Chapter One

1. Introduction.

1.1. Does inclusive education address social inclusion?

Ideally, inclusion is the most appropriate way of addressing social inclusion within aspirations of social justice (UNESCO, 2005; Lloyd, 2000; Slee, 2000). However, given the historical background of the "disablement attitude" and values attached to it, inclusion is still being addressed in a medical model where persons with special needs are viewed as sick individuals in need of treatment and charity support and social factors are rarely put into consideration (Slee, 2000; The Disability Discrimination Act, (DDA) 1996).

Although it is believed that the current move towards inclusive practice strives to address existing questions such as: Who is in? Who is out? Who benefits? Who loses? Who decides? How come? And what are we going to do about it? (Slee, 2000), it is questionable whether inclusive education acts as a vehicle for arguing against the medical model and is in favour of the social model. Therefore, the aim of this study is to understand whether the current trend of inclusive education has been transformed from a medical model to an adaptive social model. Clearly, answering such a question may demand adaptation of the social model within which inclusive policies, values; principles and the language address social inclusion (DDA, 1996; UNESCO, 2005; Farrell, 2001).

The concept of inclusive education originates from special education (UNESCO, 2005). The idea which recognizes that children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) have a right to education is derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948), which states that, "everyone has a right to education" and that the right to education should be free for all children at least in the elementary and fundamental stages (UNESCO, 2001). As a result, many countries have undertaken different strategies of responding to the needs of children with SEN starting from segregation, integration and the current trend of inclusive education. During the 1970s, the education of children with SEN was provided in separate and isolated locations. It was later challenged by human rights advocates (UNESCO, 2005).

Following the UDHR's recommendations, Special Education practices shifted from separate locations to the mainstream as an integration approach. Although integration approaches in mainstream schools promoted social interaction, the system faced a rigid curriculum and, teaching and learning strategies whereby children with SEN were expected to 'fit in'. The major weakness of integration has been its emphasis on SEN children outlining that such children should adapt to the system rather than the system adapting to the children's needs (UNESCO, 2005).

Inclusive education was introduced as an alternative approach to address challenges encountered in addressing social and academic needs of children with SEN in a segregated and integrated education system. The present approach of inclusive education is outlined in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for action on Special Needs Education (1994) as the most "popular" international document as far as inclusive education is concerned. Its declaration highlights a number of statements which include among others:

- The fundamental guiding principle for all countries is to ensure that all children learn together in mainstream schools where possible, and that maximum support and services be provided to match the needs of all children.

- Regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating a welcoming community, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. And that inclusive schooling is seen as the best way of creating solidarity among children with special needs and their peers without special needs.

- All learners have to be enrolled in mainstream schools in whatever state they are in and should not be discriminated because of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions (UNESCO, 1994).

It is important to note that inclusive education is based on a belief that all learners can benefit in mainstream schools within their locality/ community. Moreover, on –going support can be provided to the child with special needs with other children rather than moving the child away to separate SEN services (Szecsi, & Giambo, 2007; Kurt, 2002). The research findings of Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson and Kaplan, (2007) confirm that educating children with special needs in mainstream schools does not interfere with other children's academic performance.

1.2. Inclusive policies:

The practice of inclusive education depends on how policy makers attempt to develop policies that can facilitate its implementation (Szecsi, & Giambo, 2007). In accordance with various international policies, legislations and world organizations such as the Universal Declaration (1948), Education for All (EFA)(1990), the Standard Rule on Equalization of Opportunities for Disabilities (1993), the Salamanca Statement and Frame work for Action (1994); many countries throughout the world have come up with policies that guarantee equal participation opportunities as well as promoting the rights of people with disabilities/SEN in the society (ILO, 2004; UNESCO, 2005; Lindsay, 2003).

Uganda which is my home country is in line with the international trends on inclusive education. The record shows that inclusive education policy can be traced back to the 1990's as a result of Education For All (1990) which states that the school system must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children (ILO, 2004). Then the education of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools stems from the 1992 Government White paper on education. The paper clearly spells out the Uganda Government's commitment to provide universal primary education for all learners irrespective of their ability, ethnic origin, and social group, place of birth or gender (UNESCO, 2001; Kurt, *et al,* 2006). The idea was later tabled in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) and as a result, the Ugandan Government committed itself by establishing a Department of SEN and Careers Guidance under the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop and implement policies.

The Constitution also recommended the establishment of the National Institute of Special Education under the Institutional Act (1998). As a result, the then Uganda National Institute
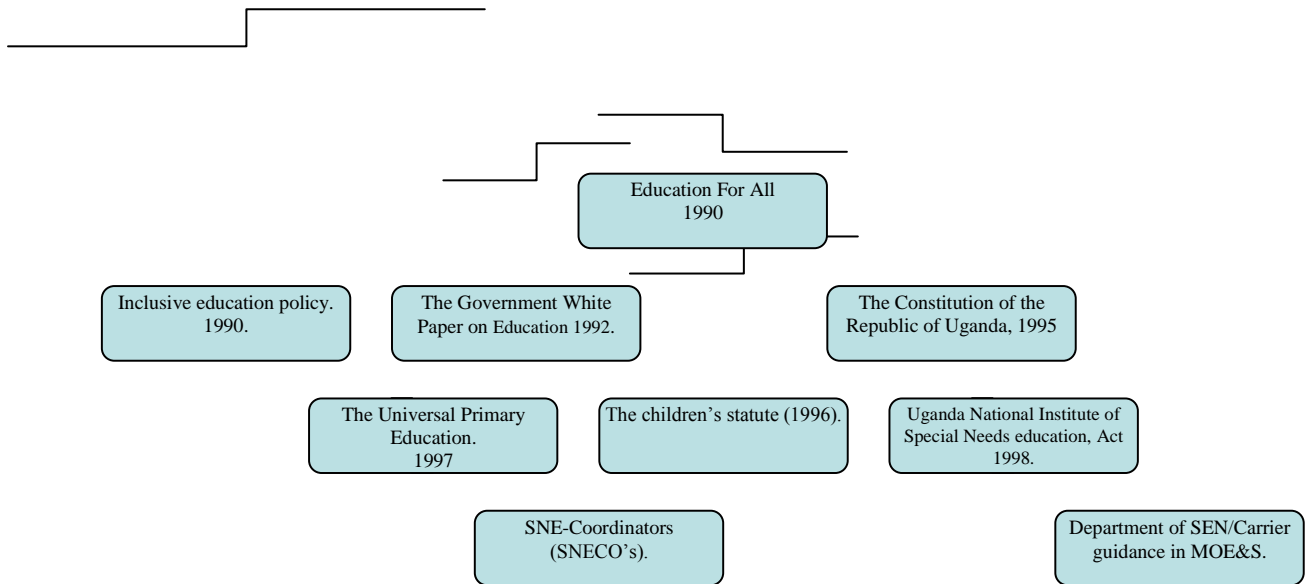
of Special Needs Education (UNISE) was established to provide teacher training and community workers' courses in order to support adult and children with disabilities/ SEN. The institute is now a department of Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation- Kyambogo University. Furthermore, Article 30 of the National Constitution of Uganda states; *all persons have a right to education and that the State shall take action in favor of groups which are marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or for any other historical or traditional reason* (ILO, 2004; Kurt *et al,* 2006; UNESCO, 2001).

Subsequently, the Children's Statute Act (1996): section 6 states; *children have a right to be educated and guided, immunized, given proper food, clothing, medical care and a home. It also empowers parents of children with disabilities and special needs to have their children examined and assessed as early as possible to find out the type and extent of the disability or special need* (ILO, 2004; Kurt *et al* 2006).

In addition, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) (1997) is perhaps the most significant national document that declared the present approach of inclusive education in Uganda. The main goal of this programme was to provide the minimum necessary facilities and resources to enable all Ugandan children of school going age to attend school and complete primary education. The UPE programme seeks to ensure the inclusion of all children, giving children with disabilities and other SEN at least a theoretical access to primary education (UNESCO, 2001) under the following policy objectives:

- Establishing, maintaining quality education as the basis for promoting human resource development.
- Providing the minimum necessary facilities and resources to enable every child to enter and remain in school until the primary cycle of education is completed.
- Making basic education accessible to the learner and relevant to his /her needs as well as meeting National goals.
- Ensuring equitable education in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities and making education affordable for the majority of Ugandans (Kurt *et al*, 2006, UNESCO, 2001).

1.3. Inclusive education policy structure in Uganda.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │    Education For All     │
                    │          1990            │
                    └─────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│ Inclusive        │  │ The Government   │     │ The Constitution │
│ education policy. │  │ White Paper on   │     │ of the Republic  │
│ 1990.            │  │ Education 1992.  │     │ of Uganda, 1995  │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘

        ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
        │ The Universal    │  │ The children's   │  │ Uganda National  │
        │ Primary          │  │ statute (1996).  │  │ Institute of     │
        │ Education.       │  │                  │  │ Special Needs    │
        │ 1997            │  │                  │  │ education, Act   │
        └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  │ 1998.            │
                                                     └──────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
              │ SNE-Coordinators │          │ Department of    │
              │ (SNECO's).       │          │ SEN/Carrier      │
              └──────────────────┘          │ guidance in      │
                                            │ MOE&S.           │
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1.4. Inclusive education policy in the UK.

On the other hand, in the UK as my area of study, the journey from exclusion to inclusion was accelerated after the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) which observed that 20% of school population could have SEN (Lindsay, 2003). Based on the committee's assumption that equal educational opportunities can be achieved in a mainstream setting, the integration of children with SEN was established under the Education Act 1981(Lloyd, 2000).The 1981 Education Act outlined the responsibility of ordinary schools to identify, assess and provide for children with SEN. It also stipulates the parents' rights towards their children's education (Dyson, 2001).

Later the Education Reform Act 1988 emphasizes that the National Curriculum and the Local Management of schools, OFSTED (i.e. the educational inspectorate) should ensure that all children benefit in mainstream school setting (Lloyd 2000, Lindsay, 2003, Farrell, 2001, Dyson, 2001).The Code of Practice (DfEs 1994) introduced Early intervention practices, parental involvement, multi-disciplinary approach and the appointment of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO's).The new section 316 of the 1996 Education Act as amended by the SEN and Disability Act (SENDA, 2001) recognizes that children with special needs with "statement" should be educated in the mainstream

schools unless the parents opt for special school or the education of other children is affected. In the same way, it recommended that children with SEN without statement be educated in mainstream schools except in exceptional circumstances (Warnock Report, 2005; Dyson, 2001).

In addition, the 1997 Labour Government accelerated the policy of inclusion through a Green Paper (Department of Education and Employment 1997) and Special Educational Needs Action Programme (Department for Education and Employment, 1998), leading up to the revised Code of Practice and Guidance which explains the policy of inclusion and how it might be implemented. For instance, the Department for Education and Skills, (2001a; 2001b) guidance indicates the circumstance under which a child could be considered a threat to others or as taking up a disproportionate amount of teachers' time (Lindsay, 2003; Warnock report, 2005).

Similarly, the publication of 1997 the Green Paper Excellence for All Children; Meeting Special Educational Needs (DfEE 1997) came up with the ideas of promoting academic performance for all children especially in literacy and numeracy, inclusion for all children in the mainstream, ensuring parental involvement in education, and cooperation between local agencies involved in education children with SEN among others (Lloyd, 2000).

In the same way, the Green paper (2003), "every child matters" advocates multi- agency collaboration in order to prevent secondary disabilities/SEN and to provide early intervention. In addition, the Government White Paper (2004) "Removing Barrier to Achievement" aims at removing barriers to learning through inclusive practice in all schools and early years with the agenda of offering positive possibilities for children with SEN and their parents (Lloyd, 2000). Furthermore, the recent SENDA (2005) drawn from the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 prohibits all schools from discriminating against children in their admission arrangements in the education (Dyson, 2001). As a matter of fact, almost all the Local Education Authorities in the UK have adopted inclusive education policy. For instance, Greenwich (one of my areas of study) so far has 65 mainstream schools against 5 special schools.

The Local Authority further indicated its ambition to create more inclusive schools see: http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/YourCouncil/TheBorough/GreenwichProfile/Education.htm.

Evidently, policies and legislations confirm that Inclusive education benefits all children, educators, parents and the community. For that matter, their positive attitudes play an important role for the successful implementation (Tilstone & Rose 2003; Falvey & Givner, 2005). Research studies (Lo, 2007; Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Tilstone & Rose, 2003) indicate that both children with and without disabilities hold positive attitudes towards mainstreaming.

In addition, research done in Britain suggests that female children hold more positive attitudes towards mainstreaming children with special needs in regular classes than males (Lo, 2007). Positive attitudes of children with and without SEN may indicate that both groups are sensitive to human diversity and are tolerant towards different needs of individuals.

Furthermore, a survey on teachers' attitudes indicated that teachers and principals have differing attitudes as determined by their educational beliefs, teaching methods and experiences. For instance 89% of teachers held a belief that their teaching abilities would be reduced by having children with learning difficulties in their classrooms and 96% believe that supervision to other students will be interrupted by children with SEN (Lo, 2007). Similarly, separate   studies done by Hui (2005) and Nxumalo, (2006) indicate that teacher's support and value inclusion but with some reservations especially when it comes to the severity of   special   needs.   The   writers   suggest   that   children   with   severe emotional/behavioural and intellectual disabilities should not be enrolled in mainstream schools (Hui, 2005; Nxumalo, 2006).

For the parents of children with special needs, Inclusive Education can be seen as an opportunity for children to be able to interact with their peers socially and academically. However, parents' views towards inclusion may differ. While many parents agree with the philosophy of supporting children with special needs within regular classroom settings, there are other parents who still want to maintain a special school sector. As reported in a study done by Jones, *et al*, (2002), parents believe that including all SEN in a regular 'one-size-fits all' classroom will- prevent children with SEN from getting extra attention and increase teachers' workload and have negative consequences for regular children . Such parents who prefer special schools may oppose any mainstreaming policy/ and any reliable option for mainstreaming. To this end, they believe that inclusive education should be an option but not a policy (Lo, 2007; Farrell, 2001).

1.5. Motivation for the study

The motivation for this study is based on my working experience in Uganda. As a SEN teacher in a mainstream school for nine years and as an inspector of schools responsible for the SEN program since 2000, I find limited attention has been paid to the attitudes of parents of children without SEN towards inclusive education. While inclusive education is the current concept within educational research, my interactions with parents in Uganda have not been enough to convince me that they all embrace inclusive education.

Similarly, the contexts within which inclusive education policy, values and principles are delivered appear not to be supportive to parents of children without special educational needs. For instance, both international and Uganda legislations seem to highlight roles and responsibilities of parents of children with special educational needs only. For example, the Salamanca statement states that "parents need support in order to assume the role of a parent of a child with special educational needs" and that their "positive attitudes enhance inclusive schooling" (UNESCO, 1994, p.39). Another example is the Uganda's Children's Statute (1996) which empowers parents of children with disabilities and special needs to have their children examined and assessed as early as possible in order to identify the type and extent of the disability or special need (ILO, 2004; Kurt *et al*, 2006).

Based on my contact with both parents and policies, it seems that parents of children without special needs are likely to remain in doubt as to whether inclusive education may not have a negative influence in their children's education. As Farrell (2001) also observed, the placement of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream may cause a threat to the rights of mainstream peers to receive "good" education.

Then in August 2007, I embarked on a Master's program in special education needs sponsored by European Commission, run by three Universities: Roehampton University, in the UK, Fontys University in the Netherlands and Charles University in Czech Republic. This offered me opportunities to visit schools in the UK and the Netherlands and observe parental involvement in these countries. After a number of mainstream school visits in the UK and interacting with inclusive education policies, I seem to have been convinced that parents of children with special needs are more involved in their children's learning than parent of children without special educational needs. For instance, the (DfEs, 2003b: Para 8) comments "we want to see special schools take a leading role in helping mainstream schools develop inclusive learning environment" (Cheminais, 2003).

Also the UK SEN-Code of Practice, (2001, p.17) states that "positive attitudes to parents of children with SEN, user friendly information, procedures and awareness are important in children's learning". In this case, I agree with Dyson (1997) when he observed that special schools have colonized and reproduced themselves in mainstream school instead of transforming mainstream schools.

1.6. Statement of the problem.

Parents have influence on their children's education, so undermining/ overlooking their attitudes towards inclusive education leads to creating exclusion in the process of inclusive education. Although many studies on parental attitudes towards inclusive education combine both parents of children with and without SEN (Jones, *et al* 2002), in this study the investigation covers attitudes of parents of children without SEN in particular.

Motivated by my Ugandan context, and the way the government there is trying to implement 'inclusive education', I chose this study to examine the current attitudes of parents of children without special needs from two mainstream primary schools in London, UK.

1.7. The Significance of the study.

The findings of the current status of parents' attitudes are helpful to the schools in paving a possible way of addressing the views of all stakeholders towards inclusive education. In other words these findings may act as an eye opener for the school authorities to conduct awareness programmes on inclusive education among parents of children without special educational needs.

Since this research was focused on specific schools, it is hoped that the information will act as a baseline for more research. Therefore, the findings are likely to act as a source of information for future researchers in the same discipline.

As an education officer responsible for the SEN program in my country Uganda, I hope that the findings of the current status of parents' attitudes will work as a bench mark for convincing the Ministry of Education and Sports to start up a programme of addressing parental attitudes. This is my starting point of initiating some programmes specifically addressing the issue of bringing all stakeholders on board as far as inclusive education is concerned.

In addition, it is hoped that the findings will work as a source of my advocating for initiating the involvement of parents of children without special needs in inclusive practice. This might include for instance, advocating for a joint executive board in every mainstream school at the district level.

Similarly, the research outcome contributed to my understanding of inclusive education that can help me in addressing challenges my country is facing in the implementation of inclusive education.

Also the findings will act as a source of information for future research in my country in the same discipline since I have not yet come across any research of this kind.

1.8. Research questions.

The main question for this study is "what are the attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education?" Therefore, in order to get the current status of parents' attitudes, towards inclusive education in two mainstream primary schools in London, three guiding questions were designed as follows;

1.   *What are the attitudes of parents of children without special needs with reference to age and education affect inclusive education?*

2.   *What is the awareness level of inclusive education among parents of children without special educational needs?*

3.   *What are the opinions of parents of children without special educational needs on educational policies?*

1.9. Summary.

This chapter highlights briefly the origin of inclusive education and the different strategies the education system has gone through in order to provide equal educational opportunities to children with special needs. The chapter further discusses the inclusive policies in Uganda as the writer's home country and inclusive policy in the UK as the area of her study. It also

discusses the researcher's motivation for the study, the significance of the study and the research guiding questions.

1.10. Structure of the Study.

This study is divided into six chapters as based on a brief summary of what each Chapter tries to cover:

Chapter one gives an introduction of the whole study, the motivation for my study, the statement of the problem, the significance, research questions and the structure of the whole dissertation.

Chapter two presents a review of literature on attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education and a brief reflection on how parents are given support in their children's learning, a discussion on the working definitions of key words, Research studies and other relevant literature in relation to parents' attitudes in reference to their age and education; parents' awareness level of inclusive education and parents' opinions on educational policies. The review also gives summary and conclusions based upon the literature findings.

Chapter three outlines details of the methodology employed in the study. Reasons for the methodology chosen are given along with methodological procedures related to data collection and research questions. This chapter will further present ethical aspects and the way the data is analyzed and interpreted.

Chapter four includes data presentation and analysis of the results in a tabular form followed by giving the description of the main points.

Chapter five presents the evaluation of literature review in relation to the research findings in the context of attitudes of parents of children without special needs attitudes towards inclusive education.

Chapter six presents the conclusions of the study. This chapter will highlight the summary of the whole research the findings. Furthermore this chapter discusses the limitations of the study process, the implications for future research and practice, recommendations and then conclusion. Finally, the list of references and the appendices are presented.

Chapter Two (Literature Review).

"Inclusive Education is for everybody and is everybody's business" (R. Slee 2000)

2. Introduction.

This chapter presents a review of literature on attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education and a reflection on how parents are given support in their children's learning. This is followed by a discussion of the working definitions of key words. Research studies and other relevant literature will be reviewed with the aim of understanding parents' attitudes in reference to their age and education; parents' awareness level of inclusive education; and parents' opinions as far as educational policies are concerned.

Following international and local legislations concerning the introduction of inclusive education, it was assumed that parents' attitudes towards inclusive education were no longer a challenge. For instance, in the UK, the recognition for parent partnership in inclusive education was accelerated in the 1980's when inclusion superseded integration or special education (Thomas, 1997).

Furthermore, the 1981 Act and subsequent amendments recommended parental participation in their children's assessment and early intervention (Farrell, 2001). Other important legislations such as the Salamanca statement, SEN-Code of practice, the Government Green papers such as; Supporting Families, (1998), *Every* Child Matters, DfES,2003, and Sure Start; the Parenting Fund (Sure Start Unit; NFPI, 2004) recognized that parental involvement in their children's learning as an important issue and recommend their full participation in inclusive education practices (Katz *et al*, 2007; DfES, 2001; UNESCO,1994).

However, it is important to note that most of these legislations tend to give much attention to parents of children with special needs. There is a lack of literature focusing on the attitude of parents of non disabled children towards inclusive education.

2.1. Working definitions.

2.1.1. Inclusive education.

There is no clear definition for Inclusive education; different countries use different approaches and practices to address issues related to inclusive education. For instance in my country Uganda, 'the approach to inclusive education has changed with the recognition that many learners other than those with disabilities have special needs or need for special support services. Such learners include learners with social emotional problems, learners with language difficulties, street children, children who have experienced wars, orphans, children heading families and children who are suffering from HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses' (Kurt, 2002, p.12). In this case, Uganda perceives inclusive education in the context of enrolling and teaching all learners in the mainstream school setting using all the available resources. The idea is to ensure that all learners are enrolled in schools within their locality/ community.

Recent research reveals that inclusive education in Australia is perceived as the practice of providing for students with diverse abilities, backgrounds and aspirations in regular schools where individuals' developmental, cultural and personal differences are met (Kraayenoord, 2007), while in Swaziland inclusive education is referred to as a system where a group of learners with disabilities such as mental, physical, communication and sensory impairments learn in mainstream schools (Nxumalo, 2006). The common definition in most English speaking countries is that inclusive education is a strategic approach or process that tries to respond to the needs of all learners by reducing exclusion within and from education so that basic human rights to education, right to equal opportunities where social justice can be afforded (Kurt, 2002; Thomas, 1997; Farrell, 2001).

Similarly, in this study, inclusive education is understood as a process of giving equal educational rights to all learners through increasing full participation and responding to their diversity needs. The study also addresses inclusive education as a means of reducing

exclusion within and from education system. The perception is that all stakeholders such as parents, policy makers, educators and the community involved in inclusive practices aim at developing an inclusive society.

2.1.2. Attitudes

"Attitude" can be perceived as a concept that refers to what people say, do and think towards an object in order to make some judgments, evaluations or reactions. Attitudes can be positive, negative, neutral, favourable or unfavourable. Attitudes reflect one's beliefs, opinions, values and feelings towards behavior or an event (http://www.nd.ed/~rwilliam/xsoc503/attitudes.html). Similarly, in this study attitude means the way people express themselves through their responses, reactions and feelings towards inclusive education where the attitudes rely on how participants responded to the questionnaire.

2.1.3. A parent:

The America Heritage Dictionary defines a parent as: 'one who begets, gives birth to, or nurtures and raises a child, a father or a mother'. In this context, a parent is any person who is directly responsible or involved in rearing a child. This person can be the biological parent, step-parent, foster- parent, house parent, guardian, grandparent or any other person accountable for the child's growth and development.

2.1.4. Children without SEN

In this study, Children without special educational needs are referred to as the "so called normal" children in the mainstream (regular) schools. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that children in regular education may have SEN which are not yet identified.

In order to ensure a comprehensive review of the related literature on the current status of parents' attitudes towards inclusive education in two mainstream primary schools in London, three guiding questions were designed as follows:

What are the attitudes of parents of children without special needs with reference to age and education affect inclusive education?

What is the awareness level of inclusive education among parents of children without special educational needs?

What are the opinions of parents of children without special educational needs on educational policies?

2.2. Attitudes of parents in reference to age and education.

The advent of inclusive education initiated a lot of studies on the attitudes of teachers, children with and without special needs and their parents. Most findings indicated that teachers, children and parents support and value inclusion but with some reservations especially when it comes to the severity of special needs. For instance, results reveal that many people think that children with severe emotional/behavioural and intellectual disabilities should not be enrolled in mainstream schools (Lo, 2007; Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Tilstone & Rose 2003; Hui, 2005; Nxumalo, 2006; Jones, *et al,* 2002).

However, in most cases, parental attitudes towards inclusion are assessed in general without separating attitudes of parents of regular classroom children from parents of children with special needs (Jones, *et al*, 2002). Building on the general attitudes of parents, this study will particularly investigate the attitudes of parents of children without special needs in relation to their age and education level.

In a study conducted by Medinger (1975) on attitudes of parents of children in regular education towards mainstreaming in Harry Spence Elementary school District, a survey was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between opinions and attitudes towards mainstreaming in reference to type of residence, annual income, and leadership in the community, level of education and age of parents. 55 families whose children were enrolled in Harry Spence were randomly sampled. The findings show differing attitudes according to parents' age in responding to whether children with physical impairment should be enrolled into mainstream, the responses were as follows:

Age	Positive	Negative	Not sure
30 years and below	85%	15%	
30-34 years	74%	4%	22%
35-39 years	58%	17%	25%
40-44 years	75%	17%	8%
45-49 years	42%	29%	29%
50 and above	43%	43%	14%

Observably, one can see that on average, parents aged 30and below to 44 years show positive attitudes towards mainstreaming children with physical impairment compared to those ages between 45-50+. It may be that parents who indicated positive attitudes attended elementary schools with children with disabilities in mainstream classes.

When it came to parents' level of education, responses were as follows;

Level of education	Positive	Negative	Uncertain
high school	39%	19%	42%
college	21%	53%	26%

In this situation, parents' level of education may have nothing to do with their positive or negative attitudes towards inclusive education. In another a study, to examine parents' perceptions on integrating their pre-school children (Stahmer, Carter, Baker & Miwa, 2003) it was observed that parents who were well- educated parents showed less concern with the behavior of children with special needs in inclusion than lower educated parents, especially if their children were included with peers who had sensory or physical disabilities. This sounds different from what has been observed in my district Rukungiri of Uganda where most educated parents seem to have negative attitudes towards inclusion. For example, the majority of well educated parents shifted their children from government schools to private schools to look for "good quality" of education (schools' annual statistical forms, 2000).

Nevertheless, the above study indicated that the majority of the participants believed that through inclusion programs children with and without disabilities/SEN can benefit equally.

In another development, a study was conducted on attitudes of both children with and without and their respective parents towards the principles of inclusion, exclusion, equifinality and teacher's load (Jones, *et al,* 2002). The participants were 63 parents and 98 children in inclusive classroom at Canadian elementary high school. Out of 63 parents, 25 were parents of children with special needs while the other 38 identified themselves as parents of regular classroom children or children without special needs. The attitudes were investigated using an attitude questionnaire. When it came to inclusion, the general data suggested positive acceptance of inclusion among all respondents with an overall mean 32.03 out of 55.

However, generalizing the data has limited us from finding the responses of each group of respondents. For instance, we may not understand parents of regular classroom students' responses towards inclusion.

It is probably due to negative attitudes that inclusive education is seen as being for poor communities and for disabled people. This may be true because a preliminary study claims that educational planners have failed to introduce inclusive education in both in private and public schools which has increased the number of private schools (UNESCO, 2005).

There is also an assumption that inclusive education has increased privatization of education system and that in many countries government schools have closed allowing children to attend private schools (UNESCO, 1996). As a matter of fact, many private schools seem to have acted illegally to deny entry and participation of children with disability (UNESCO, 2005). It is therefore believed that unless inclusive education is introduced in both the private and public system, it will still be viewed as a system for the poor as well as people with special needs.

2.3. Parents' awareness level about inclusive education.

In the UK, the recent transition process from special schools to mainstream schools emphasizes parental awareness of, and their engagement in mainstream services as evidenced in the Government's Green Paper "Supporting Families, (1998), Every Child Matters, DfES,2003, and Sure Start; the Parenting Fund(Sure Start Unit; NFPI, 2004) (Katz, *et al*, 2007). As a result, parents of children with special needs have access to information on special needs education, a statutory right to contribute to the assessment, to seek independent advice, to have access to independent parent support and parent partnership scheme. They also have access to Government circulars on special educational needs and have a right to appeal to tribunal (Farrell 2001; UNESCO, 1994).

Similarly, the New Labour Government committed itself by providing a range of information through printed booklets and on dedicated websites to all parents on inclusive education (Beveridge, 2005). In addition, many public awareness campaigns have been going on. For example the campaign on "We know inclusion works" rally held in the UK in October 2006 to sensitize the public indicated that negative opinions still persist in the society. The Director is quoted as saying, "we decided that time had come to do something to challenge the negativity" see website: http://www.allfie.org.uk/pageso6/campaigns.html.

Furthermore, during the UK inclusive schools' weeks, educators, students, and parents get opportunities to share and acknowledge their commitment in making and improving schools' ability to educate all children (Inclusive Schools Week, 2007).

In a similar manner, in South Africa the provincial government organized awareness campaigns aimed at the community and stakeholders where the pilot schools for inclusive education are located. The concept of an inclusive education system was presented through activities such as presentations, plays and poetry (Eloff, & Kgwete, 2007). Such campaigns can assist policy makers and other professionals in capturing the community's attitudes towards inclusive education practices. Depending on how the community perceives the message, awareness campaigns contribute to promoting positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

Despite the efforts made by various inclusive advocates to conduct awareness campaign and produce enough information, there is still a gap in understanding inclusive education practices. For example, Cammeron & Simpson (2002, p. 4) surprisingly say that, "sadly, the calls on our helpline alert us to the fact that there still remains a deeply worrying lack of understanding and in some areas a lack of political will to recognize that disabled young people have the right to be included in mainstream".

Lack of knowledge about inclusive education issues may, in many cases, be created by inadequate information or poor communication. As Eason & Whitbread (2006) reveal during studies of conflict resolutions, parents complain of not being adequately informed about the special education process. I witnessed this also on 17th December 2007, when I asked one of the Head Teachers of a mainstream school in Netherlands how all parents get information. She replied, "Parents of regular classroom children have no right to get information and to refuse children with special needs in this school". This seems to indicate that parents of children without special needs have little knowledge as far as children with special needs are concerned.

Another challenge was observed after a pilot study done by Katz *et al,* (2007) to explore barriers to inclusion. The study which involved asylum seekers, disabled parents, fathers, and black minority ethnic parents was conducted to identify the common barriers to inclusion. When it came to physical and practical barriers, 55% of the participants claimed that they had never received any information on how to engage themselves in mainstream services. It was found out that lack of knowledge was the major challenge for parental engagement in inclusive services. It is assumed that the type of information or the methods used to communicate could be one of the barriers. For example, Communication materials that are prepared with important messages such as mainstreaming practices are either inaccessible or the mode in which they are transmitted is unfriendly.

Although "Parents have unique strengths, knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of child's needs and the best ways of supporting them" (DfES, 2001, p.16) their involvement in education is not taken into account, a fact which may contribute to inclusive education challenges (Hodge & Runswick, 2008). Therefore, there is a possibility that their lack of sufficient knowledge on inclusive education can create controversies that may cause or contribute to the children's special needs (Lloyd, 2000).

2.4. Parents opinions about educational policies

Despite the fact that the International Commission on Education for the 21st century reminded policy makers to design educational policies in a diversified manner so as not to cause social exclusion (UNESCO, 1996), there is a strong possibility to indicate that most hindrance to the implementation of inclusive education is caused by educational policies (Kurt, 2002). For example, in many countries, curriculum and examination systems are driven by open competition based examination performance which may not meet the needs of all learners (Kurt, 2002; Farrell, 2001).

Similarly, in the UK, the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2004) reported that the national educational policies have often acted in ways that frustrate the implementation of inclusive education. For example, schools feel pulled in opposite directions by pressures to achieve better academic results and to become inclusive (Klaus, 2005). In the UK, Conservative Governments in the 1980s and the 1990s increased the pace of raising standards by introducing so called 'market mechanisms' into the education system. Raising standards contributed to parents seeing inclusive schools as stumbling blocks when making decisions about schools for their children (Slee 2001; Lloyd, 2000; Farrell, 2001). This indicates that any policy such as inclusive education policy which intends to welcome all learners may be seen as a challenge to the school's performance and may not be easily supported by parents.

Another challenge is the belief that excellence for all can only be realized through examination performance where all children are capable of acquiring the basic skills in literacy and numeracy (Lloyd, 2000). In Uganda, such examination pressure has caused examination malpractices and drilling. Some parents have come to believe that excellence for all can only be achieved through coaching their children and in some cases buying examinations. An incident happened in the 2007 Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results when Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) cancelled 290 candidates due to cheating which involved impersonation, collusion, substitution and smuggling (New Vision 14th Jan 2008) Uganda.

Although many governments appear to be committed in promoting academic excellence and raising standards in their school system, the assessment strategies for achieving the goals seem to be completely at odds with the needs of an inclusive education system (Klaus, 2005; Slee, 2000). It is believed that unless the current school organization, curriculum, assessment and testing procedures change, equal educational opportunity will remain a dream (Lloyd, 2000).

In the same way, the new system introduced in the UK, which announces and shames schools identified as failing introduced in the UK seems to be a threat to many schools that practice inclusive education (Lloyd, 2000). In this case, 'inclusion and the standard agenda are in conflict because they imply different views of what makes an improved school' (Ainscow, Dyson, and Booth, & Farrell, 2006, p.12).

Again, in many countries the introduction of Inclusive Education policy raised curiosity to some parents with doubts as to whether the Governments were ready for the proper implementation. For instance in Uganda it was seen as a dilemma due to inadequate facilities with regards to the proper implementation. Although inclusive education is accepted and recognized, the Ugandan Government still lacks sufficient educational provisions for children with SEN (Kurt, 2002). Such educational provisions include inadequate teaching staff to handle large classes including children with special needs, inadequate classrooms, lack of post- primary institutions for deaf children and inadequate budget to accommodate

them; teacher: pupil ratio, educational materials and adequate accessible classrooms (Kurt, 2002).

In another development, the Uganda government initiated automatic promotion in all inclusive schools. The idea of direct promotion from one class to another seems to have contributed to parents' negative attitudes towards inclusive schools. As a result, the "well to do parents" shifted their children from such schools to private schools (UNESCO, 2001). With that experience, there is a possibility for parents of children without special needs to think that inclusive education policy may have negative influence in their children's education. It was later challenged by politicians and other professionals who suggested that the way a child performs at the end of the schools' year should determine his/her promotions from one class to another (Kurt *et al* 2006).

It is believed that the major drawbacks of such controversies in the current educational policy are caused by the failure of the governments to involve professionals in policy making. For instance Carr & Kemmis (1986) observed that in the UK the educational policymaking business shifted from practising professionals such as teachers to the State after the Second World War. Before this, the Educational policy making was done by teachers who were autonomous in making practical decisions about curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. After the Second World War (post-war), the business moved to the State which is being criticized for developing theoretical policies that cannot be easily implemented. Such policies include inclusive education, which is seen as a new policy being imposed on professional practitioners by the state. The whole system has been criticized for excluding teachers from educational policy making whose expertise could aim at developing realistic policies (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

It has also been observed that once practitioners are involved in policy making, there would be chances of acceptance and implementation because the policies would be to their understanding level. Otherwise disengagement of practitioners such as teachers from policy making means disempowering them as well as depriving the education system of the right direction (Gaad & Khan, 2007).

The Government's failure to involve practitioners may have reduced teachers' interest in supporting educational policies. Tilstone & Rose (2003) observed that, Teachers tend show loyalty towards implementation Government policies rather than improving quality life of their pupils. Also quoted on 17th May 2006 in The Times UK , the National Union of Teachers states; "the policy of educating children with special needs in mainstream schools has failed and must be changed immediately" for that matter, the Union requests the Government to review inclusive education policy and to halt the closure of special schools (Haplin, 2006 p. 1). According to the Union's statement, one may conclude that teachers feel that mainstream schools do not meet the needs of all learners. Teachers also seem to believe that special schools are more effective in supporting children with special needs than mainstream schools.

2.5. Summary.

The aim of this chapter was to review the related literature with an intention of understanding parents' attitudes in reference to their age and education; parents' awareness level of inclusive education; and parents' opinions as far as educational policies are concerned.

Firstly the chapter discusses working definitions such as inclusive education, attitudes, parents and children without special needs. Inclusive education was defined basing on different perceptions from different countries. Although countries perceive inclusive education concept in different ways, it was observed that the definitions aim at improving learning environments and providing opportunities for all learners to become successful in their learning experiences. Research findings and other related writings indicate that parents' attitudes in general vary with age and education level. It was also observed that young parents hold positive attitudes towards mainstreaming children with SEN in regular education compared to old aged parents.

Concerning awareness, attempts have been made to ensure accessibility of inclusive education information (Farrell, 2001) but more effort is needed especially for parents of children without special needs. The findings confirm that the current educational policy may have difficulty in providing a curriculum that is appropriate for a wide range of learners. There was a concern over the formality of acquiring the basic skills, in literacy and numeracy (Lloyd, 2000) as the only academic achievement which actually acted as one of the barriers to inclusion. It emerged that in order to respond to pupil diversity and promote greater participation for all pupils, the current school organization, curriculum, assessment and testing procedures have to be adjusted.

Furthermore, the policy makers are criticized for their failure to involve professional practitioners in policy development. It is observed that the way educational policies are developed may influence the implementation of inclusive education practices.

Chapter Three (Methodology).

3. Introduction.

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to undertake this study. The chapter briefly describes the meaning of research and presents two research paradigms namely, positivism and interpretivism. From the two paradigms, the chapter justifies the choice of paradigm for this study. It also presents research questions and research design by describing research methods, research tools, the study sample, the process of data collection and data analysis. Ethical, reliability and validity measures are also highlighted.

3.1. Research.

Mertens (2005, p.27) describes research as an inquiry done in a systematic way with the data collected, analyzed and interpreted in an effort to "understand, describe, predict or control an educational or psychological phenomenon", while Cohen *et al,* (2007) call it a tool that assists individuals to search for the uncovered truth in order to come to terms with day-to-day theories. In other words, a research as a tool combines both experience and reasoning approaches to help us answer some unanswered questions that exist in an attempt to understand the world.

3.1.1. Research paradigm.

A research paradigm according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.38) is 'a set of basic beliefs that deal with ultimate or first principles'. They note that a paradigm represents a worldview that defines, for its holders, the nature of the world'. A paradigm therefore can be seen as a mode or a 'fashion' of doing something. As researchers try to acquire new knowledge, they employ various research paradigms either consciously or unconsciously to guide them through the course of knowledge seeking (Kim, 2003). The 'paradigm' and the research question(s) seem to play an important role in determining the most appropriate research methods (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

Although there are many kinds of paradigms, the two prominent paradigms commonly recommended in educational and social research are known as positivism and interpretivism.

To understand a phenomenon, these two paradigms use different assumptions and approaches. For example positivists argue that there is only one truth and that measurements and observations are the only ways to understand the truth. While interpretivism involves interpreting the phenomena in terms of its actors based on meanings and interpretations (Cohen *et al*, 2007).

3.1.2. Positivism.

The positivism thinking was developed by a French philosopher August Comte who said that 'true knowledge is based on experience of senses and can be obtained by observation and experiment' (Nirod, 2007; 1). Positivists believe that in order to test a theory or to describe an experience or to predict and control forces that surround us, observation and measurement have to be applied (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). It means therefore that the methods and approaches to be used must have the ability to quantitatively give the results. That is to say numerical data collection and data analysis have to be employed when testing and verifying the hypothesis (Gephart, 1999). In other wards positivists use numbers or numerical data in order to discover information about the world.

Positivism has been criticized in many ways. For instance (McCullough 2006) says that positivist' issues are only measured if they are known before the beginning of the study and therefore have to be included in the questionnaire; this means that quantitative research is appropriate when the issues to be tested and the language to be used by participants are known. Acquiring information prior to the study is likely to create bias because the researcher can take sides in the study, hence inaccurate results. Also Robson (2002) criticizes positivists for treating human beings as research objects when human beings are identified as partners and colleagues whose views are important. In addition, positivists being so restricted to quantitative measurement may restrict the researcher from capturing the real meaning of certain social behavior such as non-verbal expressions.

3.1.3. Interpretivism.

Gray, (2004) describes interpretivism as a major anti-positivism paradigm which aims at gaining deeper understanding of a phenomenon through a one -to-one relationship between the researcher (subject) and the world (object). In this way, Interpretivists tend to find meanings and to understand how social members interact in different situations in order to understand their experiences (Cohen, *et al*, 2007). Interpretive researchers prefer meanings to measurement because they are concerned with how people can understand and perceive their own experiences. They also believe that the reality cannot exit at once, but has to be constructed time and again, and what might be true today may not be true tomorrow depending on the situation (Mertens, 2005).

Interpretivism has been criticized for dwelling only on participants' views, which may limit the researcher from acquiring information in other useful areas such as documentations. Furthermore, since different people interpret situations in different ways, the researcher may not achieve consistent interpretations as some are likely to be subjective in their interpretations (Cohen *et al*, 2000)

Nevertheless, positivism can not be directly used in this study because attitudes are not measured in the same way we measure other things. Since interpretation of attitudes may be based on analysis of expression in writing (Martens, 2005), interpretivism is seen as the best paradigm for this study. As Mackenzie & Knipe, (2006) put it, human experience is socially constructed and to understand the world of human life, social interaction has to be involved. The study emphasized understanding of parents' attitudes towards inclusive education through social interaction with their views being captured within their natural environment.

3.1.4. Research questions.

It was the intention of this study to assess the current attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education in two mainstream primary schools in London. Therefore, the specific research question that guides this investigation are:

What are the attitudes of parents of children without special needs with reference to their age and level of education towards inclusive education?

What is the awareness level of inclusive education among parents of children without special needs?

What are the opinions of parents of children without special needs about educational policies?

3.2. Research design.

3.2.1. Qualitative approach.

Interpretivist researchers tend to use qualitative design for data collection and they believe that it is the best option for any descriptive and interpretive study (Gephart, 1999). In other wards a qualitative approach is seen as a means of gaining deeper understanding of a phenomenon through discovering its meanings. In order to obtain the required information about the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education, I used a qualitative approach which helped me to interpret and understand participant's attitudes from their views and expressions. Mertens (2005) believes that qualitative approach is good for a specific program in which the information produced is described at length and in- depth. In this single study qualitative approach gave me descriptive and exploratory data on the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education.

Similarly, Creswell (2003) calls it a process of inquiring into how social or human behavior can be understood through sharing their views within human's natural setting and that the views can be easily filtered for data analysis. The approach has helped me to achieve

detailed information from participants' natural settings and to make sense and meanings out of the information provided.

McCullough (2006) claims that a qualitative questionnaire can be designed in away that provides unanticipated but useful information. So through a qualitative questionnaire unanticipated useful information was reflected which yielded purposeful and meaningful data. The researcher believes that the qualitative approach has helped her to achieve a comprehensive data.

3.2.2. Research Methods

3.2.2.1. A survey.

In educational research, Cohen, *et al*, (2000) call methods as a range of approaches used to gather data to be used as a basis for inference, interpretation, explanation or prediction. For the purpose of this single study of finding out attitudes of parents towards inclusive education, a survey was an appropriate method for collecting the data. As Cohen *et al* (2007, p.207) indicated, "Surveys are useful for gathering factual information, data on attitudes and preferences, beliefs and predictions, behavior and experiences".

In this context, a survey has been defined as a method of getting information from a selected sample of individuals from almost any human population (Robson 2002). The survey was chosen because it enabled the researcher to obtain information from representatives of the selected population (Bell, 1996). A survey became an effective and a quick tool which helped me in documenting the participants' views and in analyzing the data since the information provided was simple and straightforward. It was also advantageous for me to restrict myself to one method of data collection because there was greater consistency in the quality of responses parents gave.

3.2.2.2. Research instrument

The researcher used a self-completion/administered questionnaire as the research instrument. According to Robson (2002) a self-completion/administered questionnaire is a system where respondents fill in answers themselves. This can be done at home or in the office alone. For this study, a self- completion/administered questionnaire approach was chosen because it permits a large sample to be reached with relatively little extra efforts. A self completion questionnaire allows anonymity and free expression of feelings which encourages frankness in sensitive areas. And the absence of the researcher helps the respondents to answer questions in a private and familiar environment with no threats or pressure (Cohen *et al,* 2007).

3.2.2.3. Participants and procedures.

Initially, the researcher had planned 60 parents from one inclusive school and the procedure was that children would take and return a questionnaire to and from their parents. The reason for choosing the above category was that: The school provides educational services to both children with and without special needs and the parents do educate their children in an inclusive setting.

However, as Creswell (2003, p.181) says that 'in qualitative method, the data collection process might change as the doors open and close'. During data collection the researcher made was forced to make some adjustments to her data collection process. This came about after realizing that the selected school had fewer than expected number of participants. The targeted number was 60 parents but the researcher managed to distribute questionnaires to only 51 parents. In addition, out of the 51 questionnaires distributed, only 14 parents were able to respond and to return a completed questionnaire in time while the remaining 37parents never responded

Table 1 shows categories of targeted respondents.

Category	Respondents	Expected number	%	Respondents	%	Non respondents
school	parents	60	100			
an inclusive school	parents	51	100	14	27.5	37

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As the researcher could not achieve the expected number of participants from the targeted school A, another inclusive school was sampled as school B. Table 2 illustrates the targeted number of respondents and how they responded from both schools A and B. from School B, out of 36 questionnaires distributed 26 responded in time and 10 never responded. As a result the total number of respondents is 40 parents of which 14 parents are from school A and 26 parents from school B. Although the targeted number of 87 respondents was not achieved, the researcher decided to analyse the results from 40 participants.

Table 2 shows categories of respondents from school A and school B.

Category	Expected number	Response	Percentage %	Non response	Percentage %
parents:	87				
school A	51	14	27.5	37	72.5
school B	36	26	72.2	10	27.7
total		40		47	

A survey questionnaire composed of closed questions and open questions was administered to participants from two schools. Reasons for closed questions were that they are quick to complete and straight forward to code and do not discriminate on how accurate the respondents are (Cohen, *et al*, 2000). Bearing in mind the participants' busy schedule, closed questions were good for them. On the other hand, open questions were administered in order to allow respondents to explain in details and qualify their responses. Open-ended questions

helped participants to express their feelings and to shed light on statements that were mentioned in closed questions (Cohen *et al* 2007).

A questionnaire had 3 sections which incorporated the attitudinal ideas. Section A had 5 items where participants were required to give their personal information. Such questions were easy to code since there were options to choose from. Section B had closed questions which required answering 'yes' or 'no' and open questions which were left for the respondent to fill in their responses. Then Section C consisted of a 15-point Likert scale that provides a range of options to a given statement as follows: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The advantage of this Likert scale was that it provided opportunities for rendering data more sensitive and responsive to respondents (Cohen et al 2007). Two open-ended questions were also included in this section in order to allow participants to shed more light on some of the above statements.

3.3. Data collection

Children from year five and six classes of the identified parents were used to deliver the questionnaires to their parents and return them. A Questionnaire together with a letter and a return envelope were sealed in an envelope and given to participants. The advantage of using children was that they would remind their parents to complete questionnaire and return it to the school.

3.4. Ethics

In relation to Revised Guidelines for Educational Research (2004,p6) which state that 'educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for any persons involved directly or indirectly in the research, regardless of age, race, religion, political beliefs and life style between such persons and researchers'. Before data collection the following ethical issues were taken care of.

Firstly, formal permission was requested by the research tutor who introduced me to school A while in school B, the Deputy Head Teacher introduced me to the school staff. Secondly, the selected participants were given letters requesting them to participate in the study which were attached to the questionnaires. The purpose of the letter was to introduce myself, explain what the study was all about and to give assurance of confidentiality to the participants.

3.5. Piloting the instrument.

In order to establish the reliability and validity of the instrument, the researcher pilot tested the questionnaire with five people whose comments helped in making some adjustments. The reason for piloting the questionnaire was to ensure that the questions were consistent and clear with no ambiguity (reliability) and to confirm whether the questionnaire measured what was supposed to be measured (validity) (Robson, 2002, Cohen *et al* 2000).

3.6. Data analysis.

Since the study was conducted through a qualitative approach, the results are presented in a tabular format and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative data from the open and closed questions in the survey questionnaire are descriptively presented and analyzed. The key points are presented in tabular and analytic format. The key points are clustered according to their relativity and described by giving the main points. It is believed that the data analyzed following this format is easy to read and understand (Cohen *et al* 2000).

3.7. Summary.

This chapter has explored the methodological process undertaken in this study which includes the methods, participants and data gathering procedures, ethics and validation process. The next chapter will present the data presentation and data analysis.

Chapter Four (Data analysis).

4. Introduction:

This chapter includes the data presentation and analysis of the results of the study in relation to the research questions. Qualitative data from the open and closed questions in the survey questionnaire are descriptively presented and analyzed using Content analysis. The Key points are presented in tabular and analytic format. Finally a summary of this chapter is presented.

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, self completion questionnaires were completed by parents from two inclusive primary schools in London. In this data presentation school 'A' will stand for the original target school and school 'B' will stand for the second sampled school. The target samples for data collection are 87 parents from two inclusive schools. A survey self-completion questionnaire composed of closed questions and open questions was administered to 51 participants from school A and 36 participants from school B. Out of 87 participants, the researcher was able to receive and analyze only 40 respondents. The basic findings are presented using tables followed by a descriptive analysis.

4.1 Personal information

Table 3 presents participants' personal information.

Background variables.	Groups	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	8	20
	Female	32	80
Age	16-24	0	0
	25-34	9	22.5
	35-49	31	77.5
	50-64	0	0
	64+	0	0
Are you employed?	yes	38	95
	no	2	5
What is your highest level of education?	school	0	0
	college	13	32.5
	university	27	67.5
Do you have a child with disability or special educational needs?	yes	4	10
	no	36	90

Following the table 3 above, it is observed that only 8 males equivalent to (20%) against 32 (80%) females participated in the study. Out of these 8 males, 3 (37.5%) are from school A and 5 (62.5%) from school B. On the other hand, of the 32 (80%) females, who participated in the study 11(34.4%) are from school A and 21 (65.6%) from school B. According to the participants' age range, the majority of respondents are between 35-49 years who are equivalent to 31 or (77.5%) against 9 or (22.5%) between 25 – 34 years. Out of 31 participants between ages 35-49 years 14parents (45.2%) are from school A and 17 parents

(54.8%) from school B. Then the 9 participants between 25-34 years are all from school A. One may think that the reason as to why many respondents are between 35-49 was that children between 10-11 years were mostly involved in taking questionnaires to their parents. The results show that many parents are employed only 2 indicated not being employed. Among the 38 (95%) parents who are employed 12(32%) are from school A and 26 parents (68%) are from school B. Then the 2 parents (5%) who are not employed are from school A.

Concerning the qualifications, out of 13 parents (32.5 %) with college qualifications, 4 are from school A and 9 from school B. Then of the 27 parents (67.5%) with University qualifications, 10 parents (37 %) are from school A and 17(63%) from school B. From the data collected it is observed that the majority of respondents do not have children with special needs. This confirms my interaction with both schools' authorities who stated that there were few children with special needs from the selected classes. Of the 4 parents (10%) who have children with special needs, 2 parents (50%) are from school A and another 2 parents (50%) from school B.

4.2. Have you ever heard about any of the following types of special educational needs?

Table 4 indicates how participants responded to the question which requested them to indicate if they have ever heard about any of the following types of special educational needs

Category	Age				Education level			
	25-34yrs		35-49yrs		College		University	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Visual impairment	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0
Hearing impairment	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0
Speech and language impairment	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0
Physical disabilities	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0
Serious emotional disabilities	5	4	22	9	13	0	27	0
Autism	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0
Cerebral palsy	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0
Downs Syndrome	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0
ADHD	9	0	31	0	13	0	27	0

The participants were requested to indicate if they have ever heard about any types of special educational needs mentioned above. The results are presented in reference to parents' age and qualifications as indicated in the table above.

According to the results shown in table 4 above, many parents aged between 25-34 years indicate that they have heard about almost the above categories of special educational needs except the 4 parents out of 9 parents indicated that they have never heard about serious emotional disabilities. In addition, parents aged between 35-49years indicated that they had heard about the categories of special needs except one parent who indicated no idea about serious emotional disabilities. It is assumed that maybe those who indicated having no idea about serious emotional disabilities did not understand the question as one parent stated " *I have never heard about people with serious emotional disabilities and am not a British to answer this*" another one commented " *I don't know such people but I know people who are mad."*

 On the same question, all 13 parents with college qualifications revealed that they have heard about all the types of special educational needs.   Similarly, all 27 parents with university qualification also demonstrated to have heard about all the categories of special educational needs.

4.3. Are you aware of there being some children with special educational needs in the School?

Table 5 shows how parents responded to the question which wanted them to show if they were of children with special needs in their children's school.

Respondents	Yes	No
Participants from school A	14	0
Participants from school B.	26	0

From the table 5 above, it can be seen that all 14 parents from school A answered that they were aware of children with special needs in their children's school. Similarly, all 26 respondents from school B indicated being aware of children with special needs in their children's school. According to how participants from both schools responded to the above question, one may assume that the question was clear. All participants believed to have been aware of children with special needs in their children's school. One parent also confirmed that "*there is a deaf boy in my son's class*".

4.4. How did you come to know about children with special needs?

Table 6 illustrates how parents came to know about inclusive education.

Response	Frequency	%
We were told by our children who study with children with special educational needs	28	70
Other parents who know children with special needs told me	5	12
I observed children with special needs in my child's class	6	15
My son is one of them	1	3

The above open- ended question was included in this section in order to help respondents in shedding more light on the question of awareness of children with special needs.

With reference to table 6 above, out of 40 parents who responded to this question, 28 (70%) said that they got the information from their children who study with children with special needs, as one parent stated "*my daughter told me about it*", 5 parents (12%) said other parent who know pupils with special needs tell them while 7 (15 %) said that they observed children with special needs in their children's classroom while 1 parent(3%) points out that "*my son is one of them*".

Although the participants indicated getting information about children with special needs from other parents and others from observing children with special needs in their children's classes, the results suggest that many parents received the information from their children.

4.5. What do you understand about inclusive education? What does it mean to you?

Table 7 presents parents' views about inclusive education.

Statements	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inclusive education means including children with special needs within a mainstream school.	15	38
Inclusive education is to have an amalgamation of kids with learning difficulties and kids without difficulties being taught in one class.	3	7
Inclusive education is that any child with whatever special needs s/he may have has a right to be included in the mainstream school.	6	15
Educating children with special needs in a mainstream education, providing extra support where necessary to the child so that s/he can participate as fully as possible.	7	17.5
I am not familiar with this term.	2	5
No response	7	17.5
Total	40	100

While responding to this question, participants came up with different views on what they understand about inclusive education as summarized in table 7 above. Out of 33 participants who attempted to answer this question, 10 are from school A and 23 from school B. Of the 7 respondents who did not respond to the question, 4 were from school A and 3 from school B. The results given in table 7 are summarized as follows: 15 (38%) responded that inclusive education means including children with special needs within a mainstream school. 6 parents (15%) responded that Inclusive education is to have an amalgamation of kids with learning

difficulties and kids without difficulties being taught in one class. 7 parents (17.5%) answered that Inclusive education is that any child with whatever special needs s/he may have the right to be included in mainstream school.

Following the above statements, it may be observed that most parents have one thing in common while defining inclusive education. Almost all statements aim at including children with and without special needs into the mainstream school. 2 parents (5 %) who are not familiar with the term are from school B and have no children with special needs. It is not clear why 7 parents (17.5 %) did not answer this question at all.

4.6. Do you receive any circulars from or materials from Local Authority talking about Inclusive education?

Table 8 indicates how parents responded to the question of receiving inclusive education circulars and other materials.

Respondents	Yes	No
school A	3	11
school B	0	26

The question was to find out if parents receive any circulars or materials from Local Authority and responses are as presented in table 8 above. Out of 40 participants 3 parents from school A answered "yes" meaning that they do receive circulars from Local Authority and 11 answered that they have never received circulars from Local Authority. In school B all 26 parents indicated that they have never received circulars from Local Authority. There is a possibility to believe that the 3 participants who indicated having received circulars from Local Authority are parents of children with special needs. However, the overall results would appear to suggest that most parents have never received inclusive education circulars or materials from the Local Authority.

4.7. Has the school ever conducted awareness meetings on inclusive education?

Table 9 illustrates how parents responded to the question on whether the school has ever conducted awareness meetings.

Respondents	yes	no
school A	0	14
school B	0	26

This question aimed at finding out if the schools have ever conducted awareness meetings on inclusive education. Table 9 above indicates that all 14 respondents from school A have never received any awareness meeting on inclusive education. Similarly all 26 respondents from school B claim to have never attended any school meetings on inclusive education. According to the results shown above, it could be concluded that since all 40(100%) parents have never witnessed any awareness meetings organized by schools on inclusive education, neither school has ever conducted awareness meetings on inclusive education.

4.8. The following is a set of statements about educating children with and without special needs in the same classroom. For each statement please put a tick whether you; strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Table 10 illustrates how participants responded to the statements about educating children with and without special needs in the same classroom.

Statement	Respondents	Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Educational inclusion"... is about equal opportunities for all pupils... it pays particular attention to the provision for, and achievement of, different groups of pupils."	school A	0	14	0	0	0
	school B	0	26	0	0	0
2. Inclusive Education is about children with special needs being in school with children without special needs.	school A	5	5	4	0	0
	school B	14	12	0	0	0
3. Inclusive Education is the best option for all children.	school A	0	4	0	10	0
	school B	0	3	0	23	0
4. Inclusive Education means that some children get more support and attention than others.	school A	0	12	2	0	0
	school B	0	12	0	14	0
5. Inclusive Education promotes social interaction.	school A	0	13	1	0	0
	school B	0	11	0	15	0
6. The school has organized meetings / workshops to talk about inclusive education.	school A	0	0	0	8	7
	school B	0	0	0	22	4
7.Inclusive Education supports the learning development of all pupils	school A	0	6	3	5	0
	school B	0	8	4	14	0
8. Inclusive Education encourages children to learn how to be tolerant of difference in others.	school A	0	4	3	7	0
	school B	2	8	2	14	0
9. Inclusive Education can impact on the emotional development of children.	school A	0	4	4	6	0
	school B	0	10	5	11	0
10.The school has a range of support staff assigned to work with children with Special educational needs	school A	0	14	0	0	0
	school B	0	23	3	0	0
11. Inclusive Education can mean more disruptive behaviour within lessons.	school A	0	11	0	3	0
	school B	0	20	0	6	0
12. Iam comfortable with my child being in the same class with children with special needs.	school A	0	8	0	7	0
	school B		6		20	0
13.Inclusive Education means that not all	school A	9	2	3	0	0
	school B					

Statement number1 requested participants to indicate on whether educational inclusion"... is about equal opportunities for all pupils... it pays particular attention to the provision for, and achievement of different groups of pupils." 14 participants from school A and 26 participants from school B agree with the statement.

Statement number 2 wanted the participants to suggest if Inclusive Education is about children with special needs being in school with children without special needs. Out of 14 participants from school A, 5 parents strongly agree, 5 agree and 4 are neutral. Similarly, out of 26 participants from school B, 14 parents strongly agree and 12 parents agree.

Statement number 3 required the participants to indicate if Inclusive Education is the best option for all children. In school A, 4 agree and 10 disagree while in school B, 3 agree and 23 disagree.

Statement number 4 requested participants to indicate if they believe that Inclusive Education means that some children get more support and attention than others.12 agree and 2 are neutral in school A while in school B, 12 agree and 14 disagree.

Statement 5 wanted the participants to give their opinion on whether Inclusive Education promotes social interaction. 13 parents agree and 1 parent is neutral in school A while in school B, 11 agree and 15 disagree.

For statement 6 participants were asked to indicate if the school has ever organized meetings / workshops to talk about inclusive education. Out of 14 participants from school A, 8 disagree while 7 strongly disagree with the statement. In school B, 22out of 26 participants disagree and 4 strongly disagree with the statement.

Statement number 7 requested participants to state if inclusive education supports the learning development of all pupils. The results indicate that 6 parents from school A agree, 3

are neutral and 5 disagree with the statement while 8 parents from school B agree, 4 are neutral while 5 disagree with the statement.

Statement number 8 required participants to state if Inclusive Education encourages children to learn how to be tolerant of difference in others. As observed from the table above, in school A, 4 agree with the statement, 3 remained neutral while 7 disagree with the statement. For school B, 2 strongly agree, 8 agree with the statement, 2 remained neutral and 14 disagree with the statement.

Statement number 9 requested participants to show if Inclusive Education can impact on the emotional development of children. According to the results in school A, 4 agree with the statement, 4 remained neutral while 6 disagree with the statement. Among those who remained neutral one participant the question was not clear to her as she stated "*negative impact or positive impact? The question is not clear*". In school B, 10 agree with the statement, 5 are neutral and 11 disagree with the statement.

Statement number 10 was to find out if the school has a range of support staff assigned to work with children with Special educational needs. The results indicate that in school A, all 14 participants agree with the statement while in school B, 23 agree with statement and 3 remained neutral.

Statement number 11 wanted participants to show if Inclusive Education can mean more disruptive behaviour within lessons. Out of 14 participants in school A, 11 agree with the statement and 3 disagree with the statement. In school B, 20 agree with the statement while 6 disagree with the statement.

Statement number 12 requested participants to indicate if the are comfortable with their children being in the same class with children with special needs. From school A, 8 agree that they are comfortable while 7 disagree with the statement. Then in school B, 6 agree with the statement and 20 disagree with the statement.

Statement number 13 required participants to confirm that Inclusive Education does not mean that all pupils' needs can be fully met. The data indicates that in school A, 9 strongly agree with the statement, 2 agree with the statement and 3 remained neutral to the statement. In school B, 13 strongly agree, 10 agree with the statement and 3 are neutral.

Statement number 14 was to indicate if the school has explained to them what part they can play in my children's education. According to the results, out of 14 participants from school A, 7 agree with the statement while 8 disagree with the statement

Statement number 15 was to confirm if parents get regular accurate and helpful information about their children's progress. The results indicate that 3 participants from school A agree with the statement and 11 disagree with the statement.

As can be seen in table 10, many respondents agreed with most of the statements. It is only statement number 6 that no one agreed that the school has ever organized workshops or seminars on inclusive education. Further more, the survey data suggest that many participants disagree with the following statements number 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 15.

4.9 Do you think children with special educational needs should be placed in mainstream school?

Table 11 shows why or why not participants think children with educational needs should be placed in mainstream school.

Respondents	Yes	If yes why?	No	If no why not?

school A	3,it depends	If the children with special needs are given the appropriate and necessary care and attention they require without disrupting mainstream classes they should be placed. I think it depends on the child's special needs. Not all special needs can be adequately met within mainstream education.	11	It is difficult for children themselves and it slows down the progress of the rest of the class. If severely disruptive behavior can impact on other children's concentration and ability to learn. It is not always the best option for severe special needs. Perhaps children with special needs may be helped more in a specialized school.
school B	9	It can be beneficial for both the child with special needs and the children in his/her class. Depending on circumstances and disability. If appropriate for their	17	They will need extra support. Children with special needs take much of teachers' time.

		needs and the needs of others, it is a benefit. It is important for all children to learn to be tolerant of differences in others and to value those differences.		

The above table summaries the reasons as to why or why not parents do think children with educational needs should or should not be placed in mainstream school.

As shown on the table, three parents from school A do support the idea of placing children with special needs in the mainstream school but they added that 'it depends'; on *how the school can be able to meet the needs of all learners and if children with special needs can not disrupt other children, and on severity of the child's special needs*. They seem to believe that not all special needs can be adequately met within mainstream education. Another eleven parents from the same school do not see any need to include children with special needs in mainstream school. Their arguments are summarized as follows; *It is difficult for children themselves and it slows down the progress of the rest of the class. If severe, their disruptive behaviour can impact on other children's concentration and ability to learn.*
It is not always the best option for severe special needs.
Perhaps children with special needs may be helped more in a specialized school.

In school B, 9 out of 26 respondents are in favour of children with special needs to being placed in the mainstream schools and they suggest that mainstream schools can be beneficial for both the children with special needs and other children in the same class.
Depending on circumstances and disability, mainstream schools are good.
Mainstream schools are important for all children to learn to be tolerant of differences in others and to value those differences. Contrary, there are seventeen parents who seem to

believe that it is not right to place children with special needs in the mainstream schools because *they will need extra support and take much of teachers' time.*

4.10. Any other comments?

The last part of the questionnaire requested parents to indicate any other comments they may have as far as inclusive education is concerned. 3 parents offered their comments as follows: one parent states that '*children can be very supportive of those with SEN. They are generally very supportive and understanding. My son's class has known him since nursery and is very good with him'.*

Another one comments that '*teachers are not qualified to deal with some of the needs. Special needs children would be better served in specialist unit'.* The last parent also comments that *'Class sizes are too large to cope with some of the issues thrown up'.*

4.11. Summary

The study was an attempt to find out parents' attitudes towards inclusive education in the context to their age and education; awareness level of inclusive education; and opinions as far as educational policies are concerned. The above sections summarize what parents had to say about Inclusive education in relation to the literature review and then the summary of the chapter. The next chapter evaluates the research findings in relation to the literature review.

Chapter Five (Evaluation).

5. Introduction.

Approaching the final stages of this study, this chapter evaluates the research findings in relation to the literature review. Reference in the concluding Chapters is made to my experience in Uganda, as I consider what lessons my country maybe able to learn from this,

albeit small, study in the UK. This chapter also presents a summary of what has been discussed as a conclusion.

5.1. Demographic data- Personal information

Section A of the questionnaire requested participants to give their personal information such as gender, age, employment, highest level of qualifications. Furthermore, the participants were requested to indicate if they have a child with disability or special needs. Following the gender issue, the current study indicates that 80% females against 20% males have participated in the study. Similarly, some studies have demonstrated that the number of female respondents outweigh the number of males (Medinger1975; Waddington and Reed, 2006; Jones, *et al,* 2002). As observed by Medinger (1975, p.11) "Results also indicated that females generally have … higher contact ratings, and more positive attitudes than their male counter parts" towards responding to the questionnaires.

As revealed from the data, 77.5% of parents who participated in the study are between 35-49years against 22.5% who are between 25-34 years. According to the data analysis 10-11years old pupils from year 5 and 6 classes were selected to deliver questionnaires to their parents. This could be one of the reasons why many respondents are between 35-49 years old. As observed from chapter 4, participants with a University qualification outnumber those with college certification. This was revealed during my interaction with school authorities who explained that in the UK, education is free and compulsory. This could be the reasons why majority of respondents were University graduates.

On the other hand, the data collected indicates that the majority of respondents do not have children with special needs. The reason could be that the study had targeted parents of children without special needs. Another reason could be that many children with special needs are still being educated in special schools. As indicated in Chapter One, the Local Authorities in the areas of study still halt the closure of special schools. This also confirms my interaction with both schools' authorities and links to what was revealed in Chapter One; parents believe that including all children in a regular classroom will prevent children with SEN from getting extra attention and increases teachers' workload (Jones, et al, 2002).

However, in Chapter One, one of the Local Authorities   shows an ambition to create more inclusive schools.
(http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/YourCouncil/TheBorough/GreenwichProfile/Education.htm). This seems to suggest that in future most schools will be able to provide education in an inclusive setting.

5.2. Have you ever heard about any of the following types of special educational needs?

To advance the understanding of different categories of special educational needs, the results are presented in reference to parents' ages and qualifications. As has been demonstrated previously, table 4 suggests that 9 parents of ages between 25-34 years as well as 31 parents between 35-49years have ever heard about all special educational needs. In reference to parents' level of qualifications, all 13 parents with college qualifications and the 27 parents with university certificate revealed having an idea about different categories of special educational needs. This contradicts what was discussed in Chapter Two that well- educated parents were less concerned with the behavior of children with special needs in inclusion than parents with lower education levels (Stahmer, et al, 2003). In addition, it was observed in Chapter Two that in Uganda, well- educated parents tend to shift their children from inclusive schools to private schools for "the good quality" of education.

Nevertheless, there is a possibility to believe that the awareness campaigns conducted in the UK in October 2006 on "We know inclusion works" may have contributed to this high percentage of parents' awareness: http://www.allfie.org.uk/pageso6/campaigns.html. As it was observed in Chapter Two, awareness campaigns conducted in South Africa through different activities such as play and poetry promoted positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). Based on the percentage of responses, the overall results indicate that a majority of parents are aware of different categories of special educational needs.

However, there was disparity especially when it came to serious emotional disabilities and four parents between 25-34 years together with one parent between 35-49 years indicated that they had no knowledge of serious emotional disabilities. As noted in the literature review, lack of disability awareness may be one of the contributing factors as to why disabled young people's rights are not recognized in mainstream (Cameron & Simpson 2002). Although Chapter Two highlights the UK's emphasis on parental awareness of special educational needs through the Government's Green Papers such as; Supporting Families, (1998), Every Child Matters, 2003, and Sure Start Unit; NFPI, 2004 (Kart, et al, 2007), many parents are still not aware of emotional disabilities.

5.3. Awareness of Children with Special Educational Needs in Regular Classes.

The central concern of this question was to find out whether parents are aware of children with special needs in their children's school. Participants were required to answer 'yes' if they were aware of children with special needs, and to answer 'no' if they were not aware. In addition, to those who answered 'yes', an open- ended question was included to indicate how they were informed.

It is important to note that all 40 (100%) respondents who participated in the study are aware of children with special needs in their children's classes. It is evident from the above review that parents are aware of children with special needs in regular classes (Jones et al, 2002, Stahmer, et al 2003, Farrell 2001, UNESCO, 1994, Eloff, & Kgwete, 2007). Furthermore, the UK Government through its Green Paper documents such as Excellence for All Children; Every Child Matters, Department for Education and Skills, (2001a; 2001b); emphasized that all children should be placed in the mainstream, ensuring parental involvement in education (Lloyd, 2000 Farrell 2001). Such government policies may have contributed to the parents' awareness of special educational needs in the mainstream schools.

Another perspective was to find out how parents get information concerning children with special needs. According to the results, the common source of information was from children –to- parents where 70% of respondents indicated having been told by their own children. Genuinely many children share their school experiences with their parents. As a matter of

fact, there is a possibility to agree that "children with special needs" have been one of the topics that children share with their parents. Moreover studies indicate that both children with and without disabilities hold positive attitudes towards mainstreaming (Lo, 2007, Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Tilstone& Rose, 2003; Nxumalo, 2006; Nxumalo, 2006).

However, various respondents have identified different means about how they first received information regarding children with special needs. For instance the 12% demonstrates having been told by other parents who know children with special needs while 15% states that they first observed children with special needs in their children's class. 3% indicates that it is because she has a child with special needs in the same mainstream school.

It was revealed in Chapter Two that since the introduction of inclusive education a range of information has been provided through printed booklets and on dedicated websites to all parents (Beveridge, 2005). Similarly, the Government's Green Paper such as "*Supporting Families*, (1998), *Every Child Matters*, DfES,2003, and *Sure start; the parenting Fund*(sure start unit; NFPI, 2004) have facilitated parents of children with special needs in getting information on special educational needs(Katz, et al, 2007).

Following the previous discussions in Chapter One and Two, some parents might have accessed some information from Government papers or websites. On the other hand, parents who first observed children with special needs in their children's classes seem to have been involved in their children's learning as evidenced in Green Paper such as: Excellence for All Children; Meeting Special Educational Needs (DfEE 1997). The Green paper publications emphasize parental involvement in their children's education (Lloyd, 2000). Such publications which prompted many parents to get involved in their children's learning might have been one of the factors as to why children with special needs were observed in classrooms.

5.4. How parents understand inclusive education.

The above open – ended question requested participants to express their understanding about inclusive education. At this point it is necessary to mention that participants' expressions

about inclusive education appeared to be similar. A difference is in the number of parents who confirmed having no idea about inclusive education. It is apparent from the data and from my personal experience that different countries use different approaches and practices to address issues related to inclusive education. As a result, by comparing the approaches from the data and the evidence discussed in Chapter Two, many responses aim at facilitating children's learning as well as improving the interaction between children with and without special needs (Kurt, 2002; Kraayenoord, 2007; Nxumalo, 2006).

It is essential to note that every definition or approach given, both in the literature review and from the data, focus on educating children with and without special needs in a mainstream setting. For instance, 71% who responded to this question indicate that inclusive education means including children with special needs within a mainstream school confirm to what was discussed in Chapter Two as the placement of both children with and without special needs in the mainstream setting(Kurt, 2002; Kraayenoord, 2007; Nxumalo, 2006).

On the other hand, the 5% who indicated having no idea about inclusive education seem to lack enough information about inclusive education. The reason for having no idea about inclusive education may be to lack of information or poor communication. As indicated in Chapter Two, where one of the Head Teachers in the Netherlands believed that parents of regular classroom children had no right to get information or to refuse children with special needs in that school. It was similarly observed in the literature review during a pilot study done to explore barriers to inclusion. A study which involved asylum seekers, disabled parents, fathers, and black minority ethnic parents indicated that this group had no information as far as mainstreaming was concerned (Katz, *et al* 2007). In addition, it is not clear why the 17% never made any attempt to respond to this question.

Nevertheless, relying on the percentage of the respondents, the majority believe that inclusive education emphasizes the inclusion children with and without special needs into the mainstream schools.

5.5. Accessing inclusive education circulars or materials.

The above question was to find out if parents receive any circulars or materials from Local Authority. As presented in Chapter Four, out of 40 parents who responded to this question only 3 parents which is equivalent to 7.5% indicated that they had received circulars from Local Authority. The analysis further reveals that the 3 respondents are the parents of children with special needs. As evidenced in the literature review, parents of children with special needs should have access to Government circulars on special needs education; and there is an intention that they have access to a statutory right to contribute to the assessment, to seek independent advice and access to independent parent support (Farrell 2001, UNESCO, 1994).

On the other hand, the analysis in Chapter Four indicates that 37 participants or 92.5% have never received any circular from the Local Authority. It sounds similar to what was revealed in literature review when Katz, *et al* (2007) conducted a study which demonstrated that 55% of the participants had never received any information on how to engage themselves in mainstream services. Further more it was pointed out that the major complaint during conflict resolution studies was lack enough information on inclusive education (Eason & Whitbread, 2006). It is already mentioned in Chapter One, that both the Salamanca statement and Uganda's legislations support parents of children with special needs and encourage them to assume the role of a parent and positive attitudes towards inclusive schooling (UNESCO, 1994). The brief review and data analysis seem to indicate that parent of children without special needs lack sufficient information on inclusive education.

5.6. Awareness meetings on inclusive education.

The above question aimed at finding out if the schools have ever conducted awareness meetings on inclusive education. The results presented from the data analysis illustrate that 100% of the participants who responded to this question are sure that schools have never

conducted awareness meetings on inclusive education. This contributes to what was observed in the literature review, during the researcher's interaction with one of the head teachers of a mainstream school, the Head Teacher reacted that "Parents of regular classroom children have no right to get information and to refuse children with special needs in this school".

According to the data analysis, it is acceptable to believe that either the schools have never conducted awareness meetings or parents are never invited to attend inclusive education meetings. An observation was highlighted in Chapter Two that when parents are not involved in inclusive education activities, they may cause or contribute to their children's disabilities (Lloyd, 2000). In support of this suggestion, the DfEs, (2001) believes, parents have unique strengths, knowledge and experience to contribute to their children's learning needs and the best way of supporting children is to work in partnership with parents.

5.7. Statements about educating children with and without special needs in the same classroom.

The above statements required participants to give their opinions whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with each of inclusive education statement. And most of the issues raised in this question have been explored in the previous Chapters.

Following the data in the previous Chapter, the results indicate that many participants believe that inclusive education is about giving equal opportunities to children with and without special needs to be enrolled in and attend to in a mainstream school. This confirms what has been discussed in Chapter One that, the UK Government has taken an initiative of developing inclusive education policy based on a belief that all learners can benefit in mainstream schools within their locality/ community (Warnock Report DES, 1978; Szecsi, & Giambo, 2007). Since then, the government appears to have been committed in promoting mainstreaming policies. As can be observed from the literature review, it is hoped that many schools in the UK would therefore, enroll children with and without special needs (Klaus, 2005; Ainscow, et al, 2006).

Nevertheless, the literature review indicates that a balance between inclusive education and educational policies was established as a major challenge as far as inclusive education is concerned (Klaus, 2005; Slee 2001; Lloyd, 2000). This may be partly connected to what Ainscow et al (2006) cited; that inclusive education and the standard agenda are in conflict because they imply different views of what makes an "improved school". As quoted in *The Times* UK News Paper, 17th May 2006: that "the policy of educating children with special needs in mainstream schools has failed and must be changed immediately" (Halpin, 2006, p.1).

Some of the educational policies which emphasize that schools should aim at better academic results as well as becoming inclusive may have contributed to parents' disagreement with inclusive education system. For example, the statement which claims that Inclusive Education is the best option for all children attracted 82.5% disagreement. A similar statement which requested parents to indicate if they were comfortable with their children being in the same class with children with special needs shows that 67.5 % are not comfortable.

According to the evidence from the literature review, this may be partly connected to the educational policies which emphasize that excellence can only be achieved through examination performance where all children are capable of acquiring the basic skills, in literacy and numeracy (Lloyd, 2000) and to what Halpin, (2006, p.1) stated in The Times UK that "parents felt betrayed as their children's educational needs went unmet and the children sunk into a spiral of misbehavior that often ended in expulsion".

5.8. Do you think children with special educational needs should be placed in mainstream schools?

The above question requested participants to indicate if children with special educational needs should be placed in main stream school. It also required them to give their opinions as to why children with special needs should or should not be placed in mainstream school.

Based on the results from the data, 30% indicate that they agree with the idea of placing children with and without special needs together in mainstream schools. As explained in the above discussion, the majority suggests that if children with special needs are provided with necessary care and attention, without disrupting others then they can be placed together; children with severe problems should not be placed in the mainstream school but those with mild disabilities can be placed and that placing children with and without special needs together benefits both groups. In support of the above statements, Farrell et al (2007) believe that by educating children with special needs in mainstream schools does not interfere with other children's academic performance.

On the other hand, 70% do not agree with the idea of placing children with and without special needs in mainstream school. In their discussions, they claim that children with severe behaviors can disrupt others children's learning, take much of the teachers' time and that such children with special needs can be easily helped in a special school. One parent stated that *"My daughter is in a class with children with special needs. I feel this is holding her back so we are withdrawing her from the school"*. It was also confirmed by a study done the Cambridge researchers who interviewed teachers, children and parents from 20 schools in seven Local Authorities and came out with conclusion that, although inclusion promotes social interactions for both children with and without special needs, there is no positive evidence to prove that inclusion meets all learning needs of children of different abilities (Halpin, 2006).

In addition, inclusive education is seen as being for poor communities and for disabled people, so well-to do parents seem to believe that their children will not get "good education". Again the educational planners' failure to introduce inclusive education in both

in private and public schools may contribute to negative attitudes towards public / mainstream schools (UNESCO, 2005). In this case, the national educational policies have influence on parents' decision in choosing schools for their children (Slee, 2001; Lloyd, 2000; Farrell, 2001) because parents may be at odds with any policy that interferes with their children's learning.

The general view for those who participated in the study seems to indicate that children with severe special needs should not be placed in the mainstream schools. This sounds similar to what was revealed in Chapter Two that most parents support and value inclusion but with some reservations especially when it comes to the severity of special needs (Lo, 2007; Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Tilstone & Rose 2003). For instance, many parents have stated that children with severe emotional/behavioral and intellectual disabilities should not be enrolled in mainstream schools. This was also revealed in chapter one when Hui, (2005) and Nxumalo (2006) conducted separate studies on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and concluded that children with severe emotional/ behavioral and intellectual disabilities should not be enrolled in mainstream schools (Hui, 2005, Nxumalo, 2006).

Another discussion that is mostly highlighted in Chapter Four is lack of sufficient information about inclusive education practices. According to the data analysis, many parents seem to indicate that they have limited information on inclusive education. This maybe true because the findings confirm that the Local Authorities have never disseminated any circulars or materials on inclusive education. Similarly, the two schools have never conducted any awareness meeting on inclusive education. it also confirms what was revealed in Chapter Two where parents complained of not being adequately informed about the special education process (Eason & Whitbread 2006).

5.9. Any other comments:

The last part of the questionnaire requested parents to give any other comments. This chapter evaluates different comments given by three parents who attempted to respond to this question as follows. Comment one; *children can be very supportive of those with SEN. They are generally very supportive and understanding. My son's class has known him since nursery and is very good with him'*. As shown from the data, this parent has a child with special needs and she believes that her child has been supported since nursery school. This confirms what has been highlighted in chapter one that positive attitudes of children with and without SEN may indicate that both groups are sensitive to human diversity and are tolerant towards different needs of individuals (Farrell et al, 2007). Similarly, one of the studies done suggests that educating children with special needs in the mainstream schools does not interfere with other children's performance (Kalambouka et al, 2007).

However, this contradicts to what has been observed in Chapter Two where the UK Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2004) reported that the national educational policies have often acted in ways that frustrate the implementation of inclusive education (Klaus, 2004). Again the literature review points out that open competition based on examination performance contributes to the parents' decision in choosing schools for their children, seeing inclusive schools as stumbling blocks (Slee 2001; Lloyd, 2000; Farrell, 2001).

The second parent commented that '*teachers are not qualified to deal with some of the needs. Special needs children would be better served in specialist unit'*. Such comment seems to indicate that children with special needs should not be placed in mainstream school because teachers have limited skills to handle SEN children. Similarly, Chapter One reveals a survey conducted by Lo (2007) on teachers' attitudes where the findings indicate that 89% believed that their teaching methods and experiences would be reduced by having children with learning difficulties in their classrooms. In addition, the National Union of Teachers observed in Chapter Two that educating children with special needs in the main stream schools have failed. The Union therefore, suggests that special schools should not be closed because they are the best option for children with special needs (Haplin, 2006).

Then a third parent argued that *'Class sizes are too large to cope with some of the issues thrown up'*. According to the above statement, it seems the parent indicates that there are many children already in regular classes so adding SEN children can create more problems. The same observation was highlighted in the previous Chapters as one of the reasons as to why parents shift their children from Government schools to private schools. For instance, many parents in Uganda claim that inclusive schools lack educational provisions which include inadequate teaching staff to handle large classes including and inadequate classrooms (Kurt, 2002).

5.10. Summary.

The aim of this chapter was to evaluate the researcher's findings in relation to the previous chapters. During the course of my evaluation, it was observed that the data findings agree with the previous chapters. For instance, parents share common views about how they understand inclusive education and the majority is aware of different categories of special educational needs.

Generally, parents' attitudes towards inclusive education seem to be positive but with some disparities influenced by the severity of special needs and inadequate information. However, the core concern observed is that parents do not seem to be sufficiently informed or provided with enough information. As the respondents point out, they have never received any documents on inclusive education and the schools have made no attempt to conduct awareness meetings on inclusive education. Variables such as age and education level were found to be related to their attitudes.

The next chapter will present a summary of the research findings in relation to the guiding questions and the implications for the practice. Limitations during the study, a conclusion and the recommendations for further study will also be highlighted.

Chapter Six (Conclusion).

6. Introduction.

This chapter examines the whole research study on attitudes of parents of children without special needs at two mainstream schools in London, UK. The chapter also discusses the research findings, limitations encountered during data collection, implications of the findings for the future researchers in the same field, recommendations and the general conclusion.

It has been observed in this study that since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) statement "every one has a right to education", different educational strategies have been made to ensure equalization opportunities to children with special educational needs. In accordance with various strategies, inclusive education has been introduced as anew strategy to address challenges encountered during segregation and integration strategies. As inclusive education was trying to establish itself as an important approach within the general education system, a lot of challenges were observed. These include attitudes, inadequate facilities, and inadequate trained personnel to mention but a few.

Therefore, the overall study examines the current attitudes of parents of children without special needs at two mainstream primary schools in London. The motivation for the study is based on my working experience as an inspector of schools in Uganda as well as my interactions with some of the schools in London, UK.

The literature review on the attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education is discussed with reference to the parents' age and education level; inclusive awareness level and their opinions towards educational policies. Although the writer explored related information she found limited research studies available on the attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education.

In order to ensure a comprehensive data, a qualitative method was used within a broad frame work of interpretivism paradigm. A survey questionnaire was designed and administered

to parents at two mainstream primary schools. Throughout the study, ethics of respect of any participants involved directly or indirectly was put into considerations. For example, before the data collection, formal permission was requested from schools' authorities. In addition, an introductory letter was attached to the participant's questionnaire.

The research findings are presented in a tabular format and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Furthermore, each point (table) is followed by a descriptive analysis.

The research findings are evaluated based on the literature review in relation to other previous chapters**.** In accordance to the results, there seem to be no major differences between the literature review and the data analysis.

According to the study sample size, the researcher cannot generalize the attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education. She therefore, concluded by recommending the study as a pilot study for further studies in the same field.

6.1. Research findings.

The key outcome of the study is based on the literature review and data analysis. On one hand it appears that the parents' age and education level are some how not related to their attitudes towards inclusive education. In the same way, both the literature and the data suggest that parents of children without special needs have limited information as far as inclusive education is concerned. The findings indicate that both the Local Authority and schools have not conducted enough awareness campaigns on inclusive education. The literature review has also established that national educational policies which aim at raising standards through academic results have contributed to the parents' decision in choosing schools for their children (Slee, 2001).

In addition, the UK Government has been criticized for involving the State and excluding professionals during educational policy development. It was observed that once practitioners are involved in policy making, their expertise would aim at developing realistic policies which can be easily implemented (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). To this end, the review seems to indicate that the educational policies are the most hindrance to the implementation of inclusive education.

Based on the findings, parents have differing opinions as far as inclusive education is concerned. Some parents believe that if children with special needs are provided with necessary care and attention, without disrupting others then they can be placed together. Others say that it is okay to place children with mild special needs in a mainstream school since it can benefit both groups.

However, the majority still believe that placing children with special needs in an inclusive setting children can disrupt others children's learning and take much of the teachers' time. They suggested that children with special needs can be easily helped in Special Schools. The overall results indicate parental support for inclusive education but with some reservations especially when it comes to the severity of disability/ SEN. They claim that children with severe emotional/behavioral and intellectual disabilities should not be enrolled in mainstream schools.

6.2. Limitations.

Reflecting on the shortcomings encountered in this study generally; there were no major challenges in other areas of the study. It was only during data collection that some challenges were mostly experienced.

At first, a self – completion questionnaire was used to collect the data from parents in one mainstream primary school. Out of the expected number, only 14 respondents managed to respond and to return the questionnaire. As I could not get enough data from the first sampled school, I was advised to contact another school. Bearing mind the limited time I had, getting another school as well as convincing parents to participate in the study was not easy.

Again due to the UK schools' time schedule, the study collided with the schools' examination time table. For that matter, my data collection was put on halt until at the end of school examinations. Since I had limited time in which to complete my dissertation, a one day visit for each school to deliver the questionnaires was not enough to discuss with the school authority and capture important information.

Another challenge was with my research instrument (self-completion questionnaire) which could not confirm whether the sampled respondents were the ones who completed the questionnaire. And to those who never responded, I was unable to know the reasons as to why they never responded.

Some respondents highlighted that some questions were not clear. For instance, participants were requested to indicate if "Inclusive Education can impact on the emotional development of children". It was not clear whether I was referring to a positive impact or a negative impact. Such ambiguity may have led to this question not being fully responded to.

6.3. Implications for future research.

In order to avoid the above limitations, I would suggest that more than two schools be sampled along with a broader selection from the population sample (e.g. from primary and secondary schools). For the research instrument, I would suggest a range of procedures / methods be used so that ambiguity and doubts are minimized. This can be done by including interview, case study or a focused group meeting. In addition, the program convener should schedule study time so that the data collection time does not collide with the examination time.

As an inspector of schools responsible for SEN program in Uganda, the findings have inspired me a lot and I hope that this study will act as a source of information for another similar research in my country. In the next study, the above limitations will act as a reminder to avoid similar situations.

6.4. Recommendations.

Following the above findings, the study demonstrates that the most challenge is lack of enough information on inclusive education. Since such challenge can be minimized through intensive awareness campaign, the Government should design different approaches in creating awareness to all stakeholders. Local Authorities should design and distribute circulars and materials talking about inclusive education. In the same way, schools should organize and invited all parents to attend awareness meetings on inclusive education.

At the heart of the idea of inclusive education lie controversial educational policies such as the national curriculum, Excellence for All and procedures which influence the school academic performance and equal educational opportunities. Such controversies can be minimized once the policy makers involve professionals who are expert in designing achievable policies.

Since this research was focused on only two schools in London, I would suggest that my findings act as a source of information for future researchers in the same field. Therefore, more research studies on attitudes of parents of children without special needs towards inclusive education are recommended.

6.5. Final Conclusion.

When we revisit the data and the literature that has emerged from the study, it is easy to identify that parents of children without special needs lack enough information on inclusive education practice. Also as the study data reflects, parents support inclusive education but with some reservations that children with more severe emotional/behavioral and intellectual disabilities should not be enrolled in mainstream schools.

One of my motivations for this study was to find out whether parents of children without special needs in the UK do embrace inclusive education. According to the findings, there is a possibility to believe that the parents in the UK appear to recognize the ideals of inclusive education. However, it is highly arguable whether they put into practice inclusive education policies effectively.

In a nut shell, due to small sample size of this study, I may not be able to generalize parents' attitude towards inclusive education. Ultimately, I would take this study as a pilot study for future research in the same field.

6.6. Summary.

The Chapter has summarized the findings about the current attitudes of parents of children without special needs from two mainstream primary schools in London. It has also highlighted a summary of the research findings and the implications for the practice. In addition, the chapter has discussed the limitations during data collection, recommendations and then the final conclusion.

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Appendices.

An introductory letter.

Dear Parent,

My name is Generous Kazinda, and I am from Uganda, studying at Roehampton University on an Erasmus Mundus Scholarship sponsored by European Union. I am doing research as part of a Masters in Special Educational Needs, as in my country I am an Inspector of Schools with a Special Educational Need focus to my work.

I am carrying out a research to look at the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education. I would very much appreciate your views about this topic. Please be assured, the information you will provide will be solely for this study and will be kept confidential. Your responses

will be part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in the report.

Also please note that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- You are free to refuse to answer any question
- You are free to withdraw at any time

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the study.

Generous Kazinda

A Questionnaire to the parents.

Section A. *Please tell me about yourself*

Put a tick in the box provided

1. Gender   male ☐   female ☐

2. How old are you?   16-24 ☐   25-34 ☐   35-49 ☐   50-64 ☐   64 + ☐

3. Are you employed? Yes ☐   No ☐

4. What is your highest level of education?   School ☐   College ☐   University ☐

5. Do you have a child who has a disability or special educational needs? YES ☐   NO ☐

Section B.

Awareness   level

5. Have you heard about any of the following types of Special Educational Need?

Visual impairment	Yes ☐	No ☐
Hearing impairment	Yes ☐	No ☐
Speech and Language impairment	Yes ☐	No ☐
Physical disabilities	Yes ☐	No ☐
Serious emotional disabilities	Yes ☐	No ☐
Autism	Yes ☐	No ☐
Cerebral palsy	Yes ☐	No ☐
Downs syndrome	Yes ☐	No ☐
ADHT	Yes ☐	No ☐

Other - please specify…………………………………………………………….

6. Are you aware of there being some pupils with special educational needs in the School?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

How did you come to know about this?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. What you understand about Inclusive Education? What does it mean to you?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. Did you receive any circulars or materials from Local Authority talking about Inclusive Education?   Yes ☐   No ☐

9. Has the school ever conducted awareness meetings on Inclusive Education?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section C.

Opinions

The following is a set of statements about educating children with and without special needs in the same classroom. For each statement please put a tick whether you, *strongly agree*, *agree*, are *neutral, disagree* or *strongly disagree.*

Statement	strongly	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly

	agree				disagree
Educational inclusion"... is about equal opportunities for all pupils... it pays particular attention to the provision for, and achievement of, different groups of pupils."					
Inclusive Education is about children with special needs being in school with children without special needs.					
Inclusive Education is the best option for all children.					
Inclusive Education means that some children get more support and attention than others.					
Inclusive Education promotes social interaction.					
The school has organized meetings / workshops to talk about inclusive education.					
Inclusive Education supports the learning development of all pupils					
Inclusive Education encourages children to learn how to be tolerant of difference in others.					
Inclusive Education can impact on the emotional					

development of children.					
The school has a range of support staff assigned to work with children with Special educational needs					
Inclusive Education can mean more disruptive behaviour within lessons.					
I am comfortable with my child being in the same class with children with special needs.					
Inclusive Education means that not all pupil's needs can be fully met					
The school has explained to me what part I can play in my child's education.					
I get regular accurate and helpful information about my child's progress.					

8. Do you think students with special educational needs should be placed in Mainstream classes?   Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes - why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

If No, why not?

……

……

Any other comments?

Please fold, place in A5 envelop supplied, seal and return with your child to the class teacher

Thank you for your support in answering my questions.