introduced the National Curriculum also introduced LMS open enrolment and the creation in some senses of a market in education through the publication of league tables. How does your school fare in such competitions? To what extent are you mindful of your position and what impact does it have on what and how you teach?

Views integration / inclusion.

Most people when questioned will say that they believe in integration / inclusion of as many pupils as possible etc. (they might say 'In an ideal world we should all be together etc. BUT BUT) However, are there pupils however for whom you consider a placement at a special school to be more appropriate or those for whom atendance within your school is extremely difficult?? Where do you draw the line and what criteria do you use? (resources available, staffing, expertise, disruption etc.

Who are these pupils and do you have direct experience of such pupils? (examples, cases histories)

How many pupils on SEN register?

What criteria do you use to identify a pupil for 'registration?'

Where do you draw the line between these pupils and those who are simply experiencing difficulties of some sort? ie. Do you draw the line in practice?

Is it possible to make such distinctions ie. is there a radical break in the continuum?

What are the consequences / what purpose is served by placing pupils on the register?

What are the benefits / disadvantages of these procedures. How well do they work?

Relationships with parents are seen as important generally but perhaps particularly so when their children are identified as having special educational needs, how much contact do you have with the parents of pupils on the register .. do you attempt to have extra contacts or a different kind of relationship with them from parents of other pupils? what form do these contacts take, how successful are they and what are the factors relevant to their success or failure. How easy are your relations with parents of these pupils?

There is currently a great deal of discussion amounting to something of a panic over boys' supposed failure or relative failure at school. What are your views on this problem? Is the future female? (as in the Panorama programme etc..)

One of the most striking features of special education is the imbalance between males and females identified with boys outnumbering girls often by a proportion of 2:1 and sometimes by much more.

What are the figures for this school / class?

Do you know? if not why not? Is it not an issue? If you do know is it something about which you're concerned? If yes what form does that concern take?

Over-representation of boys as having SEN - an issue? has it been discussed? Your views?

Is it possible that the over representation is indicative of a measure of overidentification? ie. are some boys being wrongly identified as having SEN? If so how and why? (given that it is not an 'exact science' anyway?)

Might it be the case that girls' under representation is indicative of a measure of underidentification? ie. are there girls who perhaps should be identified but are not for whatever reason? If so how and why? (might there be differences in the criteria applied?)

Alternatively of course the over representation might be explained in the actual incidence of SEN in boys? If so how do you account for this?

Do you perceive any differences in the types of special needs identified in boys and those in girls? If so what are they?

I want to discuss the behaviour (in the broadest sense) of those pupils who are on the register. Sometimes it is said that there is a

link between bad behaviour and learning difficulties even if the nature of the link eg. direction of causation is not clear (does bad behaviour 'cause' a learning difficulty or vice versa?) Have you noticed such a link? Sometimes it is said that a learning difficulty is accompanied by withdrawn behaviour, have you noticed such a link?

Case studies?

Can you conjure up in your mind some of your pupils who are on the register and describe for me their appearance, general demeanour within the classroom, their friendships, how they react to others, their relationships with teachers and with their parents?

4. Individual Cases?

Respondent's experience of range pupils who have been 'identified.'

1. Those for whom a formal assessment has been requested / conducted or who have been 'statemented ie. pupils considered 'at the limit' or 'over the limit' of the school's ability to meet their needs, and who may have been moved on to a special school. Case history.

2. Others who may be at various stages along the continuum. Nature of difficulties, why and how identified? Distinction

between those who are simply experiencing difficulties and those who are identified at stage one?

Case histories.