

**PREPARING TEACHERS FOR MORE PERSONALISED TEACHING IN
PGCE PROGRAMMES: PARTNERSHIP, SCHOOL BASED
ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

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END OF AWARD REPORT**

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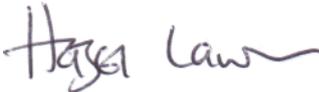
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Attachment: Statement of income and expenditure (SIE)

Introduction

The project addressed the issue of trainee teacher learning with regard to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) during the school placement element of one year postgraduate teacher training programmes. Through a focus on the university/school partnership, school organisational and classroom pedagogic processes, the project intended to improve knowledge and understanding about teacher education relevant to the special educational needs and inclusive education fields.

The project was carried out between April 2010 and July 2011 although analysis of the data continues. Data collection was completed by April 2011.

Tricia Nash was employed as Research Fellow from April 2010 to July 2011 (0.5 for 2 months, full time for 13 months).

To date, a short paper has been presented at the following conference:

Norwich, B., Lawson, H. and Nash, T. *Personalised teaching in initial teacher education: school based activities and special educational needs*. Paper presented at EARLI, Exeter 30 August – 3 September 2011.

Aims

The project was set within three main contexts:

1. The broader context of ongoing concerns around the education and training of teachers with regard to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (Wedell, 1995; Robertson, 1999; House of Commons, 2006; OFSTED, 2008, 2009);
2. Partnership models and arrangements between teacher training providers, in this case Universities, and schools, particularly in relation to trainee learning about special educational needs;
3. The narrower context of a specific practical SEND teaching task which was developed on the University of Exeter one year postgraduate teacher training programmes (PGCEs) over several years (Golder, Norwich and Bayliss, 2005; Nash and Norwich, 2008) and subsequently recommended to all PGCE teacher training providers (TDA, 2009). This task is designed to involve all PGCE trainees in having direct experience of teaching an individual child or young person with some identified special educational need in their placement school over a period of time and working under the guidance of the school's special educational needs co-ordinator.

The project planned to examine what and how PGCE trainee teachers learn about teaching pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in their placement schools. Specifically the project examined and compared the school based learning

and outcomes of PGCE trainees in primary and secondary PGCE programmes that used different approaches to preparing teachers for the special needs aspects of their future teaching.

The overall aim of the project was to identify practical principles and procedures about how to design and support planned school based activities relevant to learning to teach pupils with SEND. This involved 3 specific aims:

1. To examine the context, the processes and the outcomes of PGCE trainees undertaking different planned SEND activities in primary and secondary schools in terms of the partnership arrangements between the schools and the university providers and the schools' general arrangements for initial teacher education (ITE).
2. To compare the immediate outcomes of undertaking different planned SEND activities for trainees and the schools over and above classroom teaching of pupils with SEND:
a) an SEND practical teaching task, b) another (non-teaching) pupil-focused SEND task (such as a pupil study task) and c) where there is no pupil-focused SEND task, only classroom teaching of pupils with SEND.
3. To integrate the findings of this project into various forms that can be disseminated and communicated to PGCE providers, placement schools and other organisations with interests in teacher education.

Project outline

The project compared 3 kinds of school based approaches with regard to learning about SEND: one that involved a practical teaching task; the second which involved a pupil-focused task (but not practical teaching); and the third where there was no specific pupil-focused SEND task other than class teaching practice.

It examined these approaches in terms of the following framework:

1. Planned activity related to SEND;
2. Classroom teaching (planning, observation, teaching, supervision);
3. Schools' teacher training provision (supervision, support of trainees, seminars/presentations, place of SEND/inclusive teaching, roles of teacher training mentors/tutors, commitment to initial training partnership);
4. Schools' special needs and inclusive policy and practices - range, nature and incidence of additional needs, specialist resourced units, role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO);
5. Schools' overall policy and practice;
6. Partnership with PGCE provider (though visiting tutors, training of mentors/tutors, communication with university about programme).

The project used this framework in a flexible design to collect qualitative and quantitative data in each of 18 participating schools relevant to the above project aims. The research orientation was to develop a holistic and intensive analysis in each school.

Advisory Group

The project invited academics and policy leaders with expertise and interest in special educational needs within initial teacher training to join an Advisory Group.

The members of the group were:

Lynn Carroll, TDA SEND Officer

Dr Yota Dimitriadi, PGCE ICT Secondary Course Leader, University of Reading

Nick Peacey, Coordinator of SENJIT, Institute of Education

Professor Klaus Wedell, Institute of Education, University of London

The Advisory Group met 3 times: in June 2010, December 2010 and March 2011.

External evaluation

Dr Anthony Feiler, Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol was appointed as a consultant and external evaluator for the project. The aim of this external evaluation was to monitor and evaluate the quality of data collection, analysis and the overall conclusions drawn in the study. The role had two functions: to provide formative evaluation during the process of the project; and to provide external validation of the project conclusions. It involved evaluating the project methods by sampling the activities at the various stages (school based data collection, data analysis and conclusions) and will involve a final report to include evaluation of this end of award report. Dr Feiler commented most positively on the conduct of the research fellow: her 'skills and sensitivity as a researcher were exceptionally strong. She was thoughtful and reflective with those she interviewed, her manner encouraged open, candid conversations, and she elicited full and extended responses consistently' (external evaluator's comments from school visit, March 2011). The evaluator's final report will be forwarded to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Design of Project

Sample

The project worked with 3 comparable university primary and 3 secondary PGCE programmes, selected as representing good quality provision as recently judged by OFSTED ratings. Although these programmes' ratings may not reflect the details of what goes on as regards SEND in placement schools, we assumed some commonality between the PGCE programmes as regards general systems and quality of training provision. The aim here was to examine school based provision within programmes that represented optimal current training practices.

The TDA have placed an increasing emphasis on SEND in initial teacher training over the past few years, publishing a range of materials and encouraging the use of the SEND teaching task in PGCEs (TDA, 2009). It was therefore difficult to find university programmes which did not use any form of school based task focusing on

SEND. The project therefore focused on tasks which were pupil-focused (teaching and non-teaching). The three types of approach and sample were thus:

1. *Practical SEND teaching task*. A primary and a secondary PGCE programme which both use this task.
2. *Alternative planned pupil-focused SEND task (non-teaching)*
 - a. A primary PGCE programme on which trainees completed a set of inclusion tasks, at whole school (perspective on inclusion), classroom (organisation and discipline) and pupil levels. The pupil-level task involved observation of two lessons, focusing on one pupil in each lesson within an area of diversity or SEND.
 - b. A secondary PGCE programme which used a pupil pursuit task, where trainees shadowed a Year 7 pupil with SEND for one day.
3. *No specific planned pupil-focused SEND task*
 - a. A primary PGCE programme which included a task finding out about the role of the SENCO and how the school catered for children with two different types of SEND, but no specific planned pupil-focused task.
 - b. A secondary PGCE programme which had no overall specific school-based SEND task, although some subjects had SEND –related tasks (e.g. English trainees were asked to spend time with an SEN class and to meet with the SENCO).

For each university the programme managers identified 3 placement schools which they recognised as providing satisfactory or better quality general partnership and training provision (this was not a judgement about SEND provision in those schools). Three schools were selected as being the minimum number to show a range of variation across the school based placements. Where possible, these schools also provided placements for 2 or more trainees.

The overall sample in the project therefore comprised 6 university programmes (3 primary, 3 secondary), 18 schools and 32 trainees (1-2 trainees per school), as in Table 1.

Table 1 University, school and trainee sample

	Practical SEND teaching task	Alternative planned SEND pupil focused task	No specific planned SEND pupil task	Total
Primary PGCE	University A 3 schools (A1, A2, A3) 6 trainees	University C 3 schools (C1, C2, C3) 5 trainees	University E 3 schools (E1, E2, E3) 6 trainees	3 university programmes 9 schools 17 trainees
Secondary PGCE	University B 3 schools (B1, B2, B3) 6 trainees	University D 3 schools (D1, D2, D3) 5 trainees	University F 3 schools (F1, F2, F3) 4 trainees	3 university programmes 9 schools 15 trainees
Total	2 university programmes 6 schools 12 trainees	2 university programmes 6 schools 10 trainees	2 university programmes 6 schools 10 trainees	6 university programmes 18 schools 32 trainees

Ethics

The project met the ethical guidelines set out by British Educational Research Association and was given ethical approval by the University of Exeter. Universities, schools, trainees and all participants were provided with information about the project and gave their consent.

Data Collection

For each school, a wide range of data were gathered and generated over a 2-3 day period. Data collection included:

- *Documentary data* - for example, university/school partnership documents and policies, school placement handbooks, school SEND and inclusion policy documents, lesson plans.
- *Observations* of trainees' classroom teaching (of 2 lessons where possible). An observation schedule was used focusing on levels of access/engagement and differentiation adjustments for pupils with SEND. This was based upon instruments used in an Irish study exploring the implementation of, and access to, the curriculum for pupils with a variety of SEND in mainstream primary school classes (NCSE, 2010). Incidences were recorded in field notes where the observer saw particular interactions or the use of specific strategies with pupils with SEN. These were noted for a future 'stimulated recall' activity as part of the trainee interviews.
- *Semi-structured interviews* with:
 - trainees
 - school tutors and mentors
 - senior teachers with responsibility for initial teacher education
 - the school SEN coordinator (SENCO)
 - university visiting tutor.

The interviews were based on the six aspects of the initial framework:

- partnership arrangements with the university
- supervision and support generally for trainees and with respect to special educational needs specifically
- background information about and capacity of the school as a teacher training institution
- the role and work of initial training tutors, subject tutors
- the involvement and role of SENCO in initial training
- trainees' learning from campus and school generally and specifically about special educational needs and inclusive education.

The trainee interviews also included 'stimulated recall' (Calderhead, 1981) of the observed lesson(s) and reflection upon two hypothetical vignettes/scenarios (Alexander and Becker, 1978). In both of these the trainees were asked to consider their pedagogical responses – why they chose (or would choose) to act in a particular way, how did they know to act in that way and from where this was learned.

- **Surveys** – following the observations and interviews, trainees were also asked to complete an online survey regarding attitudes towards inclusion and teaching children with SEND, their placement experience and the influences on their learning about SEND. The survey is available at <http://elac.exeter.ac.uk/limesurvey/index.php?sid=92771&newtest=Y>

Data analysis

All data were analysed thematically using a conceptual map derived from the six aspects of the initial framework. This map and associated coding framework was regularly refined in response to the initial analysis of data, as areas for thematic analysis evolved.

There were three levels of data analysis:

1. **School first level summaries** - first level collation and grounded analysis of all data with a school focus and a trainee focus to provide first level summaries per school of approximately 40 pages.
2. **School second level summaries** - utilising Nvivo in coding the school first level summaries, according to a flexible coding framework (see Table 2) based on our conceptual map, to produce 5-8 page second level summaries.
3. **Cross-school comparison** in relation to the different types of task and according to primary/secondary phase.

The first level of analysis thus led to 18 first level summaries, one for each school. At the second level these summaries were further analysed using the coding framework in Table 2.

Table 2 Second level coding framework

School overall context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethos - Setting/demographic - Policy/practices - Initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links /community - Staff - School performance data
Trainee placement details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which placement? - Length of placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage of PGCE
School's SEND/inclusion provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range /nature/incidence of SEND - Units, organisation /TA roles - Inclusive commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive /SEND practices - SENCO role/training - External links/support
School's ITE provision	<p>General and SEND specific aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staffing/tutor roles - How organised - Supervision/support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to ITE - Whole school procedures re inclusion/SEND
Partnership with PGCE provider (university)	<p>General and SEND specific aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School based tutor/university visiting tutor roles - Training mentors/tutors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication with university - Quality of partnership - Preparedness of trainees
Planned activity re SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning - Setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision/support - Learning benefits
Classroom teaching relevant to teaching SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allocation of class - Setting for teaching placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning/resources - Support and supervision - Teaching strategies used
Trainees' learning about SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudes and concepts - How learned (e.g. prior experience, previous teaching placement, actual teaching experiences, observation/modelling, university learning, school professional studies sessions, SEND planned activity, mix of sources) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What learned (e.g. task design, learning modes, behaviour management, pupil grouping, teacher-pupil learning interactions, working with other adults, motivational approaches) - What not learned
Trainees' pedagogic understanding and knowledge (Mostly based on hypothetical scenarios)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedagogic strategy used with reasons for use - Further assessment by self - Consult others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kinds of analysis used (e.g. comparative, knowledge transfer, evaluations, evaluation in terms of consequences for future planning, trial and error)

The third level is continuing. To date (end October 2011), cross school comparative analysis has been carried out for 6 schools, one from each of the university programmes, as indicated in Table 3. This analysis was: 1) across two schools (one primary, one secondary) which relate to university programmes using the same type of SEND activity in school placements; and 2) analysing schools' data across all three types of SEND activity. This analysis continues so that the next stage will include cross comparison with all 3 schools per programme.

Table 3 Cross school comparative analysis (first stage)

	Practical SEND teaching task	Alternative planned SEND pupil-focused task	No specific planned SEND pupil task
Primary one year PGCE programme	South West School (A1) Large village 15% SEN 'Inclusive' school	North East School (C1) Mid size Infant Suburban 10% SEN 'Caring' school	South West School (E1) Infant Large town 15% SEN Inclusive + withdrawal
Secondary one year PGCE programme	South West School (B1) Small town 25% SEN 'Leading' school	South West School (D1) Large semi-rural 13% SEN 'Learning' focus	East Midlands School (F1) 3 schools (3-19) Urban multiethnic 45% SEN Academy, split-site
			

Research Findings

The research findings to date, from all forms of data, are grouped according to four main areas:

1. Cross programme outcomes and processes – a) what and b) how/where do trainees learn about teaching pupils with SEND?
2. Programme specific outcomes – a) the nature of the different tasks and task-related learning and b) the issue of ownership of the task
3. Pedagogic knowledge: cross programme and programme specific outcomes
4. Variability and inconsistency in context

As data analysis is continuing, it must be noted that these initial findings are tentative and preliminary, based on analysis of 6 of the 18 schools.

1. Cross programme outcomes and processes

The findings with regard to outcomes in relation to trainees' learning about teaching pupils with SEND are drawn from across all six programmes and all six schools; they do not seem to be differentiated by type of programme or school (primary, secondary) or the existence (or not) of a pupil-focused SEND task. These findings include what trainees learn about teaching pupils with SEND and how and where they learn these things.

a) Outcomes: What do trainees learn about teaching pupils with SEND?

Trainees' learning about teaching pupils with SEND, mainly drawn from their interviews, the stimulated recall and the hypothetical scenarios, can be grouped into different aspects.

Task design

Trainees learned to **reduce task demands** for some pupils. This might include, for example: including the lesson's learning objectives on the back on a worksheet so pupils do not need to write them down (trainee 2, school D1); breaking the task down into smaller parts – the beginning, middle and end of a story (t1, C1); reducing the expected outcome for some pupils, for instance the number of poetry lines (t1, A1) or the number of maths questions completed (t1, D1).

They learned to **differentiate the task**, for example: worksheets for some pupils included key words or key sentences (t2, C1); sentence templates could be provided (t1, A1); some pupils could draw rather than write (t2, C1).

Learning modes

Trainees referred to the **use of visual and/or concrete materials and resources** as something they had learned about teaching pupils with SEND. This included, for example: colour supported worksheets with keywords highlighted in different colours (t2, D1); pictorial supported worksheets for pupils with dyslexia (t1, D1); use of an interactive whiteboard (mentioned by most trainees).

They also learned about **using a game approach**, for example, using a noughts and crosses game based on the lesson content with competition between boys and girls (t1, D1); word searches (t1, C1); hangman (t1, C1).

Behaviour management

This aspect was frequently mentioned by trainees as an area they were learning about. Their learning can be grouped into these areas:

- **Positive praise/reinforcement/ignoring.** Using positive praise and not always focusing on negative behaviours (t1, E1); using positive reinforcement, praise and stickers (t1, C1); ignoring behaviour (t1, D1).
- **Remaining calm and consistent** (t2, D1). Trainee 2, school C1 stated: *in university they always said 'don't show the children that you're losing it or that you're getting angry'*.
- **Giving choices and responsibilities** to pupils (t1, D1; t2, C1), for example, asking a boy with behaviour difficulties to video the lesson (t2, B1).
- **Techniques for settling classes**, for example: a 3, 2, 1 clapping process (t2, D1) or a computer countdown (t2, C1); using non-verbal signals such as hands on heads (t2, C1) or standing quietly and waiting for pupil attention rather than raising their voice (t1, B1).

Pupil grouping

Trainees made a number of suggestions in this area. For example: mixed ability small groups (t2, D1; t1, C1; t2, C1); partnering more confident/more able pupils with pupils who are less confident/able (t2, B1; t 1, E1); separating children into different groups and different areas of the classroom (t1, C1).

Teacher-pupil interaction

Varied kinds of questioning were mentioned by trainees and observed in classroom teaching:

- **directed questioning** with time and clues provided for pupils (t1, D1; t, F1); directed questioning to check understanding (t1, C1); directed questioning to go over the previous day's lesson rather than just telling pupils (t2, C1).
- use of **open questions** so pupils' own ideas and opinions are sought (t 1 , A1).
- alternatively, use of **closed questions** (t, F1).

Recapping tasks was also talked about by some trainees (t, F1).

Motivational approaches

This included: learning about **participatory methods** (t 1, A1) for example: having a range of activities for pupils to choose between so they can make their own decisions (t2, C1); making **tasks short and sharp** (t, F1), planning for pace (t2, D1); and **making lessons interesting** to include and engage all pupils, for example, reading a book in 'an interesting and dramatic way' to start the lesson (t1, C1).

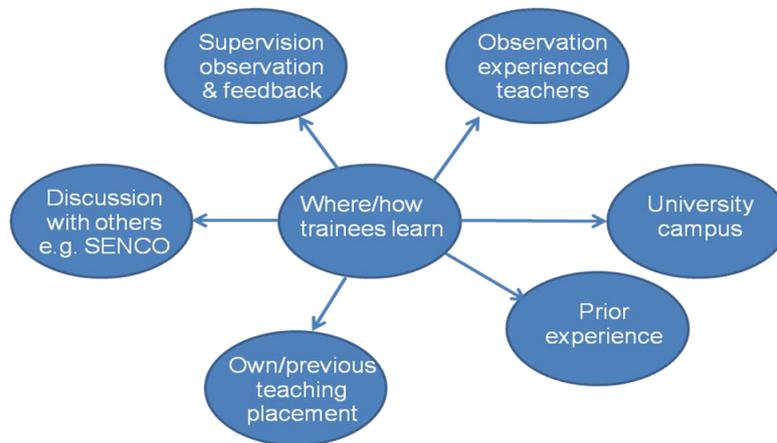
Assessment and feedback

For instance, trainee 2 at school A1 said she had learned to not give negative feedback to some pupils with SEND. She gave the example of not saying 'not that's wrong' when a pupil makes an error, but to turn this around and say positively, 'have another go'.

b) Processes: How and where do trainees learn about SEND?

Trainees were asked about where and how they learned about the different approaches and techniques above. This analysis revealed different aspects of their PGCE programme (university and school based) as well as experiences from outside or prior to their PGCE programme. Interviewed staff were also asked about where trainees' learning in this field took place. Figure 1 illustrates the different processes of learning about SEND which emerged.

Figure 1
Processes of learning about SEND: how and where do trainees learn about SEND?



Observation of experienced teachers Trainee 1, E1 had observed the success of partner work on her previous placement. Trainee 1, F1 had learned how to use differentiated worksheets from observations of her class teacher.

Supervision experience School tutors, frequently the class teacher in primary schools and a subject teacher in secondary schools, observe trainees' lessons and give feedback, also supporting the trainee to review and reflect on their teaching. For some trainees this was mentioned as important to their learning about SEND. Trainee 1, F1 stated that some approaches she used were generally developed *through feedback from the teacher when they were watching my lessons.*

Discussion with others, for example, SENCOs, class teacher, teaching assistants, mentors.

Own teaching practice (current or previous) – for example, trainee 1, F1 stated that she had learned about reading instructions aloud from her own experience on the current placement. Trial and error was often referred to in this context.

University campus course This was also frequently mentioned by trainees. For example, trainee 1, E1 said she had learned about the 'thumbs up' technique and trainee 1, F1 mentioned that she had learned about using closed questions from the university part of their courses. This latter trainee thought that the university course had contributed most to her knowledge and understanding of SEND.

Prior experience

This category includes experience of SEND within their families (for example, t 1, B1's brother had dyslexia), from previous employment roles (for example, as a

teaching assistant) or volunteer work and through other programmes (for example, an undergraduate education degree, t2, E1).

Most important learning experience

For many, the school placement was considered the most important learning experience:

Within their placement, if they're in a classroom placement there will be 10% of children, if not more, depending on the area you're in that have special needs and so that's where you learn, you learn on your feet really (SENCO, E1).

Definitely the placements, both placements have been really helpful (t2, E1).

Often a combination of elements was mentioned:

So I think it's a blend of things, theoretical input, direct research through the pupil pursuit which is a kind of research they're doing there, and then also practice which transforms it into something that has meaning for them (university tutor, D1).

Trainee 2, school D1 said that she had learned about scaffolding and planning for pace and clarity from university subject sessions, her school placement experience and her own reading. Trainee 1, B1 said she had learned about differentiation in lesson planning at university but this was reinforced in her first placement. Trainee 1, A1 felt that her previous experience working as a teaching assistant and her professional studies assignment on diversity during her campus course were what had contributed most to her knowledge and understanding of teaching pupils with SEND.

Others were uncertain from where they had learned approaches or cited 'common sense' or 'intuition'.

2. Programme specific outcomes

a) Nature of tasks and task-related learning

Practical SEND teaching task

Primary and secondary (Schools A1 and B1)

The practical SEND teaching task in both the primary and secondary programmes involves a trainee working with a single pupil with identified SEND over 6-8 hours in total, observing, talking with, assessing, teaching and evaluating. This can be in-class or in a withdrawal context, alone, in a small group, in a whole class or a

mixture of these. The focus is on teaching and learning within the trainee's subject area (especially for secondary trainees).

This SEND teaching task was referred to by some of the four trainees as one of the ways in which they had learned about teaching pupils with SEND (for example, t2, B1). Trainee 2 in School A1 stated that the task had reinforced her belief in the effectiveness of personalised learning. She also noted that it is not always obvious that a child has SEND unless you work closely with them:

I think, that's something I've really realised, that actually it's not obvious that a child needs support sometimes until you really get to know them and you kind of have that one to one time.

Trainee 1 at school B1 seemed to appreciate the opportunity to assess an individual's learning:

... because I could actually sit down with him, I didn't ask really probing questions about it, but I could work with him on a one to one basis and sit with him and see how he was getting along, whereas here [in the general classroom] it's very hard to judge until you look at their work and then you think, mm, they didn't really get that.

School staff also mentioned a range of gains from engaging in this task: for example staff at school A1 spoke of the development of knowledge of the small steps that are needed for children to develop and that trainees can access material they may not have encountered before. Staff at school B1 suggested that trainees learned about assessing individual needs and develop confidence and positive attitudes towards inclusion. The University Visiting Tutor at School B1 stated that the task

signals SEN as really important and this might otherwise be overlooked.

However, staff at school B1 seemed to be minimally involved with the task. The SENCO, as a teaching SENCO, had not had time and had instead made a video about the task for the trainees; the ITE coordinator and mentor did not consider it part of their roles. The subject tutor, whilst encouraging the trainees, expressed concern that sometimes trainees try to go too far with the task:

A problem I've encountered with trainees with this task before, is that they want to spend too much of their time on it and it becomes quite an obsessive type of task for them, obviously once you are on placement, it's about, part of your training is about learning to prioritise, to juggle tasks and administration and research with your actual daily teaching life, so sometimes you have to encourage trainees to say, 'right, ok, come on, you've done enough research now, let's start disseminating, let's start writing it up and move on', because there's another task looming.

It is interesting to consider how such views connect with and reflect on partnership relationships with the university which seem frequently to be regarded as bureaucratic (meetings to attend, forms to complete, regulations to comply with) and as a contact when there are concerns about a trainee.

Alternative planned SEND pupil-focused task

Primary (School C1)

This university programme employed a set of four inclusion/SEND tasks which the trainee carried out through observation and research. Three of the tasks were whole school or whole classroom oriented. The fourth task had a pupil focus as trainees considered different forms of differentiation (for example, ability grouping) and how they contributed towards inclusion of children with individual needs. This included focused observation in two lessons, in each one focusing on one child within an area of diversity or SEND. The tasks were reported via a professional blog about key issues surrounding inclusion and equality and fed into a later assignment. One trainee (C1), for example, reflected in her blog:

This, for me, presents the issue of the individual's needs versus the needs of the class as a whole. Child B was fidgeting and not paying attention, regardless of whether he had the toy or not. The only difference was that while he had the toy he was not bothering anyone else, and once the toy was taken away, he started to distract others. I am by no means suggesting that we just give him a toy and let him ignore the teacher, but I believe that finding an effective way to make Child B focus on the lesson should be made a priority, as when he is focused on something (in this case the toy, in an ideal case the lesson), the rest of the class benefits.
[Child B was described as having concentration, learning, behaviour problems].

Trainee 1 described the blogging as being 'a bit of a chore' at first. The SENCO felt that the task contributed a lot but that it was dependent on the SENCO's approach in supporting the trainee.

Secondary (School D1)

A Pupil Pursuit formed the secondary programme's pupil-focused task. In the first week of their first placement, trainees were allocated a Year 7 pupil with identified SEND or 'personal challenges' and followed that pupil for a day to observe how they were included in 5 different subject lessons. They then discussed their observations with the learning support department staff in the context of the pupil's Individual Education Programme (IEP), school policies and practices. A report of this task was formally assessed by university tutors and could form part of a longer assignment on inclusion.

The task seemed to benefit the school as well as the pupil as the Year 7 pupils had only recently started at the secondary school and had not all yet been assessed regarding their needs. For example, one trainee noted that the girl they 'pursued' had some confidence and social skills issues:

And I thought that she struggled with some confidence issues and some social interaction issues. She'd be very quiet and sat through whole lessons, where she'd not spoken or really interacted with the other pupils in the class, which I thought was to the detriment to her learning sometimes; sometimes not, because she concentrated, she wasn't a disruptive learner, but very quiet girl (t2).

A number of people suggested that the task enabled the trainees to see the school day from the pupil's perspective:

it was interesting to follow the people and see what a kid's life is like at school and you forget how hard it is, like you're going to all these different lessons and change (t1).

The subject tutor, however, wondered how much the trainees learned about SEND as they might not understand what was happening so early in their placement experience.

No specific planned pupil-focused SEND pupil task

Primary (School E1)

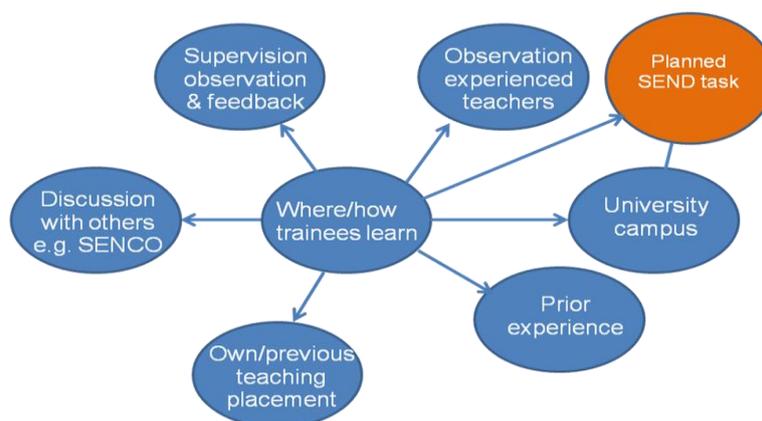
The primary PGCE programme included a task finding out about the role of the SENCO and how the school catered for children with two different types of SEND, but no specific planned pupil-focused task. One trainee (t1) had observed the SENCO with an intervention group and felt she had learned not to take for granted what a child can do.

Secondary (School F1)

There was no specific school-based SEND task on the secondary PGCE programme.

A planned SEND task thus seems to be an additional programme specific element that contributes to how trainees learn about SEND on their school placements – see Figure 2.

Figure 2: Processes of learning about SEND - position of a planned SEND task



b) Ownership of task

In all of the 4 PGCE programmes with pupil-focused SEND tasks, the task is set by the university for all trainees. The issue of task ‘ownership’ seems to be important in terms of the importance, value and status given to the task. For some project participants the task seems to be regarded as ‘owned’ by the university, as ‘university work’ and not part of their ‘school work’. This was evident when some staff talked about their role in supporting trainees and when trainees discussed the task.

- For trainees in school C1 with the blogging task, the blogs were monitored and supported by the university tutor not the school staff; the class teachers said they were not aware of the task until the trainees arrived.
- For trainees in schools A1 and B1, the practical teaching task was monitored by the university tutor and handed in to the university as part of the trainees’ portfolio.
- At school D1, however, the pupil pursuit task seemed to be valued by the school (as contributing to school information about the new pupils).

3. Pedagogic knowledge: cross programme and programme specific outcomes

Across all programmes trainees’ broader pedagogic knowledge in relation to teaching pupils with SEND could be identified in addition to the more specific strategies and techniques illustrated above in section 1a – What do trainees learn about teaching pupils with SEND?

Some of this broader pedagogic knowledge was similar across the 6 schools and the 6 PGCE programmes; other aspects seemed to vary depending on the existence of a school-based pupil-focused SEND task. Table 4 illustrates some of these aspects according to preliminary analyses.

Table 4 Aspects of pedagogic knowledge by programme/task type

Aspect of pedagogic knowledge	Practical SEND teaching task	Alternative planned SEND pupil-focused task	No specific planned SEND pupil task
Planning for SEND similar to general teaching planning	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility in task design/response mode	✓	✓	✓
Indirect means to goal e.g. use of puppets, wait to see pupil alone	✓	✓	✓
Seeking underlying reasons and causes	✓	✓	✓
Use of lesson evaluation to action plan	✓	✓	✓
Be clear about pupils' understanding; check learning regularly	✓	✓	X
Take time to know pupils; work closely with them	✓	✓	X

Thus there appear to be some broader aspects of pedagogical knowledge (being clear about pupils' understanding, checking their learning regularly and taking time to know pupils, working closely with them) which are learned and promoted through the existence of a pupil-focused SEND task compared to when trainees do not undertake such a task. Analysis to date, however, indicates that the exact nature of the task (a practical teaching task or an alternative pupil-focused task) does not seem to make a difference.

It is interesting that one of the identified aspects of broader pedagogical knowledge emerging from the project is that *planning for SEND is similar to general teaching planning*. Trainee 1, E1 stated:

There shouldn't be huge amounts of difference because each child needs all the support, you should give each child just as much attention as the next one and really you should be thinking about that for all the children, how can you help them and how can you make them achieve their potential? Some of them might need a little bit more support and you might need to really think of a way to try and include them because other children might be doing fine, but really you should be using the same process to try and get the best out of all of them.

Research and evidence (eg Davis and Florian, 2004; Lewis and Norwich, 2005) has suggested that much of what may have traditionally been seen as teaching

approaches for pupils with SEND consists of the approaches used in ordinary teaching, **extended, explicitly emphasised** or **intensified** for particular individuals or groups of pupils. Notions of inclusive pedagogy have thus been conceptualised which 'extend what is ordinarily available in the community of the classroom as a way of reducing the need to mark some learners as different' (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2010, p14). This recognition by trainees of the similarities between planning for pupils with SEND and general teaching planning has important implications for broader understandings around inclusion.

4. Variability and inconsistency in context

University programme context

There was varied coverage of issues around SEND in the 6 university PGCE programmes. All provided a general introduction to SEND and inclusion in some form (e.g. whole cohort lectures). Other elements included, variously: classroom management, differentiation, SEND elective modules, outside speakers (for example, SENCOs, pupils with SEND) and an SEND seminar following up placements. Some courses may focus on diversity and inclusion generally and one SENCO commented that this may mean that SEND gets lost in broader issues.

There seemed to be a general feeling from university tutors and school staff alike that only so much can be covered in a 'crowded' 1 year PGCE programme. Gaps in provision were particularly noted in terms of how the topic of SEND was permeated within some subject studies but not others (even within the same university programme). Some trainees commented that they would like more on behaviour management strategies and on strategies to include different types of SENDs.

In terms of preparation of trainees by the university course for teaching pupils with SEND on their school placements, some trainees did not feel prepared and this was endorsed by staff in some of the placement schools. Others felt that they were as prepared as they could be in a short period of time and there was an expectation that practicalities can be learned on the job:

I think they're as prepared as they can be at this stage, because you learn by being in school don't you really, so obviously you need theory but you actually learn by being in the school dealing with children with different and every class is different everywhere you go isn't it, different problems, although lots of similarities (E1, class teacher).

One SENCO (E1) reflected that she had done a PGCE herself, so she knew how hard it was to be fully prepared; she argued, therefore, that trainees needed to learn from observing and talking to the teachers in their placement schools.

Another SENCO (B1) talked about how differences between trainees in how well prepared they were when they come to school depended on their interest, personality and previous experience (their first placement and/or prior to the PGCE course).

School context

It was assumed that trainees in the placement schools of the PGCE programmes would all have *some* experience of teaching pupils with SEND as part of their class teaching experience (Nash and Norwich, 2008). This was expected to be variable whether or not there was a planned activity about SEND. The extent of this experience and whether it was supervised as regards teaching those with SEND was also expected to be variable across trainee and school based on previous research and reports (Nash and Norwich, 2008; OFSTED, 2008).

Although this preliminary analysis is only based on 6 schools, each operating within a different PGCE programme there were clear inconsistencies between schools and even between trainees within the same school. This variability took a number of forms:

1. The number of children in the trainees' class/es, and in the school as a whole, with SEND. This depended on the type of school (primary/secondary) and on the way classes were allocated. Schools often stated that they tried to give trainees experience of teaching pupils with a range of SENDs, but that they did not give trainees classes with 'really really challenging individuals' (F1) in consideration for the trainees and the pupils. However, this sometimes meant the trainees did not always experience teaching pupils with significant SEND. For example, trainee 2, E1 commented that there had been no opportunity on her previous placement to deal with difficult behaviour as children with behaviour difficulties were taken out of the sessions the trainee had taught. The project highlighted the issue of class allocation for one university tutor:

I think that came out when we were organising students for you to visit, it became clear that some of them aren't working with any SEN pupils. I was really surprised and it raised an issue which I think I need to follow up. With the range of experiences that we like our students to have when they're on teaching practice, we ought to formalise that slightly or that expectation a bit more (university tutor, D1).

2. The involvement of SENCO within ITE.
3. The values and ethos of the school and attitudes of individual members of staff – for example in one subject teacher interview there seemed to be the assumption that once a class had been ability set there was no further need for adapting teaching to personal needs of students.

4. The amount and quality of supervision/mentoring of trainees' teaching – in terms of who carried out the supervisions, whether this teacher taught the class that the trainee was teaching and the frequency of the supervision of the trainee.
5. The type of professional studies input from the school, if any. This varied as to whether it was required by the university, whether the syllabus/topics were set by the university, the form it took (seminars, individual discussions) and who led sessions (SENCO, ITE coordinator etc). One mentor commented that professional learning for trainees might vary across schools with some providing much higher quality training:

I think there is an issue that if it relies on the sessions that are given by the schools, is there some form of quality control on the sessions given by the schools? (mentor, B1)

Discussion: What elements have been found to be important in preparing teachers for teaching pupils with SEND in PGCE programmes?

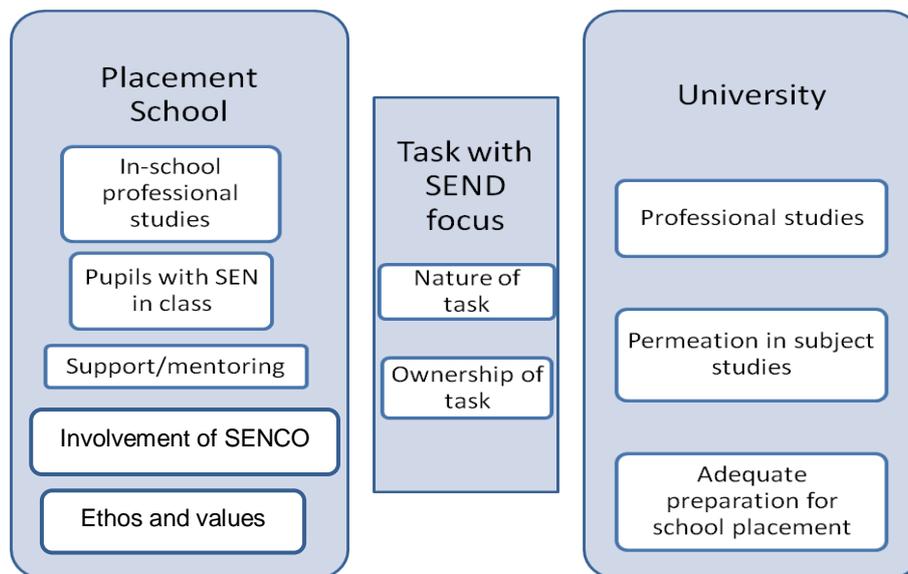
Trainee teachers spend a significant proportion of their training in schools gaining practical classroom experience with the support of school-based teacher-mentors (18 weeks in a one year primary programme and 24 weeks in a secondary programme). It has previously been noted, with regard to special educational needs, that this school-based preparation is dependent on the specific provision within the school, thus experiences may be very variable (OFSTED, 2008). This current study has confirmed this unevenness and goes further in making preliminary identification of some the elements comprising this variability (see previous section and figure 3 below).

Teachers' beliefs and attitudes are also influenced by the norms and cultures of a school (Jordan and Stanovich, 2003; McIntyre, 2009) and trainee teachers' attitudes are shaped by their interactions with teachers in schools through their school placements (Pearson, 2009). Thus the school placement experience is one crucial element in the preparation of teachers. As one school tutor in this current study expressed:

You're ok if you're in a school with somebody like ... [the principal school tutor]. Whereas before it didn't matter what school you were in because the Uni was giving it to you so you all had the same, but now where your placement is depends on what quality you get. When I did my PGCE most of it came from the Uni so we were all having the same quality. But now of course it's all coming from the schools, so if you're here you get a very good PGCE training year (school subject tutor, D1).

Figure 3 illustrates the variability already noted across 6 schools in 6 different PGCE programmes in terms of the contexts of placement school, university course and SEND-focused task.

Figure 3: Kinds of variability in placement school, university course and SEND tasks

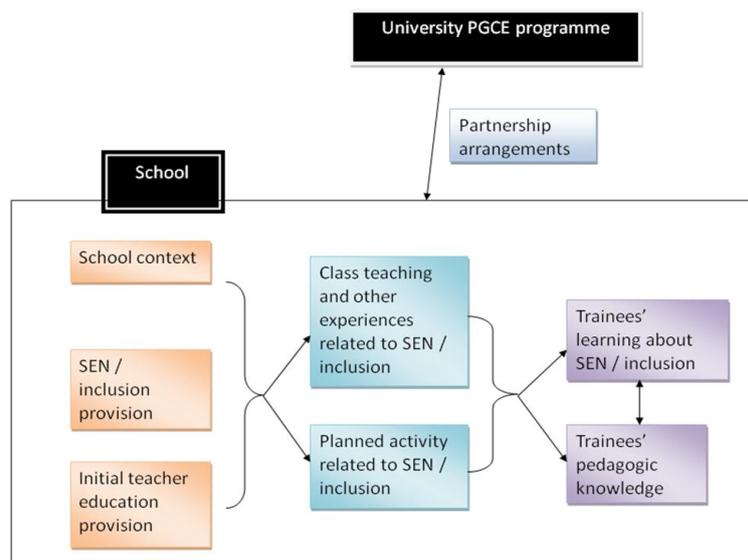


Regardless of this variable provision in placement schools, it is generally hoped by PGCE providers that through programme input they can enable trainees to develop knowledge about SEND, influence their attitudes and give some introduction to practice with pupils with SEND (Lambe, 2007; Mintz, 2007). This study indicates, however, that university PGCE programmes also seem to be variable in terms of input around teaching pupils with SEND; even within programmes there is variability, for example, in different subject areas.

This research examined PGCE programmes which used different approaches to school-based learning about SEND in terms of pupil-focussed and practical teaching tasks. As noted earlier, there appear to be some broader aspects of pedagogical knowledge which are learned and promoted through the existence of a *pupil-focussed SEND task* compared to when trainees do not undertake such a task, although the exact nature of the task (at least in the programmes we studied) seemed less important. OFSTED (2008) also stated that the most effective ITE providers in their survey extended their provision beyond generic issues to additional and specifically focussed work. Further, McIntyre (2009, p606) has noted that school-based work incorporates 'largely incidental learning', arguing that *planned* diverse learning experiences, which need to be regarded as more than 'university work' are needed to promote 'practical theorising'.

Ownership of the task in our study (university work or school work) did seem to be an issue in the credence given to the task by some school staff and trainees. Such issues around ownership and the value placed on a task would seem to relate to university-school partnership relationships and perhaps indicate a need for further 'joint work' (Lawson and Nash, 2010). A deeper analysis of our study data with regard to partnership is required. Others, however, have noted the often rather superficial nature of ITE partnerships (Furlong et al, 2006). Figure 4 illustrates an initial representation of the broader relationships between university, school and trainees' learning about SEND in the school-based part of their PGCE programme.

Figure 4: Trainees' learning about SEND – partnership and school context



It must be stressed that these findings are based on a preliminary analysis of just one third of the 18 case study schools.

Summary of findings

The findings are summarised with reference to the three specific project aims.

Aim 1: To examine the context, the processes and the outcomes of PGCE trainees undertaking different planned SEND activities in primary and secondary schools in terms of the partnership arrangements between the schools and the university providers and the schools' general arrangements for initial teacher training.

The data analysis to date has examined the trainees' outcomes in terms of learning about SEND, looking at *what* they learn and *how* they have learned this. The *what* of trainees' learning appears to be complex and multi-dimensional, encompassing aspects of task design, learning modes, behaviour management, pupil grouping,

teacher-pupil learning interactions and motivational approaches. The *how* involves different processes of experience (prior and current), observation, discussion and supervision. Both of these, the *what* and the *how*, appear, at this stage, to be similar across PGCE programmes. Partnership arrangements and schools' general arrangements for ITE have not yet been examined in depth.

Aim 2: To compare the immediate outcomes of undertaking different planned SEND activities for trainees and the schools over and above classroom teaching of pupils with SEND a) an SEND practical teaching activity, b) another (non-teaching) school based planned activity about SEND (such as a pupil study task) and c) where there is only classroom teaching of pupils with SEND.

Findings indicate no distinctive specialist pedagogy is learned for teaching pupils with SEND that these trainees encounter in their class teaching. Instead, generic pedagogic approaches, which may be extended or intensified, are indicated in trainee's learning, with an emphasis on general pedagogical learning rather than any specifics for SEND. There seem to be some broader aspects of pedagogical knowledge, about understanding children's needs, which are learned and promoted through the existence of a pupil-focused SEND task compared to when trainees do not undertake such a task. We do not have evidence yet about whether the exact nature of the task (a practical teaching task or an alternative pupil-focused task) makes any difference.

Aim 3: To integrate the findings of this project into various forms that can be disseminated and communicated to PGCE providers, placement schools and other organisations with interests in teacher education.

Some tentative implications of the study will be developed once full analysis is completed. These will be disseminated as discussed on p26.

The overall aim of the project was to identify practical principles and procedures about how to design and support planned school based activities relevant to learning to teach pupils with SEND. Analysis to date suggests the following:

- The need for trainees to experience teaching pupils with a range of SEND; this has implications for the selection of classrooms in which they do their teaching practice.
- The need for the involvement of the SENCO and/or experienced classroom teacher with 'good practice' in teaching pupils with SEND in two-way observations (trainee observes SENCO/SENCO observes trainee) with follow up discussions.
- The value of planned tasks relevant to learning about teaching pupils with SEND, whether a teaching and/or pupil monitoring/pursuit type of task. These tasks could be part of a wider set of tasks related to other themes relevant to

trainee teachers. This relates to how such planned tasks can become the basis for trainees' development of their reflection on their developing practice and be used for programme summative assignments.

- Development of 'joint work' around SEN as an aspect of the university-school partnership, for example, in relation to planned tasks.
- Recognition of what the university can and does offer to the training partnership; in terms of theory and knowledge about SEND and inclusion and its relationship to school practice, in the design of planned school based experiences, for example SEND practical teaching task or pupil pursuit task.

Whilst there is still further analysis to do, we expect it to refine rather than change the broad aspects of these interim findings.

There are possible implications for local and national significance. Attention to special educational needs is clearly important in both school placement and university parts of PGCE programmes. The variability in school provision for trainees around SEND, however, indicates the need for higher level consideration of issues in a number of ways:

- The role of the training provider in the planning and overseeing of placement opportunities for trainees
- The importance of a planned curriculum for placement learning and the role of a SEND [pupil-focused] task within such an approach
- The need to provide a critical context and overview.

The original aims of examining how trainees responded to school based work where there were SEND pupil-focussed tasks versus no such task remain relevant. However, the research also contributes to current debates about what and how both schools and universities contribute to the ITE partnership (DfE, 2010) and to how new teacher standards for September 2012 relating to SEND (DfE, 2011) could be approached.

Further areas for investigation

There would seem to be a number of areas that would benefit from further investigation within the study data set and perhaps in further studies:

- the *stage of the PGCE programme* when the placements take place. The period of data collection for this study was in the first school placement for some programmes (for example, trainees from Universities C and D were observed in the autumn term) and in the second placement (of 2 or 3 placements) for others (for example, trainees from Universities E and F were observed in the spring term and those from university A in the summer term).
- the *type of PGCE programme – secondary or primary*.
- *numbers of trainees on a PGCE programme*. The six PGCE programmes varied in numbers of trainees from 24 to 450.

- the focus on the *general and/or the specifics* of special and inclusive education.
- the role and involvement of parents in trainees' learning about SEND.

Dissemination

Executive summary

An executive summary of the key findings and implications of the project for training providers, PGCE tutors, professional associations and policy makers (DFE, OFSTED, TDA etc) will be circulated during 2012. This will be disseminated to all PGCE providers through Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) email links. It will also be distributed to participating project schools.

Conference Presentations

Presentation already taken place:

Norwich, B., Lawson, H. and Nash, T. *Personalised teaching in initial teacher education: school based activities and special educational needs*. Paper presented at EARLI, 30 August – 3 September 2011, Exeter.

Presentation accepted:

Lawson, H., Norwich, B. and Nash, T. *Initial teacher education in England: School based activities and special educational needs*. Paper to be presented at International Inclusive Teacher Education Research Forum 2012 Symposium, 13-15 February 2012, University of South Florida.

Presentation submitted:

Lawson, H., Norwich, B. and Nash, T. *Pre-service teacher education and school based activities: pedagogical decision making and special educational needs*. Submitted for American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, 13-17 April 2012, Vancouver.

Presentations intended for submission to future conferences:

Norwich, B., Lawson, H. and Nash, T. *Initial teacher education in England: School partnership and learning about teaching pupils with SEND* To be submitted for European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), 18-21 September 2012, Cadiz.

Academic papers

The following papers are intended for submission for publication in 2012:

Paper focusing on cross school analysis with regard to process and outcomes, for submission to *British Educational Research Journal*.

Paper focusing on context and process aspects, for submission to *Teaching and Teacher Education*.

End of project statement

A Statement of Income and Expenditure (SIE) is attached to this report.

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