

**O'Brien, Trevor, 2008, *Special Educational Needs in the Primary School: Teachers', Principals' and Parents' Perceptions of the Current Reality.***

### **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

The contentious topic of including children with special educational needs in mainstream schools is relatively new in Ireland. There have been various developments in policy, which highlight the imperative of including such children with their typically developing peers.

The most notable development has been "The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004". This act, though currently not enforced at the time of writing, brings with it enormous challenges for teachers, principals and all those involved in education. The present writer has undertaken a study to explore stakeholders' perceptions of inclusion, with a particular reference to three primary schools in the south of Ireland.

This research project was conducted with a view to determining attitudes towards current policy and practice in the Irish context and also to identify ways in which provision could be improved. Issues considered include the area of teacher-training, school resources and the importance of collaboration with outside agencies. The findings emanating from this research present challenges to policy makers and to practitioners and the researcher offers recommendations in this regard.