Mainstream teachers' concerns about inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disability in England under pre-pandemic conditions

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A survey-based investigation of teachers' concerns was conducted the following adaptation of Sharma and Desai's 'Concerns about Integrated Education (CIE) Scale' two decades ago. The terminology was adjusted and integrated' became 'inclusive', and 'Special Educational Needs and / or Disability (SEND)' replaced 'disability' in a novel 'Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale'. A purposive sample included the public and private education sectors. An online questionnaire was completed in April 2020 (n = 93) by teachers (66: state mainstream, 18: independent, 5: UK-based international schools, 3: SEND specialists, 1: alternative provision). Statistical analysis of closed questions aimed to identify teachers' concerns about IE for children with SEND and was complemented by qualitative analysis of data generated through open-ended questions. Varied understandings of what IE means and longstanding concerns were identified. The highest level of concern was evidenced around resources, specifically, funding for specialist and support staff, resources, and appropriate infrastructure. Qualitative data analysis suggested that children with SEND risk being perceived as an onerous adjunct to an already stressful regular' teaching role. Few respondents mentioned national performance monitoring and accountability regimes in this context and, instead, viewed additional paraprofessional and external support as self-evident solutions to excessive workloads, neglecting the implications for equity in education.

Introduction

Current landscape

It has been argued that the field of IE is complex and that teachers find competing concepts of IE difficult to grasp in theory and practice (Lauchlan and Greig, 2015), resulting in ambivalent teacher attitudes towards 'full inclusion' and inconsistent practice, especially relating to more complex learning needs (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Male and Raynor, 2009; Parey, 2019). Such ambivalence is compounded by inequities of provision and resource allocation in SEN practice (Bines, 2000). Funding cuts of 17% for children identified with SEND across England since 2015 (Parveen, 2019) have prompted criticism of government for failing these children and scrutiny of the ideal of a fully inclusive education system. As Hodkinson argues, 'the development of inclusive education has been stalled by the problems of its definition and of government's acceptance of this form of education' (2016, p. 87). Meanwhile, the percentage of children identified with SEND in England is rising (Department for Education [DfE], 2019) and the level of attendance at special, rather than mainstream, schools is increasing (Norwich, 2019). The proportion of children identified with SEND per class has risen significantly, increasing demand for specialist support and funding (Weale and McIntyre, 2018); yet, assessments for education, health and care plans (EHC plans), which attract additional funding, are refused or delayed (Tickle, 2017). There is evidence that schools are delaying EHC plan assessments and then pressurising parents to either agree to transfers to other schools or to home educate (Done et al., 2021).

Implication for teachers

It has been found that diversity in school and classroom populations (Hettiarachchi and Das, 2014) may induce higher stress levels in mainstream teachers. In the absence of political will to implement full inclusion (Oswald and Swart, 2011), or to radically overhaul political priorities relating to education (Done, 2019), attention has focussed on teachers. Hence, Slee (2010) argues that consistent IE requires teachers with high levels of self-efficacy and Pantic and Florian (2015) advocate positivity around accepting children identified with SEND. The accompanying risk here is that this emphasis on teachers merely

reinforces governmental efforts to 'responsibilise' teachers for policy implementation and thereby re-focuses attention away from systemic issues such as equitable outcomes and resource distribution (Done et al., 2015). The investigation of teachers' concerns rather than their deficiencies reflects this.

Defining IE

Tomlinson (2015) maintains that human rights and social justice underpin an IE system. Historically, the Salamanca Statement advised that schools 'should accommodate all children regardless of their material, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions' (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 1994, p. 6). Cochrane subsequently summarised IE as the 'practice of supporting a diversity of student needs in a general educational setting' (2016, p. 23), and Hornby (2011) frames IE as a multi-dimensional concept that accommodates diversity, human rights, social justice and equity issues. Cooper and Jacobs (2011), however, regard IE as exclusionary since children with SEND are present in classrooms without any guarantee of social and educational inclusion. In the reported study, IE was defined as a classroom that delivers a supportive and engaging environment for all children to learn at a level tailored to their individual learning needs. In England, legislation and statutory guidance. particularly the 'SEND Code of Practice 0–25 Years', defines a 'special' need as a learning difficulty or disability calling for 'special educational provision to be made'; it states that those with SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010, that is, a material or mental impairment with long-term and substantial adverse effects on their ability 'to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (DfE, 2015, p. 15, p. 16). These definitions were applied in the reported study.

Research aims

The study aimed to investigate a highly contested area of policy by identifying mainstream teachers' understanding, experience and concerns about IE for children with SEND in England, and to establish whether the level of concerns corresponded to the rising proportion of children with SEND in mainstream classrooms in England (DfE, 2019).

Onto-epistemological orientation

The pragmatic onto-epistemology adopted in the reported study rejects any tendency dichotomise positivist and constructivist positions, instead, embracing a more holistic approach that enables exploration of the multiple realities of teachers and commonalities in their concerns about IE for children identified with SEND (Dillon et al., 2000). Pragmatism here implies an 'objective reality that exists apart from human experience' (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019, p. 3) where this reality only exists through environmentally grounded human experience (Morgan, 2014), that is, is socially constructed through socio-political narratives and interests that shape beliefs and values. Social constructions of teachers' concerns about IE vary. Following Morgan (2014, p. 26), 'some versions of those social constructions match individuals' experiences more than others'. This does not imply a relativist position since knowledge is conceived as a continuum that permits consideration of objectivity and subjectivity, and methods appropriate to the research question (Goles and Hirschheim, 2000, p. 261).

Procedures and methodology

A survey instrument design (SID) combining qualitative and quantitative data is commonly used to produce both types of data within a single study (Bryman, 2012) and to increase the likelihood of robust implications (McKim, 2015); it is intended to ensure a more complete picture than would otherwise be possible (Denscombe, 2014, p. 147). The emphasis was on 'understanding different viewpoints and representing diverse voices' (Shannon-Baker, 2016, p. 330) and the generation of more nuanced and authentic accounts (Day and Sammons, 2008) from a critical realist stance that recognises causal relationships. Such surveys can achieve a 'snapshot' of a wide target population at one point in time through both numerical data and 'descriptive, inferential and explanatory information' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 334). Beyond identifying the concerns of teachers around IE at a time when the SEND population is growing (DfE, 2019), this strategy also enabled teachers to suggest ways of alleviating such concerns.

Ethical considerations

Following BERA (2018) ethical guidelines, informed consent was gained through a consent form accompanied by an information sheet detailing the research aims and purpose. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality (BERA, 2018), and advised of their right to withdraw from the study prior to the data analysis stage (31st May 2020).

Sampling and respondent demographics

A purposive sampling strategy using professional networks ensured access to respondents who might provide rich data given their professional role, access to networks, expertise or experience (Ball, 1990). The sample comprised 93 teachers stratified by experience, gender and organisational type to ensure representation across the public and private sector; 66: state mainstream school, 18: independent school, 5: UK-based international schools, 3: SEND specialists and 1 from alternative provision. Special schools were excluded as the study focus was teacher attitudes in mainstream settings. Respondents were not restricted to commenting on children already on their school SEND register since lengthy current delays in securing formal assessment means that this register is not an invariably reliable indication of levels of SEND in some schools. Of the 93 respondents, 83% ($n = 77$) were female and 17% ($n = 16$) male; 49% ($n = 46$) were aged

Table 1: Years of experience of teaching children with SEND

Years	At current school		In education	
	No. of participants	% of participants	No. of participants	% of participants
>1	9	10%	1	1%
1–5	51	55%	12	13%
6–10	14	15%	24	26%
11–20	15	16%	43	46%
>20	4	4%	13	14%

31–40 years and 31% (n = 29) were 41–50 years. Variation in teaching children with SEND are shown in Table 1 below.

The most common reported class size was 26–30 children (53%, n = 49) with 40% (n = 37) reporting 3–4 children with SEND in a typical class; 49% (n = 46) taught primary aged children, 44% (n = 41) secondary aged and 6% (n = 6) taught both primary and secondary children. The roles of respondents are shown in Table 2 below.

Data collection
Data were collected through an online survey which enabled access to geographically dispersed populations (Wright, 2005), was cost and time-efficient and permitted data to be exported to statistical packages for analysis (McPeake et al., 2014). The survey ran throughout April 2020, allowing its promotion on various media platforms to maximise the response rate and follow-up requests (Hudson and Miller, 1997). It was decided that the launch of the survey should go ahead despite the sudden lockdown of all schools in England during the final week of March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is possible that concerns around workload may have been exacerbated by this event which created additional demands on schools, including risk assessments for any child considered to be or classified as vulnerable.

Table 2: Role best describing teachers' current position of responsibility for children with SEND

Role	No. of participants	% of participants
SENDCO	8	9%
Head of year	3	3%
Head of key stage	1	1%
Head of pastoral	5	5%
Head of behaviour	1	1%
Safeguarding officer	1	1%
THRIVE practitioner	0	0%
Senior leadership team	16	17%
Classroom teacher	58	62%

Online survey questions were designed using Google Forms and contained 8 open-ended questions and 34 closed questions inviting structured responses for calculation of frequencies at analysis. A dichotomous question compelled respondents to 'come off the fence on an issue' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 477). The terminology of Sharma and Desai's (2002) Concerns about Integrated Education (CIE) Scale was adapted for contemporary use, for example, 'integrated' became 'inclusive' and 'disability' became 'SEND'.

The online survey questionnaire contained: (1) questions on personal and professional characteristics; (2) a 'Concerns about Inclusive Education' (CIE) 25-item Likert scale to generate quantitative data and 'build in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response whilst still generating numbers' (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 480), with options labelled 'extremely concerned' (4), 'very concerned' (3), 'a little concerned' (2) or 'not concerned at all' (1) and yielding score values ranging from 25 to 100 (higher scores indicating greater levels of concern); and 3) 8 open-ended questions and one dichotomous question. The online questionnaire was piloted to check that the content was appropriate to the research question and to teachers, and remained unchanged as the questions were found to be easily understood.

Data analysis procedures

Quantitative analysis. The objective was not to generalise the results (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 727) and a descriptive statistical analysis of the quantitative data was undertaken using Microsoft Excel 2019 and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics (n, %) and bivariate statistics for all questions were calculated. Mean analysis scores of individual items and four factors ('resources', 'acceptance', 'academic standards', 'workload') were explored by summing all 93 scores provided for each item and dividing this figure by the total number of teachers (93) to give an arithmetic average of a group of scores.

Qualitative analysis. Content analysis (CA) of qualitative data involved coding textual data into categories, followed by counts and logs of the occurrences of words, codes and categories in order to draw theoretical conclusions from the text (Ezzy, 2002). NVivo 12 and Microsoft Excel 2019 software was used to organise and code textual data in the dataset as a whole. Word Frequencies and Word Clouds (QSR International, 2021) for individual questions were explored in NVivo 12 to highlight terms appearing more frequently. Coding revealed frequencies and patterns, thus enabling comparison and conceptualisation of the respondents' unique responses (Cohen et al. 2018).

Reliability and validity
Cronbach's alpha and coefficient alpha scores were computed to test internal reliability and validity in SPSS for

the original Sharma and Desai (2002) CIE Scale and the adapted scale, and these were found to be sufficient. The adapted 25-item CIE Scale was analysed by factors to determine whether teachers' concerns about IE for children with SEND were clustered in a particular pattern. Descriptive outputs, frequency outputs and mean scores were determined by the question and by the different roles of teachers for group comparison. Word Clouds (QSR International, 2021) were used alongside word frequency tables to visualize the free text.

Results

Given the study's scale, the findings are discussed in the context of the English education system.

Teachers' understanding of IE

Content analysis of textual responses revealed three main themes relating to understandings of IE; 41% ($n = 38$) felt that education should embody principles of equality, quality and inclusion of all; 17% ($n = 17$) mentioned IE as a right for all children to receive the same education (defined as access to lessons tailored to children's specific needs) (Table 3 below). The single most referenced term was 'access', appearing 35 times and denoting a child's ability to access a good education, full curriculum, learning opportunities, and provision catering for their individual needs (Figure 1 below). The secondmost referenced term of 'education' was used 27 times by those in all roles of additional responsibility for children with SEND to denote teachers' ability to effectively teach to individual needs. For one, IE for children with SEND is 'ensuring planning, teaching and assessment meets the needs of every child in the class; no matter what the barriers, you provide an education appropriate to the child'.

The two most significant themes (by textual reference frequency) were equal opportunities and the access of all children with and without SEND to education and a full curriculum adapted to individual needs. As in Norwich (2002), the concept of 'full inclusion' was understood as teaching all children in the same classroom, with similar support from practitioners to accommodate all types of diversity and promote social respect. Yet, it is arguable that the import of the concept of 'full inclusion' was not

fully grasped or, at times, was assumed to refer to the choice available to parents to elect for a mainstream as opposed to a 'special' school. Hence, nine respondents raised the importance of IE 'within' mainstream schools and lessons. In one case, mainstream schooling was defined as, 'a system to provide all students, regardless of any challenges they may have, with access to age-appropriate general education in their locality to enable them to reach their potential'. Three mentioned an environment permitting children identified with SEND to build social relationships and feel happy, calm and experience a sense of belonging; hence, children with SEND should be 'a fully integrated part of the school and class life [and be] happy and calm within the educational setting and able to build social relationships to the best of their ability'.

Notably, there was some confusion around what the principle of educational equity meant in practice for children with SEND. The current accountability regime measures degrees of progress whereas one respondent stated, 'according to the government, they should all reach the same level'.

Key concerns of teachers

The key concerns of teachers about IE for children with SEND in England in 2020 were captured in two separate sections of the survey: the adapted 25-item CIE Scale and open-ended questions (Table 4).

25-item CIE Scale. Respondents indicated their level of concern about IE in the context of their school situation and personal experience by selecting a response that best reflected their position. Scores for the scale ranged from 37 to 95, indicating wide variation between individual teachers in their levels of concern in this area. The mean score was 59, indicating a significant level of concern at the time that this study was conducted. The reliability of the internal consistency of the four concern factors and the adapted CIE Scale was computed using Cronbach's alpha to reflect the procedures used in Sharma and Desai's (2002) study. The adapted CIE Scale possessed adequate reliability and validity for use in assessing teachers' concerns about IE for children with SEND in England with a coefficient alpha of 0.93 for the total scale. The introduction of four new questions did not affect reliability and the use of factor scores for inter-group comparison was possible as the coefficient alphas showed a sufficient level of internal consistency (Table 5).

The mean score for each item indicated that the highest level of concern was around standardised testing excluding and failing children with SEND (Figure 2).

A comparison of the mean factor scores for the reported study and those of Sharma and Desai (2002) revealed

Table 3: Understandings of 'inclusive education'

Q4.1) What is your understanding of the term 'inclusive education' for children with
Significant Themes
Equal opportunities and experiences for all children with and without SEND to access edu AND a full curriculum
Curriculum planning/resources adapted, differentiated to support all children to achieve success/positive outcomes OR reach their potential (meeting needs of all children) in a su environment + at a suitable pace
SEND children learning alongside/together their peers/fully included
Mainstream environment (in their locality)
Ad hoc responses of significance
Are happy and able to build social relationships with peers / a sense of belonging
Government policy to ensure all children reach certain levels and children with SEND mak comparable progress with children without SEND.
High expectations for learning and behaviour to be able to progress (teacher)
All parties involved in decision making e.g. team around me policy

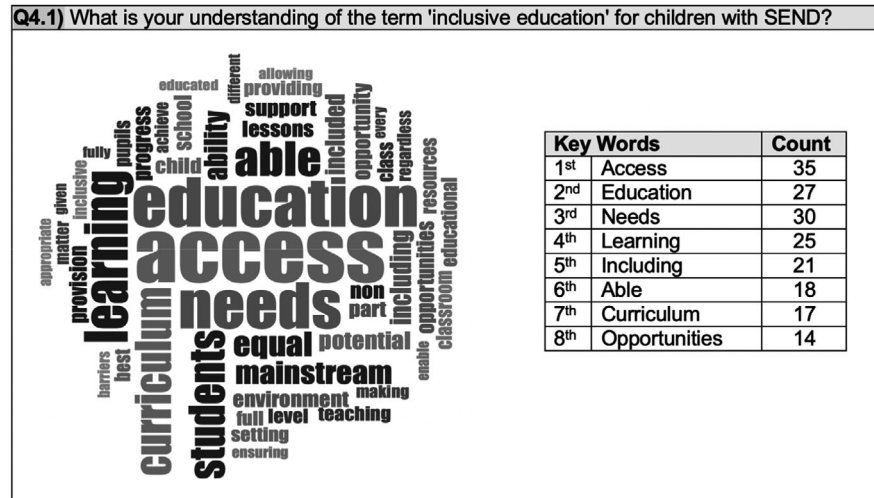**Figure 1: Word cloud of teacher understandings of 'inclusive education**

Q4.1) What is your understanding of the term 'inclusive education' for children with SEND?

Key Words		Count
1st	Access	35
2nd	Education	27
3rd	Needs	30
4th	Learning	25
5th	Including	21
6th	Able	18
7th	Curriculum	17
8th	Opportunities	14

Table 4: Rank order of mean factor score and mean difference (2002 and 2020)

Rank Order	Survey Questions
1	Q3.23) Standardised testing excludes and fails children with SEND.
2	Q3.11) Other members of school staff are stressed.
3	Q3.8) There are inadequate specialist staff available to support children with SEND (e.g. physiotherapist, occupational therapist, educational psychologist, behaviour therapist etc
4	Q3.18) It is difficult to give equal attention to all children in an inclusive classroom.
5	Q3.10) My workload is increasing.
6	Q3.7) My school has not got enough funds for implementing inclusive education success
7	Q3.1) I do not have enough time to plan educational programs for children with SEND.
8	Q3.13) There is inadequate resources or specialist teachers available to support inclusiv
9	Q3.22) Increasing numbers of children with SEND in my class or school leads to a higher in me.
10	Q3.4) I have to do additional paperwork.
11	Q3.20) There is inadequate administrative support to implement inclusive education prog
12	Q3.14) My school does not have adequate SEND instructional materials and teaching ai etc).
13	Q3.12) My school has difficulty in accommodating children with various types of SEND be infrastructure e.g. architectural barrier.
14	Q3.17) The academic achievement of children without SEND is being affected.
15	Q3.21) Including children with SEND in all areas of the curriculum leads to a higher degr
16	Q3.24) Children with SEND can be learning outside the classroom for the majority of the
17	Q3.25) Having to respond more effectively to diversity in the classroom.
18	Q3.19) I am not able to cope with children with SEND who do not have adequate self-ca not toilet trained).
19	Q3.15) Overall academic standards of the school are suffering.
20	Q3.2) It is difficult to maintain discipline in class due to poor behaviour.
21	Q3.16) My performance as a classroom teacher or school principal is negatively affected
22	Q3.3) I do not have knowledge & skills required to teach children with SEND.
23	Q3.6) Parents of children without SEND may not like the idea of placing their children in t there are children with SEND.
24	Q3.5) Children with SEND are not accepted by children without SEND.
25	Q3.9) I do not receive enough incentives (e.g. additional remuneration or allowance) to i all activities.

Table 5: NVivo Word Cloud displaying the 50 terms most used by teachers

Classroom Teachers Mean Scores			
CIE Factor	Current Study	Rank Order	Sharma & Desai (2002) Study
1. Resources	2.63	1st	2.79
2. Acceptance	2.15	4th	2.04
3. Academic Standards	2.50	3rd	2.13
4. Workload	2.52	2nd	1.65
Principals / Senior Leadership Team Mean Scores			
CIE Factor	Current Study	Rank Order	Sharma & Desai (2002) Study
1. Resources	2.54	1st	2.80
2. Acceptance	1.96	4th	2.19
3. Academic Standards	2.28	3rd	2.20
4. Workload	2.31	2nd	1.83

that, despite the time lag between the studies and contextual differences, respondents in both were particularly concerned about Factor 1 ('Concerns about Resources').

Sharma and Desai's (2002) study included 310 primary school principals and 484 teachers in Delhi, India.

Respondents in the latter were least concerned about Factor 4 ('Concerns about Workload'), whereas in the reported study this factor was the second-highest area of concern and Factor 2 ('Concerns about Acceptance') and Factor 3 ('Concerns about Academic standards') were positioned lower in comparison to Sharma and Desai's study. Additionally, in the latter, school principals were significantly more concerned about implementing 'integrated' education whereas the reported study found that classroom teachers' levels of concern about IE for children with SEND were higher across all factor scores in comparison with senior leaders, which included school principals and deputy heads. However, when factor scores were ordered by importance, the rank order of senior leaders' and classroom teachers' factor scores was the same. Whilst the same survey scale was used in both studies, albeit with adaptations in the reported study, this comparison of findings highlights contemporary concerns around IE for children with SEND in England in 2020.

Open-ended survey responses. There were mixed concerns around IE for children with SEND and to maintain continuity between emerging themes from the adapted CIE Scale and the open-ended textual responses,

Q4.2) In your experience do you have any key concerns about inclusive education for children with SEND? Please tell me what they are and why they concern you.
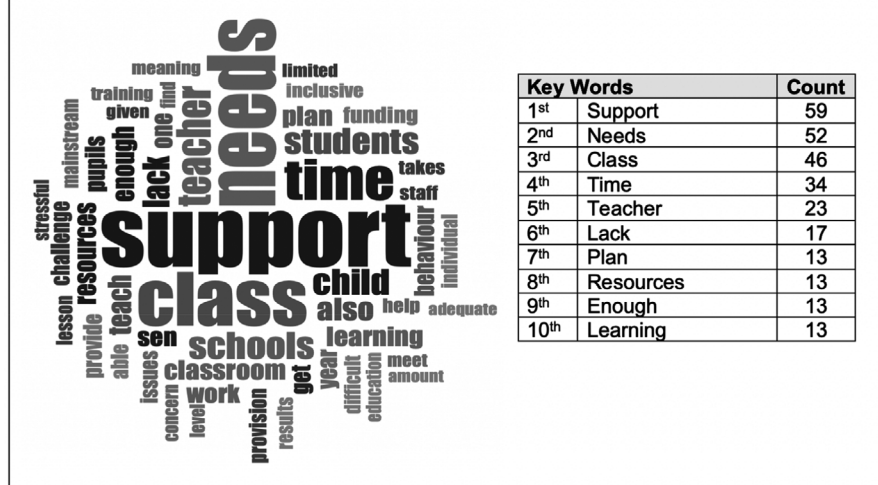
Key Words	Count
1st	Support	59
2nd	Needs	52
3rd	Class	46
4th	Time	34
5th	Teacher	23
6th	Lack	17
7th	Plan	13
8th	Resources	13
9th	Enough	13
10th	Learning	13

Figure 2: Mean analysis scores ordered by rank for individual items in the 2020 CIE Scale

the four factors of concern identified by Sharma and Desai (2002) were expanded in sub-themes from the textual data. No key concerns about IE for children with SEND were indicated by 10% (*n* = 9) of respondents, with comments such as 'not in school unless there is a major impact on lessons or the child' or, more specifically, 'not in a selective independent setting'. However, 90% (*n* = 84) indicated key concerns about IE for children with SEND with the highest level of concern around resources. The majority were most concerned about Factor 1 ('Concerns about Resources') in the adapted 25-item CIE Scale and the open-ended question where key concerns included specialist and support staff, funding, resources, and inappropriate infrastructure.

When factor scores for the open-ended questions were ranked in order of importance, Factor 4 ('Concerns about Workload') generated the least concern as in Sharma and Desai's (2002) findings. However, when compared to a separate section of the adapted 25-item CIE Scale, this factor ranked second in importance. This disparity is attributable to the inclusion of a statement designed to investigate whether teachers felt their workload was increasing in the adapted 25-item CIE Scale. Notably, the term 'support' occurred most frequently to express key concerns about IE, visualised as a Word Cloud (QSR International, 2021). Critical analysis to identify the context in which the term 'support' was used found that the highest concern was support for schools through funding that would enable the employment of more teaching assistants (TAs) and paraprofessionals. Support in classrooms and for teachers' wellbeing featured prominently, linking with the third-highest concern around the availability of specialist resources and planning time. Hence:

I often find myself having to make difficult decisions on who to support/spend time with as I haven't got enough time for everyone. This either results in a SEND child taking up a lot of my time at the

detriment of others in the class or in reverse me spending time with the larger groups in the class and the SEND child not getting the support they need to develop. As a teacher, having to make these decisions can be very stressful and leaves you with a sense of failure. Whilst I might know I'm doing my best, I am left to wonder - is my best good enough for the children in the class? This can be very demoralising and emotionally stressful.

Alleviating concerns

Taking the four factors of concern identified by Sharma and Desai (2002), and replacing the phrase 'concern with' with 'ideas about' maintained thematic continuity during content analysis. Numerous suggestions were volunteered on how teachers' key concerns about IE for children with SEND could be alleviated. Those with added responsibility for such children commented on Factor 1 ('Ideas about Resources'), particularly primary teachers (44%, *n* = 41) compared to secondary (35%, *n* = 33). 'Ideas about Resources' presented the highest number of references (81) within the text, including staffing, resources, infrastructure and funding. One respondent stated:

Systems for gaining outside support need to be streamlined with less paperwork involved [and] making decisions about class sizes and staffing should not just be done based on numbers alone but also taking into consideration the complexity of needs in each class/year group. More support staff are also needed in the classroom to ensure that children are properly 'included' not just there.

Ideas around acceptance received 41 references, including SEND training, planning time and responding to diversity in the classroom, for example:

I think teachers are being left to come up with too many ideas alone. (I have been a Head and a Deputy

Head and am currently back being a class teacher so I'm talking from all levels on this). I think more time for planning collaboratively for children with SEND, not just at the start of term when an IEP is being written, but weekly would help. Teachers together. Teacher with SENCO, Head with teacher, etc. Constant regular collaboration. You feel too alone and that you're either failing your children with SEND or your other children. Or both!

Surprisingly, given Factor 4 ('Ideas about Workload') was ranked the second-highest concern about IE for children with SEND, no suggestions were made for alleviation which may indicate a feeling that heavy workloads are an accepted norm within the profession or that basic expectations of teachers (abilities to plan, deliver and perform) serve to obscure this issue.

In common with respondents' concerns, 'support' was the second most frequent term used in the context of alleviating their concerns about IE for children with SEND, as visualised in a Word Cloud (QSR International, 2021).

Correlations
A dichotomous survey question sought clear opinions on whether respondents felt there is a correlation between rising numbers of children with SEND and teaching professionals' anxiety and/or stress levels in the classroom; 73% ($n = 68$) responded affirmatively as opposed to 27% ($n = 25$) negatively.

Affirmative responses. The four factors of concern (Sharma and Desai, 2002) were used, replacing the term 'concern' with 'comments' to identify four themes and sub-themes relating to the reason for the response. The highest number of references ($n = 68$) to 'acceptance' included comments that echoed studies on the additional input required from the teacher (Ewing et al., 2017); self-efficacy and coping with student behaviour (Humphrey and Symes, 2013); a lack of training and professional development to deliver inclusive practices for different educational needs (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Florian, 2014; Mader, 2017); and diversity needs within the classroom contributing to higher stress levels (Hettiarachchi and Das, 2014). For example:

The extra differentiation required to cater for all abilities in a class can be very challenging, time consuming and stressful; also, there are increased behavioural issues which cause stress for the staff and all children whether they have SEND issues or not.

Another responded, 'it seems as if now a greater number of children are presenting with needs, more often than not emotional and behavioural needs. Teachers are being asked to become counsellors which makes teaching harder'.

Of the affirmative responses, the term 'stress' appeared 35 times; for example:

Because we are now so good at identifying different learning needs as a profession, the expectation from parents, inspectors and staff themselves is that we constantly adapt to individual needs at all time, in every lesson and aim to maximise impact, all resulting in stress for teachers and poor morale when they feel they can't do enough.

Another perspective on stress was volunteered:

From what I have experienced, I have taught different classes with different numbers of SEN percentages and needs and I have been most stressed this year in a class with 50% SEN (varying needs) because I am constantly concerned that I am not meeting the needs of all the individuals in my class. I have had to change my teaching style and approach to cater for such a diverse class which has been a very stressful experience.

Only three respondents (3%) referred to parents; two felt that parents have unrealistic expectations whereas the third felt that parents 'seem unsupported and isolated'. Another stated that 'unrealistic expectations from Government' caused stress.

Negative responses. Of the 27% ($n = 27$) of teachers responding negatively, 6 identified a correlation between rising numbers of children with SEND and teaching professionals' anxiety and/or stress levels in the classroom. This somewhat contradictory result may be attributable to respondents' interpretation of the original question or a perceived need to avoid challenging a seemingly un-contestable politicised ideal. For example, 'I feel there are numerous pressures on class teachers that add to growing anxiety. I could not say that teaching children with SEND is solely adding to this but will be a contributing factor.'

The remaining 19 respondents identified variables, including behaviour problems, workload, bureaucracy and SEND as part of a teacher's role, which prevails to varying degrees in all schools. Hence:

Every teacher, TA, member of SLT has a limit to their capacity and it is the non-mainstream children who require the extra mile. Unfortunately, we, as educators, have to have that extra mile to give. If we are so stretched in general, then that extra provision becomes the source of anxiety. Likewise, behavioural issues that are not dealt with due to a lack of resources end up back with the teacher, who has the welfare of all their class to consider. Again, this creates a further, and often ongoing, level of anxiety.

Another respondent commented on working in selective school environments, 'not in my school but maybe generally as it's a selective grammar school with very few statemented children', introducing a possible bias in these responses.

Discussion

The continuities between the findings of Sharma and Desai's (2002) seminal research on teacher attitudes towards 'integrated' education and those of the reported study, which explored attitudes towards 'inclusive' education, are alarming and suggest that subsequent inclusion-related legislation and repeated revision of statutory guidance in England has served to exacerbate the tension between the ideals and realities of educational inclusion. The aspiration to 'full inclusion' (UNESCO, 1994) has been replaced by a two-track educational system in England whereby 'special' school attendance is increasing whilst teachers in mainstream settings perceive 'full inclusion' as restricted to students that have elected for a mainstream setting and as problematic to deliver, that is, differentiated teaching practices.

As in Sharma and Desai's (2002) study, teachers' concerns do not translate into demands for radical systemic change or a radical overhaul of political priorities. Instead, the focus continues to be on resources or higher levels of funding to support the prevailing organisation of education and provision for children with SEND. Accordingly, the changes which teachers in the reported study wish to see are, by comparison, relatively modest and specific, and arguably not exclusively related to such children. The latter point is illustrated by the highest individual item of concern which was the national mandatory standardised testing regime (SATS). Standardised testing is potentially exclusionary for any lower performing child and creates additional demands on schools; concern in this area does not, therefore, reflect the specific concern around assessment for children with 'special' needs noted by Friend and Bursuck (2019).

One obvious irony suggested by the reported study is that it reproduces the tendency to focus attention on teachers rather than systemic issues despite its intentions at inception. Slee's (2010) argument that consistent IE requires teachers with high levels of self-efficacy to individualise the responsibility for inclusive practice and reinforces tendencies to blame teachers for systemic failures (Done et al., 2015). This may account for the key difference between the two studies in the ranking of workload. It was a key concern in the updated study but, again, the preferred solution is not systemic change but an expressed need for funding to enable additional paraprofessional support with a concomitant failure to acknowledge that the National Education Union (NEU, 2021) attributes excessive workload to mandatory assessment and accountability regimes and, more specifically, to mandated progress monitoring and reporting for all

children. In this context, the motivation for wanting such additional support in the classroom is perplexing as SEND-related statutory guidance (DfE, 2015) makes clear that teachers are responsible for all children within their classroom and that delegation of that responsibility is no longer permissible. Hence, it is arguable that some respondents were not seeking additional paraprofessional input in order to ensure high-quality educational support for children identified with SEND but were, instead, looking to reduce a workload through delegation of responsibilities related to SEND provision as a convenient solution to wider workload pressures over which they have minimal control. On the latter account, IE functions as a rhetoric that disguises and, indeed, reinforces exclusionary pressures and practices (Done and Andrews, 2019).

Similarly, the behavioural issues that some respondents associated with IE and perceived as a further source of stress in teachers are highlighted as confirming the need for an increased level of paraprofessional and external support. Again, rather than seeking transformation of the prevailing educational culture, children with SEND appeared to be experienced by teachers as a group that is inhibiting regular schooling or as a stressful adjunct to their remit. This experience rests uneasily with Tomlinson (2015) suggestion that adherence to human rights and a social justice agenda underpin provision for children identified with additional needs within IE.

The relationship between teachers' stress and attrition rates is a growing concern (Brunsting, Sreckovic, and Lane, 2014); ironically, however, the attrition rates for special education teachers can be double those of general educators (Wong et al., 2017). Nevertheless, expansion of the teacher workforce might have been a more logical response to the concerns articulated around time spent on planning, heavy workloads (NEU, 2018), additional responsibilities (Ballard, 2012) and collaboration with peers. Stress and anxiety (Friend and Bursuck, 2019) are said to occur when the input required from the teacher to implement IE increases (Ewing et al., 2017) and this may account for the school-related concerns found by Yadav et al. (2015) and, more specifically, those of Speck (2019) that English schools lacked trained paraprofessionals and support staff in SEND. The English SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) does not, however, permit delegation of responsibility to paraprofessionals. This is not to suggest that increased funding from the government is not required but, rather, that it is targeted on improving teacher-student ratios and delivering high-quality provision for equitable outcomes (Done and Knowler, 2020; Done et al., 2021).

A key study objective was 'understanding different viewpoints and representing diverse voices' (Shannon-Baker, 2016, p. 330) through the generation of nuanced authentic accounts (Day and Sammons, 2008). However, following

Ball's (2003) concepts of impression management and un-contestable narratives, it is conceivable that teachers provided socially desirable responses that did not reflect their everyday practice. Endorsing the presence of children with SEND in mainstream classrooms does not necessarily translate into appropriate classroom provision and educational inclusion (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011).

Pantic and Florian (2015) advocate positivity around accepting children identified with SEND and, yet, not all comments offered in the adapted study were suggestive of such positivity. As Yadav et al. (2015) found, reservations about capacities to maximise the quality of education provided to children with SEND persist and were evidenced in this later study. Kamenopolou et al. (2015) found similarly varied understandings of IE in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), accompanied by an assumption that teachers gradually develop knowledge about the needs of different learners through experience (DfE, 2017).

Limitations of study
Prevailing COVID-19 lockdown conditions prevented multiple types of data collection, for example, interview or observation, for validation purposes.

Online recruitment introduced a potential for selection bias given the relatively small sample of teachers achieved ($n = 93$). Findings are unlikely to be representative of all teachers in England since the understanding and practice of IE varies significantly between individual teachers, classrooms and schools. The Education Policy Institute (2021) has recently reported wide variation in provision between geographical areas, describing this situation as a 'postcode lottery'. As IE has become a politically un-contestable ideal (Done, 2019), the risk of inauthentic responses is likely, for example, endorsing the inclusion of children with 'special' needs in mainstream education in principle whilst failing to challenge practices at school level that can be construed as exclusionary or failing to adapt their teaching practice (Done et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, to our knowledge, this is the first study that sought to update the terminology of Sharma and Desai's (2002) seminal research for contemporary research purposes.

The study distinguished school types within the mainstream education sector but did not focus specifically on schools in areas of high social deprivation whilst such schools frequently have very high proportions of students with identified SEND and fewer resources. The closure of schools and move to online provision during the COVID-19 pandemic brought such disparities and inequities into sharp relief (Montacute, 2020; Done and Knowler, forthcoming).

Future research
Additional data collection through, for example, life history and narrative methods, are required to fully comprehend the complexities of teachers' concerns about IE. The inclusion of children's and parents' concerns would also be valuable for comparative purposes. Dialogue with teachers around support would be advantageous given that 'support' was identified as the second most frequently occurring term in open-ended question responses. Further studies could also seek to highlight existing strategies identified as useful in delivering meaningful IE for children with SEND in schools, for example, through an online platform permitting all teachers in the UK to share strategies for inclusive practice. The authors are currently pursuing another line of inquiry relating to exclusionary practices in English schools (both legal and illegal) and the studies comprising this research (e.g., Done et al., 2021; Done and Knowler, forthcoming) underline the difficulty of securing authentic responses on politically sensitive topics. These studies highlight the issue of disproportionality, that is, disparities in exclusion rates between children with identified SEND and their peers, further suggesting that proclaimed understandings of IE do not necessarily indicate inclusive practice at school level.

Conclusions
The purpose of the reported study was to identify teachers' understanding, experience and concerns about IE for children with SEND in England in 2020 at a time when the level of children with identified SEND in England is increasing (DfE, 2019). A cross-sectional survey strategy sought to gain insight into teachers' concerns through a 'snapshot' of this population at a particular point in time through numerical and descriptive data (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 334). The online survey also invited suggestions on alleviating these concerns and sought to establish whether there was a correlation between the levels of teachers' concerns about IE for children with identified SEND and increasing levels of children with identified SEND (DfE, 2019).

Key findings were, firstly, that teachers' understandings of IE varies significantly, raising questions as to the extent to which the goal of IE can be comprehensively realised or functions as a political rhetoric. Secondly, a significant level of teacher concern was evidenced through a mean score of 59 for the adapted 25-item CIE Scale. Thirdly, that the highest level of concern was around resources and, more specifically, the availability of support, including specialist and support staff, funding and inappropriate infrastructure. Fourthly, that the desired support centred on relieving the pressure on teacher workloads in the short-term, with children identified as SEND being perceived as a key contributor to excessive working hours and as a source of stress and anxiety. Tensions between different areas of policy discourse

(Done, 2019; Done and Knowler, 2020) and the focus of professional bodies on national performance management and accountability regimes (NEU, 2021) were seldom mentioned. In one case, governmental pressure to deliver similar levels of progress across the student population was a source of resentment, possibly implying that the progress of children with SEND would not otherwise be a priority. References to 'the SEND children' indicate a lack of inclusivity or a risk that children are perceived primarily through the labels associated with mandated identification and funding procedures.

Recommendations

The teachers' highest level of concern in this study was resources and, specifically, the availability of support. Schools are faced with financial limitations (Friend and Bursuck, 2019); hence, the adoption of a budget impact model (BIM), derived from health economics, could be adapted for internal use by schools to calculate how they create, deliver, scale, sustain and measure impact, thereby measuring the net cumulative cost of resources for IE and, crucially, aiding the case for additional funds. However, the findings suggest that inclusion-related legislation and statutory guidance has not effected the fundamental shift in values envisaged by proponents of full inclusion. Such a shift is unlikely in the absence of a similarly fundamental shift in governmental priorities (Done, 2019; Done and Knowler, 2020) and given the expansion of the 'special' school sector (Done and Andrews, 2019).

The reported findings demonstrate that the concerns of teachers about IE for children with SEND in England in 2020 were complex, varied and significant, and pandemic lockdown conditions are likely to have compounded such complexity. Arguably, the study aim of shifting the focus of attention from teachers' deficiencies to systemic issues was not achieved since teachers' response to their 'responsibilisation' for inclusion by government (Done et al., 2015) was to seek increased funding in order to secure some respite from the demands of an essentially unchanged educational culture that is far from inclusive.

Conflict of interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was granted 27th March 2020 (M1920-106) by the Research Ethics and Governance Office, University of Exeter, Lafrowda House, St. Germans Road, Exeter, EX4 6TL.

Data Availability Statement

The dataset will not be shared on ethical grounds. It will, however, be made available through a University of Exeter external repository upon editorial request.

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