

Wood, Karen, 2012, *Catering for Children with Special Needs (SENs) at Second Level in the County of Cork: A Study of the Perceptions and Attitudes of Teachers at Teaching SENs.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

There have been many changes in the area of special educational needs education Ireland over the past decade with significant developments in department policy a legislation.

This research project focused on the attitudes and perceptions of teachers relation to Special Educational Needs (SENs hereafter) in three second-level school one being a DEIS college, the second a community school and the last being voluntary secondary school. The writer looked at how these schools catered for SF1 students in terms of resources. Similarities and differences in their approaches to SF1 were discussed and analysed.

The writer critically evaluated the literature in relation special educational needs. Issues considered were the history of policy change relation to SENs in Ireland and UK. Further issues that were examined were school resources, teacher training, including both pre-service and in-service, inclusion and bullying. The writer used both questionnaires, distributed to twenty of the teachers each school and unstructured and focused interviews with the three principals from each school to understand the structures which have been put in place in their schools to aid the child with SENs.

The main conclusions are that: inclusion is a positive development in education; there is a lack of awareness of policy documents in relation to SENs; there are differences in the challenges facing teachers who teach SENs students; most teachers did not receive adequate pre-service training in the area of special educational needs and according to 72% of teachers surveyed, there is a link between bullying and the special educational needs student.