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The Making a Statement project

Final Report

**A study of the teaching and support experienced by pupils
with a statement of special educational needs in mainstream
primary schools**

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The Making a Statement (MaSt) project

Executive summary

Research from our previous Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project showed that the day-to-day support for pupils with special education needs (SEN) in mainstream schools is often provided by teaching assistants (TAs) instead of teachers. We have argued that this is one main reason why the negative effect of TA support on academic progress, found in the DISS project, is greater for pupils with SEN than for those without SEN.

The Making a Statement (MaSt) project was designed to explore the teaching, support and interactions experienced by pupils with statements of SEN – a topic on which there is little systematic information.

The MaSt project findings are based on results from extensive systematic observations and detailed case studies involving 48 pupils with statements of SEN for moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Observations of 151 average attaining ‘control’ pupils provide a reference point for comparison. Case studies were based largely on interviews with nearly 200 teachers, TAs, SENCOs and parents/carers. All data were collected over the 2011/12 school year, and involved researchers shadowing pupils in Year 5 over one week each.

Spending a week at a time observing at close quarters, and discussion with practitioners and parents/carers, brought home how schools are making every effort to attend to the needs of pupils with statements amid a period of intense flux and uncertainty in schools and local authorities. However, quantitative and qualitative analyses identified five overarching concerns that capture the MaSt study’s key results.

A high degree of separation and TA support strongly characterised the educational experiences of pupils with statements. Pupils with statements spent over a quarter of their time away from the mainstream class, the teacher and their peers. A clear point to emerge from the MaSt study was the almost constant accompanying presence of a TA in relation to all the locations in which pupils were placed. There is, in other words, an intimate connection between TAs and the locations, both in and away from the classroom, in which pupils with statements are taught. Compared to average attaining pupils, statemented pupils experienced less time in whole class contexts and a much higher degree of one-to-one interaction with TAs – often at the expense of interactions with teachers and peers.

TAs have more responsibility for pupils with statements than teachers. TAs had much of the responsibility for the planning and teaching of statemented pupils. Many TAs devised alternative curricula and prepared intervention programmes, and almost all TAs had a high level of responsibility for moment-by-moment pedagogical decision-making. Teachers rarely had as high a level of involvement in planning and teaching statemented pupils.

The appropriateness and quality of pedagogy for statemented pupils is unlikely to close the attainment gap. Compared to their average attaining peers, pupils with statements received a less appropriate and lower quality pedagogical experience. The support provided for these pupils – particularly by TAs – was clearly well intentioned, but seemed unlikely to be sufficient to close the attainment gap between them and their peers.

There are considerable gaps in teachers' and TAs' knowledge concerning meeting the needs of pupils with statements. Teachers and TAs felt under-prepared for dealing with the challenges and complex difficulties posed by pupils with statements. Most teachers reported having had no training on meeting the needs of pupils with high levels of SEN, indicating failings in initial teaching training. As TAs held valuable knowledge about the pupils they supported, teachers often positioned them as the 'expert', despite TAs having similar weaknesses in their knowledge and training.

There are concerns about the ways in which schools prioritise meeting the needs of pupils with statements. There was little evidence of an effective and theoretically-grounded pedagogy for statemented pupils. The specification on the statement of a number of hours of TA support seemed to get in the way of schools thinking through appropriate approaches for pupils with pronounced learning difficulties in mainstream primary schools.

Implications for practice

There are presently two full-time equivalent TAs for every three full-time equivalent teachers in English mainstream primary schools. Whilst the DISS project showed that investment in TAs has eased teacher workloads and stress, the inadvertent drift towards models of TA deployment that – though well meaning – have resulted in unintended and unsatisfactory consequences for pupils with SEN.

In common with the DISS project, the MaSt study provides further evidence that schools need to fundamentally rethink the common approaches to the ways TAs are deployed and prepared, if they are to get the best use from this valuable resource. School leaders and teachers need to think more inclusively about pupils with SEN, and ensure their learning needs are not met principally by TAs. Schools must address the issues of pupil separation that characterise the day-to-day experiences of pupils with SEN¹.

Implications for policy

The MaSt project was conducted as the coalition government plan the biggest changes to the SEN system in 30 years. The Children and Families Bill, which sets out the reforms, received its first reading in Parliament in early February 2013. The findings from the MaSt study have clear implications for two core elements of the proposed changes: the replacement of statements with Education and Health Care plans (EHCPs); and the introduction of personal budgets, which give parents/carers more control over their child's SEN funding.

¹ Our recently published book, *Maximising the impact of teaching assistants: Guidance for school leaders and teachers*, addresses precisely these issues concerning the effective use of TAs.

In terms of EHCPs, a clear message from the MaSt project and the preceding DISS project is that the conversion of the hours specified on a statement into hours of TA support leads to practices that are both unlikely to close the attainment gap, and separates pupils from their teacher and peers.

On basis of the evidence from our research, we suggest that the new EHCPs avoid expressing support for pupils in terms of hours, and instead specify the pedagogical processes and strategies that will help meet carefully defined outcomes. Furthermore, we recommend that setting personal budgets is dependent on the outcomes specified in the EHCP in order to avoid schools making decisions about support based predominantly on the resources available.

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Introduction

Our previous research – the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project – showed that day-to-day support for pupils with special education needs (SEN) in mainstream schools is often provided by teaching assistants (TAs), instead of teachers. This, we argue, is one main reason for other results from the DISS project, which found that support from TAs had a more profound negative impact on the academic progress of pupils with SEN than pupils without SEN (Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012).

However, there is surprisingly little systematic information on the overall support and interactions experienced by pupils with the highest level of need attending mainstream schools. The Making a Statement (MaSt) project was funded by the Nuffield Foundation to provide such a picture. The study also addressed factors that influenced the effectiveness of what is often described as ‘additional support’ provided by TAs in mainstream settings.

The main findings from the MaSt project, reported here, are based on results from extensive systematic observations of 48 pupils with statements of SEN for moderate learning difficulties (MLD) or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and 151 average attaining ‘control’ pupils. The observation data were supplemented with detailed case studies, based largely on interviews with nearly 200 teachers, TAs, SENCOs/inclusion managers and parents/carers. All data were collected over the 2011/12 school year, and involved a team of researchers shadowing pupils in Year 5 over one week each.

Findings from the MaSt study provide a much-needed perspective on inclusive practice vital for informing policymaking and classroom practice, at a time when SEN provision is undergoing the biggest reform in 30 years (DfE, 2012a).

Background

Following changes to policy in the 1980s, many pupils with SEN are now educated in mainstream primary and secondary schools. In schools in England, children and young people with SEN are presently defined in terms of three levels of increasing need: School Action, School Action Plus, or they have a statement of SEN. We note that, as part of the current review of SEN by the Department for Education (DfE), this category system is due to be replaced with a ‘school-based category of SEN’, and the function of the statement is to be widened and renamed an Education and Health Care plan (EHCP) (DfE, 2012a).

Over the last five years, the combined number of pupils with SEN in state-funded primary schools on the three levels has fluctuated from 19.6% in 2008, to a high of 20% in 2010, and then, in 2012, falling to 18.5% (780,000 pupils) (DfE, 2012b). Over the same period, the proportion of pupils with a statement has remained stable at 1.4% (58,535 pupils in 2012).

The historical increase in the number of pupils with SEN being included in mainstream schools has been accompanied and assisted by an increase in the numbers of classroom-

and pupil-based support staff, known variously as teaching assistants or learning support assistants, but referred to collectively as TAs throughout this report².

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) TAs in mainstream schools in England has more than trebled since 1997 to about 190,000 (DfE, 2011). At the time of writing, TAs comprised a quarter of the mainstream school workforce in England, Wales and Scotland³: 32% of the primary school workforce and 15% of the secondary school workforce (DfE, 2012c; Statistics for Wales, 2011; The Scottish Government, 2011). However, this somewhat underplays the reality of this growth in primary schools, where – on the basis of a headcount – there is almost one TA for every teacher: 223,671 teachers and 215,584 TAs⁴ (DfE, 2012c).

Perhaps not surprisingly, such a substantial part of the school workforce accounts for a significant proportion of the annual primary education budget. Expenditure on TAs in 2010/11 constituted around 16% of the £17.1 billion spent by primary schools, or £2.8 billion (DfE 2012d). To give that figure some context, over the same period, primary schools spent £8.7 billion (or 51% of the primary education budget) on teaching staff (DfE, 2012d).

On the face of it, this appears to be a worthwhile investment, given that primary headteachers report that one of the main reasons for the increase in TAs, and indeed some other support staff (such as bilingual support assistants), is that inclusion policies would be impossible to implement without them (Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012). However, results from the longitudinal DISS project, which was designed to provide much needed information on the deployment and impact of TAs and other school support staff – and which is the main inspiration for this MaSt study – raised serious questions about the way the employment and deployment of TAs has become closely connected to policies of including pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.

Results from the DISS project (described in full in Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012) show that TAs have a predominantly pedagogical role, and spend much of their time supporting pupils with SEN and lower attaining pupils. This has obvious benefits because it allows hard-pressed teachers to devote their time to the rest of the class, in the knowledge that the children in most need are being given potentially valuable individual attention by TAs. There are also other benefits in terms of reductions of teacher workloads.

But unfortunately, the DISS project also found that there are serious unintended consequences: there was a negative relationship between the amount of TA support received and the progress made by pupils, and in particular those with the highest levels of SEN (Webster *et al.*, 2010). The more support pupils receive from TAs, the less progress they make, and this is not explained by pupil characteristics such as prior

² In line with common usage, we use the term ‘teaching assistant’ to cover equivalent classroom based paraprofessional roles, such as ‘learning support assistant’, ‘special needs assistant’ and ‘classroom assistant’. We also include ‘higher level teaching assistants’ in this definition.

³ All full-time equivalent teachers and support staff in publicly funded schools, including all local authority maintained schools, academies and city technology colleges.

⁴ On the basis of data for full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, the ratio of teachers to TAs is slightly lower, but nonetheless significant: for every three FTE teachers, there are two FTE TAs (DfE, 2012c).

attainment, SEN status or income deprivation (Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012). This finding was found over four primary year groups, and three secondary year groups.

Drawing on extensive data collected through observations, surveys, interviews and lesson recordings, the main explanation for these results on pupil attainment appears to be the way TA-supported pupils spend less time interacting with the teacher and become separated from the teacher and curriculum. Effectively, the least qualified staff (TAs) have been assigned primary educator status for the pupils in most need. It is then, perhaps not surprising that pupils with SEN tend to make less progress than their peers (Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012). In a similar way, Klassen (2001) found that pupils who had a statement of SEN for a specific literacy difficulty or dyslexia, and who were assigned additional support for literacy, made less progress than their unsupported peers.

The situation described above raises both significant concerns about the support given to pupils with SEN and concerns about fairness and discrimination in education. As Giangreco *et al.* (2005) have argued, it is unlikely that we would allow such an educational regime for pupils without SEN.

Moreover, recent statistics have shown that there is a growing interconnection between SEN and deprivation. Government data shows that pupils with an SEN statement in primary and secondary schools are twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals as pupils without SEN (DCSF, 2009). The authoritative Cambridge Primary Review, which put the needs of vulnerable children at its heart, concluded that 'there is an urgency about providing educational and social support for particular children in difficulty which cannot wait for primary education – or society as a whole – to become more equitable and inclusive' (Alexander, 2009).

In addition, school failure – in terms of leaving compulsory education without qualifications, or having inadequate literacy and numeracy skills – is known to have long-term damaging effects on society, as well as for the individuals concerned (Feinstein *et al.*, 2008). Educational failure feeds into social problems and the financial cost, through the involvement of social welfare, health and judicial systems, can be seen as avoidable expenditure.

The policy context

It is against the backdrop of closing the attainment gap between pupils from deprived and well-off backgrounds that the coalition government have initiated an overhaul of the systems and processes relating to the identification and provision of SEN, and improving learning outcomes for vulnerable pupils via the Pupil Premium.

*'The biggest shake up of SEN in 30 years'*⁵

Of specific interest to the present study are the coalition's proposed changes to SEN – the biggest in a generation. Here, we briefly describe the trajectory of developments in SEN preceding the 2011 Green Paper (DfE, 2011) and subsequent Children and Families Bill (DfE, 2013), and the key changes to policy and practice proposed.

The Education Act (1981) gave legal weight to the recommendations of the Warnock inquiry into SEN (DES, 1978) and was the catalyst to greatly increasing the number of children with SEN educated in mainstream schools. The Act introduced the system of statementing, whereby a statutory assessment of a pupil's SEN was set out in a legal document alongside the provision required to meet those needs; in effect, creating a bespoke package of care. Provision for SEN is taken to mean provision that is additional to, or otherwise different from, that normally available to children in mainstream settings. A key feature of the statement is that provision is very often expressed in terms of a number of hours of support from a TA. In a sense, the resources attached to the statement to ensure a pupil's needs are met, have become the accepted currency of statements, rather than the nature of the provision itself.

The evolution of debates over the last 30 years concerning the rights of pupils with SEN to be educated in mainstream schools can be seen in the move from 'integration' to 'inclusion' (Moran and Abbott, 2002). Further changes to legislation since the mid-nineties in the form of the Education Act (1996), the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) and the Disability Discrimination Act (2005), strengthened and protected the rights of the child to an inclusive education. The New Labour government's ten-year Children's Plan (2007) aimed to personalise learning for all pupils, and in this sense, a trend towards 'personalisation' might have supplanted 'inclusion' as the way in which education for pupils with SEN was thought about in the future (Alexander, 2009); however, the Plan never reached fruition and did not survive the change of government in 2010.

The parents/carers of children with SEN often describe the statementing process as a long and stressful battle, in which they hold a weak position against the local authority (LA) (Hartas, 2008; Jones and Swain, 2001; Lindsay, 2007; O'Connor, 2008; Penfold *et al.*, 2009; Truss, 2008). Whilst the 1981 Education Act had the positive effect of establishing a new level of individual and institutional awareness, which enabled some pupils with SEN access to a mainstream education, decisions about provision were made in terms of the available resources of LAs and the school, rather than the needs of the child (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009; Warnock, 2005). Some LAs and schools are still reluctant to initiate the statementing process, not only for financial reasons, but

⁵ Ward, H. and Vaughan R. (2011) SEN shake-up: every child assessed before three, *Times Educational Supplement*, 11th March. Available online: <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6072560>. (accessed 6.12.2012).

also because LA advisors and teachers lack of expertise, knowledge and skills relating to SEN, and the fear of the practical implications of having pupils with particular types of SEN in the school (Dyson *et al.*, 2004; Humphrey and Lewis, 2008; Nutbrown and Clough, 2004; Penfold *et al.*, 2009; Wheeler *et al.*, 2008).

To use the emotive language of parents', winning the long battle for a statement is too often seen as the conclusion of the process rather than just one phase in providing what is needed for the child (Hartas, 2008; Jones and Swain, 2001; Penfold *et al.*, 2009). In the interests of maximising scarce resources, some schools subsume all the funding for SEN provision into one pot for redistribution among a large number of pupils with SEN – not all of whom will have a statement – which has the effect of pupils with a statement subsidising the support of those without (Hartas, 2008; Jones and Swain, 2001; Penfold *et al.*, 2009).

Furthermore, as the needs of pupils with SEN can vary greatly, this practice of bundling funding and pupils with SEN together often leads to generic types of support, and means that provision to meet the particular needs of pupils with statements (and to funding is attached) gets overlooked or watered down.

Parental confidence in the SEN system, and in particular, in relation to the quality and clarity of statements and school accountability, was the subject of the 2009 Lamb Inquiry. Despite the vast majority of parents and carers who contributed to the inquiry stating that they were satisfied with their child's current placement (Lamb, 2009), their experiences in securing for their child a diagnosis and, in particular, an amount (in hours) of support from a one-to-one TA, together with wider concerns from Ofsted regarding what constitutes 'adequate progress' for pupils with SEN and the haphazard school systems for monitoring the attainment of these pupils (Ofsted, 2006), prompted the coalition government to begin consultation, within a year of coming to power, on a wholesale reform of the SEN system.

At the time of writing, the coalition's plans – in the form of the Children and Families Bill – have been put before Parliament for their first reading. Since summer 2012, 20 pathfinder projects have been developing and testing the key elements set out in the preceding Green Paper⁶, including the EHCPs, which combine the educational provision listed in statements with provision from health and social services into one support package, and the introduction a 'personal budget', which would give parents/carers control over their child's SEN funding. We understand that another proposed change is a move toward expressing the resources attached to a statement in terms of a monetary amount, rather than hours of TA support.

The Pupil Premium

Whilst the new Bill has, as one of its central proposals, the aim of devolving power and resources to parents, so the coalition government has also implemented plans to do likewise for schools via the Pupil Premium. Introduced in 2011, the Pupil Premium is a £1.25 billion fund to assist schools to provide 'additional provision' for pupils from families on lower income (e.g. those known to be eligible for free school meals, and

⁶ <http://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk>

looked-after children) – collectively, a group of pupils that overlap considerably with pupils with SEN.

In a similar way to the proposed changes to how the resources attached to a statement are expressed, the Pupil Premium is also expressed as a monetary amount (a funding formula decides how much each school receives on a per pupil basis). Schools are free to invest these funds in any way they choose (e.g. in staffing or ICT), but the coalition has made it clear to school leaders that their funding allocation, details of what they have spent it on, and the academic outcomes of pupils targeted by the Premium, will be published online (e.g. in performance tables). Schools also face specific scrutiny from Ofsted inspectors on their spending decisions, as the government attempts to hold schools to greater public account.

Early evidence suggests that primary school leaders have identified new and existing TAs as the ‘intervention’ in which they are most likely to invest their Premium money (Cunningham and Lewis, 2012; Ofsted, 2012). However, principally citing the results of the DISS project, some commentators have suggested that this is unlikely to have as significant effect on the learning outcomes of disadvantaged pupils as other interventions (Higgins *et al.*, 2012), unless schools rethink how TAs are deployed and prepared (Gross and Hatchett, 2012).

Although the Pupil Premium and the resources that are attached to statements – both now and in the future – represent separate funding streams, they target particular, but not dissimilar, groups of pupils. And the needs of these pupils are typically met by the same means: support from TAs.

Therefore, the key point to make about the current policy context against which the MaSt project was conducted is that school leaders and governing bodies are under greater scrutiny than ever before to spend resources (already diminished as a result of cuts to public sector funding) on ‘things that work’ to improve learning outcomes for the pupils who find learning more challenging than their peers. Therefore, knowing more about the experiences of pupils with SEN, and the effects of these experiences, is imperative if schools are to make cost-effective decisions about how to meet their needs and raise attainment.

A broader justification for the MaSt study, over and above the immediate issues of reform to the statementing procedures and the Pupil Premium, is that, whatever changes are brought about by the Children and Families Bill, there will always be a group of pupils who – however they are labelled – are likely to have difficulties in accessing the everyday classroom learning experiences. Therefore, obtaining more information on their interactions and the supports currently in place is essential to improving practice.

The Making a Statement project

As the brief review of developments in SEN above shows, there is nothing new about a concern with the education of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. There has, for example, been a good deal of interest in appropriate pedagogies for pupils with SEN (Gersten and Edwards Santoro, 2007), and on school policies of inclusion and school leadership (Ainscow, 2007). But there is surprisingly little research that documents, in a systematic way, the support experienced by pupils with SEN, and specifically, those with statements. One of the most authoritative sources available – *The SAGE Handbook of Special Education* – contains comprehensive coverage of forty papers from experts in special education from the UK and USA (Florian, 2009), but does not have any descriptive information of the sort we are suggesting is vital at this stage.

There is a common assumption that pupils in most need will be getting ‘additional support’, but as the DISS study shows, this is not the case: the ‘additional support’ the statement entitles a pupil to is often provided by a TA and not a teacher. However, the DISS project offers only a partial picture of support received, because it was not set up to cover all the educational support and experiences of pupils. Our review of the literature has failed to yield any recent research that comes close to what we argue is urgently needed. There is very little information that we have been able to find on:

- The tasks given to pupils with SEN
- The locations and contexts within which they are supported (e.g. in and out of the classroom; individual, group and class contexts)
- The professional identity of the people providing support (e.g. teachers, TAs, learning mentors, peripatetic teachers, therapists and other support staff and specialists; parent-helpers and other volunteers)
- The nature of the interactions experienced by pupils with SEN (e.g. the frequency and duration of different interactions with adults and peers).

One exception to this lack of research is the early observation studies of pupils with SEN by Croll and Moses in 1985 – the One in Five study. This research was concerned with describing the behaviour and interactions of pupils with SEN (as defined by teachers) and how these differed from pupils without SEN. The classroom situation, policy and political contexts for the inclusion of pupils with SEN, the understanding of different forms of SEN, and the increased and changed roles of TAs and other adults, have all changed since the 1980s, but the MaSt project was informed by methods used in this valuable early research. The study also built on research in the USA by Zigmond (2006) in the 1980s and early-1990s, which used explanatory observational studies to ‘look “inside the black box” at how students with learning disabilities were spending their time and at what instructional and learning opportunities were being provided for them’.

A later survey in 1998 of 48 schools involved in the original One in Five study found concerns with the ‘quality of support provided to children [with SEN] by classroom assistants and learning support assistants’, and the way in which the pupils ‘who most needed a teacher’s support were spending a lot of their time in class with someone who was not a trained teacher’ (Croll and Moses, 2000). Therefore, the description of the

interactions involving pupils with SEN – being as they are, at the heart of all educational experiences – is of particular importance.

The DISS project found that pupils' interactions with TAs tended to be qualitatively different to those involving teachers: they were more concerned with task completion than learning, and more reactive rather than proactive, and these might be factors influencing the educational progress of pupils with SEN. But there is little information on the overall nature of interactions experienced by pupils with SEN. Such information would need to cover obviously educational interactions but also, in line with parents' views expressed to the Lamb Inquiry, interactions that are more geared to nurturing 'soft skills' (Lamb, 2009).

What is more, little is known about how the educational experiences of pupils with SEN matches up with the provision set out in statements of SEN, which describe their needs and the ways in which 'additional support' and special help is to be planned and provided in order to meet those needs.

The MaSt study, therefore, aimed to provide a detailed description of the tasks, contexts, personnel and interactions involving pupils with statements of SEN, and how it matches the planned provisions of the statements. The main research questions were:

1. What is the composition of everyday educational experiences for primary-aged pupils with a statement of SEN?
2. What factors enable or inhibit the stated provision being met, and enable or inhibit the effectiveness of teaching and support in terms of pupil outcomes?

It was not the aim of the MaSt study to investigate in any depth the statementing process, nor to measure impact and outcomes for pupils. Instead, the focus of the study was on what happens after a statement has been awarded. We argue that the point at which the statement is translated into provision is a cause for serious concern, and an area we know little about in any detail. Parents/carers might be broadly satisfied with their child's current placement (Lamb, 2009), yet Ofsted (2006) concluded that there is a misconception that support from TAs can ensure good quality intervention or adequate progress by pupils, and evidence from the DISS project supports this view.

Without any systematic empirical evidence of what it is pupils with a statement experience moment-by-moment, day-to-day, it is difficult to know either what it is in terms of provision that parents/carers are satisfied with, or how acutely the broader indicators of ineffective provision are felt. Put simply, despite these genuine concerns and decision by the government to overhaul the statementing system, we still do not know what the provision set out in an SEN statement looks like to the pupils on the receiving end.

Without being clear about what pupils with statements experience, we cannot make effective judgements about which provisions work best (Lewis, 2006). Such research will also be useful in documenting examples of practice and policy, as reflected in everyday educational experiences, which work well, which work less well, and which can inform future policy and practice. The proposed research will also draw on

innovative research methods previously developed in the DISS project, as described below.

This research will also be relevant as the new legislation on SEN is finalised, when statements as such will be replaced by EHCPs. In the week this report was published, the Children and Families Bill, which sets out the reforms, received its first reading in Parliament. Information on precisely how the ECHPs will operate in practice is still to be defined on the basis of results from the, as yet incomplete, Pathfinder projects (DfE, 2013).

Whatever these changes in policy and procedures will mean in detail, many of the pupils they will affect will continue to be educated in mainstream schools; therefore, the nature of their interactions and support will still be of concern. We hope this research will inform not only the structural and classroom processes that comprise future support for pupils with SEN, but also inform important underlying pedagogical issues about ways of educating these pupils.

Methodology

We gathered data through a rigorous analysis of the activities of pupils with statements and their interactions with teachers, TAs and other adults over the course of a school week. Provision for statemented pupils is made in terms of a weekly allocation of hours, and so data collection over five days is necessary in order to be confident about the comparisons made between planned provision (e.g. what the statement says) and the observed reality. The study had two components:

1. A systematic account of the moment-by-moment experiences of primary-aged pupils with statements of SEN in everyday mainstream settings
2. A description of the perceptions and expectations different stakeholders have of the structures and delivery of provision, and its resemblance to the stated or intended package of provision.

The project involved detailed observations on 48 pupils in Year 5 who had a statement for either moderate learning difficulties⁷ (MLD) or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). Further details on the pupil sample follow shortly. We selected these categories of SEN above all others as they are commonly occurring, and were also likely to detect school support factors connected to problems with learning and classroom engagement, and allow such issues to emerge. Other categories of SEN (e.g. hearing or visual impairment) were more likely to be affected by, and be seen by schools in terms of, within-pupil factors⁸.

Over the course of the 2011/12 school year, the research team, in collaboration with colleagues in six local authorities, identified pupils who met the above selection criteria. With the help of the LAs, we approached the headteachers of the schools these pupils attend to recruit them for the study. We followed up expressions of interest from headteachers, who then facilitated the process of securing permission from parents/carers and obtaining the necessary consents and ethical clearances. The main bulk of school visits were carried out in the spring and summer terms in 2012.

Data collection tools

Researchers shadowed a statemented pupil for a school week, and collected data using an extended version of the data collection tools used in the DISS project. The MaSt study's multi-method approach combined quantitative systematic observations from the pupil's perspective, with contextual data drawn from interviews and general qualitative observations and summaries. The tools formed part of a tested methodology,

⁷ Pupils with moderate learning difficulties have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and language delay, lower self-esteem, lower levels of concentration and under-developed social skills, compared to pupils without SEN.

⁸ It is noted that whilst the same can be said for pupils with a statement for BESD, effort was made to select pupils whose statement also covers learning difficulties connected to BESD, and whose needs closely resemble those defined as, or comparable, to MLD.

adapted to serve the purposes of this study. In this section of the report, we provide more detail the methods of data collection.

Systematic observations

The main method of data collection was a systematic observation schedule that described the activities of pupils with statements and control pupils on a minute-by-minute basis. The aim was to provide a rigorous, objective and replicable description of behaviour.

The method used has its origins in earlier schedules used in the earlier Class Size and Adult Pupil Ratios (Blatchford *et al.*, 2003) project and the DISS project (Blatchford *et al.*, 2009). It used a category system determined prior to data collection with explicit and rigorous definitions and criteria for classifying behaviour and contexts. Observers recorded behaviour according to explicit decision rules.

Sample

Observations were coded at minutely intervals over the course of the week. Overall, there were 38,865 data points, collected over 648 hours of classroom observation. On average, there were 810 data points per pupil (there were 48 pupils). The equivalent of 13.5 hours of observation were conducted over a school week. A total of 886 lessons were observed, with an average duration of 44 minutes.

Pupils

Observations were conducted on the 48 pupils with a statement of SEN across 45 schools. As described above, the MaSt study focussed on pupils who were in Year 5 and who had a statement for either MLD or BESD. Five pupils had a somewhat more complex composition of difficulties, of which one of the main presenting needs was either MLD or BESD. A breakdown of the pupil sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Pupils with statements

	Statement type		Gender				Ethnicity				EAL		FSM	
			Boy		Girl		White		Other					
MLD	29	60%	18	50%	11	92%	24	65%	5	45%	3	100%	10	45%
BESD	14	29%	14	39%	0	0%	12	32%	2	18%	0	0%	8	36%
Composite	5	10%	4	11%	1	8%	1	3%	4	36%	0	0%	4	18%
Total	48	100%	36	75%	12	25%	37	77%	11	23%	3	6%	22	46%

How representative is the sample of pupils in the MaSt study of pupils with statements nationally? To answer this question, we drew on data issued by the Department for Education on pupils in English schools collected during the school year our research was conducted (DfE, 2012b). Over this period, there were 58,535 primary-aged pupils who had a statement of SEN (1.4% of all pupils attending state-funded primary schools). A fraction under 10,000 pupils (17%) were in Year 5.

Of these pupils in Year 5, 74% were boys and 26% were girls. Nationally, of all primary pupils with statements, 78% are white and 22% are defined as being in another ethnic group. As can be seen from the data in Table 1, our sample was very consistent with this national picture. Primary-aged pupils with statements known to be eligible for free

school meals (FSM) were over-represented in our sample, whilst pupils whose first language is known or believed to be one other than English (EAL) are under-represented (FSM: nationally=29%; MaSt=46%. EAL: nationally=15%; MaSt=6%).

As our aim was to track pupils with statements for particular categories of SEN, our sample cannot be seen as representative of all pupils with statements. We note, however, that MLD and BESD are two of the most commonly occurring categories of SEN under which statements are granted. Nationally, pupils with statements for MLD and BESD comprise, respectively, 11% and 13% of all primary-aged pupils with statements. The most commonly occurring type of SEN for which statements are awarded is speech, language and communications needs (SLCN) (24%). The main reason we chose not to focus on this group of pupils was because colleagues from the Institute of Education and the University of Warwick were undertaking a study of provision for pupils with SLCN⁹ over the same period as the MaSt project was conducted.

As can be seen from Table 1, there were no girls in our sample with a statement for BESD, which is in line with the general low prevalence of this. Nationally, girls comprise only 6% of girls with statements in state-funded schools (e.g. primary, secondary and special schools) (n=3,690), and 2% of all pupils with statements overall. Boys with a statement for BESD, on the other hand, comprise 17% of all boys with statements (n=26,500), and 12% of all statemented pupils, in state-funded schools.

Nationally, MLD is the most commonly occurring category of SEN for girls with statements, and a greater proportion of girls have a statement for MLD than boys: 21% vs. 15%. However, in terms of raw numbers, there are almost twice as many boys with a statement for MLD than girls (22,720 vs. 11,995).

Overall, then, the sample of pupils in the MaSt study can be seen to be broadly in line with national profile for pupils with statements for SEN.

Observations were also collected on 'control' pupils. The aim here was to observe a sample of pupils – average in the class in terms of their academic attainment – in order to provide a comparison and point of reference for the results on the pupils with statements. Teachers were asked to identify at least three average attaining pupils in the statemented pupil's class, and one of these pupils was used as the control for each lesson observation. These pupils were rotated to extend the numbers observed but also to accommodate possible absences. Control pupils were matched to the pupils with statements only in terms of gender. There were 151 control pupils in the sample: 115 boys and 36 girls.

Table 2 below presents a breakdown of all observations of all pupils included in the MaSt study by the main pupil characteristics.

⁹ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/better/>

Table 2. Observations of all pupils (control and statemented)

	Total observations		Gender				Ethnicity				EAL		FSM	
			Boys		Girls		White British		Other					
Control	5,005	13%	4,176	14%	829	11%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Statemented	33,860	87%	26,625	86%	7,235	90%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>MLD</i>	20,878	54%	14,266	46%	6,612	82%	18,448	68%	2,430	49%	2,783	100%	7,795	47%
<i>BESD</i>	9,057	23%	9,057	29%	0	0%	7,525	28%	1,532	31%	0	0%	5,646	34%
<i>Composite</i>	3,925	10%	3,302	11%	623	8%	1,152	4%	961	20%	0	0%	3,035	18%
Total	38,865	100%	30,801	100%	8,064	100%	27,125	100%	4,923	100%	2,783	100%	16,476	100%

School staff

The adults working with pupils (both control pupils and those with statements) were also the subjects of observation. The sample of school staff is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Adults included in observations

Teachers	189	49%
TAs	174	46%
Other adults	19	5%
Total	382	100%

Table 4 below shows the composition of adults present in the locations where observations took place (both in and away from the classroom), for teachers and TAs only; other adults have not been included. It can be seen that in three quarters of observations (73%), there was one teacher present, and in 45% of observations there was one TA present. Interestingly, the historical classroom arrangement (i.e. one teacher and no TAs) occurred in only 14% of observations – a tangible sign of how much the presence of TAs has become an established feature of classroom life.

In 10% of observations, one or more TAs were present, but no teachers; and in 18% of observations, at least one teacher was present, but no TAs. The most common composition of adults across the observations was one teacher and one TA (30%), and one teacher and two TAs (25%).

Evidence from the case studies shows that in most cases (n=21 out of 48), the pupil had a specific TA attached to him/her on a one-to-one basis. Eight pupils had two TAs attached to him/her. In many cases, (n=18) a general class-based TA was also deployed to work in the pupil's class. Therefore, in many lessons, there were three adults present during classroom observations: the teacher; the TA attached to the statemented pupil; and a class TA, who often (although not exclusively) supported other lower attaining pupils.

Table 4. Composition of adults present in observations

Number of TAs	Number of teachers							
	0		1		2+		Total	
0	311	1%	5,291	14%	1,374	4%	6,976	18%
1	2,553	7%	11,731	30%	3,357	9%	17,641	45%
2	895	2%	9,859	25%	1,701	4%	12,455	32%
3+	246	1%	1,547	4%	0	0%	1,793	5%
Total	4,005	10%	28,428	73%	6,432	17%	38,365	100%

Schools

There were 45 schools visited in total, located in two large local authorities (both similar on demographic criteria) and four London boroughs. About half of the schools (n=22) were two-form entry primary schools. There were nine single form entry schools and nine three or four form entry schools. Five schools had an additional resource provision (ARP) attached, which the statemented pupil attended for at least part of the week. Twenty schools were situated in urban areas, and seven in rural or semi-rural areas. Four schools were situated in deprived/low socio-economic status areas, and three schools served mid to high socio-economic status areas.

Systematic observation schedule

The main focus of the observations was pupils with a statement of SEN. In order to assess how far statemented pupils' experiences differed from the average pupil experience, every fifth minute of each observation period, the focus moved from the statemented pupil to the 'control' pupil. The logic of shadowing statemented pupils across the week inevitably resulted in observations being carried out away from contexts where the control pupil could also be observed. Therefore, very few observations of control pupils were conducted away from the classroom and in ARPs, and these have accordingly not been included in tables of results below.

Observations were coded on a minute-by-minute basis. Researchers observed for the first ten seconds of each minute and then coded the interactions, activity and contextual information in operation during these ten seconds. A copy of the observation schedule used in the MaSt project can be found in Appendix 1. We now summarise the main observation categories.

Interactions

During the observation, the pupil could be involved in one of three 'social modes' (Blatchford, 2003): interacting with an adult; interacting with another pupil; or not interacting with anyone. Researchers coded whether the pupil being observed (either the statemented pupil or the control pupil) was mostly active or passive during an interaction; therefore, interactions were either: adult to pupil; pupil to adult; peer to pupil; or pupil to peer. A qualifying code denoted whether the interaction was non-verbal.

Instances where no interaction took place were also coded (e.g. when the pupil was quietly getting on with his/her work), and there was a sixth option ('Bin') for instances when the observer's view was uncertain (e.g. because it was momentarily obscured).

A set of decision rules was developed to help researchers choose between codes and improve reliability. For example, if the pupil and a peer talked for roughly the same amount of time during an observation interval, the interaction was coded as pupil-led (e.g. pupil to peer). Also, local interactions – regardless of duration – had priority over global interactions; so, if a TA whispered something to the pupil as the teacher was addressing the whole class, the interaction with the TA was given priority, as it was more specific and local to the observed pupil (the teacher's talk to the class was global).

On task and off task behaviour

Other observation studies (e.g. Croll and Moses, 1985) used a more nuanced category system for coding pupil behaviour; however, for the purposes of the MaSt study, researchers coded, at a general level, whether the pupil was on or off task. Pupils were assumed to be on task unless they were exhibiting very clear off task behaviour (e.g. talking to a peer about something other than the task; walking about the room without permission; or messing about). Internalising forms of off task behaviour (e.g. staring into space) were not specifically captured. If there was any uncertainty in the researcher's mind, the 'Bin' category was applied.

Pupil context

One of the main observation categories was directed at recording the classroom social context within which pupils were working at the time of the observation; that is, whether they were part of the whole class (or very large group of 12 or more pupils), a medium sized group (7-11 pupils), a small sized group (2-6 pupils), one-to-one with an adult, or were not interacting with anyone ('individual work').

Group attainment

The attainment level of the classes and groups in which pupils were seated or worked was additionally coded; attainment – as defined for the researcher by the teacher – was classified as being higher, average, lower or mixed.

Adult context

These codes described the context or main activity of the adults present during the observation interval, which may or may not have involved the pupil under observation. The adult context codes correlated with the pupil context codes, so adults could be: leading the whole class (or a large group of pupils); with a medium sized group; with a small group; one-to-one with an individual pupil; part of the audience listening to another adult lead the class (analogous with the pupil context code, 'part of the whole class'); and roving the classroom.

Location

In any one observation interval, the target pupil could be either in or away from the location where the main teaching activity is taking place. Typically, the teaching location was the classroom, although if the class are doing PE, it might be the playing field or the hall. In all such cases, location would be coded as 'in class', thereby indicating that the statemented pupil and the control pupil were in the same location.

Consistent with this logic, the pupil with the statement might be observed away from the class (typical examples include, an SEN room, the school library or a corridor). Instances where pupils were in an ARP where coded separately.

Curriculum focus

Researchers recorded the main subject that was being taught to the whole class or was the focus of the main teaching activity in which the observed pupil was involved (e.g. English, mathematics, science, etc.). Any instance that was not obviously connected to a curriculum subject was coded as 'non-curriculum'; examples of this included assemblies, a talk from a visitor and social skills interventions.

Pupil task

Researchers coded the extent to which the physical task (e.g. a worksheet) that the observed pupil was engaged in was the same as, differentiated from, or different to what the task given to the average attaining pupils, as represented by the control pupil. A 'differentiated task' was defined as being a task that had been modified in some way (e.g. simplified) from the core task invariably given to the control pupil; and a 'different task' was defined as a task connected to another topic or curriculum subject to that given to the control pupil. Instances of, say, a TA *verbally* differentiating a task were not recorded, as it was more difficult to collect these data systematically.

Instances of whether the pupil was engaged in a task connected to an intervention were also recorded. In the MaSt study, 'interventions' were defined as specific self-contained programmes of learning (often, though not always, available off the shelf), aimed at: boosting the learning of pupils falling behind in literacy or numeracy; developing skills in areas of speech and language skills, social interactions and emotional literacy; or developing weak motor functions (e.g. physiotherapy).

Class size

The final item to be coded on the observation schedule was the number of pupils present in the class. As class size remained relatively fixed for long periods of observation, and because it could be particularly time-consuming to do a headcount each minute, this item was coded every fifth minute.

Inter-rater reliability analysis

It is important in studies using systematic observations to determine the reliability of the coding between multiple observers. Two rounds of inter-rater reliability checks were made near the start and mid-point of the main phase of data collection. The method for conducting the inter-rater checks involved one researcher (R1) spending half a day with the other researchers (R2 and R3) in school, coding observations contemporaneously.

Two separate analyses were conducted, comparing observations made by R1 and R2, and observations made by R1 and R3. In all, the paired observations each covered 180 minute-long time intervals; therefore, each analysis is based on three hours of observation.

The observation data were entered into SPSS and reliability coefficients (kappa) were calculated for the main sets of mutually exclusive categories:

- Interactions
- On task and off task behaviour
- Pupil context
- Group attainment
- Adult context
- Pupil task.

Reliability was calculated by taking the observations for each minute as the unit of analysis, and examining the extent of agreement between the codes recorded by R1 and R2, and by R1 and R3. The kappa scores for the two analyses are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Kappa scores for inter-rater reliability analysis

Variable	R1 and R2	R1 and R3
Interactions	0.80	0.69
On and off task	0.61	0.60
Pupil context	0.86	0.95
Group attainment	1.00	0.97
Adult 1 context	0.80	0.89
Adult 2 context	No data	0.89
Pupil task	0.83	1.00

There was consistently high or very high agreement for most of the variables (pupil context; group attainment; adult contexts; pupil task), with kappa scores of 0.80 or higher. The kappa score for interactions coded by R1 and R2 was higher (0.80) than for those coded by R1 and R3 (0.69), but overall the inter-rater agreement for this variable is still substantial. Kappa scores for on and off task behaviour were consistent between the pairs of observers, but yielded a lower – but nonetheless – satisfactory coefficient.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with SENCoS, teachers, TAs and the pupil’s parents/carers enabled us to describe the perceptions and expectations that different stakeholders have of the structures and delivery of provisions, and its resemblance to the stated or intended package of provision. The interviews also revealed the factors that enabled or impeded the provision being delivered effectively. These data, therefore, allowed us to address the second research question.

The interviews contained questions about the needs of the statemented pupil and the provision in place for them. The same questions were put to all interviewees. Teachers and SENCo were asked some additional questions in line with their respective positions and responsibilities. The full interview schedules are presented in Appendix 2.

Interviews were held at various points across the week of the school visits. Interviews were typically arranged to take place from the third day of the visit, as by this time, the

researcher was more acquainted with the situation in school and was able to nuance particular questions in order to reflect his/her observations.

Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and an hour, depending on the time available. In the case of TAs, interviews were largely conducted during their hours of work; and in the case of parents/carers, a convenient arrangement was made for researchers to conduct interviews after the pupil had been dropped off at school in the morning, or before he/she was picked up at the end of the day.

Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. These transcripts formed the basis of the case study reports produced by researchers on each school visit. Interviews were conducted with 162 school staff from the main sample of school staff (see Table 3), plus 33 interviews with the parents and carers of the pupils with statements. A breakdown of interviewees is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Case study interviews

SENCOs/Inclusion managers	40	21%
Teachers	56	29%
TAs	66	34%
Parents/carers	33	17%
Total	195	100%

Documentation

With the help of the LAs and schools, researchers had access to documentary evidence, most notably the statement of SEN itself and recent Annual Reviews, which detailed any updates to the statement. These documents provided details of the pupil's current SEN (and, where relevant, their non-educational needs), together with the provisions that should have been in place to meet these needs. The allocation of support hours was also recorded on these documents.

Field notes

Finally, researchers kept on-going field notes of qualitative observations, contextual details, thoughts and impressions on the pupil experience being observed. These notes supplemented and assisted the interpretation of the data from other sources. Field notes were organised in relation to a set of overarching themes, which were developed to reflect the main observations categories and the questions in the interview schedule, and provided a framework for the construction of the case study reports (see below). The themes were:

- *The pupil*: background, history of needs, medical diagnosis
- *The support*: deployment of and interaction with adults; pupil work context (one-to-one, groups); differentiation; interventions
- *The statement*: stakeholders' familiarisation with the statement, individual education plan (IEP), etc.; hours of support; the value/utility of the statement
- *The fit between provision listed on statement and support*
- *Other issues*: pupil's progress and development over time; transition from primary school

Case study reports

The data from the interviews, documentation and field notes were combined to produce a case study report on each of the 48 statemented pupils. The case studies provided a more substantive picture of the educational experiences of pupils with statements of SEN than could be captured by the observations alone. In particular, the case studies provided more detail on the main areas covered by the observation categories: the contexts in which pupils with statements worked, the roles of teachers and TAs in those contexts, and the nature of the tasks pupils undertook.

The case study data relating to each pupil were written up according to a set of predetermined themes used for field notes. These data were then arranged thematically and interrogated. The prevalence of key and recurring features contained in the data were coded and later used to develop a set of emergent subthemes. These were refined and used to organise the presentation of results, which features later in this report.

The analysis of the case studies

Throughout the presentation of results from the case studies, we provide an indication of prevalence of findings, by stating the number of case studies in which particular subthemes or characteristics were identified (as $n=x$). The maximum number of cases in which a subtheme might be found, therefore, is 48.

In some instances, it was more appropriate to express prevalence at the respondent level; for example, in the section on staff training and guidance, we present the results in terms of responses from teachers and responses from TAs. Here, then, the denominator is the total number of teachers interviewed ($n=56$) and the total number of TAs interviewed ($n=66$). For clarity, we indicate where we have expressed results at the respondent level instead of the case (or pupil) level.

Prevalence was only counted when it was unequivocally evident in a case study report. It is possible, therefore, that *actual* prevalence (e.g. the total number of cases in which a particular subtheme and characteristic might apply) may exceed *stated* prevalence (e.g. the total number of cases in which a particular subtheme and characteristic was found). In other words, there may be more cases to which a particular subtheme or characteristic applies, but it was not possible to draw them out conclusively from the case study report. In this sense, prevalence data may appear to understate the significance or predominance of a particular issue; we suggest where we feel this might be the case.

Results from systematic observations

In this section we work through the main categories of pupil behaviour, and look at whether results varied in terms of location (in the classroom, out of the classroom, and in an additional resource provision, or ARP) and curriculum area.

Our initial analyses of the systematic observations data produced separate results for pupils with statements for MLD, pupils with statements for BESD, and the control pupils. However, as we found very few differences between the results for the pupils with statements, we combined these two categories for the analyses presented here.

Location

The logic of the observation system was such that one researcher followed the stated pupil wherever he/she went, so observations of the control pupil could not be made when both pupils were in separate locations. This is one reason for the smaller total of observation points for control pupils. It was very rare that both pupils were simultaneously observable in out of class contexts. For the purposes of analyses in this report that relate specifically to pupils' location, we have used only the observations for control pupils made in the classroom; the small number of observations of these pupils made outside of this context have been discounted from the analyses.

We first analysed the extent to which pupils were in or out of the classroom when the observations took place (see Table 7). There was a large difference between pupils with statements and control pupils. As expected, pupils with statements spent much less time in the classroom compared to control pupils. In a small percentage of instances, pupils with statements were observed working in an ARP attached to the school (4%). Overall, then, in over a quarter of all observations (28%), pupils with statements were observed in locations away from the mainstream class.

Table 7. Observations by pupil location

	Control		Statement	
In class	4,608	100%	24,101	72%
Out of class	0	0%	8,158	24%
ARP	0	0%	1,394	4%
Total	4,608	100%	33,653	100%

It is worth noting that close analysis of the case study data, along with observations of researchers, indicated that the locations in which the pupils with statements worked could be categorised on a scale from spending almost all the time in the classroom (e.g. having the same experience as control pupils), through being in the classroom, but separated in terms of having an individual workstation away from others, to experiencing a high degree of separation from the classroom in order to work in another location (including an ARP). We explore the case study data relating to pupil location later in the report.

Class size

As part of the data collection process, researchers made a headcount of the number of pupils in the classroom every fifth minute of the observation period. Class size was only recorded when the pupil with the statement and the control pupil were together in the main teaching location – which in almost all cases was the classroom; therefore, unlike the other results presented in this section of the report, there is no difference for control pupils and those with statements.

The results in Table 8 show the class size for observations collected in English and mathematics, and all other lessons; all other curriculum subjects (e.g. science, history, PE, etc.) were grouped together. The results show that the majority of observations were collected in the core lessons of English and mathematics (55%).

Pupils were mostly taught in classes of between 26 and 30. Smaller class sizes were slightly more likely in mathematics than English. The overall tendency for class sizes to be smaller in these lessons is likely to be the result of two factors. Firstly, many schools split the year group for core subjects, which often had the effect of a cohort of around 60 pupils being divided into three (not always equally populated) groups. The second factor is that for some subjects, such as PE, classes were sometimes collapsed, so pupils were taught in much larger groups (e.g. as a year group, which could happen in some smaller schools).

Table 8. Class size by curriculum subject

	English		Mathematics		Other subjects		Total	
12 -20 pupils	116	11%	111	21%	96	8%	323	12%
21 -25 pupils	353	35%	169	32%	322	26%	844	30%
26-30 pupils	449	44%	216	40%	544	43%	1,209	43%
31+ pupils	99	10%	40	7%	293	23%	432	15%
Total	1,017	100%	536	100%	1,255	100%	2,808	100%

Interaction with adults and peers

Almost all the interactions pupils had with adults were with teachers and TAs. There were a very small minority of pupil interactions (n=578, or 3% of all recorded observations) involving other adults (e.g. other school support staff, such as an administrative assistant or midday supervisor, or visitors). All interactions involving other adults have been omitted from the analyses that follow; the results in this report concern only pupils' interactions with teachers and TAs.

Generally speaking, a pupil in any classroom at any given time can be involved in one of three 'social modes' (Blatchford, 2003): i) interacting with an adult, usually the teacher; ii) interacting with another pupil; and iii) not interacting with anyone, perhaps working individually. Table 9 shows the number and percentage of observations control pupils and those with SEN were observed in these three modes. These results also include instances of non-verbal interactions, although overall these made up less than one percent of all interactions coded.

The results in Table 9 below show how the amount of time spent in the social modes differed for the pupils with statements and the controls. Pupils with statements tended to experience many more interactions with adults (59% vs. 41%), and experienced far fewer interactions with peers (18% vs. 33%). Strikingly, therefore, pupils with statements had roughly half as many contacts with peers, compared to control pupils. This supports the informal observations of researchers after their visits to schools that the pupils with statements seemed to spend less time talking, working and playing with other pupils in the class. The proportion of time both groups of pupils spent not interacting were roughly equal, accounting for around a quarter of observations.

Table 9. Interactions in the three social modes

	Control		Statement	
Adult and pupil	1,858	41%	18,126	59%
Peer and pupil	1,472	33%	5,521	18%
No Interaction	1,174	26%	7,300	24%
Total	4,504	100%	30,947	100%

These results can be extended by dividing the adult to pupil interactions into two: whether interactions were mainly from the adult to the pupil, (e.g. explanations or instructions), or from the pupil to the adult (e.g. the pupil asking a question or making a comment to the adult). A similar set of results on the direction of the interaction was also conducted for pupil to peer interactions. These results, which are an extended version of the results just shown, are in Table 10.

Table 10. Interactions in the three detailed social modes

	Control		Statement	
Adult to pupil	1,798	40%	15,652	51%
Pupil to adult	60	1%	2,474	8%
Peer to pupil	908	20%	3,651	12%
Pupil to peer	564	13%	1,870	6%
No Interaction	1,174	26%	7,300	24%
Total	4,502	100%	30,933	100%

For both groups of pupils, there were far fewer interactions from pupils to adults compared to those from adults to pupils, indicating that classroom talk tends to be a very one way affair, with pupils in a relatively passive role. This has been found in many observations studies in classrooms (e.g. Galton *et al.*, 2002; Blatchford *et al.*, 2003).

Interestingly, though, it was pupils with statements who, relative to control pupils, directed more interactions toward adults (8% vs. 1%). So although this type of more active pupil role was not common, pupils with statements were more likely than their classmates to be active in terms of asking questions, making comments, etc. We look below at the extent to which these interactions differed for teachers and TAs.

A similar comparison can be made of whether peer interactions were directed from peer to pupil or from pupil to peer. Results show that pupils with statements had somewhat fewer interactions with peers, compared with control pupils: peer to pupil = 12% vs. 20%; pupil to peer = 6% vs. 13%. For both groups of pupils, there are twice as many peer to pupil interactions as pupil to peer. This seems to be a general trend that might be due to the greater number of peers in the pupil's environment relative to the pupil. At a table of, say, five pupils, there is a four in five chance of peer to pupil interaction, but only a one in five chance of pupil to peer interaction.

Interactions with teachers and TAs

Focussing only on adult-pupil interactions, further analysis (shown in Table 11) revealed that whilst control pupils almost always interacted with teachers and almost never with TAs (95% with teachers; 5% with TAs), pupils with statements interacted with TAs almost as much as with teachers (53% with teachers; 47% with TAs).

Table 11. Which adults involved in interaction

	Control		Statement	
Teacher	1,759	95%	9,637	53%
TA	99	5%	8,489	47%
Total	1,858	100%	18,126	100%

We looked more closely at teacher to pupil and TA to pupil interactions by dividing them into whether they were directed by adults at pupils, or by pupils at adults. As we have seen, the former would typically represent times when the adult is explaining or instructing pupils, and the later represents times when pupils would, for example, make a comment or ask a question of an adult. These results are shown in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12. Adult to pupil interactions

	Control		Statement	
Teacher	1,716	95%	9,142	58%
TA	82	5%	6,510	42%
Total	1,798	100%	15,652	100%

Table 13. Pupil to adult interactions

	Control		Statement	
Teacher	43	72%	495	20%
TA	17	28%	1,979	80%
Total	60	100%	2,474	100%

Table 12 presents the results on adult to pupil interactions for teachers and TAs. It can be seen that results are quite similar to the overall results for teacher and TA interactions as seen in Table 11. This is not surprising given that adult to pupil interactions made up the vast bulk of all adult-pupil interactions (17,434 out of a total of 20,382, or 86%). As with the overall results for adult to pupil interactions, in the case

of control pupils, the vast majority of adult to pupil interactions were from the teacher (95%), while for pupils with statements, there is a more balance between interactions from the teacher and the TA.

The interesting results are in Table 13, which shows that of the all instances of pupil to adult interactions, there was a clear difference between control pupils and pupils with statements. While control pupils directed most of their interactions at teachers (72%), pupils with statements directed 80% of all their adult-focussed interactions to TAs, with only a fifth to teachers. If pupil to adult interactions are a sign of a more active form of engagement in interactions (in contrast to the more obviously passive role taken when a pupil is listening to an adult), then this indicates that pupils with statements have a more active role with TAs than they do with teachers. This is a similar result to that found in the DISS project (Blatchford *et al.*, 2012).

Interactions with adults by location

Here, we examine adult and pupil interactions in different locations. Results in Table 14 are shown separately for teachers and TAs.

Table 14. Adult and pupil interactions by location

		Control		Statement	
In class	Teacher and pupil	1,685	95%	8,059	64%
	TA and pupil	93	5%	4,542	36%
Out of class	Teacher and pupil	0	0%	1,042	22%
	TA and pupil	0	0%	3,681	78%
ARP	Teacher and pupil	0	0%	490	66%
	TA and pupil	0	0%	252	34%

In line with results already seen, the results in Table 14 confirm that control pupils received almost all classroom interactions from the teacher (95%) and very few from TAs (5%), and pupils with statements received many more interactions from TAs (36%) and fewer from the teacher (64%).

These results reveal the extent to which TAs dominated the teaching of pupils with statements when out of the classroom. Interestingly, although there were relatively few interactions in ARPs, in this context, it was teachers who played a much bigger role in directing interactions at pupils with statements; relatively speaking, pupils with statements were twice as likely to receive interactions from a teacher, compared to a TA.

Taking only the interactions pupils directed at teachers (not shown in Table 14), we find once again just how passive the role of the pupil is in school. Very rarely did we record the control pupils directing interactions at teachers or TAs in classrooms. In contrast, pupils with statements had a more active role in interactions with adults. In the classroom, pupils with statements were more likely to direct an interaction at a TA than the teacher (7% vs. 2%). This was especially likely to be the case for pupils with statements when they were out of the class: they were ten times more likely to direct an interaction at a TA than a teacher (21% vs. 2%). Again, consistent with the balance of teacher-pupil and TA-pupil interactions in ARPs, pupils with statements were more likely to direct and interaction at a teacher than a TA in these contexts (9% vs. 7%).

Interactions with adults by curriculum subject

We now look at whether adult to pupil and pupil to adult interactions varied between the four curriculum categories defined by the study. The core subjects of English and mathematics (or literacy and numeracy) were separated from all other National Curriculum subjects (e.g. science, history, art, PE, etc.). A fourth category – ‘non-curriculum’ – covered observations made in contexts where there were no obvious connections to a curriculum subject (for example, registration; a talk by a visitor).

The results, shown Table 15, were broadly similar across the different curriculum areas. For control pupils, teacher and pupil interactions considerably outnumbered TA and pupil interactions in each subject group. For pupils with statements, there was more balance between teacher and pupil and TA and pupil interactions in core and non-curriculum subjects, although there was a greater proportion of interaction involving TAs in English (59%) than teachers (41%).

In other subjects, pupils with statements had many more interactions with teachers, compared to TAs (71% vs. 29%). One explanation for this is that the bulk of TA support was provided in core lessons rather than non-core lessons. Also, core lessons typically took place in the morning, with non-core lessons taking place after lunchtime, when part-time TAs had gone home.

Table 15. Adult and pupil interactions by curriculum subject

		Control		Statement	
English	Teacher and pupil	486	91%	2,847	41%
	TA and pupil	47	9%	4,117	59%
Mathematics	Teacher and pupil	353	98%	2,435	54%
	TA and pupil	5	2%	2,095	46%
Other subjects	Teacher and pupil	810	95%	3,745	71%
	TA and pupil	43	5%	1,559	29%
Non-curriculum	Teacher and pupil	110	96%	606	46%
	TA and pupil	4	4%	718	55%

Pupil context

One of the main observation categories was directed at recording the classroom social context within which pupils were working at the time of the observation; that is, whether they were part of the whole class (or very large group of 12 or more pupils), a medium sized group (7-11 pupils), a small sized group (2-6 pupils), one-to-one with an adult, or were not interacting with anyone (‘individual work’). This information was recorded for every pupil for every observation regardless of whether any interaction took place.

As we have seen, pupils with statements, unlike control pupils, were observed in three different locations and results for pupil context are therefore given separately for each of these locations. The results, shown in Table 16, allow us to make direct comparisons of the experiences of control and statemented pupils when they are in the classroom at the same time (i.e. ‘in class’). It can be seen that pupils with statements spent a little

less time in the whole class context (44% vs. 49%). Instead, pupils with statements spent markedly more time working one-to-one with an adult (14% vs. 1% for controls).

Average attaining control pupils were more likely to be working on a task on their own (33% vs. 26%). It is worth emphasising that in almost half of all observations involving control pupils, they were in a predominantly audience mode; yet more evidence of just how passive the role of the pupil is in school.

Table 16. Pupil context by location

	Control		Statement							
	<i>In class</i>		<i>In class</i>		<i>Out of class</i>		<i>ARP</i>		<i>Total</i>	
Part of class/large group	2,221	49%	10,307	44%	737	10%	96	7%	11,140	34%
Part of medium group	59	1%	282	1%	436	6%	337	24%	1,055	3%
Part of small group	696	15%	3,575	15%	1,918	26%	608	44%	6,101	19%
One-to-one with adult	61	1%	3,358	14%	3,370	46%	140	10%	6,868	21%
Individual work	1,463	33%	6,058	26%	922	12%	209	15%	7,189	22%
Total	4,500	100%	23,580	100%	7,383	100%	1,390	100%	32,353	100%

When out of the class, pupils with statements were much more likely to be in a one-to-one context with an adult (typically a TA, as we shall see) (46% of observations out of the class), followed by being in small group (26%), and then engaged in individual work (12%). When in an ARP, pupils with statements spend less time in one-to-one context, and much more time in small or medium sized groups (68% of observations in ARPs) – most likely reflecting the smaller class sizes in these locations.

The total column to the far right of Table 16 shows the proportion of time pupils with statements spent in the various work contexts across the three locations. These results bring into sharper focus the noticeable difference between control pupils and those with statements in terms of time spent in the whole class context (34% vs. 49%), confirming the comments from researchers, after numerous days spent in classrooms, that pupils with statements tended to miss out on many whole class sessions.

We can also see the high amount of overall time that pupils with statements spent working one-to-one with an adult (21% vs. 1% for controls). Another way to express these findings is to say that pupils with statements interacted on a one-to-one basis in about one in five observations, and are 20 times more likely to be one-to-one with an adult than control pupils.

Pupil context by curriculum subject

Separate analyses of the pupil context data by each curriculum area suggested that the results for English, mathematics, other subjects and non-curriculum focus were broadly similar to the overall pattern of results presented above. There was a tendency for pupils with statements to have more whole class teaching and less one-to-one teaching in other subjects, and correspondingly less whole class teaching and more one-to-one teaching in English. As mentioned above, pupils with statements tended to be included in whole class contexts for other subjects in the afternoon, when they were less likely to receive TA support; whereas, one-to-one support most often took place in the mornings

and focused on literacy and numeracy. For control pupils, there was more whole class teaching and less small group contexts in non-curriculum topics.

Contextualising pupils' experiences in primary schools

It is worth setting the results on pupils' interactions with teachers and TAs, presented earlier, in the broadest possible context the data allow. By doing so, we can obtain a meaningful sense of how much time pupils spent interacting with adults in the three main contexts (class, group and one-to-one) across the three locations, as a proportion of all recorded interactions. To do this, we integrate the data reported so far on the three social modes and pupil contexts (separately when interacting with teachers and TAs) to show – as a percentage of all observations – how control and statemented pupils spent their time in school. The results are shown in Table 17. As with other tables, the results for pupils with statements are given separately for the three different locations.

Table 17. Composition of all pupil interactions by location and pupil context

		Control		Statement							
		In class		In class		Out of class		ARP		Total	
Teacher and pupil	Part of class/large group	1,489	35%	6,659	22%	398	1%	28	<1%	7,085	23%
	Part of medium group	16	<1%	70	<1%	144	<1%	138	<1%	352	1%
	Part of small group	63	1%	384	1%	403	1%	74	<1%	861	3%
	One-to-one with teacher	109	3%	915	3%	342	1%	0	0%	1,257	4%
	(Total) (% of all interactions)	(1,677)	(40%)	(8,028)	(26%)	(1,287)	(4%)	(240)	(1%)	(9,555)	(31%)
TA and pupil	Part of class/large group	42	1%	609	2%	13	<1%	2	<1%	624	2%
	Part of medium group	3	<1%	66	<1%	121	<1%	14	<1%	201	1%
	Part of small group	23	1%	988	3%	755	2%	34	<1%	1,777	6%
	One-to-one with TA	25	1%	2,857	9%	2,984	10%	0	0%	5,841	19%
	(Total) (% of all interactions)	(93)	(2%)	(4,520)	(15%)	(3,873)	(13%)	(50)	(<1%)	(8,443)	(27%)
Pupil and peer interaction		1,361	32%	4,114	13%	1,272	4%	124	<1%	5,510	18%
No interaction		1,102	26%	5,856	19%	1,246	4%	172	1%	7,274	24%
Total		4,233	100%	22,518	73%	7,678	25%	586	2%	30,782	100%

We have already noted the typically passive role pupils appear to have in teaching and learning, and this is shown by the results in Table 17, where it can be seen that over a third of all observations involving control pupils concerned class-level interaction with the teachers (35%). For both groups of pupils, just over 1% of all in-class interactions were with the teacher as part of a small group, and 3% were with the teacher on a one-to-one basis. For interactions across all locations, however, we found that statemented pupils had, overall, twice as many interactions with teachers in group and one-to-one contexts, compared with control pupils (8% vs. 4%).

Compared with control pupils, those with statements experienced less interaction overall with teachers (31% vs. 40% of observations), and much more interaction with TAs (27% vs. 2%) on a mainly small group and individual basis. Whole class

interactions with the teacher came chiefly at the expense of interactions with TAs. Furthermore, interactions with TAs also limited the opportunity for statemented pupils to interact with peers. Overall, these pupils had getting on for half as many peer interactions as control pupils (18% vs. 32%).

The results in Table 17 also confirm that all interactions away from the class (including in ARPs) tended to be with TAs rather than teachers (13% vs. 5%). We note that there were no instances of teachers or TAs working on a one-to-one basis with statemented pupils in ARPs; interactions were all at the group level.

Attainment level of pupils' classes and groups

In the next analysis we examined the attainment level of the classes and groups (in and out of classrooms) in which pupils were seated or worked. This was analysed in terms of the number of observations in which pupils with statements and controls were in higher, average or lower attaining classes and groups, or in mixed attainment classes and groups. The results are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Attainment level of pupils' classes and groups

	Control		Statement	
Higher attaining	11	<1%	130	1%
Average attaining	135	5%	271	2%
Lower attaining	151	5%	5,782	34%
Mixed attainment	2,524	89%	10,603	63%
Total	2,821	100%	16,786	100%

Pupils with statements spent far more time in lower attaining classes and groups (34% vs. 5%), while control pupils spent far more time in mixed attainment classes and groups (89% vs. 63%). These results for control pupil are not unexpected; it should be remembered that control pupils were chosen because teachers identified them as average attainers, and the attainment of pupils with statements tends to be lower by comparison. Nevertheless, the results do provide a clear picture of the classroom social context within which pupils with statements work and socialise, and the extent to which it tends to be homogeneous in terms of similarly lower attaining pupils. We return to these results below when we look further at the peer interactions in class.

Attainment level of small groups

We extended these results by examining the attainment level of the group separately just for small groups of two to six pupils, which is the size of group that tends to be seated around a table. The results (shown in Table 19) reveal that, in line with results for all group contexts, pupils with statements spent far more time than control pupils in small groups with lower attaining pupils (57% vs. 8%). In contrast, control pupils (as expected) spent most of their time in mixed and average attaining groups (91% in total).

Table 19. Attainment level of small groups

	Control		Statement	
Higher attaining	3	<1%	0	0%
Average attaining	91	13%	30	1%
Lower attaining	56	8%	3,222	57%
Mixed attainment	537	78%	2,380	42%
Total	687	100%	5,632	100%

Adult context

We now turn from the working and social contexts of pupils to the contexts for the adults working in the same classrooms as pupils. Whereas the pupil context noted the kinds of groupings within which pupils spent their day (and whether they interacted with adults), the adult context refers to the main contexts within which the adults worked, irrespective of any interaction with pupils. The context categories were similar to the contexts recorded for pupils, with two additions: being part of the class audience (e.g. when the TA listens to the teacher teach the class) and roving the class (e.g. walking around the room, checking pupils are on task).

Data on the activity of adults is drawn from a supplementary dataset of adult-focused observations, which was compiled contemporaneously with the main dataset of pupil-focused observations. The following analyses of adult work contexts (shown in Table 20), based on over 1,000 hours of observations of 189 teachers and 174 TAs, tell us what teachers and TAs were doing at the moment of observation. This data set is the basis of Table 4, where we saw that there were often one or two TAs in a classroom, but sometimes none and sometimes three or more. There was very often one teacher in the class during the observations, but there were also some observations with no teacher or two or more (see Table 4).

Table 20. Adult context

	Teacher		TA	
Leading class/large group	13,711	44%	498	2%
Part of medium group	937	3%	554	2%
Part of small group	3,878	12%	5,618	18%
With individual	3,551	11%	11,596	37%
Part of audience	2,406	8%	9,709	31%
Roving class	6,869	22%	3,080	10%
Total	31,352	100%	31,055	100%

Straight away, we can see that teachers spent the bulk of their time leading the whole class (or a large group – though this was very rare) or roving the class. Roving the class often involved having very brief interactions with one or more pupils during the ten second observation interval. In contrast, interactions with pupils when adults were roving are typically one-way and different to the more substantive interactions that

occurred in group and individual contexts. Teachers worked with individuals on a one-to-one basis 11% of the time, and with groups 15% of the time.

The context for TAs was very different to that of teachers. TAs spent most of their time with an individual pupil, and – as the results relating to the pupils’ context found – these individuals were almost exclusively pupils with statements, rather than control pupils. TAs spent 20% of the time working with groups of pupils – again, this tended to be the groups including statemented pupils. The smaller amount of time TAs spent roving the class compared with teachers suggests that TAs worked for a longer duration with pupils in one-to-one and group contexts. TAs very rarely led whole classes, but there were a number of instances across the MaSt study of TAs covering classes in the absence of the teacher.

The results for the ways in which teachers and TAs spend their time were similar to those found in the DISS project (Blatchford *et al.*, 2012); however, the observations from the MaSt study draw attention to the amount of time TAs spend in a more passive role, as part of the class audience. In almost a third of instances, TAs were found to be listening to the teacher teach; the reader will recall that control pupils and statemented pupils spent (respectively) 35% and 23% of their time doing likewise (see Table 17).

Taking only the observations of TAs in classrooms (which comprise 72% of all observations of TAs at work), we find that TAs spent 37% of the time in this largely inactive and passive role. This finding is compounded by the fact that, as the data in Table 4 shows, in 35% of observations, two or more TAs joined teachers in class – and all were very likely to be in audience mode at the same time.

We note that the results for teachers should be interpreted with particular care. The logic of data collection method for the observations meant that on the occasions when pupils with statements were observed working in a different location to the setting where the mainstream class and teacher were working, observations of the teacher were not possible. A good example of this is the way in which statemented pupils were often withdrawn from the class once the teacher had delivered her whole class input. As a consequence of this, it is likely that the proportion of time teachers spent leading the class might be slightly overestimated, and the proportion of time spent working with groups and individuals slightly underestimated (as the researcher would have been away from the class when the teacher was most likely to work with pupils in these contexts). On the whole, however, the results presented in Table 20 are consistent with findings from the observations conducted as part of the DISS project (Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012).

Adult context by location

As we suggested in the section above, we also examined data on the adult contexts separately by each location type. Results for teachers working in the mainstream class did not differ greatly from those in shown in Table 20 above. The key finding relating to TAs’ passive role in class was made above.

There were a much smaller proportion of all observations of teachers working with pupils away from the mainstream class (12%). Doing so allowed teachers more time to work with groups (31%) and individual pupils (19%). In comparison, spent more time

than teachers working away from the classroom (a quarter of observations involving TAs were made outside the classroom), and as consequence, they were more active. TAs spent the majority of their time away from the class working one-to-one with a pupil (51%), and 27% of the time working with groups (27%).

Fewer observations overall were made in ARPs: 2% of all teacher observations and 2% of all TA observations. ARPs tended to be run as classrooms in their own right, but contained a much smaller number of pupils – often less than a dozen pupils. Teachers nonetheless spent quite a sizable proportion of their time leading the ARP class, and this is reflected in the amount of time TAs are passive, listening to the teacher teach (28%).

Teachers were able to take advantage of the smaller class size, and overall spent half their time working with small groups (30%) and individuals (20%). These figures are comparable with results for teachers working away from the class. When not part of the class audience, TAs spent most of their time in ARPs working with small groups (39%) and individuals (28%).

Adult context by curriculum subject

We additionally analysed results for adult context in relation to the four different curriculum categories, separately for teachers and TAs. However, these results did not show any clear differences between curriculum areas, with the contexts broadly similar for each subject, and similar to the general picture for the adult contexts already shown for teachers and TAs.

Pupil task

For each observation, the physical task (e.g. a worksheet) in which the pupil was engaged was categorised as the same as, differentiated from, or different to the task undertaken by the majority of the pupils in the class; most often, this was the task given to the average attaining pupils. In this analysis, a ‘differentiated task’ is defined as being a task that had been modified in some way (e.g. simplified) from the core task given to the control pupil; and a ‘different task’ is defined as a task connected to another topic or curriculum subject to that given to the control pupil.

It is important to note that this analysis did not take account of any differentiation that might be expressed through the nature of the talk from adults to pupils. The analysis reported here is solely about the physical task that pupils were engaged in. We note that with this more nuanced, vocal expression of differentiation discounted from the following analyses, the extent of differentiation overall is likely to be underestimated in the observation results. We return to a fuller treatment of differentiation later when we examine results from the case studies, which showed that differentiation through interactions was a key feature of statemented pupils’ moment-by-moment experiences.

The logic of the observation system was such that observations of the control pupil were forfeited on the many occasions when the researcher was observing the statemented pupil away from the mainstream class. It was rare that both the control pupil and the pupil with a statement were simultaneously observable in out of class contexts. Given that we could not know for certain whether the task the pupil with a

statement was doing in out of class contexts was the same or different in some way from what the control pupil was doing, our analyses of the pupil task reflect these restrictions; therefore, only data collected from observations in class are used.

Instances of whether the pupil was engaged in a task connected to an intervention were also recorded. For the purpose of this analysis, ‘interventions’ are defined as specific self-contained programmes of learning (often, though not always, available off the shelf, as we shall below), aimed at: boosting the learning of pupils falling behind in literacy or numeracy; developing skills in areas of speech and language skills, social interactions and emotional literacy; or developing weak motor functions (e.g. physiotherapy). As the control pupils were making the expected levels of progress, they were not subject to curriculum interventions.

It can be seen from the results in Table 21 that almost all the tasks undertaken by the control pupils in the classroom were undifferentiated (94%); that is, they did the task intended for (in most cases) the majority of the class. In contrast, in 81% of in-class observations, pupils with statements undertook the same task as control pupils. In 12% of instances involving statemented pupils, the task was differentiated in some way, and in 5% of observations, the task was connected to a different curriculum topic or subject. In 2% of classroom observations, pupils with statements took part in curriculum interventions (there is more on interventions below).

Table 21. Pupil task (in class observations only)

	Control		Statement	
Same task	4,186	94%	18,521	81%
Differentiated task	236	5%	2,864	12%
Different task	21	<1%	1,114	5%
Intervention	0	0%	490	2%
Total	4,443	100%	22,989	100%

Pupil task by curriculum subject

To be clear, the results in Table 21 reflect only the observations made in class, where both pupils were observable. The analysis of pupil task by curriculum subject in Table 22 is also restricted to in-class observation and, as we are interested in the tasks pupils with statements did relative to control pupils, only data for the former group is shown.

Table 22. Pupil task by subject (in class observations of pupils with statements only)

	English		Mathematics		Other subjects		Non-curriculum		Total	
Same task	6,416	78%	3,400	67%	7,722	92%	983	78%	18,521	81%
Differentiated task	1,022	12%	1,255	25%	583	7%	4	<1%	2,864	12%
Different task	389	5%	402	8%	115	1%	208	16%	1,114	5%
Intervention	401	5%	1	<1%	17	<1%	71	6%	490	2%
Total	8,228	100%	5,058	100%	8,437	100%	1,266	100%	22,989	100%

As can be seen by the results in Table 22, 81% of all tasks given to pupils with statements were the same as that given to the control pupil, and this was particularly true for subjects other than English or mathematics. Despite there being a clear need for differentiated activities for pupils with statements, differentiation overall was quite rare (12% of all observations), though it was more common in mathematics than other subjects. As noted above, only 2% of class-based observations concerned pupils with statements taking part in an intervention.

Interventions

In 17% of all observations (both in and away from the classroom), pupils with statements were engaged in an intervention. If we deconstruct this 17%, we find that 13% of interventions were carried out away from the classroom (e.g. in shared areas between classrooms, corridors or separate classrooms), and a further 2% were carried out in ARPs. The remaining 2% were conducted in the mainstream class.

The composition of 17% of observations of interventions can also be deconstructed in terms of curriculum subject. Interventions were most likely in English (9%), then mathematics (4%). The interventions in non-curriculum areas (3%) commonly related to the development of the pupils' social skills, helping to improve their motor skills or following a physiotherapy programme. The remaining 2% of observations concerned interventions in other curriculum subjects (e.g. science).

On task and off task behaviour

Finally, researchers coded whether the pupils were on task or off task in the observation period¹⁰. Because of the broad definitions of on task and off task behaviour used in the MaSt study observation system, it was not always possible for observers to determine which of the two codes to apply; therefore, there was an option to not code. The 'uncodeable' (or 'Bin') option was used in 15% of all observations (12% of control pupil observations; 15% of pupil with statement observations).

We cross-tabulated the data on pupil on task and off task behaviour with three expressions of adult support. These measures represent a hierarchy, with different levels closer to or further away from the pupil:

1. The presence of one or more TAs in the observation context
2. The proximity of the TA to the pupil
3. Direct interaction between the TA and pupil.

The analyses that follow only show the results for pupil behaviour under these three conditions. The results do not imply causality; that is, that the presence of TAs causes more or less on task behaviour.

¹⁰ The observation schedule used by the trainee educational psychology students was slightly simplified from that used by other three full-time researchers in that on and off task behaviour was not included. Therefore, the results on pupil behaviour, reported here, are based on 35 out of the 48 pupils in the study.

TA presence

Firstly, we analysed pupil behaviour when different configurations of teachers and TAs were present. When one teacher was present, the on task behaviour of both groups of pupils was fairly consistent; there was little change in the amount of on task behaviour when one or more TAs were present.

The results on off task behaviour reflected this general finding. The low number of observations made it difficult to say anything too meaningful about pupil off task behaviour, though it is worth noting that for pupils with statements, in situations with and without a teacher present, instances of off task behaviour increased as the number of TAs increased. This was also true for control pupils in contexts when a teacher was present.

TA proximity

Going beyond the mere presence of adults, the observation schedule enabled researchers to note instances when an adult shared a particular context with the pupil who was the target of observation (e.g. a TA was sat beside them). This was the purpose of the 'shared context' column that can be seen on the observation schedule in Appendix 1. These data provided a good measure of TA proximity and were cross-tabulated with the data on pupil behaviour.

As might be expected, pupils showed more on task behaviour and less off task behaviour in circumstances when a TA was in the immediate vicinity of the pupil. However, compared to the control pupils, those with statements were somewhat less on task when a TA was sat beside them (82% vs. 88%).

TA and pupil interaction

Finally, we looked at the amount of on and off task behaviour for the instances when a TA was not only proximate to a pupil, but also interacting with him/her. Again, as one might reasonably predict, the proportion of on task behaviour was greater, and the proportion of off task behaviour less, when pupils were interacting with a TA, rather than just proximate to the TA, or where the TA was merely present.

As in the case of TA proximity, it was even clearer that pupils with statements were less likely to be on task and more likely to be off task in interactions with TAs, compared with control pupils. However, the smaller number of coded instances involving control pupils make any strong conclusions unwise.

On task and off task by location

We examined behaviour by location and the results confirmed the earlier results relating to TA and teacher presence: statemented pupils were generally less on task and more off task than control pupils. Compared to their behaviour in class, statemented pupils were more often on task when observed out of the class, probably because teaching sessions in this context tend to be – as we have seen – in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Or, put another way, there was less chance of a pupil being off task when in a one-to-one or small group context, with close attention from an adult – typically, a TA.

On task and off task by curriculum subject

In brief, the general results on the amount of on task and off task behaviour were reflected in results for English and mathematics separately. Pupils with statements were more likely to be off task in other subjects. One explanation for this, as suggested earlier, might be because pupils with statements receive less support from adults – specifically TAs – during non-core subjects; less individual attention might, therefore, lead to more off task behaviour.

Results from the case studies

As explained in the earlier section on the MaSt study research methodology, the case studies helped to develop a more substantive picture of the educational experiences of pupils with statements of SEN than could be obtained by the observations alone. The case studies drew together data from interviews with SENCos, teachers, TAs and parents/carers, documentation and field notes, which were arranged thematically and interrogated.

In the presentation of results that follows, we provide an indication of prevalence of findings, by stating the number of case studies (out of a maximum of 48) in which particular subthemes or characteristics were identified (as $n=x$). We also use comments drawn from the interview transcripts to illuminate particular findings. In most cases, the selected quotations can be seen as typical of comments made by interviewees on specific issues.

Location

The systematic observations revealed that pupils with statements spent a quarter of their time away from the mainstream classroom. The case study data add a layer of description beyond the broad picture provided by the observations, revealing an important aspect of how the locations experienced by pupils with statements are fundamental to learning experiences and opportunities for social experiences.

Overall, the case studies revealed how the locations within which pupils with statements find themselves are indicative of a high degree of separation from the classroom, the teacher and their peers. Perhaps the most obvious point to emerge from the observation data, and also the case study data, was the almost constant accompanying presence of a TA in relation to all the locations in which pupils were placed. There is, in other words, an intimate connection between TAs and the locations, both in and away from the classroom, in which pupils with statements are taught.

School architecture and design seemed to fundamentally affect and limit the decisions school staff made about the environments for pupils with statements, in terms of the availability and suitability of spaces in the classroom and elsewhere in the school. Away from the main classroom (and teacher and peers), observations of pupils with statements at work were conducted in corridors and open-plan areas between classroom, dedicated (often small) SEN rooms, other available classrooms, specialist teaching areas (e.g. cooking area, music room), the school library, the dining hall and even the staffroom.

Close analysis of the case studies, along with observations of researchers, indicated that the locations in which the pupils with statements worked could be categorised on a scale from: i) spending almost all the time in the classroom (e.g. having the same experience as control pupils); through to ii) being in the classroom, but separated in terms of having an individual workstation away from others; to iii) experiencing a high degree of separation from the classroom in order to work in another location (including an ARP).

Whilst in some cases, the use of the workstation was seen as a form of separation within the classroom. Pupils were often positioned at the side or back of the classroom, and away from peers. This constituted a clear form of separation from the rest of the class, and – with the presence of TA – a separation from the teacher. However, in at least one case, the needs of the pupil (and indeed the collective needs of the rest of the class) were such that the use of an in-class workstation appeared to represent the best possible arrangement: distractions were minimised for all, and the pupil’s own anxieties about sitting for long period with other children was obviated.

As separation from the mainstream classroom is highly indicative of pupils’ with statements educational experience, it is worth mentioning the decision-making processes that lead to it. Typically, as pupils were struggling with the mainstream curriculum in the class, or with behaviour and relationships with classmates, schools had considered how to adapt the curriculum and the locations for learning, deciding what support to offer and what environment in which to offer it. A typical example of this, consistent across the case studies, was the way in which interventions were delivered away from the classroom.

Where withdrawal occurred for purposes other than interventions, arrangements were typically found to be in place where teachers had given TAs permission to make decisions about withdrawing the pupil. In the main, this was related to behaviour; if the pupil was distressed or disruptive, he/she could be safely removed from the lesson and attended to by the TA. In terms of learning, TAs often removed pupils from the classroom to aid their concentration.

“Sometimes we might go in the library and I might just read a story to her, or she might read to me. It’s just getting her back and refocused. But sometimes she might just need that time out”.

TA

“If it’s noisy, she’s easily distracted. So if you want the best from her, I think by being somewhere quieter, she will benefit more from that”.

SENCo

Some schools were attentive to the affects of routinely withdrawing pupils with statements from the classroom, and focussed on changing things *within* the classroom in order to facilitate a pupil’s inclusion.

“It’s important that [P5¹¹] doesn’t felt that he’s out of the classroom, excluded from the class. It’s very much, this is what we’re doing in here; let’s adapt it, change it, or make it suitable for him to use, and to apply”.

Teacher

¹¹ In order to retain the anonymity of pupils, we have replaced names with the unique pupil identifiers we used in the project.

Indeed, whilst some pupils did not seem bothered by being away from the classroom (some seemed to prefer it), others did not like to be seen as requiring different treatment to their peers.

“He does not like to be out of the classroom. So when he does the one-to-one work... he will just speed through it and just be desperate to go back. Or increasingly truculent about coming out, and it’s not then purposeful to work with him”.

SENCo

“It’s special to them and they enjoy it... They’re sort of different children [when withdrawn]”.

TA

The role of teachers

The analysis showed that one key way of organising the case study data in this theme was in terms of a scale expressing the degree of responsibility the teacher had for the education of the pupil with a statement of SEN (as far as it was possible to determine). At one end of the scale, teachers were found to have a strong and full responsibility for the education of pupils with statements (n=6 out of 48 cases), whilst at the other end, they are seen to have little or no responsibility (n=13); in such situations, it is TAs who take on this substantive responsibility. (We explore the role of TAs momentarily).

Often the situation in a school was not at one extreme or the other; the most common approach across the case studies fell at the mid-point of the scale, where the teacher was seen to have overall responsibility for planning the curriculum and general teaching strategies, whilst the TA effectively took on the actual teaching in terms of the delivery of the curriculum (n=20).

High teacher involvement

One clear, but very rare, example of teachers’ high involvement in supporting pupils with statements (and other pupils with SEN) was via the employment of teachers to lead additional literacy and numeracy groups. In one school, the pupil with the statement was taught as part of small group and received a high amount of personalised support from a teacher.

Another example of high teacher involvement was evident in the several cases where the education of pupils with statements was provided in an additional resource provision (ARP), separate from the main classrooms within the school. ARPs benefited from a small class sizes (typically below 10 pupils) and a reduced adult-pupil ratio. In the case of one school, the lead teacher ran the ARP as if it were a mainstream class.

“We try to give them that experience of a mainstream class. They are expected to listen; they are expected to take turns... The teacher’s there for everybody”.

Teacher

Such examples were the exception. In the majority of schools, the statemented pupils’ principal base was the mainstream classroom. As we shall see, this arrangement most

often resulted in TAs taking on the main responsibility for the pupils; however, there were a few examples of teachers taking the role of, what one SENCo called, 'the primary practitioner role'. In these schools, there was a deliberate view that the teacher should have a bigger role than the TA, and that TA support should not be seen to replace support from the teacher.

"She needs to be delivering the provision more than the LSA. Because if [P14] has got complex learning needs, then you would want your most qualified member of staff in there. No disrespect to [TA] – she's fantastic; but [teacher] is the one that's got the qualifications for complex needs, so that's what we want to do... We're guaranteeing quality going in".
SENCo

"I would not want [the TAs] to almost take over his care, so that the class teacher loses sight of... I think it's easy, as a class teacher, when you know you've got children who are finding things very difficult, to give yourself that security of, 'Oh, Mrs. So-and-so will always work with that group'. And I think it is hard as a teacher to just step back and say, 'No, I'm not going to do that'".
SENCo

One final expression of high teacher involvement identified in the case study data was the way in which SENCos and teachers tried to ensure that pupils with the highest learning needs received at least as much teacher time as other pupils, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons.

Low teacher involvement

At the other end of the scale of teacher involvement were a number of cases of teachers taking little or no responsibility for the education of pupils with statements. Such a situation was evident in at least a quarter of schools visited as part of the MaSt project.

"He's there on my plan, but he's not big on my radar, to be honest".
Teacher

The deployment of TAs to work with statemented pupils clearly influenced, and even justified, teachers' decisions to transfer the responsibility for teaching these pupils to TAs. We explain how these decisions affect the TAs' role later.

"I don't have the main role; I see the main role as actually being [TA]. I have the overview as to what's going on. So everything [TA] plans is run past me [and] I will put suggestions in there, but [TA] will then go away and resource it".
Teacher

"[Teacher] doesn't have a lot to do with her... He doesn't do the planning for her; I do all of that".
TA

Several teachers attributed this situation to not having the appropriate training (as one teacher put it, not being 'infant trained'), as if the pupil's academic level obviated the need for their involvement. Another external force contributing to this situation, in the minds of some teachers, was the way in which much of the education of pupils with

statements had historically happened away from the classroom, and so they were less informed about pupils' needs and progress, and how to address them. In this sense, problems regarding teacher involvement and responsibility become self-perpetuating.

"I do feel the teachers feel a bit out of the loop with it, because it's so far removed from their experience, and her level is so far removed from what they're running around trying to deliver to everybody else".

SENCo

For many teachers, a pupil with a statement in their class was just 'one of 30 pupils' to which they had to direct their time. Given the need to get through the curriculum and myriad other pressures that characterise the teacher's life in a modern primary school, this is an understandable position. However, this somewhat suggests that there is a parity of need among pupils, when this is far from the reality.

Catering for a pupil in the Year 5 class who was achieving at a considerably lower level than the rest of the class was a conflict for teachers. Therefore, handing a TA this responsibility was seen as a pragmatic solution. As attainment gap widened, again, the justification for this arrangement was reinforced.

"He can't possibly teach [P124] at her level when he's teaching everybody else as well. Particularly as the kids get older and older and older".

SENCo

Over time, TAs were seen to become the 'experts' on statemented pupils, and this too legitimised teachers' decisions to devolve responsibility for the education of these pupils to TAs. Interestingly, some parents/carers saw some value in this situation.

"The class teacher's role is actually quite small in [P126's] case... Partly because of the nature of the class he's got and the needs of the other children [and] partly because of [TA's] skills".

SENCo

"One of her LSAs – or both of them – are very experienced. One in particular is very, very able and I kind of feel that they are more able to know what [P17's] needs are... I'm quite happy that the staffing is appropriate".

Parent/carers

Teacher plans, TA delivers

As the comments above from teachers and SENCos attest, handing the day-to-day implementation of teaching to the TA is understandable, and on the face of it, a sensible use of teachers' and TAs' time. But this arrangement (as we have also seen) stands the risk of reducing teachers' understanding of the needs of pupils with statements and knowing how best to meet them. In most cases, it seems that this lack of knowledge is more an unintentional by-product of how TAs are deployed by the school to meet the needs of statemented pupils, and teachers' feeling of responsibility to the majority of pupils in the class.

Yet most schools were neither at one end of the teacher responsibility scale or the other. Where the case study data was sufficient to allow a reasonable judgement to be made, in 20 cases, teacher responsibility was placed at some point between the two extremes.

“I am the line manager for both of the TAs, so I organise all the intervention groups and what he needs; setting his targets and monitoring what the TAs are doing with those”.

Teacher

The most common arrangement might be broadly described as ‘teacher plans and TA delivers’ – a situation consistent with findings from our previous DISS study.

It was the teacher’s role to plan and prepare differentiated tasks for the lowest attaining pupils in the class (which typically included the statemented pupil) and it was the TA’s role to facilitate the pupil’s engagement in the tasks and provide any further differentiation.

As the observation results showed, in the classroom, the teacher and the TA(s) have different roles: the teacher has responsibility for the whole class teaching and has a monitoring and roving role; whilst the TA(s) worked with pupils with SEN in small groups and on a one-to-one basis. This is not to suggest that teachers did not interact with statemented pupils, and there were numerous examples of this observed by researchers. The example below shows how the teacher brought her formative assessment skills to bear when working with the lowest attaining pupils in her class, which included the statemented pupil.

“When I sometimes do one-to-one, sometimes I catch up with particularly those three pupils because I really want to delve to where their blocks are. And I’ve probably got more expertise in that than [TA]”.

Teacher

However, it was the frequency and duration of teachers’ interactions with statemented pupils that is of concern. The evidence across the case studies is that whilst most teachers have some form of strategic oversight for the teaching and learning of statemented pupils, as we explain below, the majority of moment-by-moment support is handled by TAs. It appears too that in a number of cases, the full effects of these arrangements were not clearly understood by parents.

“I’m not here to see, so I just hope that they’re guiding him and explaining things. I get worried when it comes to maths and things like that, because obviously I can’t see him taking part, so I’m not sure what happens then. Is he asked? Do they explain it? Is he asked to do it, or do something else? I’m not too sure”.

Parent/carer

The role of TAs

The instances recorded in this theme concern TAs' description of their role in supporting statemented pupils. SENCOs, teachers and parents/carers also gave their perspective on the TA role.

TAs described their role in a variety of ways and with varying degrees of clarity. At the broadest level, they felt that their job was to 'be there' for the statemented pupil. This cast the TAs as being 'on standby', ready to respond when pupils signalled struggle; signals to which TAs were highly attuned.

"He never says that he cannot do, but you can see within the facial expression that he will give off; so you'll see the eyes roll or you might hear a sigh, and you just know that he's having difficulty".

TA

School staff used a rich array of metaphors to characterise the TA role. TAs were described, and described themselves, variously as a: 'crutch'; 'mediator'; 'conduit'; 'advocate'; and 'keyworker'. In a few cases, the nurturing role as a mother was reflected in how TAs were viewed. One SENCO compared the role of a TA to that of being a mother with a young child, and one TA positioned herself thus: *"I'm not the class teacher and I'm not her mum – so I'm that person in between"*.

In the main, TAs' definitions and purpose of their role covered eight main areas (*n* denotes number of cases out of 48):

1. Pedagogical planning and decision-making (n=34)
2. Monitoring behaviour/keeping the pupil on task (n=33)
3. Pastoral/emotional support (n=18)
4. Promoting independence (n=16)
5. Developing social skills (n=10)
6. Facilitating pupil's integration into school and classroom life (n=8)
7. Home-school liaison (n=7)
8. Recording and reading (n=6)

Pedagogical planning and decision-making

This is a substantive subtheme, which reveals much about the role of TAs. Pedagogical planning and decision-making ranges from devising and planning an alternative curriculum for the statemented pupil, through to preparing intervention programmes, to augmenting or modifying teachers' lesson plans and classroom input. In the majority of cases, TAs had a clear role in pedagogical planning and decision-making (n=34).

"[P124] doesn't understand the language that the class teacher will say. So [TA] will just pick out the important words and just say, 'Right, you've just got to go and do this, and put that there and there and there'".

SENCO

“He does need someone to say, ‘Right, what have you got to first?’, and then if he can’t understand a process, [TA] will explain it to him and go through it with him”.

Teacher

“Supporting her [so] she’s understanding the tasks that are going on; or bringing it down to her level, so that we can then access similar tasks that other children are doing”.

TA

“As I understand it, [TA] is there to go through a lot of the things that he needs. So in terms of his speech and language requirements, interpret any instructions that he doesn’t always get in terms of the language, the sequence of instructions”.

Parent/carer

TAs had a high involvement in planning and delivering interventions to meet pupils’ learning needs and non-learning needs, and differentiating tasks and material in various ways. As these themes raised some particular issues, we present data from the case studies on interventions and differentiation separately further on.

Monitoring behaviour/keeping the pupil on task

Just under half of the pupils included in the MaSt study (n=22) had specific needs around attention and concentration, with many described as being ‘easily distracted’. A further seven pupils were described as having behavioural needs rooted in low self-esteem and low self-confidence. Having behavioural needs was not simply restricted to the pupils with statements for BESD.

In a number of cases, TA had a role in managing and monitoring the stated pupil’s behaviour (n=13). In a greater number of cases, however, TAs had a role in ‘helping to keep the pupil on task’ and ‘focussed’ (n=20). In the majority of cases, intensive TA support was seen as essential if the pupil was to keep on task/limit off task behaviour during lessons.

“My role really is to help him to focus, understand the learning objective [and] clarify anything he doesn’t understand”.

TA

“The TA is there to... make sure that his head is moved; make sure that he is focused. Basically making sure he’s staying on task and he understands what the task is.”

Teacher

“In terms of his attention, making sure he stays on task and his attention doesn’t wander off”.

Parent/carer

“It’s behaviour management... If there’s any little bits around him – bottles of drink, pencils; anything on his table really should be removed before he sits down to do any work, because otherwise he won’t focus... I know sometimes fiddling helps kids sometimes to focus; but not so much with [P12]”.

TA

TAs' main response to off task behaviour was to prompt the pupil to return to the task or remind the pupil of what he/she should be doing. Other staff echoed these comments (see comment below). A further ten TAs said that they responded to off task behaviour by modifying or simplifying the task the pupil was working on.

"He does get distracted quite easily. So that might be a little nudge or a look, putting something down on a whiteboard, just to keep his attention going. Because actually he is able to grasp quite a lot of the information... he just needs a little bit more of a prompt".
SENCo

The use of praise and rewards was mentioned as a key behaviour strategy (n=18). On occasions, TAs used a strategy, best described as 'bargaining', in order to ensure that the pupil produced at least some work (rather than none at all) by offering a reward for completing a task, or part of a task. For example, "We'll do five sentences, then we'll do x"; "We'll work for 15 minutes, then we'll do y".

There were a small number of cases where pupils refused to do tasks (n=8), and disengaging from tasks was more likely when the task was not stimulating (n=5). However, in order to contextualise these findings, we remind readers that the observation results showed that pupils with statements did not differ greatly from control pupils in terms of the amount of time they were off task.

Emotional/pastoral support

TAs had a role providing emotional and/or pastoral support to statemented pupils, principally via leading social/emotional intervention programmes (n=18). Some TAs were trained as Emotional Learning Support Assistants to lead such interventions. A very small number of TAs had responsibilities connected with toileting or dressing.

Comments that described TAs' emotional support role were not very well defined, and overall are consistent with the comments above about TAs 'being there' for pupils.

"As an emotional support, he knows he's got someone there. He's a lot more vulnerable; he's a lot more sensitive than the other children. And sometimes people have a laugh with him and he will seem really upset – and [TA] is there for that side of things as well".
Teacher

Promoting independence

Participants were aware of the effects on pupils of a high amount of TA support and the need to reduce dependency. It was rare, but some pupils were described as 'possessive' of the TA(s) that provided their primary support.

"When you have a child on a statement, it can be very alienating if they're always working with one LSA. That's not healthy... no one would want to work solely, 20 hours a week with one person, singularly; without any personal involvement in the school community".
TA

In 16 cases, TAs had a role in promoting the statemented pupil's independence and building their self-confidence, though this too was not well defined. A number of TAs

withdrew from the pupil from time to time to allow him/her to complete work by him/herself (n=7).

“At the moment [TA] is trying to step back and encourage him to do things more independently. So she’s there a lot for moral support for him; he loses a lot of confidence when she’s not around, or there’s not an adult around that he knows is there for him. And he’s less willing to have a go at things and he worries more, so then he’s able to focus less”.
SENCo

The comment from the SENCo above reveals a paradox: the specific use of TA support to encourage greater pupil independence. For many pupils, (often intensive) one-to-one TA support had become a way of life since Year 2 or earlier. But with the transition from primary schooling drawing near, developing pupils’ independent working skills had become something of an imperative. However, many pupils were somewhat lacking in the self-confidence needed to work without adult support.

“In science, it will be just to encourage him to have a go and to talk out in the class. You know he’ll look at me and mouth the answer; and then I’ll go like this [give approval] and then he’ll put his hand up. But he definitely looks for the guidance if it’s right”.
TA

TAs were used in productive ways, as a ‘guide on the side’ – prompting and coaxing pupils of the next steps in a process.

“[TA] is there mainly to give him the independence skills. She’s supporting him, but she doesn’t spoon feed him. She asks him questions like, ‘What do you need to do next?’ and ‘What should be here?’, to really get him to think for himself”.
Teacher

“[TAs] guide him and, rather than telling him, they will suggest things so that he’s got to use his own mind to move forward with things”.
Parent/carer

However, efforts that encouraged pupils to think for themselves needed to be balanced against the tendency for many pupils to have difficulty retaining information. It is hard to reconcile, therefore, how a pupil’s self-confidence can be raised by putting in place adult support, on the basis that the pupil is unable to do things by him/herself.

“He does tend to forget quite a lot; and if I don’t reinforce it, it tends to go the next week”
TA

“He needed somebody there to be able to explain things when they’ve had an input, to reinforce things afterwards... to boost his self esteem... because he cannot do it for himself”.
SENCo

Developing social skills

Some TAs helped to develop the statemented pupil’s social skills (n=10). Mostly, this was via social/emotional intervention programmes, though beyond this, their role in developing social skills was not well defined.

“That one-to-one time away from the classroom is really good for talking, social skills, talking about things generally”.

TA

Facilitating pupil’s integration into school and classroom life

In some cases, the role of the TA was defined in board and vague terms as facilitating the stated pupil’s ‘integration’ in school and classroom life (n=8); TA presence was required in order for the pupil to subsist in mainstream setting.

“If I wasn’t there, I do feel that he would be lost while [teacher] is helping another child in another part of the classroom; and then the lesson’s gone and it’s been wasted”.

TA

“If [P6] didn’t have [TA] I think she would sink quite quickly. With the amount of support she needs for maths and literacy, within a busy class.... Without [TA] she wouldn’t get anywhere near as much support”.

Teacher

The comment from the teacher above reveals another aspect of this form of the TA role: TA support it is not just seen as helpful for the pupil with the statement, but also for the teacher and the rest of the class.

“I know I wouldn’t be able to cope with [P7] in a lesson... Like this morning, with her stamping her feet and all sorts; I couldn’t then deal with that if I’m trying to teach 14 other pupils... If [TA] wasn’t there, [P7] would sit there the whole lesson and not do anything at all”.

Teacher

“The teachers would have all done their best, but they’ve got like 30-odd kids to take care of and they can’t be expected to just pay attention to [P12] all the time”.

Parent/carer

Home-school liaison

A number of TAs had a role in home-school liaison (n=7). However, it is likely that many more TAs interviewed in the MaSt project also have a role in communicating with parents/carers than were identifiable across the case study reports. Parent/carers who mentioned home-school relations said that they had a good relationship and regular communications with the school (n=11 out of 33 parents/carers interviewed), and TAs were often integral links in this process.

Recording and reading

A small number of TAs said that they were deployed to act as a scribe or provide reading support to stated pupils whose literacy skills were particularly weak (n=6).

Involvement of external agencies

Before we turn to the data that reveals yet more about the role and responsibilities of TAs, it is worth mentioning that other adults were found to contribute to the experiences of pupils with statements. The majority of these adults were not employed by the schools, but by external agencies.

In many cases, external agencies were either currently involved in the stated pupil's provision (n=21), or had recently withdrawn and were now offered a less intensive level of support (n=20). The main types of external agencies/agents involved were: speech and language therapy (n=26); occupation health/physiotherapy (n=16); educational psychologists (n=9); specialist outreach teachers (e.g. for behaviour) (n=7); and child and adolescent mental health services (n=6).

Interventions

We reported earlier that in 15% of observations, pupils with statements were engaged in an intervention, which often took place out of the classroom and was likely to be aimed at helping pupils with statements to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

This finding is supported by the case study data, which found that the most common types of intervention that pupils with statements received were for literacy (including reading, phonics and spelling) (mentioned in 31 cases), numeracy (n=18), motor skills (including physiotherapy and occupational therapy) (n=18), social and emotional needs (n=16), and speech and language (n=13).

In the majority of cases (n=34), TAs were responsible for the delivery of at least one intervention; in seven cases, the SENCo or a teacher was responsible for delivering at least one intervention.

Where it was possible to discern, most interventions were 'homemade' (n=22); that is, they were put together by school staff using existing resources. In most cases, these homemade interventions were put together by TAs (n=12); in the remaining cases, the interventions were put together by SENCos and/or teachers (n=10).

"The class teacher will tell the LSA what [the class] about to cover. So if they're doing handling data... she will give her a series of terms and vocab choices that they will explore together. So that when [P14] hits her guided sessions, she's aware of what those words are".

SEnCo

There was some evidence that the content of these interventions was too basic, and in a few cases, almost infantilising. We will return to the subject of TAs' task selection in the section on differentiation.

'Off-the-shelf' programmes were also commonly used (n=15), and in five cases, interventions were provided by an outside agent (e.g. a speech and language therapist).

Interventions were more likely to take place during literacy and numeracy lessons (n=14) than during non-core lessons (n=7). As mentioned in the section on location, being withdrawn from the class to do an intervention with a TA, whilst the rest of the class was involved in a collective learning experience, had different effects on pupils: some liked it and others rejected it.

Differentiation

Results from the observations (shown in Table 21) revealed that in nearly one in five instances, pupils with statements did a task that was either differentiated from, or different to, the task given to the average attaining control pupils. The richness of the case study material made it possible to conduct a fuller analysis of the differentiation involved in the tasks and interventions involving pupils with statements.

Consistent with what we have already described in relation to the TA role, overall, what emerges from the analysis of the case study data is the extent to which the TAs took on the primary responsibility for creating or modifying material, and making teaching accessible for pupils with statements. The following comments were typical of the situation we found across the schools in the study.

"I often find that teachers are very busy and they can't think about differentiation all the time".

SENCo

"I don't plan specifically for [P126]. I kind of say [to the TA], "This is what the class are doing; this is what my more able and less able are doing... Use your judgement to figure out what [P126] can access or not".

Teacher

"I get [teacher's] medium-term plans, so I know what he's doing each week. We'll discuss together or I'll let him know whether I think [P126] can work similarly, but differentiated, or if it's way too complicated".

TA

In contrast to the observation results reported above, the case study data allows a much more nuanced picture to develop about how differentiation was handled across the schools. We identified four expressions of differentiation across the 48 case studies:

1. By the organisation of the school, class and/or year group (n=13)
2. By task (n=43)
3. By TA support/talk (n=46)
4. By outcome (n=23).

Differentiation by the organisation of the school, class and/or year group

In a quarter of cases the allocation of the statemented pupil to an ARP or to the lowest attaining literacy and/or numeracy set was the 'first level' of differentiation (n=13).

Additional interrogation of the case study data revealed that over half of schools set the year group by attainment for numeracy (n=27) and/or literacy (n=15). Five schools had an ARP that the statemented pupil attended.

As the observations from the systematic observations showed, pupils were often grouped (at tables) by attainment within literacy and numeracy sets, and some school staff referred to this as the 'second level' of differentiation.

Differentiation by task

TAs were found to have a high level of responsibility for devising and selecting tasks for statemented pupils to do in lessons. In half of all cases, teachers differentiated tasks three ways, for higher, average and lower attaining pupils (n=24). However, TAs very often had to differentiate the physical tasks set by the teacher for his/her lower attaining pupils further, in order to make it accessible for the pupil with the statement (n=43). Teachers very rarely supplied this extra level of differentiation for pupils with statements; therefore, as one TA put it: "I'll have to go away and differentiate [the task]; make it a bit more simplified".

In such instances, TAs had been given a 'free rein' by the teacher to adapt and/or create tasks. The following comments show how some TAs sourced tasks.

"Some of the poetry [the class have] done, I've just said, 'There's no point trying to get [P126] to do that. She won't get anything out of it'. So I then go away and I will do something that maybe the Year 2s would do for poetry; so a much, much lower level but still a similar task".

TA

"Quite a lot I do at home... Trawling on the internet, trying to find worksheets and activities that I think would be suitable for her".

TA

The issue of what tasks constitute an appropriate or effective pedagogical choice was highlighted in researchers' field notes, which described numerous instances of unengaging and repetitive work. There were also examples of TAs selecting tasks that had no pedagogical content, such as colouring-in activities.

Differentiation by resources

The use of resources was also considered a form of differentiation (n=43). In many cases, tasks were made 'more visual' or tactile by the use of visual aids, pictures or materials (n=20). Again, it was TAs who tended to produce or source materials. This was especially the case for numeracy lessons, where researchers frequently noted TAs' use of Multilink cubes and Numicon shapes to model and demonstrate tasks, and for pupils to use to complete work.

Differentiation by TA support/talk

The most popular form of differentiation to be found in almost every case study was in the form of TA support; that is, the presence of a TA and, in particular, the way in which they provided differentiation verbally. This form of differentiation was not captured by the systematic observation data reported above. Teachers and TAs described two

particular features of TA-to-pupil interaction: i) modification of language (e.g. simplifying it, breaking it down) (n=37); and ii) repetition (n=11).

The majority of comments described how TAs 'tailored' their language in ways that made curriculum content, tasks and instructions more accessible.

"Just very simple language... Try and break it down into information chunks"

TA

"You have to tailor your language as if you were talking to a younger child, just to make sure she has understood"

Teacher

It was interesting to note that SENCo and teachers recognised that modifying talk in this way a considerable skill.

"Teachers are expected to move things on at quite a fast pace, and you get children on SEN who cannot move at that pace. It's very difficult and it takes a lot of skill to pitch down what you want those children to do, so that you're helping them to move on to the next step. And that's a real skill".

SENCo

As was found in the DISS project, this form of verbal differentiation was performed on the hoof, and in response to the teacher's talk. Therefore, TAs were converting and filtering the teacher's whole class talk, making judgments about what words and aspects of it the statemented pupil could comprehend, and reinterpreting or rephrasing it in a way that they felt the pupil could understand. Some TAs said that this form of 'thinking on the spot' was challenging and stressful.

Many of the pupils we tracked were described as having poor retention skills, so TAs explained that a high degree of their interactions with pupils concerned repetition.

"He normally does need it repeating to him, and it does need to be very specific and what you're going to do first; what you're going to do second... so small steps".

TA

In the DISS project, we described a phenomenon that we called 'stereo teaching', where TAs were heard to repeat the teacher's whole class talk to the pupils they supported (often word for word), directly after the teacher had spoken (Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012). Given the lack of pre-lesson preparation TAs received, this practice – which was again observed in the MaSt project – was perhaps understandable.

Differentiation by outcome

Differentiated by outcome was a feature of half of the case studies (n=23); in other words, pupils with statements were expected to produce less work than their peers.

"If other kids are producing three paragraphs, then he might only produce two or three sentences, for example".

SENCo

“The class might have had a spelling test with 50 words, whereas he would do about 20 or something like that”.

TA

Whilst in 81% of in-class observations, pupils with statements undertook the same task as control pupils (see Table 21), the findings from the case studies show how the definition of differentiation used for the purposes of the observations underplays a more fine-grained and prevalent practice. Though the physical task might be the same, it is in the interactions and gentle calibration of expectations and outcomes – which relies on moment-by-moment decision-making by TAs – that we see a more nuanced representation of what differentiation for statemented pupils looks like in the primary classroom.

Preparedness

Training and guidance

Teachers and TAs were asked to identify the main types of training that they had received that were relevant to helping them support the needs of the statemented pupils tracked in the MaSt study. School staff were also asked to list the form that their training had taken (e.g. via Inset; as part of a formal qualification). The denominator in the analysis of data arranged under this theme was at the respondent level.

Of the responses received from TAs on the main types of training they had received, the most frequent responses were training in speech and language programmes (n=13 out of a possible 66 TAs), curriculum intervention programmes for literacy and numeracy (n=11) and types of SEN (n=11). Of the codeable responses received from teachers, the most frequent main type of training they had received was on types of SEN (n=4 out of a possible 56 teachers).

It is highly likely that these responses understate the actual experiences of teachers, and very probably TAs. That said, the most common response from both TAs and teachers on the matter of training relating to the needs of the statemented pupil was that no training had been received. Nineteen TAs and 24 teachers – over a third of all teachers and TAs interviewed – said that they had had no specific training to help them support the needs of the statemented pupil they supported/had in their class.

“I’ve never been on a course for children who have got Down’s syndrome. I’ve actually been on almost no special needs courses since I was trained thirteen years ago. So no; I’ve come into it very blind”.

Teacher

“I did a four year teacher BA instead of a PGCE, but in my placements, I didn’t come across SEN children really at all”.

Teacher

“I think sometimes I personally don’t really know what to do with [P7]. I don’t know if I don’t understand her statement... It’s so hard to get into her head, I almost don’t know what to do with her at times. And when I’m thinking about bringing stuff down to her level, sometimes I just don’t know how to do it.”

Teacher

The main ways in which TAs received training and guidance were via external agencies that were involved in the statemented pupil’s support/care (e.g. speech and language therapy) (n=18), Inset (n=12), meetings with school SENCo (n=11) and formal training (e.g. NVQ) (n=9). For teachers who provided a response, the main forms in which they received training and guidance were via formal training (e.g. PGCE) (n=4) and handovers from the pupil’s Year 4 teacher on his/her transition to Year 5 (n=4). Again, the responses from teachers are likely to understate the true picture.

Teachers and TAs made some additional comments concerning the role experience plays in lieu of training/guidance. A number of teachers (n=7) and TAs (n=15) said that they often drew on their experience of working with the statemented pupil and/or other statemented pupils in place of any specific training or guidance. A few teachers drew on their previous experience of working as a TA, and in one case, a teacher said that her experience of teaching in Key Stage 1 had been a “great asset” in knowing how to adapt tasks to suit the need of the statemented pupil in her class.

It was clear too that TAs were extremely dedicated and did the best they could for the pupils with statements that they supported, but TAs were frequently found to have received minimal training to know how to address these pupils’ particular learning needs. Many were carrying out the literacy and numeracy interventions that they had either taught themselves or were taught by another TA. As a result, some expressed a lack of confidence in what they were doing.

A number of TAs (n=12) described how they learned from their own practice; that is, finding out what works and what does to work through trial and error.

“Do you know what they say about experience? It’s making mistakes and learning by those mistakes. I guess we’ve got lots of that”.

TA

Day-to-day preparation

In terms of the forms of day-to-day preparation, in only six out of all 48 cases was it found that school staff had allocated time for teacher and TA meetings (including TAs joining teachers during their PPA time). In 13 cases, TAs said that they were allowed preparation time to prepare resources or intervention sessions for the statemented pupil during periods when they were needed less, with assembly and PE lessons mentioned most frequently.

“I get three hours on a Monday to plan... Part of that is to sit in, like 20 minutes or half an hour in the planning session, just to see what the teacher is going to do and just to see where I can slot things in for [P401], and see what will work from what won’t work”.

TA

In 13 cases, TAs received lesson plans prior to lessons, often by email. Some teachers' planned more thoroughly than others, meaning that TAs often had to 'make up the gap' and do the planning themselves.

"[TA] does have a plan every Monday morning so she can pick up what we're doing. I give a timetable for the week, in terms of the literacy lesson, and what my content will be, the learning objective, what my teaching input will be, what I'm expecting the children to do – and then there will be some notes for them".

Teacher

"I will give them [a plan of] what we're doing in literacy and maths, and I'll give them a general idea of the topic we're working on this week... They're very good; they're very proactive... If I give them a topic – what we're doing is measuring or we're doing numbers or something – they've got such a good bank of resources that they'll be able to go and find things to use."

Teacher

In half of all cases, TAs and teachers described ad hoc meetings before and/or after school and during break and lunch times. One of the main consequences of the ad hoc preparation arrangements was that teacher and TA meetings relied on the goodwill of TAs (n=18).

"I choose to come in early. I don't start 'til nine, but I'm in at 8.30 every morning, if not earlier. And my plans are ready so I can have a read through. Some LSAs will have theirs e-mailed the night before. And then at the end of a session, I'll just chat with [teacher] about it or feed back. I generally know what I'm doing before I come in."

TA

"I don't get any time to plan, so planning is done in my own time. But I've worked out a way to do it quite efficiently, so that's fine".

TA

In 11 cases, school staff reported that there was no allocated time for teachers and TAs to meet prior to lessons; nor in these cases were TAs given lesson plans in advance.

"I have no time planning; I have no plan every day. I never know what we're doing, every day, so it's very difficult".

TA

"It's just going into class, sitting there with him, listening to the input myself, and then judging it from there".

TA

"There's no specific time; no real meeting time. There's no planning time for TAs, which I think is another huge stumbling block, especially when you're delivering something that is so completely different to the classroom".

TA

As the comments above from TAs suggest, this lack of planning and preparation has an effect on TAs' confidence and feelings of competence, in terms of what whether they are being effective.

"I sometimes question myself: am I doing the right thing? Because you know nobody's really got time... You don't have time to talk to teachers. You don't have time to sit down and say, 'Actually, what shall we do with him today? I've tried this'... And there's no time to prepare anything, so it's a case of, 'Right, what are we going to do now? OK, we'll get the books... and we just go over the same thing'".

TA

Additional results from the case studies

There were a number of additional findings to emerge from the analysis of the case study data that do not connect directly with the observation results, but provide useful insights and contextual detail to the broad analyses of data from the MaSt study.

Development of provision for pupils with a statement of SEN

The case study data allowed us to establish the extent to which school staff and parents/carers were involved in the development and review of provision for pupils with a statement. As part of the interviews, participants were asked: i) whether they were familiar with the key documents that list the pupil's provision – namely, the statement of SEN, annual reviews and IEP; and ii) about the nature of their involvement in the development and review of provision.

Participants' understanding of the statement

Of the coded responses from teachers, 12 (out of a possible 56) claimed that they had an understanding of the pupil's statement and/or annual review, and 12 said that they had no understanding of these documents. About a third of TAs (23 out of a possible 66) said that they had an understanding of the pupil's statement/annual review; 18 TAs claimed that they had no understanding of these documents.

Overall, TAs were more familiar with the pupil's IEP: 25 TAs claimed to have an understanding of the IEP. Six TAs said that they had no understanding of the IEP.

Having an understanding the pupil's IEP was seen by TAs as more appropriate to the level at which they were involved in developing and delivering provision; although, as we discuss below, given the high amount of involvement many TAs had in curriculum design, a clearer oversight might have been more necessary, if not entirely suitable.

Thirteen parents/carers (out of a possible 33) claimed to have an understanding of the statement, annual reviews and/or the IEP; six parents/carers said that they had no understanding of these documents.

Involvement in the development and review of provision

In almost every case study, the interviews with school staff described how the statement was used to create and update the IEP. The IEP was described as 'working

document', which broke down or translated the targets listed on the statement into smaller goals.

"The statement provides the broader, bigger picture... From that, we have to really break it down... because our IEPs, that's really just for one term".

SENCo

In most cases, teachers wrote IEPs, perhaps with input from the SENCo. TAs were also often invited to contribute. However, it was striking that in a number of schools, the situation was actually the reverse. TAs described a situation where they write the IEP targets, pass the IEP it to the teacher to approve, who then passes it to the SENCo to approve, before it is put into use.

"[TA] designs it and then runs it past me, and then I would do suggestions. But it would be [TA] that does the overview and prepares ideas and what [P16] needs; and then she'll run it past me and check that that's OK".

Teacher

In the case of another pupil, teachers had so little contact with her that the teacher asked the TA what to write on the IEP.

The extent to which TAs were involved in the development of provision ranged from TAs having a high level of input to very little input. In over a third of cases (n=17), TAs had a high amount of responsibility for planning provision for statemented pupils, which included making decisions about the selection of curriculum intervention programmes (n=11). Teachers, it seemed, were willing to hand this responsibility to TAs.

"I actually leave a lot up to the TAs, because I feel they know her much better than me. They've worked with her in previous years and they've just got more time to see what works".

Teacher

"I'm pretty much left to interpret the IEP and put into practice how I think it works for [P118]".

TA

"Once they [senior management] say run a phonics group, they leave it up to me to decide which programme I would take".

TA

Despite being positioned as 'experts' on the statemented pupil – and, it seems, in some cases, effective interventions – some TAs expressed concerns that a lack of direction and supervision led to them providing inadequate pedagogical support.

"I don't personally know if I'm doing the right thing, you know... I'm just pulling on things that I've done in the past. Whether academically that's the correct thing to do, I don't know".

TA

Field notes provided by researchers added some weight to the concerns articulated by TAs, as they observed lessons where tasks seemed repetitive and uncreative, and lacked coherence and structure. It was clear also that TAs were doing the best they could, given not only the lack of guidance that was often described, but that they were not trained teachers and had little time to prepare tasks.

IEP targets tended to be reviewed half-termly, although in some cases, termly. In fourteen cases, TAs were involved in the process of reviewing and setting new IEP targets; in four cases, TAs had no role in this process.

“At the end of every term, I write a report on what I think has worked and what hasn’t, and what I’ve been doing. And then the SENCo will look at it and says, ‘If you think that’s working, fine; carry on. But you might want to try this or this’.”

TA

In a few cases (n=4), the pupil was involved in setting and reviewing his/her IEP targets. Whilst no parents/carers said that they were involved in this process, six parents/carers said that were not involved.

The value of having a statement of SEN

In the interviews, we asked what is the value of having a statement for pupils, parents, teachers and the school. Figures indicating prevalence are given at the respondent level.

Discussions about the statement with SENCos very often covered the issue of how they were funded. It is worth mentioning that there was evidence of different funding models in place in each local authority covered by the MaSt project, in terms of how the SEN budget was allocated to schools. Obtaining a clear picture of these funding arrangements proved particularly challenging, and in any event, seemed to have had little bearing on the practice observed and described.

The value of the statement to pupils and parents

Securing access to provision and resources was seen as the most helpful aspect of having a statement. A small number of school staff and parents (n=5 in total) said that the statement is essential for securing a place in parents’ choice of school – be it mainstream, special or in an ARP attached to a mainstream school – and for accessing services and support from external agencies (n=9 in total).

“I don’t think he would have got all the help and support if it hadn’t been put in place. Because I don’t think they take the requirements of the child nearly as seriously when the statements aren’t in place. So I think they are invaluable personally. I mean, nobody likes to label their children, but my attitude is, I don’t look at it as labelling them; I look at it as making sure they’re getting the help they need”.

Parent/carer

One consistent finding related to the way in which the ‘untouchable’ legal status of the statement was seen by school staff (n=26 out of a possible 162) and parents/carers (n=4 out of a possible 33) as a guarantee of TA support – invariably defined in terms of hours – and the money to pay for it.

"Those hours there are ring fenced for [P7], and to us, that's the key".
SENCo

"Budgets are squeezed and everything else, that can't be touched. Everything else can go, but the statements must be honoured".
SENCo

"The hours are there in black and white".
TA

The hours indicated on the statement and the employment and deployment of TAs were inextricably linked in the minds of many of the staff and parents/carers researchers spoke to formally (in interviews) and informally, during school visits. TAs were seen as necessary, indispensable and directly linked to provision for pupils with statements.

"I think the statement is simply a means of accessing the hours of support that she needs and the staffing point for the support that she requires".
SENCo

"He would still have had to have a significantly differentiated curriculum, which you can't deliver unless you've got an adult there to deliver it for him".
SENCo

"There wouldn't be a TA here without funding; and I think without a TA with him all the time, he wouldn't be able to manage himself".
TA

In some instances, a TA's contract was directly tied to the statement, meaning that if/when the pupil left the school, the TA's contract would be terminated; however, this practice did not seem very common.

School staff and parents/carers also said that the statement was necessary for successful inclusion (n=14 in total), ensuring the pupil made academic progress (n=10 in total) and helping their social, emotional and behavioural development (n=9 in total). Again, the comments from participants reflected the intrinsic role of the TA to these aims.

"I think if he didn't have a statement, he wouldn't be in a mainstream school. I really think from what I'd seen 18 months ago, he wouldn't still be here if he didn't have a TA with him all the time".
TA

"Unless he had the statement, he wouldn't have had the support in the afternoons, and he wouldn't have had his directed literacy and numeracy interventions in the afternoons... Without all of the interventions and help he's had, there is now way it would have had the same impact".
Teacher

“She would be nowhere near where she is now if we hadn’t gone through and the local authority hadn’t agreed to do an assessment of her needs... Because you’ve got a person there that can take charge of what [P124] does”.

SENCo

Yet in the case of a quarter of the pupils, SENCos and teachers said that having a statement made little difference to provision, as the school would have provided the same level of support in any case.

“I don’t think it actually makes any difference; just because, as a teacher, your job is to make sure all the children in your class progress. And if they didn’t, you wouldn’t be doing your job”.

Teacher

“If it’s a good school, looking at children as they are, they should do the same provision with and without it”.

SENCo

The value of the statement to schools and teachers

Despite this view about the overall *need* for a statement (in terms of putting the appropriate provision in place), many school staff found the statement itself to be a useful document. Some staff (n=5) and some parents/carers(n=4) suggested that the statement raised the profile of the pupil and his/her needs within the school.

“I think the fact that he’s got a statement does, to a certain extent, make people sit up and pay perhaps a little bit more attention”.

SENCo

In particular, the statement was seen by school staff as a helpful resource that listed in one place information about the pupil (e.g. in terms of his/her particular needs, targets) and useful strategies for helping to meet them (n=16 teachers and TAs); one teacher described the statement as a ‘guide book’. The use of the statement as an information-sharing mechanism extended to transition process.

There were some comments from school staff about the length and detail of some statements, which made them hard to interpret, and there were also several concerns about how effectively statements are kept up to date.

The match between the provision listed on the statement and provision received

The interviews allowed us to obtain views on the ‘fit’ between the provision listed on a pupil’s statement (and annual review) and the provision he/she receives. In the interviews, school staff and parents/carers were asked to what extent they felt the provision that is listed on the statement/annual review matched the provision the pupil actually received. There were 53 codeable responses: 41 from school staff and 12 from parents.

Overall, two-thirds of respondents who provided an answer felt that there was a ‘good fit’ between the provision on the statement/annual review and the provision received. A minority school staff (n=7) and parents/carers (n=3) felt that there was an

unsatisfactory to reasonable fit. In eight members of staff were uncertain, so did not commit to an answer.

Many parents/carers recognised that schools were doing the best they could and were appreciative. They felt that, under the circumstances, schools could not be blamed for struggling to meet some of their child's needs, which might have been better provided for in a special school setting; they felt that there were limits to what could be achieved in mainstream settings.

"On the whole, I'm very happy that her needs are met. But there are large gaps that the school isn't able to meet, because it's a mainstream setting. So in terms of her social development, I find that quite worrying, because her behaviour means that it...she's more able to relate to [smaller children]... It's not that she's excluded; they do go out of their way to try and include her as much as they can. But that's just not something that is able to be done fully in this setting".

Parent/carer

Many TAs felt the fit between stated and actual provision was good, but some recognised the challenges in making this happen; they made particular points about covering the curriculum and ensuring that pupils got as much of their time as possible.

"It's fitting it in... It might be he needs to do an intervention group, or he needs to do social stories, he needs to do this, and he needs to do that. But actually, there is not always the time or the resources to do it. Because if we were to take him out of his literacy lessons and his maths lessons, yes – we might have time to do all the other interventions. That's where I think the conflict comes in".

TA

"Because I'm divided between two [pupils with statements], I don't feel that he's getting the quality that he actually needs".

TA

Some school staff (n=21) expressed their answer, additionally or alternatively, in terms of the match between the hours attached to the statement and the hours of TA support the pupil received. Nine respondents said that the pupil received the number of hours of TA support specified on the statement. A further nine respondents suggested that the pupil received more than the number of hours given on the statement. Only three respondents suggested that pupils received fewer hours than specified on the statement, largely because he/she had improved to the extent that less direct adult support was required.

The progress and development of pupils' with statements

Although the MaSt study was not set up to measure or evaluate the impact of statements or provision on pupils' progress and development, it was hard to avoid some discussion of this topic in the natural coverage of the interviews with school staff and parents; school staff in particular were often keen to share with researchers the progress pupils had made on a number of dimensions. As such, figures indicating prevalence are given at the respondent level.

Taken together, responses from school staff and parents/carers related to pupil progress in terms of: acquisition of literacy and numeracy (n=37); positive approaches to learning (n=35); peer relations (n=20); emotional and behavioural development (n=19); ability to manage in a mainstream setting (n=15); and speech and language skills (n=9).

The areas of progress most frequently mentioned by staff concerned pupils' positive approaches to learning (n=31), their acquisition of literacy and numeracy (n=28) and their peer relations (n=19).

"Beforehand it would be like, 'I can't do it, so I'm not doing it. Not doing it'. Or start fiddling with something under the table. Now he'll knuckle down and you can leave him to do things on his own, instead of having to be watched the whole time."

Teacher

"Although he does still struggle sometimes with classroom situations... he's learnt and now uses the strategies that we've put in place to deal with them... He seems to be much happier in school as well. And as a result of this, he can now begin to learn."

TA

"Small things. He's now leaving spaces between his words; he's forming his lower and upper case letters more clearly. And I do feel that his understanding of the value of fives, tens and hundreds has got better as well since the start of term, which was one of his targets".

TA

"His playground behaviour has changed a lot. It used to be really quite violent, and we rarely have major violent incidents with him any more at all... And he can get along with [peers] on a similar level now, whereas before he found it really difficult".

Teacher

Parents'/carers' responses, on the other hand, focused principally on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy (n=9), emotional and behavioural development (n=5) and the ability to manage in a mainstream setting (n=5).

"He's included. He's not made to feel weird or different. I'm very happy".

Parent/carer

Overall, these findings described a situation where, in the majority of cases, pupils had made considerable and significant progress (over one, two or even three years) in their social and behavioural development, and this had been key in enabling them to 'cope' in a mainstream classroom.

Academic progress

Despite progress on the non-academic dimensions, in a great many cases, pupils' academic progress had stalled. Here, prevalence is given at the pupil (or case) level, thereby indicating the proportion of pupils in the MaSt study sample for who academic progress was a particular concern.

Taken together, comments from school staff and parents about progress being 'slow', relative to the pupils' peers, was evident in almost half of the 48 cases (n=23). In some cases, at least one interviewee referred to the widening gap between the levels of academic attainment of the pupil with the statement and his/her peer group (n=8).

"So the gap has grown, the differences have become much more apparent. And I think as he's getting older, certain behaviours, which we noticed in Year 3, but weren't quite so obvious, are now becoming a little bit more apparent".

SENCo

"He has made progress. Obviously he's made slower progress; he's made one sub-level progress in writing. In numeracy, he's made one sub-level. Reading: he's also made one sub-level... Over the course of the year, we expect [pupils] to make two sub-levels progress, according to the data".

Teacher

However, many school staff and parents/carers who described pupils' progress towards basic literacy and numeracy skills, pointed out that although it was slow and slight, relative to the pupil's prior attainment, this progress was significant and meaningful.

"He's definitely made progress – not huge leaps. When you look at levels and stuff, it never looks very much, but really, in terms of [P11] himself and where he has come from and how he's come along, there is a lot there to celebrate".

SENCo

"[Progress is] big for her, but compared to another child, she hasn't made as much progress. And they are going ahead of her; the gap is widening".

Parent/carer

In just over a quarter of cases, a lack of academic progress was apparent (n=14). In some cases progress was difficult to ascertain due to the pupils' reluctance to work without TA support (n=9).

"It seems like he's taking two steps forward, and then getting pushed back a bit... What I would like to see is him being pushed to his limit... I have a feeling that he doesn't get pushed to his full potential".

Parent/carer

"I think he has become dependent on us quite a lot. And I feel if we didn't help him, even starting him off by giving him the choice of work... I feel that he would sit there quite happily for the morning and not do any work".

TA

Peer relations

Results from the systematic observations reported above (see Table 17) showed that pupils with statements had less than half the proportion of peer interactions in classroom, compared with control pupils (13% vs. 32%). Many of the opportunities pupils had for interaction with peers were, in the case of statemented pupils, replaced with interactions with TAs. We note, however, that overall, researchers observed were

very few instances of peer-led group work involving either control or statemented pupils.

The results from the case studies reflected a deeper concern, expressed by teachers and parents, regarding the social isolation that these pupils could experience. In some cases, pupils with statements had difficulties interacting with other pupils, which could lead to other pupils avoiding them; in other cases, they seemed not to have developed friendships, not the least because the classroom environment, in terms of separation and withdrawal (e.g. for interventions), got in the way of interactions with a wider range of peers. Friendship groups were often formed on the basis of groupings in which statemented pupils spent the most time. Typically this meant that these pupils formed friendships with other lower attaining pupils. Interestingly, where interventions designed to improve social skills or develop friendships were delivered (by TAs) to groups they tended to be populated only by pupils experiencing social difficulties.

Many of the pupils in the MaSt study had social skills that were less developed than the control pupils, and this often led to difficulties working with peers. As such, this informed decisions about how teachers and TAs grouped pupils, and these actions reinforced friendship networks. The key finding in terms of peer relations was that pupils with statements who required support to develop skills for interacting with peers were denied opportunities to do so in ways that control pupils did not experience. Furthermore, somewhat perversely, where opportunities were created (e.g. in the form of interventions), statemented pupils tended to find themselves in situations with pupils who had similar difficulties with their social skills. There was very little evidence of interventions in which collaborative group work was used in a deliberate way to help pupils' social and working relations with others.

Transition from primary school

The interviews with parents/carers in particular raised the topic of the statemented pupil's transition from primary school. Despite much of the data coming from interviews with parents/carers, other discussions with school staff informed the section of the case study reports that dealt with the theme of transition; therefore, prevalence figures are more fittingly given at the pupil level.

Although school visits were conducted through the whole academic year, in 37 of the 48 cases, parents, often in consultation with the school, had identified a preferred transition destination. A mainstream school was the preferred destination in the majority of these cases (n=21), with further two identifying a mainstream secondary school with an ARP attached. In the remaining 14 cases, a special school had been selected as the preferred choice.

Encouragingly, in a third of cases, work had also begun on preparing the pupil for transition (n=16). This included visits to prospective schools and discussions between the pupil's parent/carer and the primary SENCo. In some cases, a transition plan was being prepared. In the case of pupils going to a mainstream secondary, arrangements were in place to ensure that pupils could make one or two special trips to the school – perhaps with a TA – to begin acclimatisation, and preparatory activities were planned, such as how to understand two-week timetables and move around the school safely.

There were palpable concerns about the transition process. Parents/carers were clearly anxious about making the right choice for their child, and avoiding placing them in an environment – be that a mainstream or special school – where he/she would be unhappy or unsafe. It was this thinking – that the pupil would not cope in a mainstream environment – that seemed to be behind parents'/carers' decision to favour a special school over mainstream. One mother was considering home-schooling as an alternative. One SENCo suggested that parents/carers of children with a high level of need are grateful for the mainstream school experience at primary level, but do not consider it at secondary level because of the magnitude of cultural change. In a small number of cases, fears were raised that the pupil would 'regress' academically or behaviourally if placed in the inappropriate environment (n=8).

"Our concern would probably be that if he was in a special school with children that were a lot worse than him or had different issues that he might regress or might not reach the potential that he has got".

TA

The main concern for parents/carers (evident in 12 cases) was that a mainstream secondary school would not be able to offer a similar model of support (namely, one-to-one support from a TA) that their child had become accustomed to in primary school, and this was seen as contribute to his/her failure to cope. Continued and consistent support from a TA was seen essential to successful transition and making progress.

"He won't have the same TA all the time, so I worry about how he'll cope".

Parent/carer

With this in mind, a few parents/carers and schools were reluctant to 'talk up' pupil progress and development at annual reviews for fear of it leading to a reduction of support hours in the lead up to transition.

Parents/carers concerns about peer relations were also prevalent, mainly around the increased likelihood of bullying and 'falling in with the wrong crowd'; this issue emerged in ten of the 48 cases. On this latter point, concerns ranged from more impressionable pupils following and copying inappropriate behaviour to getting draw into socially unacceptable behaviour, and even crime. But it was how a mainstream environment was likely to expose pupils to bullying that drew most concern.

"Secondary school is a different kettle of fish from infants and juniors. And I think kids are so horrible as well. And even my oldest; she said, 'Mum, they'll be horrible to [P6] at school... I'm not prepared to put her through that. From what's happened to my other daughter at secondary school, I've made my mind up".

Parent/carer

Summary of results: five overarching themes

Here, we draw out our conclusions on the results of the MaSt study in the form of five overarching themes.

Degree of separation

A high degree of TA support and separation from the classroom, teachers and peers strongly characterised the educational experiences of pupils with statements.

As a result of TAs taking on the greater responsibility for pupils with statements of SEN, such pupils were found to spend over a quarter of their time away from the mainstream class, class teacher and their peers. A clear point to emerge from the MaSt study was the almost constant accompanying presence of a TA in relation to all the locations in which pupils were placed. There is, in other words, an intimate connection between TAs and the locations, both in and away from the classroom, in which pupils with statements are taught.

Pupils with statements experienced a high degree of one-to-one interaction with a TA, at the expense of interaction with the teacher and peers. When this occurs in the form of 'stereo teaching', we see another, subtler, expression of separation that pupils with statements experience and which control pupils, by and large, do not.

Statemented pupils also experienced a form of segregation within the more obviously inclusive environment of the classroom, by being positioned at a workstation or experiencing less time in whole class contexts (compared to average attaining control pupils).

The degree of responsibility

Teachers have a low to mid level of responsibility for pupils with statements.

TAs have a mid to high level of responsibility for pupils with statements.

TAs took on much of the responsibility for: i) the *planning*; and ii) the delivery of *teaching* of pupils with a statement of SEN.

Responsibility for planning ranged from devising an alternative curriculum, through to preparing intervention programmes, to augmenting or modifying teachers' lesson plans. TAs took on much of this responsibility, with varying degrees of teacher involvement, although it was rare for the teacher to have a high level of involvement. Often TAs had the main responsibility for adapting tasks for the statemented pupil to do, with decisions made on the basis of what the TA thought the pupil would be able to access or achieve.

TAs who planned lessons, sessions and interventions for pupils with statements also had a high involvement in teaching them. But even TAs who had a low to mid level of

responsibility for planning were found to have a high level of responsibility for teaching and moment-by-moment pedagogical decision-making.

There seemed to be particular power invested in the statement itself that contributed to the way in which the responsibility for pupils with statements rested with TAs, rather than with teachers. The legal status of the statement – the statutory obligation that the school must provide a specified number of hours of TA support for the pupils – seemed to lead to a situation where teachers did not have the full responsibility for the planning and teaching of pupils with statements. Such a situation did not exist for pupils who did not have SEN.

A similar situation was found in the DISS project, and so what we describe here can be seen as further evidence of the unintentional drift toward a model of TA deployment that, while conducted with the best of intentions, has resulted in unintended consequences. Since their introduction into mainstream educational settings, the use of TAs has become an essential way in which teachers can deal with problems connected to the inclusion of pupils with statements, their workloads and job satisfaction, and challenges posed by curriculum initiatives and behaviour in school. Thus, the drift we describe is understandable. However, it raises significant concerns about the support given to pupils with statements and raises questions about a form of educational discrimination as they apply to such pupils.

The appropriateness and quality of pedagogy

Pupils with statements often receive a less appropriate and lower quality pedagogical experience compared to their average attaining peers.

The quality of pedagogy is unlikely to be sufficient to narrow the attainment gap between pupils with statements and their peers.

As was found in the DISS project, when compared to the experiences of pupils without SEN, pupils receiving a high amount of TA support have a different – and less effective – pedagogical diet. TAs' contributions to the support of pupils with statements were clearly well intentioned, but the appropriateness and quality of what they provided in terms of their pedagogical input (e.g. the physical tasks and verbal interactions) was questionable.

We found that tasks (including interventions) were often inappropriately targeted, were repetitive and/or undemanding; on occasions, the detectably lower expectations teachers and TAs had of pupils with statements seemed to underpin the selection of such tasks. As noted above, very often, it was left to TAs to provide additional differentiation and tasks to 'fill in the gap' left by teachers.

Despite progress, in their emotional and behavioural development, approaches and attitudes to learning, and peer relations over time, pupils' academic progress was often found to have stalled. The widening gap in attainment had, by Year 5, become more conspicuous and was a cause for concern – particularly with the transition from primary schooling only a year away.

The extent of knowledge

There are considerable gaps in teachers' and TAs' knowledge concerning meeting the needs of pupils with statements.

Many staff were unsure how to best deal with the challenges and sometimes complex difficulties posed by pupils with statements. Most teachers reported having had no training on meeting the specific needs of pupils with statements, and only a few had received some general training on SEN. In our view, this indicates a failing of initial teacher training. This lack of knowledge seemed to be a contributing factor in teachers' lesson and task preparation; their planning rarely extended to cover the learning needs of pupils with a statement.

Teachers often positioned TAs as the 'expert' on the statemented pupil, possessing much more knowledge about pupils with statements, despite TAs having had little more than general training on SEN and curriculum interventions. TAs were seen as capable of making teachers' teaching, interactions and tasks accessible for pupils with statements.

Similar to what was found in the DISS project, there was little opportunity for teachers and TAs to meet prior to lessons, and thus tap into this essential knowledge. By and large, communication was limited to ad hoc meetings before and/or after school and during break and lunch times. Consequently, such arrangements relied on the goodwill of TAs, though some TAs had a small amount of non-contact time to prepare resources for intervention sessions.

The quality of leadership and management

There are concerns about the ways in which schools prioritise meeting the needs of pupils with statements.

Across the schools, there was little evidence of an effective and theoretically-grounded pedagogy for pupils with statements of SEN in the instructional approaches used by either teachers or TAs. The provision of a statement of SEN – and crucially, having a specified number of hours of TA support – seemed to get in the way of schools thinking through an appropriate pedagogy for pupils with the most pronounced learning difficulties in mainstream primary schools.

Leadership is critical to both the development of a strong and suitable pedagogy for pupils with statements, and its place within the drive towards whole school improvement. Yet on the basis of evidence from this study, there was an absence of strong leadership on these points.

Equally clear was the integral role of the TA in the education of pupils with statements. Consistent with what we concluded on the basis of results from the DISS study, findings from the MaSt project add weight to the urgent need for school leaders to rethink the role of TAs with regard to meeting the needs of pupils with statements.

Of foremost importance, is that teachers must take on the lead responsibility for the pedagogical planning and teaching of pupils with statements – as they already do routinely for other pupils. We argue strongly that TAs have an important role in enabling teachers to do this. But if, as part of these arrangements, TAs retain a pedagogical role – teaching pupils with or without SEN – it is essential that this role is carefully thought through, and developed and supported with appropriate training.

Conclusions

The Making a Statement project set out to collect systematic data on the educational experiences of pupils with a statement of SEN in mainstream primary schools. This was achieved through the collection of observation data based on many hundreds of hours spent in classrooms over the 2011/12 academic year. The observations results were supported with detailed case studies, which drew together data from interviews, documentation and researchers' field notes. The findings from the observations and case studies led to the summation of the main messages from the study in terms of five key, overarching themes.

In this final section of the project report, we first describe some of the strengths and limitations of the MaSt study methodology, and then position the findings in relation the existing research in the field. We then turn to the implications of the findings on policy and practice. In line with our previous work in the DISS project and the Effective Deployment of TAs project (Webster *et al.*, 2012), we make some specific recommendations for the ways in which schools need to rethink the role of TAs, but also offer some recommendations for how local authorities and schools might approach provision for pupils with statements ahead of the imminent changes to the system in the UK.

We cannot conclude this report without making it clear that there was evidence of good practice in a number of schools. It would be incorrect and unfair to suggest that schools had 'given up' on the pupils who find learning and/or engaging with learning more of a challenge than others. Spending a week at a time observing at close quarters, and discussion with practitioners and parents/carers, brought home how schools are making every effort to attend to the needs of pupils with statements, amid a period of intense flux and uncertainty, in terms of funding shortages, high stakes school accountability, the implementation of numerous new policy initiatives, and the unclear future of long-standing support structures (such as local authority services).

There were, then, examples of TAs being deployed to work with other non-SEN pupils to allow the teacher to spend time with statemented pupils, as part of a group or on a one-to-one basis – in line with recommendations we have made elsewhere (Russell, Webster and Blatchford, 2013). Whilst such practice was far from commonplace, a more conventional model of TA deployment was in managing or monitoring behaviour and ensuring pupils were on task and focussed. We can see in the observation results on pupils on and off task behaviour that TAs appeared to be successful in this regard; and indeed, as we found in the DISS project, there were benefits for the teachers and the rest of the class in terms of the lesson running smoothly. Whilst this is clearly a positive impact, there is a difficult issue if this form of social support does not necessarily support, and may even hinder, academic progress.

The MaSt project in context

The MaSt project has provided more data on the educational experiences of pupils with statements, and extends the picture that has been painted by the earlier DISS and Effective Deployment of TAs projects – which together constitute a wider programme of research on the role and impact of teaching assistants. Results from the DISS project showed that pupils with the highest level of SEN performed even less well academically in core subjects as a result of support from TAs, compared with other pupils (Webster *et al.*, 2010). This prompted us to look more closely at the processes that might account for these results via the MaSt study.

The main findings from the present MaSt project extend the explanations given in the DISS project for the worrying findings on pupils' academic attainment. These explanations were set out in our Wider Pedagogical Role model, and chiefly concern the ways in which TAs are deployed and prepared for their roles, along with the lower quality interactions they have with pupils, compared to higher quality teacher-pupil interactions (Blatchford, Russell and Webster, 2012; Webster *et al.*, 2011).

The findings on TA deployment presented in this report, together with poor planning and preparation, and questionable forms of pupil talk, are all consistent with the findings in the DISS project. Despite the widespread coverage of the DISS project findings since their publication in 2009, on the basis of the evidence of the MaSt project, there appears to have been little change in the ways schools use TAs to support the needs of pupils with SEN.

The MaSt case study data has been particularly helpful in extending the messages from the DISS project, in terms of showing the extent to which it is TAs, not teachers, who have the day-to-day responsibility for meeting the needs of statemented pupils, and providing evidence that it is not just more effective TA deployment that school leaders must work on, but also how they prioritise meeting the needs of pupils with often challenging SEN alongside the needs of others.

Given that little seems to have changed in the way that TAs tend to have day-to-day pedagogical responsibility for pupils with statements, it is very possible that the heavy amount of TA support continues to have an inadvertent – and potentially profound – effect on the learning of these pupils.

The MaSt project, however, was not without its limitations. Firstly, although we have used the term 'pupils with statements' throughout this report, we recognise that only pupils with statements for moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties formed the focus of the study, and in themselves do not represent the full range of SEN for which statements are awarded.

Similarly, the study was limited only to pupils in Year 5. Obvious candidates for further research in this area would be replication studies on pupils in lower primary year groups and pupils in secondary schools, and on pupils with other forms of SEN (e.g. speech, language and communications needs, autism spectrum disorders, hearing and/or visual impairments).

A further limitation of the MaSt study concerns the logic of the observation design. As researchers were tasked with shadowing the statemented pupil, in instances when the pupil was withdrawn from the classroom, observations of the control pupils could not be made simultaneously. Furthermore, as pupils tended to be withdrawn following the teacher's whole class input, it is likely that control pupils' experience of the classroom may involve more group and individual interactions – and fewer whole class interactions – than the observation data suggest. That said, as around three-quarters of all observations were conducted in the mainstream class, we are confident that any variation is unlikely to have a profound effect on our main conclusions.

Ideally, had resources allowed, an alternative research design could have been to have a second researcher making moment-by-moment observations of a control pupil throughout the week-long school visit. This would have produced an overall greater number of control pupil observations and made for a fairer comparison with data on pupils with statements. However, we do not believe that the ratio of control pupil to statemented pupil observations in any way invalidates the MaSt project findings.

Implications for policy

The MaSt project findings have clear implications for two of the main changes to the SEN system set out in the Children and Families Bill, which received its first reading in Parliament in early February 2013¹²: i) the replacement of statements with Education and Health Care plans (EHCPs) and; ii) the introduction of personal budgets, which would give parents/carers control over their child's SEN funding.

In terms of EHCPs, perhaps the clearest message from the MaSt project is that expressing the support for pupils in terms of a set number of hours has a particular power over the provision that is put in place. The common practice (also found in the DISS project) was for schools to convert the hours given on a statement into hours of support from a TA. The problems this leads to have been made clear in this report.

The new EHCPs, if they are to continue to express support in the currency of hours, must specify the composition of hours (e.g. which adults provide which interventions for how long) far more clearly than is currently the case. However, the more pragmatic response would be to do away with hours as the main expression of support. We argue that the emphasis should be on pedagogy instead; that is, identifying the processes and strategies that will help meet carefully defined outcomes stated on the EHCP.

The personal budgets are a key element of selling the coalition government's reforms to the parents/carers of children with SEN – many of whom report having had an adversarial relationship with the education and SEN systems over many years (Lamb, 2009). Although the relationship between the EHCPs and the personal budgets has yet to be made explicit, it would make sense – given what has just been suggested – that each budget is set dependent on the outcomes specified in the EHCP.

¹²<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/childrenandfamilies.html> (accessed 6.2.2013)

In this way, provision cannot be decided based on the money available for it; rather, pedagogy, not resources, should dictate provision. Our view is that presently, schools too readily conceive meeting the needs of pupils with SEN as being wholly contingent on available resources. This undermines the right of these pupils to an appropriate education that non-SEN pupils do not experience. Sikes *et al.* (2007) refer to the current situation as the 'yes buts' of inclusion. Greater emphasis must surely be on identifying and providing particular instructional approaches that will meet the needs of the pupil, not predicated on (given the current economic climate) hard won, but limited, resources.

It has been proposed that the personal budget would be a proportion of the overall budget allocated to a pupil with an EHCP. This could potentially result in parents/carers requesting that money is spent on different resources/supports that schools and local authorities deem appropriate, with neither portion of the budget able to fully cover the costs of preferred initiatives. In some circumstances, this may lead to a different kind of conflict between families and institutions.

Who would have the final say over how money is spent in such cases is unclear. However, if schools and local authorities can draw on empirical research evidence, such as that presented here, to make a strong case for moving away from the default model of 'hours = TA' – which many parents have come to expect – to a more educationally effective model, such perceptions may be realigned and demands diminish.

Implications for practice

We argue that schools can make a big difference by rethinking their approach to the way they provide support to pupils with statements, and in particular, by fundamentally reconfiguring the role of the TAs. The MaSt study findings also have implications for the ways in which teachers and schools think about inclusive practice. We suggest that there are three things schools should do to improve provision for pupils with statements.

Rethinking the TA role

A clear and consistent message from the DISS project is that schools need to examine the way they deploy TAs. Doing so has implications for the experiences of pupils other than those with statements. In summary, we argue that school leaders need to ensure that TAs do not routinely support lower attaining pupils and those with SEN, and that they must address the issues of pupil separation (from class, teacher and peers) that characterise the day-to-day experiences of pupils with statements (Russell, Webster and Blatchford, 2013).

Rethinking the teacher's role

The second thing schools should do to improve provision for pupils with statements is to encourage teachers to think more inclusively about pupils with SEN. As we have seen, teachers rarely take a high level of responsibility for task or curriculum planning for pupils with statements; however, some do.

Teachers, then, need to ensure that they retain the responsibility for not only the pedagogical planning for *all* pupils in the class (this is, after all, their legal duty), but also reducing the separation between themselves and pupils with statements. In the best examples, teachers did not routinely direct or allow TAs to withdraw these pupils from the class. As noted above, some teachers also organised the classroom in ways that enabled them to work with pupils with statements.

There was little evidence of any particularly effective pedagogical approaches for pupils with SEN, though this is perhaps in line with expectations, given teachers' lack of training in this area. We call for more research in this area that directly involves teachers and SENCos.

Rethinking the school's approach to pupils with SEN

Finally, we argue that schools need to move away from models of SEN provision that rely heavily on the employment and deployment of TAs. We should make it plain that we do not see TAs themselves as the problem, but the way in which schools misuse this valuable resource. Schools need to explicitly develop pedagogical supports in relation to anticipated academic outcomes for pupils with SEN (that is, those with and without statements) of which TAs are but one approach.

It is evident that wider factors must be addressed, not least initial teacher training (ITT). Hodkinson's (2009) has drawn attention to the missed opportunities dating back to the Warnock report to rectify this situation: the government rhetoric on the issue of SEN in ITT has come to sound, in his view, 'like a scratched record'.

The Cambridge Primary Review reminds us that we 'cannot wait' for changes in wider societal or educational ecosystems (e.g. schools and classrooms) to become 'more equitable and inclusive' (Alexander, 2009). Schools can, and should, drive change where governments flounder or direct emphasis elsewhere. We recommend that schools need to develop training for teaching pupils with SEN and time for teachers and TAs to liaise, within a broader cultural shift: the educational needs of pupils with SEN must have equal status with the educational needs of pupils without SEN.

It is worth noting that such fundamental reappraisal and reconfiguration of current practice and priorities regarding pupils with statements in mainstream schools is a 'long game'. Black-Hawkins' (2012) review of commercial guidance on developing inclusive practice found a predilection for 'quick fix' strategies 'addressing fairly superficial concerns', which positions inclusive practice as an 'add-on'. We would agree with her view that such cosmetic treatments are unlikely to produce either coherent and equitable educational practices or help close the attainment gap between pupils with SEN and others.

Finally, it became evident in the MaSt study observations that class size plays a significant part in what school and teachers feel they can achieve in terms of meeting the needs of pupils with statements. Not unreasonably, a number of teachers viewed the statemented pupil as one of 30 and no more deserving of more teacher attention than any other child. Such responses were pragmatic rather than indicative of a lack of interest or care in these pupils. Often such views were defended because the allocation of TA support was deemed a more than sufficient makeweight.

We recognise that class size is an issue that transcends schools and teachers, though it was clear to us that additional resource provisions offered a notable advantage: TAs aside, teachers were able to cope with meeting the needs of eight or so statemented pupils more effectively in an ARP than could teachers in mainstream classes, who had one statemented pupil in a room of 30 children.

Whilst we are aware of the sensitive debates concerning the role of special schools and specialist provisions in inclusive education – and we do not suggest this in a deliberately contentious manner – we cannot reject the empirical evidence from the MaSt study, which suggests that there is much to learn about what ARPs offer.

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Appendix 2. Interview schedules

SENCo interview

- How long have you worked with PUPIL?
- Is there a current medical diagnosis connected with PUPIL'S needs?
- What is the funding connected to PUPIL'S statement used to pay for? Is all of it used to fund the TA hours given on the statement (e.g. statement = 20 hours / TA's hours of work = 20 hours)? Is part of the funding used to pay for other forms of support (e.g. teacher time)?
- What is the TA's role in PUPIL'S support?
- What is the class teacher's role in PUPIL'S support?
- Is there a role for peer supports (e.g. group work and talk partners) in the delivery of PUPIL'S statement?
- Do any other support staff or people from external agencies have a role in PUPIL'S support? If so, what is their role?
- Are any of the hours allocated to the statement used for 'non-contact' support? For example, are some of TA hours used to prepare resources for PUPIL?
- Are there any other forms of support used, such as ICT or visual aids?
- Tell me about any specific training and experience of the staff who work most often with PUPIL.
- What forms of guidance do the SENCo and the teacher provide to the TA(s) who support PUPIL?
- Statements typically require schools to provide a 'differentiated curriculum' for statemented pupils. How is this handled? Are any particular interventions or strategies used?
- In your view, to what extent does PUPIL receive the support listed in his/her statement?
- Are there any particular factors that help the effective delivery of the statement?
- Are there any particular factors that impede the effective delivery of the statement?
- How has the support that PUPIL received helped him/her?

Teacher interview

- How long have you worked with PUPIL?
- What is the TA's role in PUPIL'S support?
- What is your role in PUPIL'S support?
- Is there a role for peer supports (e.g. group work and talk partners) in the delivery of PUPIL'S statement?
- Do any other support staff or people from external agencies have a role in PUPIL'S support? If so, what is their role?
- Are any of the hours allocated to the statement used for 'non-contact' support? For example, are some of TA hours used to prepare resources for PUPIL?
- Are there any other forms of support used, such as ICT or visual aids?
- Language (e.g. the ways in which adults talk to PUPIL) can also be considered as a form of support. How important is language in the support provided to PUPIL?
- Tell me about any specific training and experience you have had to work with PUPIL.
- What forms of guidance do you provide to the TA(s) who support PUPIL?
- Statements typically require schools to provide a 'differentiated curriculum' for statemented pupils. How is this handled? Are any particular interventions or strategies used?
- In your view, to what extent does PUPIL receive the support listed in his/her statement?
- Are there any particular factors that help the effective delivery of the statement?
- Are there any particular factors that impede the effective delivery of the statement?
- How has the support that PUPIL received helped him/her?

TA interview

- How long have you worked as a TA in this school? Have you always worked with PUPIL?
- How long have you worked with PUPIL?
- Are your hours of work linked to the number of hours on PUPIL'S statement? (e.g. if the pupil has 20 hours of TA support, are the TA's hours of work also 20 hours).
- What is your role in PUPIL'S support?
- What is the teacher's role in PUPIL'S support?
- Is there a role for peer supports (e.g. group work and talk partners) in the delivery of PUPIL'S statement?
- Do any other support staff or people from external agencies have a role in PUPIL'S support? If so, what is their role?
- Are any of the hours allocated to the statement used for 'non-contact' support? For example, are some of TA hours used to prepare resources for PUPIL?
- Are there any other forms of support used, such as ICT or visual aids?
- Language (e.g. the ways in which adults talk to PUPIL) can also be considered as a form of support. How important is language in the support provided to PUPIL?
- Tell me about any specific training and experience you have had to work with PUPIL.
- What forms of guidance do the SENCo and teacher provide regarding your role in supporting PUPIL?
- Statements typically require schools to provide a 'differentiated curriculum' for statemented pupils. How is this handled? Are any particular interventions or strategies used?
- In your view, to what extent does PUPIL receive the support listed in his/her statement?
- Are there any particular factors that help you to provide a good level of support to PUPIL?
- Are there any particular factors that prevent you from being able to provide a good level of support to PUPIL?
- How has the support that PUPIL received helped him/her?

Parent/carer interviews

- What is your understanding of the types of support PUPILS receives at school? Who provides the support?
- How does the TA support PUPIL?
- How does the class teacher support PUPIL?
- Does PUPIL receive support from any other adults? How do these people support PUPIL?
- Are there any other forms of support, such as ICT or visual aids?
- Statements typically require schools to provide a 'differentiated curriculum' for statemented pupils. How does the school handle this? Are you aware of any particular interventions or strategies that are used?
- To what extent does the reality of what PUPIL receives in terms of support match with your expectations of what you think he/she needs?
- Are there any particular factors that help or prevent a good level of support being provided?
- How has the support that PUPIL received helped him/her?
- Is there anything about how support is provided to PUPIL that could be changed or improved?