

Does object oriented pedagogy promote
learning about the past for key stage two
children with special educational needs?

Do they engage, enjoy and learn?

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Abstract

The purpose of this explorative research (due to the sample size being small) is to investigate how children with Special Needs learn about the past and whether using an object oriented approach will benefit this educational process. *Does object oriented pedagogy promote learning about the past for key stage two children with Special Educational Needs?* This will be examined through an analysis of the children's engagement, enjoyment and their learning. The school in which the research took place was a Special School, currently providing for forty-two primary and ninety-eight secondary school aged children. The school caters for a variety of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Their level of *engagement* is answered through classroom observation when the pupils undertook a lesson about the Romans using objects and activities to bring this topic to life. *Enjoyment* was quantified from interviews which took place after the lessons had been completed and their *learning* was assessed through a series of activities that were completed.

The analysis of this data has shown that when using a tactile, tangible and object oriented approach to learning about the past, it enables even the most severely disabled child to learn about History. The sample group of key stage two children with Special Needs did indeed engage, enjoy and learn about the past!

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Authors Declaration

All research presented in this thesis was initiated and conducted by the author with guidance from The University of York. The author is responsible for the research presented in the thesis.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research is an attempt to answer the question: *Does object oriented learning pedagogy, promote learning about the past for key stage two children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)?* It was examined by looking at children's levels of enjoyment, engagement, and learning when using objects to learn about the past. The reason the author has chosen these three measures is as a result of readings about the theory of learning and how children are perceived to learn 'best' (Harms 1994). It also stems from the authors personal experience in being greater academically in those subjects that were more engaging – therefore I enjoyed them and subsequently I learnt. These three 'markers' of a good education are the authors core values for this research. The research argument being that a tactile, object oriented approach to teaching will benefit more children, especially those with SEN, and aid their understanding/learning levels than other more traditional teaching styles.

The benefit of a hands-on approach to History is widely written about outside of the UK, but seems not to have been wholly incorporated into English schooling (Dale 1982, Dyer 1983). A more traditional passive approach is still widely administered despite not being truly holistic and beneficial to all pupils in any given class. Bruner's principle of "how do I know what I think until I feel what I do?"(1960: 30) shows that the concept of tactile

approaches to learning can be the most suitable for children and those with SEN, as the use of object oriented learning combines both visual and kinaesthetic learning approaches. SEN children need the most help when it comes to schooling as intangible concepts such as the past and time in general can be extremely difficult for these children to grasp.

Currently there is not a specific SEN curriculum, which continues and maintains inclusive classroom practice – however it does mean that some provisions can be limited and are not always suitable for the child or fostering whole class teaching. In current teaching practice, it is the role of the Teacher or Teaching Assistant (TA) to develop suitable activities for the child(ren) to do – however it would create greater inclusivity if the class could do the same activities and everyone gains knowledge at the same time. This is the method that I chose to adapt throughout the research.

The teaching of History has many issues and problems which can hinder its progress in the classroom. These issues cover topics relating to the idea of learning about the past being too hard for most children to grasp. Due to curriculum constraints, issues with chronology and the down grading of history as a core-subject, history teachers have a lot to battle with. If you then combine issues that arise with children classed as ‘under-achievers’ like those with SEN, it can be difficult for them to reach each child in their classes and give each of them the time and effort that they need.

The majority of history teaching is based on a passive approach where the teacher talks and the children listen combined with assessments and targets and where good work is rewarded with ‘things to do’ sections at the end of the day or term (Cooper 1992: 5). This kind of passive approach is not a suitable teaching style for the majority of learners – as current analysis suggests that only 20% of pupils are auditory learners (Brown 1998). It is difficult for a teacher to “create a stimulating learning environment, where it is safe to speak out, yet challenging enough to encourage new ways to look at and think about subjects” (Brown 1998). Pashler et al (2008) suggest that teachers must also think about how their information is being received by the pupils and not just focus on the delivery of such information.

All children should engage, enjoy and learn at school, but it is interesting how much of these singular concepts which are considered integral parts of an education are dependent on the others. Children with SEN are often left behind in classes as they seem ‘stupid’ or unwilling to learn. However if practitioners can find a teaching method that they enjoy and are engaged they will most probably learn.

Harris & Luff (2004) believe history is a more difficult subject to teach children with SEN, as it mostly focuses on book learning exercises, and although it is suggested that teachers need to seek other information such as site visits, school trips to museums and loan services from museums, many do not know how to access

these facilities nor even how to use them (Corbishley & Stone 1994: 383; Henson 1997: 5). This book-learning focus is unsuitable for most SEN children as many have difficulty in reading, writing and communication (Turner 2011: 86).

An object-oriented approach to learning that mainly combines the visual (seeing objects, pictures etc.) and kinaesthetic (feeling the objects, putting things back together that are broken) learning styles could enable children - even those who are considered to have the most severe SEN - to participate in activities and allow them to grasp an understanding of the subject at hand (Harris & Luff 2004).

The origins of this research were founded in my Archaeology BA dissertation which looked at how archaeologists dealt with primary aged school children. That project looked at issues which needed to be considered when doing any work with such children; these were mainly communication styles, learning styles and child development. It found that there was a lack of experience in the archaeological profession in relation to communicating effectively with primary aged school children. This lack of experience is due to a gap between what the education policy of an attraction or museum states and what is actually provided by the staff members disseminating information to their audiences. The need was to progress this style of research by focusing on how children with SEN learn about the past and what can be done to help them.

The school in which the research took place was a Special School. I worked at the school from September 2010 – December 2011. The school currently has forty-two primary and ninety-eight secondary school aged children. The school caters for all types of SEN. Within the school at this present time those are: Moderate (MLD), Severe (SLD) and Profound Learning Difficulties (PLD); Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which includes Autism and Asperger's. Physical Disabilities (PD); Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties (SLCD); Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD); Hearing and Visual Impairments (HI and VI); and finally Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLD).

The sample class used through this research focused on a higher level Key Stage 2 group consisting of ten children whose SEN ranges from BESD, MLD, SPLD and ASD. The original pilot study involved a much lower ability class, where two aspects of the research (enjoyment and engagement) were being met but it was extremely difficult to judge their level of learning. It was concluded that a higher ability class would heighten the research potential.

The strategy of the research looked into how children with Special Educational Needs learn about the past. It did this by investigating an object oriented teaching approach which can aid their understanding. Subjects such as History are often deemed too multifaceted, as discussing or reading something about an event that occurred a hundred, a thousand or even a million years ago is considered outside of their understanding and comprehension

(Bourdillion 1994: 13). If the passive approach (sitting and listening) to teaching is adapted with more tactile learning approaches, this could enable a greater amount of children to enjoy and learn about the past.

The project hoped to provide researchers and practitioners with a greater understanding of the many different approaches, to not only learning about the past, but teaching it also. It also aspired to illuminate gaps within current research and practice involving children with SEN, and will move away from the idea that History is too complex for them to understand. However, if you follow in Bruner's footsteps, you should, as practitioners believe "that any subject can be taught to any child as long as the subject matter is informed and genuine" (1996: xii).

The main data was collected through two lessons entitled "The Romans". Lesson one consisted of classroom based activities and the second was a mixture of classroom and an interactive "outside the classroom" based component. During each lesson data was collected through a mixed methodology by classroom observation, interviews and a form of assessment. Each of these methods is required in order to assess the three sub-aims of the research, these being engagement, enjoyment and learning. These data will be analysed and the subsequent chapters will address themes that have arisen from this data collection.

Literature relating to the research will be discussed, analysed and displayed under the following chapters: Special Educational Needs (Chapter 2), History Teaching (Chapter 3), and Object Oriented Learning (Chapter 4). Each chapter will discuss key terms (when appropriate) that relate to the information examined throughout the chapters; specific topics found within the literature will then be discussed relating to the research. The initial introductory section will cover the reasons behind the literature search, and the concepts of engagement, enjoyment and learning which will be assessed during the data analysis.

The purpose of the methodology is to establish what the research question is, how its data will be collected and how it will be analysed. It will also focus on important aspects of research such as: the pilot study, ethics, validity and reliability.

Chapters six through to eight are concerned with the presentation and analysis of the data collected. Due to the three-fold concepts of engagement (Chapter 6), enjoyment (Chapter 7) and learning (Chapter 8), these required a three-fold data collection of observation, interview and assessment; each section requiring separate analysis and chapters.

The penultimate chapter will discuss the themes found through the literature review and how these are confirmed or contrasted through the analysis of the data. The conclusion will discuss the research as a whole and make any suggestions for how the research

could have been improved and where there is scope for further research. Before these areas are addressed an understanding of some key terms is required.

Key Terms

Special Educational Needs - Legal Definition – “a child has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her; if the child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than their contemporaries; has a disability which hinders the child from making good use of the educational resources and facilities provided; and finally if the child is under the age of five and falls into the above categories” (Frederickson & Cline 2009: 39).

Enjoyment - Experiencing joy or pleasure in something. Enjoyment can also refer to having the use or benefit of a place or thing (The National Trust for Scotland 2005: Appendix 1). My preferred definition is the latter.

Engagement – an important term in education, referring to the (degree of) involvement, participation, and commitment of a learner. It is typically understood in three senses: *behavioural*, *affective*, and *cognitive* (Gillies et al: 2010).

Learning – Is “...that reflective activity which enables the learner to draw upon previous experience to understand and evaluate the present, so as to shape future action and formulate new knowledge” (Abbott: 1994 cited in Watkins et al 2000: 1).

Inclusion - in educational contexts, it is the process or fact of increasing the participation of all learners within the system as a whole, or within the curriculum, culture, and community of particular establishments... more broadly, *inclusion* can relate to similar issues of participation and equity relating to race, culture, language, ethnicity, social class, wealth, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation. (Gillies: 2010)

Kinaesthetic learning style – “...learning by experience and doing especially when reinforced through touching and movement...” (Brown 1998: 1).

Visual Learning Style – Learners who can “learn by observation and can follow written or drawn instructions” (Brown 1998)

Literature Reviews

The following series of chapters will focus on literature surrounding three main themes related to this research. The first chapter will discuss literature relating to the contextual information regarding the institution in which the research was conducted, a process all the more necessary due to the school being for special needs children. The second chapter is concerned with History teaching, the reasoning being that the research will be conducted within a History classroom. The final chapter will discuss object oriented learning and its potential benefits as a method for learning about the past and how this approach can then be adapted for this research.

Discussions of the terms *engagement*, *enjoyment* and *learning* - which will be used to analyse the nature of how children with SEN learn about the past – at the outset, need to be discussed. Child development and communication are important aspects when looking at the way children learn, and which methods are more suited to dealing with children in a learning environment. Educational theorists such as Piaget and Dewey are associated with the educational theory termed constructivism, which relates to learners constructing their own meaning through experience and activity.

Engagement in its many forms is probably one of the most important components of learning; if pupils are engaged within the

classroom they are more likely to excel in their schooling (Helm 1999: 2). There are however some obstacles to engagement, especially when working with children with Special Needs. Children with SEN may have impairments which prevent them from learning in the same way as other children. These impairments could be: sensory – in which tactile activities can aid their learning; behavioural issues – which can delay understanding due to attention spans and disruptive behaviours; speech and language difficulties – preventing children from communicating to their teachers about activities being completed and whether they have any problems with them; and physical impairments - which could prevent children from easily accessing classroom resources and they can become marginalised from the rest of their class by not giving them the same resources to look at. Problems with motor skills can also present a challenge, though tactile resources can be suitably adapted especially for those children with the most severe and profound disabilities.

Enjoyment is the next sub-concept to be discussed. If a child enjoys the subject that they are being taught they are more likely to have a higher level of understanding than children who do not (Harms 1994). Children with some forms of SEN can have limited communication and attention levels that can hinder their understanding of subjects and this can also hinder the attempts by teaching staff to aid their ability to understand. The theory of constructivism – born from work conducted by educational

psychologist John Dewey - holds that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. In the classroom, constructivism suggests that teachers should be encouraging pupils to use active, engaging techniques to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they have understood and how their knowledge has changed (Dewey 1997: 33).

Learning is the final concept to be considered. It is important that all children and learners receive the very best of education, training and care to succeed in life (Ofsted 2011: 12). At school, children are expected to achieve certain standards of education by the time they leave school at age sixteen; within this time they are to learn a variety of subjects with the fundamentals being 'reading, writing and arithmetic'. The pupils' learning objectives were to understand the topic of the Romans, through contextual information (who, what and why?) then comprehend the topic by investigating why we know what we do about the Romans and then by the examination of the lives of Romans by investigating their material culture in more detail. Objects figured in all aspects of the lessons.

The research conducted took place in a school, the sample being analysed is made up of children aged seven to eleven years and the research will be to determine if an object oriented approach to learning promotes these children's understanding of the past. In order to achieve the highest standard of learning, practitioners must understand the numerous learning styles of the children in their

class. In order to understand how children learn, the research would take place in a Special School, where the data collection would take up three full school days over three consecutive weeks, due to the researcher's other commitments.

Chapter 2:

Special Educational Needs

The first of the three research review chapters will be looking at literature associated with Special Educational Needs (SEN). It is important to understand SEN before a research study can begin, as those who have Special Educational Needs are on a complex continuum on which their needs, symptoms and levels of severity change constantly. There have been changes in terminology to make terms 'politically correct' – 'disability' to 'difficulty' and 'special' to 'specific'. This could relate to the seemingly emotive nature of the term as people classed as having a disability when they may think of themselves as being 'normal'. Some practitioners believe that the purpose of labelling or categorizing of these needs aids in treatments and in providing them with the right care and education.

The chapter will begin with an assessment of key terms alluded to from within the research, before a brief history of SEN is given in order to suggest the overall focus of the research. A brief analysis of the numerous types and learning styles of people with SEN will follow, then an investigation of Special Needs Education will commence and will look into why it is different from other education types and modes. Finally, the chapter will discuss current debates from within this research area and how this could affect the work being done within this field.

Key Terms

Cognitive Abilities – “The ability to use knowledge acquired through thought, experience and understanding as well through the senses” (Turner 2011: 152).

Impairment – According to Wood (1980) “In the context of health experience, impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function” (cited in Deal 2006).

Inclusion – Sebba and Sachdev (1997) state that “Inclusive education describes the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and provision allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity” (Cited in Frederickson and Cline 2009: 71).

Learning Difficulty – is “a difficulty in one or more areas of learning which, with correct support and teaching, has the potential to be resolved” (Turner 2011: 154).

Learning Disability – is “a life-long intellectual impairment affecting the ability to learn and progress at the same rate as others of the same age” (Turner 2011: 154).

Statement of Special Educational Needs – is “a legal document setting out a child’s needs and detailing any extra help required to achieve these” (Turner 2011: 154).

Brief History of SEN

Terminology used within the literature can be varied: learning disability, learning difficulty, mentally retarded - still used in US literature up until 2006 (United States CDC) – impairment etc. Because of this it can be difficult to find specific literature on the terminology as it can be different according to when and where it was published (Farnham-Diggory 1978: 14; Stiker 1997:24; Burke & Cigno 2000: 1).

Equally there are children seen as ‘miracles’, people who are classed as being on the Autistic Spectrum, who have the ability to master operations such as mathematics, design, art at a young age, as well as having a far-reaching knowledge on subjects of their choice and go on to have successful careers (Poplin 1984: 291). Poplin further states that some of the world’s most famous people have suffered from learning disabilities, most notably Sir Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein (1984: 294). The stigma associated with SEN in the case of famous intelligent people, is not a negative one. However those that struggle with learning quickly become associated in a less than positive way.

There are many causes of learning disabilities and difficulties, and one must understand these in order to comprehend what effects these may have on the children’s ability to learn and the ways in which they learn. Prenatal causes such as genetic or inherited disorders, substance abuse, dietary deficiencies, exposure to

harmful chemicals or medications, or if the mother has contracted an infection or simply a complication during pregnancy (Turner 2011: 3). At the time of birth, elements such as prematurity, oxygen deficiency during birth, difficult delivery and conditions or infections within the baby can also cause learning disabilities (Turner 2011: 3). There are also postnatal causes such as brain infections and injuries, nutritional deprivation, neglect and controversially injections such as the MMR which have been cited as possible causes of some learning disabilities – however there is still no conclusive evidence for this (Turner 2011: 4).

When a child is thought to have an SEN, a form of assessment is required, whether medically if found at birth, or whilst at school. This evaluation is government-assisted and is known as a *Statement of Special Educational Needs*. The purpose of this needs-testing is to provide the correct support for people with SEN and their families (Rose 1998: 3). It is important to understand the process from identification (medical) to an assessment of what specific needs the child requires as it ultimately helps those working with and teaching children with SEN to better gauge the learning needs of these children, primarily through an understanding of the assessment process (Turner 2011: 4).

Statement of SEN

In 1994, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) proposed to all governments that they

should adopt the principle of inclusive education, by enrolling all children into mainstream schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise (UNESCO 1994; DfEE 1997: Chapter 4). The Green Paper *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997) made recommendations of what Local Education Authorities (LEAs) should consider when assessing Special Needs (Rose 1998: 27). It is from this that the current registration of needs takes place for each child. According to the Education Act 1996, section 312, the legal definition of SEN is if a child has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her; if the child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than their contemporaries; has a disability which hinders the child from making good use of the educational resources and facilities provided; and finally if the child is under the age of five and falls into the above categories (Frederickson & Cline 2009: 39). This shows that not only has there been a change in terminology but a change in the way children with special needs are dealt with in order to make sure they get the very best from their schooling and life in general. Provisions that need to be made, however, must be based on the category of SEN assigned to the child; therefore we must consider the types of SEN and the learning styles which relate to them in order to ensure that the methodology of this research is properly suited to the participants (these being BESD, MLD and ASD). By doing so the research conclusions can be then adapted for a wider range of SEN.

Types & Learning Styles

The conceptual models of individual SEN's can be organised into four broad areas: Cognition and Learning needs; Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs; Communication and Interaction Needs and Sensory and/or Physical Needs (Lerner 1971: 86; Harris & Luff 2004: 20). When practitioners are working with children with SEN in a mainstream setting, they may only be working with an individual child with a set number of SEN's and teachers can research their particular needs in order to effectively teach the child. However, as this research is taking place in a special school, one must consider a more general approach to the many types of SEN and have an understanding (however minimal) of the needs of the children and how they learn. Although this research only focuses on a few SEN, it is hoped that this can be adapted to suit a wider range of SEN. I will now discuss these areas individually.

Cognition and Learning Needs

This type of SEN is the most common as it deals with learning difficulties, whether struggling with: one or two areas of their learning (SpLD), the content and presentation (MLD) or more severe (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). For other SENs the grading is within an umbrella condition (such as mild, moderate and severe autism). However when looking at how the children learn and what difficulties they face they can be categorised in broader terms first and then specific SEN's assigned.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) most commonly cause difficulties with reading (dyslexia), writing and spelling (dysgraphia), the ability to manipulate numbers (dyscalculia) and dyspraxia which causes difficulty in movement and following instructions (Harris & Luff 2004: 38-9; Frederickson & Cline 2009: 308). Children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) will have attainments well below the expected levels in all or most areas of their learning curriculum, despite appropriate interventions from home and school (Frederickson & Cline 2009: 308). Despite having similar problems as those with SLD's they will most likely share characteristics with other pupils who have specifically BESD and SLCD's. The most severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties show a gradient of complexity in what makes up the child's SEN. Also the more severe the difficulty the lower their schooling attainments, physical abilities and communication skills become.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs

This category of SEN specifically includes children who have Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD), but also those who suffer with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) with or without Hyperactivity (ADHD). These difficulties can be seen across the whole ability range and have a continuum of severity. These children have persistent difficulties despite an effective school behaviour policy (Harris & Luff 2004: 25).

The main characteristic of BESD is the child's poor concentration and lack of interest in school/school work. This can be problematic for the teacher when deciding on suitable activities for his/her class (Frederickson & Cline 2009: 409). Sufferers of BESD are easily frustrated, unable to work in groups or independently; they can also be aggressive – both verbally and physically – towards teaching staff and fellow class-mates (Harris & Luff 2004: 25-26).

Most SEN's are not caused by a genetic mutation; those who are diagnosed with ADD or ADHD are the minority. At the biological level, diagnosis must include possibilities of neurological damage, genetic factors and neuroanatomical and neurochemical factors which lead to the impulsive, overactive and inattentive characteristics of ADD/ADHD (Frederickson & Cline 2009: 426).

Communication and Interaction Needs

Language is a central vehicle for human experience, thought and social interaction. When there is a difficulty in these attributes, a child can become frustrated with the world around them (Harris & Luff 2004: 40; Frederickson & Cline 2009: 240; Turner 2011: 60). Children who have specific communication difficulties (i.e. speech and language), would be classified as having Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties (SLCD). The pupils' dilemma is two-fold, on the one hand they have problems understanding others and on the other their problems lie in them being understood (Harris & Luff 2004: 40).

When dealing with SEN, spoken language is not the only way to communicate, and practitioners, parents, and colleagues should remember this (Turner 2011: 60). Turner furthers this point by detailing the differences between the non-disabled and disabled communicator and how they both arrive at the same goal (2011: 61). Social communication occurs with children from birth and continues throughout their lives. However those children with a delayed response or development of their speech and/or language, may need not just the words but also a gentle prompt using a sign, symbol or physical encouragement, which will aid their understanding of what was said (Turner 2011: 64-5). Makaton is a language using signs and symbols to help people communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order (Makaton Charity website; Frederickson & Cline 2009: 16).

There are also more specific learning disabilities which are connected to SLCD, these being the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and a number of related medical diagnoses such as Asperger's Syndrome (AS), Semantic Pragmatic Disorder (SPD), and Pervasive Development Disorder – not otherwise specialised (PDD-NOS). These terms are used for a range of difficulties with communication and interaction and can cover the full range of abilities and the severity of possible impairments with both varies widely (Harris & Luff 2004: 24). The nature of this spectrum is that symptoms vary from person to person and range from mild to

severe. There are three main types of ASD: classic autism (severe), AS (moderate) and PDD-NOS otherwise known as atypical autism (mild) (Frederickson & Cline 2009: 274; www.nhs.co.uk). ‘Triad of impairments’ is used to describe the traits associated with the condition: lack of social interaction, communication and imagination, more commonly termed nowadays as a lack of flexibility in thinking and behaviour.

Sensory and/or physical needs

This category specifically looks at impairments rather than a difficulty. It includes: hearing impairments (HI), visual impairments (VI), multi-sensory impairments (MSI) and physical difficulties (PD). A child classified with any of the above impairments may also have other complex learning needs.

There is a wide range of children and a wide range of physical difficulties or disabilities, and they equally cover all aspects of academic abilities. Some people have other associated medical conditions and impairments. The learning environment of the child must be adapted in order to fulfil the needs of the child, including mobility aids and communication aids (Harris & Luff 2004: 31; Frederickson & Cline 2009: 104, 526; Turner 2011: 45).

Those with HI and VI, have impairments of individual senses, either sight or hearing. These could be caused by a prenatal (before), perinatal (just before and during birth) or postnatal (after birth) condition. They could also be of one eye or ear, a partial

impairment or a complete loss (Harris & Luff 2004: 33-34; Turner 2011: 4).

A multi-sensory impairment means that a child has a combination of aural and ocular disabilities; they may also have additional difficulties which can make their situations complex (Harris & Luff 2004: 35).

There are also a handful of special educational needs which cannot be neatly nestled into one section of the widely used categories of cognitive, behavioural, communicative or sensory/physical needs. These SEN can have two or more of these characteristics, or in fact span all of them. The most common disorders are Cerebral Palsy and Down's Syndrome; and the less known being, Fragile X Syndrome and Rett's Syndrome.

Cerebral Palsy could be categorised as a physical disorder, as it can affect the sufferer's movement and posture, caused by damage or lack of development to part of the brain, prenatal or postnatal. Their academic abilities are high but they may also have problems with communication and language (Harris & Luff 2004: 27).

Down's syndrome is the most common identifiable cause of learning disabilities, which is caused by a genetic condition. Those identified as having down's have varying degrees of learning difficulties (cognitive, behavioural and communicative), as well as degree's of sensory and biological conditions (Harris & Luff 2004: 28).

The final two classifications: Fragile X and Rett's Syndrome are neurological and biological conditions. *Fragile X* is caused by a malformation of the X chromosome and is an inherited learning disability. Its cognitive disability varies widely from moderate to severe, with characteristics such as delayed speech and language, repetitive or obsessive behaviour, motor coordination problems and anxiety issues. It is also most likely to affect boys than girls. *Rett's* is a progressive brain disorder, which can be associated with autism and dementia and the ataxia form of Cerebral Palsy, and is most commonly associated with girls. Conditions associated with this are small hands and feet, stunted head growth, and as *fragile x*, repetitive or obsessive hand movements and also other related medical conditions.

Following this analysis of the above literature concerning Special Educational Needs and their various types, this material generated will aid the development of the research methodology and the planning of the lesson content. After categorising the numerous types of SEN, what follows is an analysis of current educational practices and what changes need to be made to accommodate the pupils' SEN. We will also look at the current debates and the future of Special Needs Education.

Special Needs Education

The need to provide extra resources for children with SEN arose when practitioners realised that some of the 'slow' children in their

class had some form of neurological, behavioural, or sensory impairment which prevented them from seeing the world around them in the same way as other children their age.

The origin of special needs education came from the need for a general awareness of children in schools who may have a special educational need. Changes to policy would need to be put in place before any changes to practice could take place. From 1893-1902, an awareness of the needs of those who were physically disabled was researched and some policy was put in place, though it was the Warnock Report (1978) that specified important aspects which should be considered when providing education for children with SEN. The term SEN became an umbrella concept, as it was deemed less emotive than the more traditional terms such as handicapped, disabled, mentally retarded etc; terms like 'ordinary' were replaced with 'mainstream'. The Warnock report stated that there should be two primary goals to education the first being the most relevant: "to enlarge a child's knowledge, experience and imaginative understanding, and thus his awareness of moral values and capacity of enjoyment" (Warnock Report 1978: 5).

Three main issues arise in the discussion and analysis of Special Needs Education: do the children really have SEN; what is the role of categories; and is there a preferable option between mainstream and special schools. The resulting debates provide the foundation for this research.

The concept of whether children have an SEN at all and that most do not is a fault of the teachers and ‘lazy’ teaching, which is why those who do have a SEN need a creative curriculum in order for them to achieve their greatest potential. The role of categories can also aid practitioners in providing the right kind of teaching and education for children which is crucial to this research as it is arguing that using objects as a teaching strategy is more beneficial for children with SEN. The reason for the final assessment of debates is to show that although this research is taking place in a special school that you can still use the same techniques in a mainstream setting.

Debates

Do they really have SEN?

This question is often asked by those un-educated in the politics and history of Special Needs. This, however justified, is supported further by the SEN and Disability Review, written by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), which states that 25% of 1.7 million pupils in England are being wrongly labelled when they simply require greater teaching support (OFSTED 2010: 5).

The report covers key findings and recommendations in relation to SEN provisions within England. The inspectors covered twenty two local authorities, visited one hundred and fifty educational providers, and carried out 345 detailed case studies (OFSTED 2010: 6). To summarize, the review found that for some children

the current system is working with well-managed assessment and identification methods and good-quality provisions offered. However, this was not commonly the case; the review found problems with the consistency of identification and assessment, poor evaluation of the additional support provided, a lack of nurturing towards those pupils with severe difficulties and disabilities in relation to aspirations and their future (OFSTED 2010: 6-7).

The report clearly states that when addressing those children and young people who have difficulties with learning that there is a triad of assessment. The primary assessment is called a School Action (SA), this means that the pupil has additional needs and that they should receive additional support from within the school (such as small group tuition – nurturing groups). The next stage is classified as School Action Plus (SA+) which includes collaboration from outside specialists (Speech and Language professionals). Finally, those pupils who are in need of the most intensive support are issued with a Statement of Special Needs (OFSTED 2010: 5).

The report, however, states that “as many as half of all pupils identified for SA would not be identified as having any form of SEN if schools focused on improving teaching and learning for all, with individual goals for improvements” (OFSTED 2010: 1). It is this statement that has been highly contested by some teachers, parents, and teaching unions as making the topic of identification

too simplistic, that children have multiple needs and individual needs which are not the same as another child with the same SEN (Turner 2011: 14).

According to an article in *The Guardian* online issued as a response to the report, Brian Lamb (OBE and chair of the Achievement for All Charity) who was head of the independent inquiry into Parental Confidence in Special Educational Needs (2008-2009), a review for the Labour Government, stated that more children were being identified because of better diagnosis, and that there is both over-identification in some areas (Dyslexia) and under-identification (Fragile X and Rett's Syndrome) in others (Vasgar 2010).

However, in the same article a spokesperson from the National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN) stated that “the report highlights the need for some schools to review not only which children they have identified as having SEN or disability by also the support provisions they are allocating to individual children” (Vasgar 2010). This was further commented on by Baroness Warnock (2010) in the *Telegraph* online, who states that it is the difference between good and bad teachers that “good teachers will believe in their ability to engage the imagination and cooperation of his/her pupils, however unpromising they may seem”; the reversal of this is an un-equipped teacher “who at the first set back runs to the schools Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) asking for help and is positively encouraged

by school management to do so, for the sake of a cash injection”
(p.1).

The Role of Categories

The issue of ‘labels’ is not a recent debate even within Education. The issue often arises in relation to the emotive topic of discrimination. It is ethically understood that you cannot class something as ‘special’ without implying that a hierarchical system is in place, placing those who are ‘special’ either above or below what is considered the norm. But is it not just a semantic argument? (Farrell 2001: 4).

Within the realms of Special Needs, researchers and practitioners alike have seen the ‘dark-side’ of this hierarchy seeing people deemed “retarded”, “imbeciles” etc. On the reverse side, those afflicted are now ‘gifted’ (Norwich 1999: 180).

This debate discusses the arguments surrounding the role of categories when dealing with people diagnosed with Special Needs. Categories are often used to determine many things in relation to Special Needs and these can aid with medical diagnosis; suitable adaptations in the home and school; awareness which then leads to understanding of conditions; can provide comfort for those afflicted and can lead to a greater social identity. (Lauchlan & Boyle 2007: 36).

The negative side of the use of categories can be found in many forms. Firstly, medical terms have become over time to have

derogatory connotations in every day 'comical' uses (i.e. 'idiot' and 'imbecile' (Norwich 1999:179), 'retard' (US CDC), and can have negative impacts due to there being numerous terms for their difficulties and the fact that many are on a continuum and so conditions can both improve or worsen (Norwich 1999: 179; Farrell 2001: 4; Lauchlan & Boyle 2007: 38). Secondly, perceptions, judgements and expectations of people with difficulties and disabilities can be influenced by labels and have often been used to stigmatise and devalue people within communities. Thirdly, labels must be kept within their context, as SEN are often complex and interrelated. Fourthly, categorisation can lead to a lowering of expectations from schools and parents which coupled with exclusive treatment in schools (i.e. having a teaching assistant, extra time to do exams etc.) can make school-life more complicated for pupils with SEN and create segregation amongst pupils (Farrell 2001: 4; Weisel & Tur-Kaspa 2002: 1; Lauchlan & Boyle 2007: 38).

The positive implications of categories are generally focused around greater support for parents and teachers, a label can help to understand cause, effect and treatment (Norwich 1999: 182; Weisel & Tur-Kaspa 2002: 1; Lauchlan & Boyle 2007: 36-7). Categories are also part of everyday life, society tending to compartmentalise people and issues in order to make sense of the world. Labels, on the other hand should not be used to explain the child's failure to make progress or to make unsubstantiated links between a category

and a specific intervention, which is where varied teaching strategies can aid in the selection of the preferred teaching style to match the learning style of the child.

Mainstream Vs Special

The final debate concerns inclusion of those children with SEN in mainstream schools. Many parents have little choice which public school their child can attend. It is decided on a basis of where they live. Most mainstream schools can 'cope' with mild difficulties and disabilities, but historically if a child has Profound and/or Severe difficulties/disabilities, their schooling will take place with a Special School (Florian et al 1998: 2).

According to researchers the topic of inclusion has been a key educational topic for the last twenty-five years (Avramidis et al 2000: 191). It has, as with many topics, had its fair share of terminology modification, going from integration in the early 1990s to inclusion more recently. Some research has not helped this discussion as they are often, argued Lani Florian (1998), non-categorised and so it is difficult to determine which interventions work for whom (p.4).

Practitioners and researchers alike saw that too much of a focus was placed on adapting the child for the school (integration) rather than altering the school for the child (inclusion) (Tilstone 1998: 160). According to Florian (1998: 13) Britain is within its infancy in this topic compared to other European and International

countries, such as North America, who have been at the forefront of this research since the mid - late 1980s.

Some argue that mainstream environments should be open to all children. However, this is yet another example of philosophical thought outpacing actual practice (Florian et al 1998: 1). A teacher's classroom can be disrupted even in normal circumstances, but those children who suffer from AD/HD simply cannot help it. Because of this teachers find working with children who have multiple and behavioural difficulties most difficult when it comes to teaching and so will push for these children to be placed within a special school (Croll & Moses 2003: 731).

The way forward for inclusion starts with the teachers themselves. It has been argued that in order for a successful implementation practitioners must first move away from the viewpoint of those with SEN having a 'deficit' a problem that can be solved, and there must be an alteration of what is taught during teacher training in order to aid teachers in dealing with mixed needs classrooms (Cracknell and Corbishley 1986, 1; Florian 1998: 22; Croll & Moses 2003: 732-3).

The analysis of literature surrounding Special Educational Needs gives the contextual information needed for this research. The sample participating is only concerned with certain types of SEN. An understanding of all needs must be covered in order to

understand where the literature and needs originated and how this could have a greater impact on research in this field.

Chapter 3: History Teaching

This chapter will consider literature associated with Primary History teaching and how this relates to the research to be carried out. A primary History classroom is the arena of this research and in order to discuss the relevance of object-based learning in schools, current research concerning classroom practice must be considered and likewise in this instance whether any previous work has been conducted that is directly relevant to this study. Beginning with a discussion of key terms found within the literature this will lead to a brief history of Primary History teaching in schools, including when its study started, what topics were and are still covered, and how it has changed; and will conclude with debates surrounding Primary History teaching and how this relates to the research at hand.

Key Terms

Cognitive Development – “the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem solving, and decision-making, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood” (www.healthofchildren.com – accessed on 28/10/12).

Pedagogy – Is a difficult term to find a definite definition; believed to have originated from the French and Latin adaptations of the Greek, literally meaning ‘a man having an oversight of a child, or an attendant leading a boy to school’. This meaning is now obsolete. Other examples are the ‘Science of Teaching’, and/or the

‘Craft of Teaching’. Watkins and Mortimore (1999: 3) term it as “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another”.

Brief history of Primary History teaching

When looking at history teaching literature, it is best to categorise it into how the subject will be taught and which topics will be covered. As this has changed since its initiation into the curriculum, within this section of the review the analysis will be separated by Early – Middle Twentieth Century and Mid – Late Twentieth Century to present.

Early –Middle Twentieth Century

History teaching emerged formally at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, when greater funding became available to focus on subjects considered less socio-economic (Philips 2000:11; Cannadine et al 2011: 18). After this initial decision, discussion then turned to appropriate curriculum primarily in terms of how and what children will learn (Harnett 2000:25). The pedagogical influences of the Twentieth Century - through the works of Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, Bruner etc – enabled teachers to begin to understand how children learn (Mooney 2000:xi).

This rigid view of the cognitive development of children has stunted the growth of history teaching in the primary school, as according to Piaget, from birth through to adult-hood a person progresses through four stages of development: Sensorimotor

(birth-two years), Preoperational (two-six/seven years), Concrete operational (seven-eleven years) and finally the Formal operations stage (twelve years plus) (Pound 2005: 37). Pound (2005) furthers this, by suggesting that Primary aged children would be predominately at the concrete operational stage where according to Piaget, children could only focus on one logical and tangible process at a time, which means that these children cannot be expected to apply themselves to non-tangible concepts such as the past (p. 37). Piaget further suggests (as cited in Cooper, 1992) that young children are unable to understand more than one perspective at a time, and so gaining an understanding of past cultures would be too varied and too difficult for children to comprehend (p.13). The same can be said for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), as “how do you teach history to a child who can’t remember what she had for dinner?” (Turner 2011: 88). This view has been further championed by the Ministry for Education in 1959, “younger children have so little sense of time, what place can there be for historical material in their education” (cited in Bourdillion 1994:13).

During the early stages of history teaching, the doctrine of “I talk, you listen, you learn” and reciting important dates in the past, became the most common teaching style, and is still used today (Curtis & Bardwell 1994 as cited in Philips 2000: 16; Cannadine et al 2011: 23). Topic work has been regarded the most suitable model for teaching young children history, a broad topic is looked

at with individual analysis of the important elements (Bourdillion 1994: 11). In the early twentieth century most primary history covered the lives of important men and women whereas by the mid-twentieth century the focus had changed toward providing children with a narrative of history (Harnett 2000:26). In the late 1950s history was considered to be more of a science than a story, with the involvement of some analysis into secondary sources (Harnett 2000:26).

Mid - Late Twentieth Century to Present

In the second half of the century, history teaching began to adapt further in unison with the post modern condition evolving in the world around us (Philips 2000: 11). Philips (2000) argues, that it was a challenging time for traditional values and “people were seeking new forms and expressions of identity, which had profound implications of history” – people wanted to know more about where they had come from – not simply why the British Empire had originated (p.11).

According to Harnett (2000) from the late 1970s, history teaching within the primary school reverted back to its narrative past with a greater emphasis on chronology (p.26). An overlying importance was still given to national identity, by emphasising the teaching of British History above all other nations (Philips 2000:16). As argued previously, it is believed that a purely passive approach to history is beyond the intellectual capacity of children, insinuating that

teachers must then make history proactive; instead of reading history, one can now 'Do History'(Cannadine et al 2011: 10). Cannadine et al (2011) further state, that this ideal of a 'New History' would thrust teachers into an experimental process using primary sources and active learning methods, to not only focusing on the modern history most commonly used, but also starting to address other more complex periods of time (p.10).

Educational theorist Jerome Bruner's (1960), main theory on education can be summed up in one phrase "how do I know what I think until I feel what I do?" (p. 30). Bruner's work encouraged teachers of history to branch out from the norm of the established passive approaches to teaching and in later writings would remind them that it was his belief "that any subject could be taught to any child at any age in some form that was honest" (Bruner 1996: xii). This would then open up the possibilities of what could be taught in the history classrooms and what form of teaching could take place (Harnett 2000: 29).

By the 1990's the focus was on 'doing the job' of a historian. The 1990 History Working Group stated that if history was to be taught it must be "grounded in a thorough knowledge of the past...employ rigorous historical method...and must involve a range of interpretations and explanations..." (Cited in Philips, 2000:16). This objective approach to the past will help children to gain the skills required for adulthood, but again there is too much focus on British History, with some attention paid to ancient civilisations,

like Egypt or the Mayans (Harnett 2000: 27). In 1991, after a prolonged debate about the nature and purpose of school history, the History National Curriculum was formally introduced (McAleavy 2000: 72; Cannadine et al 2011: 197). This review, McAleavy (2000) suggests, would hope to ensure that the New History, would not be overpowered by the political movements of the day and would enable children to interpret the past in an unbiased way (p.72).

Debates

Current and past debates about history teaching are vast, and so in relation to this research three main areas have been selected. The first debate concerns the idea that History is too complex to teach young children and children with Special Needs. Another area greatly discussed is the amount of knowledge a teacher needs of the subject/discipline they are teaching. The benefits of active learning in the classroom will be the concluding debate. The final two discussions relate to the learning mode being addressed – object oriented – and that if a practitioner has a lack of knowledge concerning the objects origin then this can hinder its usefulness as a learning resource and how efficient it is using active learning within the classroom, with arguments for and against its use.

Is history too complex for young minds?

According to the Board of Education in 1931, the problem of teaching history to young children is that there is still a large

amount of experimentation in regards to scope, content and approach (cited in Bourdillion 1994: 13). This combined with an inherent belief that having a knowledge of history is irrelevant to adult life and future career prospects, means that the discipline of history is almost 'fighting for its life' (Arthur 2000: 1). Relating back to previous discussions regarding a child's intellectual development, it has been stated that without a grasp of time there can be no real understanding of the crucial concepts intrinsic to the study of the past i.e. change, development, regression etc (Stow & Hayden 2000: 85). Stow and Hayden (2000), also argue that the study of chronology within primary school history had been significantly lost due to an over emphasis on the skills of a 'historian' and conceptual understanding despite chronology being a crucial aspect of understanding past lives and cultures. However if a child can primarily understand that the Romans came before the Vikings the aspect of the 'dates' of these cultures can come later (p.84).

Another aspect which has led to the perception that history is too hard for young children is the greater emphasis on source work, whether primary or secondary. The concern is that due to this lack of historical knowledge of the teacher, there will be a lack of understanding of the true benefit of using some sources as essential tools for learning (Harnett 2000: 29). It is argued that children are plied with documents, statistics, pot sherds etc in hope of teaching them the skills of the historian, but if they do not understand the

importance of looking at these items then they do not truly understand history. Experiencing the past, it is proposed, is the basis of a desire to learn about the past (Dickinson & Lee 1978: 2).

John Dewey (1997) argued that education should be based on experience, and that every experience is a moving force from which its value can be judged depending on what it moves towards and into (p. 28, 38). The benefit of experiencing the past through the use of objects is the basis for this research (Henson 1996: 1). Despite previous research suggesting that young children struggle to understand the past in terms of how a historian might interpret it, the level of understanding can be improved by using multiple learning modes in order to foster a child's understanding of time and the nature of historical concepts (Curtis & Baldwell 1994: 169-186; Stow & Hayden 2000: 88, 91).

The same views portrayed above are similarly placed within literature concerning children with Special Needs in relation to the teaching of history. Turner (2011) stated "how do you teach history to a child who can't remember what she had for dinner?" (p. 88). Teaching history to children with Special Needs is not impossible, according to Sebba (1994: 49), but current history teaching has a tendency to use excessive amounts of literacy and communication skills, which for those pupils with communication difficulties presents a greater challenge. This can be overcome through creative and flexible learning plans to ensure the greatest possible access to history, and when children find the subject content to be of value

and interest they are more certain to prove their will to succeed in the subject (Wilson 1985: 57).

Sebba (1994) empathises that it is difficult for the teacher of children with SEN, as there must be breadth and balance with the curriculum as teaching time can be reduced due to the nature of some children's SEN (p.9). Another aspect of teaching children with SEN is that they may remain on the earliest attainment levels throughout their whole schooling life; the introduction of P scales has helped teachers to plan suitable pupil activities by addressing the true levels of understanding of each child in their class (Sebba 1994: 9). Teachers of children with SEN face many issues when concerned with teaching history, presentation of content, resources and suitable activities are high on their agenda (Sebba 1994: 49). Wilson (1985) argues that a SEN history teacher's main problems are concerned with the unsuitability of textbook work and how his/her class will grasp chronological understanding; coupled with the overemphasis of literacy skills, it is understandable that few wish to teach history to children with SEN (Wilson 1985: 20, 24, 40 & 50).

Subject specific knowledge...is it needed?

The next section on current debates is concerned with the issue of subject specific knowledge and do or should teachers have it in order to successfully teach subjects such as History?

It has already been suggested within previous research that teacher training courses concentrate far more on classroom practice than they do on subject based knowledge (Cracknell and Corbishley 1986: 2; Bourdillion 1994:13; Guyver 2011: 22). On the other hand the teacher's subject knowledge, according to Husbands (2011), is generally only regarded highly when they are dealing with demotivated or less able learners, such as those with Special Needs (p.84). Mainstream classrooms are seeing a vast increase in Special Needs children. It could be suggested that a greater emphasis on subject knowledge should be introduced into the standard teacher training process (Dyer 1983: 12; Sebba 1994:9). Especially so, agrees Sebba (1994), for those children who need content to be presented in several different ways, an inexperienced teacher will be overwhelmed not just by the content but also be frustrated with the lack of guidance on how best to do it (p. vii, 9).

Even with 'extra' guidance, according to Guyver (2011), teachers need to be prepared to approach the suggested curriculum content with a flexibility of style and focus if any success is to be achieved in terms of truly engaging children, particularly those with special needs. The need for this is even more acute given the unpredictability of curriculum development, which is innately politically driven (p. 18).

Active Learning

As previously stated, history has been one of those subjects where the traditional teaching methods of “I speak, you listen, you learn” have been able to continue from the early nineteenth century up to present day (Curtis & Bardwell 1994: 169). However, this has led to teachers views of history learning being in the form of ‘facts to be stored and recited’. Children found this to be a mammoth task due to key elements such as vocabulary, literary skills and generally the subject content being ‘boring’ (Sebba 1994: vii; Harnett 2011: 25; Husbands 1996: 132; Husbands 2011: 84). A form of active learning is not just suited to those children with SEN, but also those who are apathetic with learning about the past (Wilson 1985: Henson 1996).

The Hadow Report (1931) recommended “that the [History] curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored” (cited in Harnett 2000: 25). However, Cooper (1992) suggests that this teaching style has never been wholly incorporated into history classrooms and is merely used to fill a gap at the end of a topic with ‘things to do’ and rarely involves true experiences of the past through site visits, museum visits or using objects within school (p. 5). This must occur if children are to develop any true historical understanding. A passive approach to learning does not foster an inclusive learning environment (Cooper 1992: 10; Anderson & Moore 1994: 196). On the other hand, Husbands (1996) argues that

the use of historical evidence in classrooms can complicate the learning process, confirmed also by educational psychologists such as Piaget (p. 15). However, within evolving history classrooms, one teaching mode is not going to suffice for the complex needs of today's pupils and so different learning modes such as: audio, visual and kinaesthetic must be incorporated into teaching plans, and a differentiation of task must also be included (Curtis & Baldwin 1994: 169-186; McAleavy 1994: 154; Husbands 1996: 16 & Cunnah 2000: 166).

Piaget's views of child development have subsequently been rejected by some educationalists, due to its rigid nature, with favour changing towards psychologists such as Bruner and Bloom and their concept of a new history where participants are 'doing history' (Keating & Sheldon 2011: 10 & Husbands 2011: 88). Bruner's concept of subject content adaptability is something that underpins this research, as simply denying a child an aspect of their education due to a perception that the subject is too complex for them to understand is unfairly limiting. Practitioners should be striving to provide the very best of education for all children (Bruner 1960: 30; UNESCO 1994 & Bruner 1996: xii).

To conclude this section, understanding both aspects of SEN and current History teaching enables this research to generate contextual information which directly relates to the subject being covered and the who the sample group was, now there needs to be

an understanding of the process of how the lessons are taught and what methods will be used.

Chapter 4:

Object Oriented Learning

Inquiry based learning can take many forms: from early childhood children explore the world around them using sight, hearing, taste, touch and by moving around.

Using objects to facilitate learning is one of many forms of inquiry based learning. When dealing with the vast subject of the past, the use of tangible evidence promotes its understanding. Object oriented learning is a somewhat evasive term; on face value it relates to using objects as a teaching tool, whether these be artefacts, plant specimens, toys etc.

Object based learning frequently takes place, though often away from the classroom. Museums are a more common environment in which to find this approach, and it is in relation to museums that the majority of literature can be found. Very few pieces of literature are based on cases or studies where objects have been used in the classroom, which is the focus of this research. Due to this, the initial section of the review will focus on the objects outside the classroom i.e. museum education and then will focus on object learning inside the classroom.

Learning outside the History Classroom

A strategy often used in museums is object-based learning. This can be incorporated into a variety of activities, but all have the

same basic theory in common: by exploring material culture (art, artefacts, specimens, documents, etc.), people can learn about the object and its relationship to other objects, people, eras and ideas (Falk & Dierking 2000: xi). This method of learning enables the participant to look directly at an object, be it a sculpture or painting; artefact or advertisement; primary document or ritual object, and using a myriad of questions, discover its role and importance in our world - past, present and future (Cain 2010: 198). Objects are used to initiate discussion, as well as make connections to the learner's own experiences. It is for these reasons that they are a valuable tool for learning whether inside or outside the classroom (Cain 2005: 2-7). In order to see the true value of museum education and how it provides resources for children to learn about the past, a brief history of museum education must take place.

Brief History of Museum Education

Museums are generally visited due to two fundamental reasons: that they are home to fascinating and mysterious artefacts, works of art and specimens; and also that they fulfil most people's quota of 'culture' for the year (Chatterjee 2010: 179). In more recent years the reasons as to why people visit museums and what they gain from their visit have begun to be more closely analysed, focusing on whether they are for academic purposes or for those of personal fulfilment (Gilbert 1995: 19). How people learn is something that psychologists have been trying to figure out since Socrates, who is

believed to have stated that “The unexamined life is not worth living for a human being” (Cited by Rowe 2001: 5). Museums began as houses of collectables and the rise of antiquarianism spread across the world and the ‘booty’ of expeditions was brought back and housed in museums such as The British Museum (London) and the Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford). These magnificent storage houses of the past were first only available to the upper classes – who it was believed would get the most from the objects’ intellectual value – a view which becomes apparent when considering the opening times of exhibitions, which would be during the working day when only the leisurely upper classes could attend (Chatterjee 2008: 11).

By the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, ideas started to change. Museums opened on weekends and also started to adapt their collections to suit the newly formalised educational programmes which would allow schools to visit and for it to count as valid school attendance (Hooper-Greenhill 1991: 1). According to Gilbert (1995) those working in museums saw great potential of object learning as it allowed the visitor to embrace all senses, which enabled them to engage with the past and explore skills of observation, investigation and enlightenment (p. 20).

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the concept of suitability to teach came increasingly under discussion, with a contention between the teachers who felt that curators knew more about the

exhibits and therefore possessed the required knowledge, and the curators who felt that teachers, with their training and qualifications, were in the more suitable position to disseminate the information; this surely gave way to the rise of educational attractions such as those found in the highly historical and cultural city of York: Jorvik Viking Centre; Murton Park; and even to some extent The Dungeons, who employ ‘actors’ to relive history and subsequently educate the public informally about the past (Hooper-Greenhill 1991: 1; Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 2-4).

Inclusion and Diversity in museums is a relatively new concept, as most traditional museums have been concerned with object conservation with a ‘hands off’ approach (Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 1). Spence and Gallace (2008) argue whether or not exhibitions and objects can be made accessible to people who cannot see, or who have poor motor skills (p.21), which is the next subject for consideration.

The concepts of access and inclusion are two very different things; a child may be able to access a resource with additional tools such as wheelchair access into a library or museum. Whereas inclusion is concerned with all people’s learning experiences and how these can be enhanced to achieve the best possible results. In the classroom this could be shown through providing extra support for communication by allowing the children to work with a Makaton trained teaching support assistant (Wilson 1985: 37 & Sebba 1994: 1).

Object Oriented Learning

The history of “touching the past” within museums is clearly delineated, in parallel with societal influences and hierarchies of specific periods: the eighteenth century saw only the elite regularly handling collections, with a move towards the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where the tactile nature of artefacts was overwhelmed by the rise of the visual commodities, artefacts themselves to be ‘looked at and not touched’ (Chatterjee 2008: 11-13). In more recent times the importance of handling collections has become more apparent, with the need to make exhibitions and collections accessible to all users in the wake of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Spence & Gallace 2008: 21).

Making objects accessible to visitors can sometimes be a curatorial challenge, as the procedure for releasing objects has to take into account handling requirements (use of gloves etc.), as well as temperature, humidity and general movement of objects. However, studies have suggested that there should be a shift in practice from simply having ‘handling’ collections which are only given to school groups and are made up of less desirable or replica items from the museums main collections; if guidelines are set and appropriate supervision is in place it is possible to use objects with the public (Chatterjee 2008: 18).

According to Chatterjee (2008), the true pedagogical value of object based learning has only recently been recognised by

museums as they begin to understand that the use of objects is beneficial for the educational process (p.180). This performative and participative mode of learning is the most suited to today's museum visitors and to those with Special Needs (Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 13). Gilbert (1995) argues that although visitors may spend a long time in conventional museums, looking at the exhibitions and reading the information, this does not necessarily show that they are learning from the exhibit. Quite the opposite, as it could be that the layout of the exhibit and text is badly set out and so confusion sets in, forcing people to read more to clarify their understanding (p. 19). Objects can be used to overcome this problem, both within an exhibition or a museum as a whole, invoking all the senses and allowing visitors to truly engage with and explore the past (Gilbert 1995: 20).

Teachers and curators are apprehensive about the true educational benefit of working with objects within museums as they need to consider what the status and assumptions will be about the objects, how the viewers may relate to the objects and how the status of the objects as evidence is interpreted (Husbands 1992: 1). Like Piaget's four stages of cognitive development, Husbands (1992) discusses Shemilt's model of understanding for adolescents which relates to working with objects. He believes that at stage one children cannot distinguish between evidence and information, while stage two shows that their thinking about the past is characterised by seeing evidence as 'privileged', stage three presents the capability of

seeing evidence as a basis for inference about the past and by the fourth stage children recognise that evidence is a reconstruction of past events (p.2). Stage two is most useful for this research as by using objects within the teaching of history, it allows children that most fundamental experience of discovering the past (Husbands 1992: 2).

If we allow children to experience the history through the tactile evidence left behind by past societies, it can become real rather than merely a series of dates of distant figures; it is no longer an accumulation of skills and facts but a process of becoming (Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 2). The semantic shift from 'education' to 'learning' represents a philosophical change in the ways that museums are viewed when it comes to their educational function (Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 4). Hooper-Greenhill (2007) furthers this with a caution that the context of learning in classrooms will not be and cannot be the same in a museum or gallery, as museums must represent themselves as an informal but also spectacular environment where true learning happens (p.4).

Learning inside the History Classroom

The focus of the next section comes from the premise that object oriented learning does not just have to occur in a museum, but with adequate training and resources available it can be used within the history classroom.

It is apparent that practitioners must consider other methods beyond the purely passive when it comes to teaching history particularly where genuine engagement is to be achieved. The seemingly overwhelming amount of written resources can become a distraction from other more adaptable teaching styles. Government and heritage organised initiatives such as English Heritage's *Heritage in Schools* (2012), are likely to provide greater resources and training for teachers to help them to apply new and diverse approaches in the place of more standard textbook teaching styles.

This section will consider how the history classroom is adapted for SEN children, before exploring how teachers use objects to aid their teaching and the children's understanding.

Adaptation for SEN

Wilson (1985) states that if teachers have an awareness of pupil interests it can aid their lesson planning in order to improve motivation, engagement and learning by linking these things to their curriculum (p.25). Bruner continues this point by investigating the difficulties that children face when learning subjects like History, stating that the problems lay not in the subject content but in the content delivery (cited in Wilson 1985: 40). History teachers, according to Wilson (1985), can no longer merely depend on their belief of the value of the subject they teach for the pupils in their class, suggesting that if the teacher enjoys the subject the pupils

will too and will subsequently learn more of the subject content. However it is much more the case, that if the children do not enjoy the lesson, they will find it harder to learn (p.50).

History as a subject is generally heavily laden with the use of literacy and communication skills, which for those children who have impairments in these areas can make the subject daunting (Sebba 1994: vii; Harris & Luff 2004: 43). The study of history is stunted, according to Sebba (1994), due to the limited skills of the teacher and lack of available resources to aid the subject's study (vii).

Special education researchers such as Wilson have attempted to disseminate suitable accessible ways of teaching history to children who find learning most difficult; adaptations that are to be made to teaching strategies can begin with the simple task of starting from the known to the unknown – in relation to history, working from the present day backwards to the given point in time (Cited in Sebba 1994: 1).

According to Wilson (1985) the teaching of history to low achievers must be justified through carefully planned aims and objectives which will subsequently provide the pupils with a sense of purpose and clarity of the subject's direction (p.50).

For an overall modification in teaching strategies for children with SEN to begin one must consider the factors surrounding curriculum planning: breadth and balance, assessment, subject specific

knowledge and resources (Sebba 1994: 23). A 'separate' curriculum for children with SEN is not necessarily required, with such children able to be taught the same subjects as those in mainstream schooling. They may, however, require more subject specific knowledge from the teacher in order to understand a topic. The assessment process of SEN children has seen the introduction of the P Scales which aids their assessment levels and enables teachers to quantify their understanding. In relation to resources, these should be varied and include elements for all learning styles that are in any given situation and classroom tasks should be adapted to meet these needs also.

Further elements which are paramount to the successful study of history for those with SEN are: subject specific language, the value of the narrative, and ensuring an inclusive classroom (Harris & Luff 2004: 43-58).

Understanding subject specific language is a challenge even for the most able student. The discipline of history is full of complex language and terminology. The logical way to address these complex terms is to begin from the known to the unknown, to begin by asking the children what they think a term means before progressing onto topics which relate to the main terminology, a process aiding their continual and deeper understanding (Harris & Luff 2004: 43). For this reason during the data collection of the main study a word bank was used in order to structure the terminology that would be used and to enable the understanding of

the pupils. The use of symbols or signs is also a useful tool when working with children with SEN (Harris & Luff 2004: 44).

Narratives are a common tool that people use to make sense of events in history. Within the classroom, activities such as the telling of stories and writing of stories can be used to aid the interpretation of sources, which also gives children an opportunity to determine the relative accuracy of information given in the story and any primary source (Harris & Luff 2004: 51-56).

The above information concerning the different elements that need to be considered when teaching history such as: language, the use of narratives etc. shows that there is a significant lack of literature concerning other teaching methods, such as object oriented learning. The reasoning behind this investigation of object oriented learning being effective when teaching children with SEN about history is due to the lack of literature bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Inclusivity is something that all schools and classrooms should be aiming to achieve. According to Harris and Luff (2004), the term *inclusive classrooms* is associated with engagement, the building up of contextual information and the construction of tasks (p.56). Engagement of pupils directly relates to the research at hand; if you give pupils “a strong enough stimulus they are capable of tackling even the most complex of topics with enthusiasm”, which also relates to the enjoyment aspect of the research and so infers that

engagement and enjoyment are intrinsically linked (Harris & Luff 2004: 57).

To uphold the engagement of pupils when teaching history to children with SEN, it depends on the type of activities that are given and how they are adapted to suit varying abilities (Harris & Luff 2004: 57-58). Teachers must then decide to use either differentiation by task or by outcome.

Differentiation by task involves the teacher preparing different tasks to suit the needs of the individual children; differentiation by outcome, on the other hand, involves the use of open-ended activities which enables pupils to respond in different ways (Cunnah 2000: 116). Successful differentiation will result in inclusive and engaging teaching through the use of primary source materials, the purpose of which, according to Dickinson and Lee (1978), is to stimulate and illustrate the past for children but only after initial background information into why the interpretation of sources is important to the study of the past (p.2).

Activity based learning is a preferred method of teaching children with SEN about the past. It fosters imagination, creativity, group work, cooperation, communication and in general motivates and develops those children who find general schooling difficult to comprehend (Wilson 1985:82). However, if the teacher does not have a history background (i.e. studied at A-Level and Degree level), they may find it difficult to break down complex topics for

children with SEN to understand. It is more detailed information that the children require, rather than a simplification of the topic being studied (Wilson 1985: 82). The next section will look into one form of activity based learning: the use of objects.

Object oriented learning

Sources of evidence for object oriented learning taking place in the classroom are currently lacking, which is one of the formative reasons for this study as it does need to be theoretically investigated in order to determine its true advantages. Specific literature on the use of objects in the classroom appears to be something of a given which is believed to not require theoretical analysis, allowing for individual interpretations and in some cases a seemingly strong lack of such practice in schools. Five main sources have been cited: Wilson (1985), Cooper (1992) & (1995), Sebba (1994) and Durbin et al (1990).

As a basis of introduction the Durbin et al (1990) book is written by English Heritage as an aid for teachers who may be concerned at how to use objects in their classroom, although most of the examples do not specifically relate to 'old' objects the same principles are used with artefact handling and activities associated with it. The final four pieces of reference are specifically concerned with teaching history to children with special needs or young children (justification for this is in the learning levels being lowered when dealing with children with some forms of SEN);

Harris and Luff (2004) cover this subject but do not particularly discuss the use of objects. This furthers the argument that there is a limited amount of literature supporting this research – this is however the rationale for the investigation taking place, which will in one case collate existing literature and information known and combine it with an up to date analysis of data collected to determine the effectiveness of this teaching tool.

According to Sebba (1994) teaching aids can take many forms, whether it is an object brought in from home; site or museum visit; outreach session; museum loan box service or even using the internet to research topics (p.2). The use of tangible sources, Sebba (1994) further states, enables children to experience the past themselves rather than to be the receiver of passive information (p.36). The use of objects creates proactive experiences, allowing an exchange and transfer of skills and knowledge, such as: observation, discussion and communication; as well as telling the pupil something about its origin, without excluding those children with reading difficulties who would otherwise be alienated from written evidence (Cooper 1992: 7; Sebba 1994: 36-7; Durbin et al 1990: 5). Children are now encouraged to apply new skills and concepts to objects rather than apathetically take part in lessons (Wilson 1985:105-6).

Most teachers will use objects as a separate entity to his/her usual classroom activities – for example: bring an object/toy to school day – then plan a lesson or a day around these objects rather than

incorporating the use of objects in all or most lessons, similar to a 'things to do' section at the end of a topic (Cooper 1992: 5). Equally, if you give a class a set of objects but do not inform them of why they are observing them or even what time period they are from etc they will not understand the integral value of the objects as evidence of the past (Durbin et al 1990: 7). Using Bruner's philosophy of moving from the known to the unknown, teachers can start with the physical features of the object and should eventually conclude with an understanding of what the object is and why it was important to the people of the past, or to us if the teacher is using a 'modern' object to begin the topic (cited in Cooper 1995: 1).

The procedure of using objects in classrooms usually takes the form of activities that relate to the objects in a history lesson. The children might be asked to take on the role of a 'History Detective' for example, whereby they are given an object and their job is to investigate it and work out what it is (Durbin et al 1990: 18). This of course would need to come after a series of introductory sessions concerning the time period they are looking at and possibly looking at specific objects or images that relate to it, with the aim of making the object less abstract to the viewer (Cooper 1995: 13; Durbin et al 1990: 7, 18). This form of activity can aid children who retain information extremely well but often cannot use the information to better understand the past (such as those with ASD), the use of objects helping them to visualise the information that

they have retained (Sebba 1994: 1). Objects rather than photographs or drawings can aid children with visual impairments and a slow pace when conducting the lessons will also aid those children who have poor observational skills and poor attention levels (Sebba 1994: 8; Durbin et al 1990: 17).

Durbin et al (1990) make the point that objects should not be hard to find around the school, community, museum loan services, archaeological field units, library services and even museum shops; a claim of inability to locate suitable artefacts should not excuse schools and teachers from using objects within their classroom (p. 32). The purpose of this research is to determine if the use of objects actually does help children enjoy, engage and learn about the past.

The functions of these chapters were to address the practice of using objects within the classroom to aid pupils understanding and to stress, despite overwhelming factors such as those discussed in the debates section of each literature review, that those issues should not prevent teachers from using alternative teaching aids due to their limited understanding and a lack of literature or resources supporting its implementation.

In light of the analysis of the literature relating to the research, it is clear that the study must begin with an understanding of the individual SEN of the children taking part in the research and this combined with an understanding of the fundamental principles of

history teaching, will help to focus the research and show the true potential of an object oriented approach, which is currently absent from current teaching practices.

Chapter 5: Methodology

The main research question for this project was *Does object oriented learning pedagogy, promote learning about the past for key stage two children with special educational needs?* The plan of this research was to collect data regarding the engagement, enjoyment and learning - the crucial concepts relating to the perceived ways in which children learn - of a class of key stage two special educational needs children in a history lesson whilst using an object oriented approach.

This chapter will be discussing the components of methods used in the pilot study, how this led on to the main study, and why any changes were adopted, concluding with the ways in which the data will be analysed.

Pilot Study

The initial pilot study focused on a lower ability key stage two class, in order to see the effect of an object oriented approach on those children who find passive learning most difficult and so would benefit from a more practical approach to subjects.

The purpose of the research was to introduce a different teaching strategy into a class of key stage two children with SEN. Most traditional schooling involves a passive approach to teaching, however with SEN children this is not the most suitable or appropriate method of teaching due to their multiple learning styles

and impairments which can hinder their understanding in ways not found in a mainstream setting.

In order to maintain fluency of the topics that were currently being taught, I used the current term topic of 'House and Home' to introduce the use of objects. This would help to prevent confusion as the pupils were already familiar with the topic and so it would not alter their perceptions of order and structure of the topics being covered. Structure is a highly important aspect of these children's lives, especially those on the Autistic Spectrum (ASD) who can be disorientated and unresponsive if their routine suddenly changes. Another reason for my being established at the school several months before the onset of the data collection was to create a suitable connection with the children and their environment so as to ensure a relaxed and normal atmosphere, thus resulting in valid and genuine responses.

Lesson one of the pilot study introduced the children to the Romans, a topic not previously covered due to the general belief that teaching much older history would be harder for the children to understand. An introductory aspect of the Romans topic was covered: who they were, where they came from, then moved on to more compound issues such as: why do we know things about them? The object oriented approach within history lessons is often complimented by a discussion about archaeology and what archaeologists do and how and what they learn about the past from the artefacts they discover. Children may see objects/artefacts in

museums, and the purpose of the third section of this primary lesson was to introduce the children to images and videos of museum collections. The first lesson was then concluded with an introduction to a variety of Roman artefacts.

Lesson two included a recap of the initial lesson. This was important to judge their level of recall and could aid the measurement of learning. In order to use a complex historical ideal in a low ability SEN classroom, practitioners must include aspects of play, as at this level they are working below the National Curriculum key stages and so the level of P “Performance” scales (see table one) would normally be used in a nursery or playschool environment, where early child development requires elements of play in order for the children to learn.

P Scale	Description
1 (i)	Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, for example, startling at sudden noises or movements. Any participation is fully prompted.
1 (ii)	Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, for example, catching the smell of old fabric or wooden artefacts. They may give intermittent reactions, for example, sometimes becoming quiet or tense when going into an ancient building.
2 (i)	Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, for example, looking to the source of unfamiliar sights and sounds in dramatisations of historical events. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, for example, tracking historical artefacts into or out of their field of awareness. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, for example, touching wood, stone or old brick structures during site visits.
2 (ii)	Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, for example, wanting to look at a particular photograph. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, for example, smiling at an item from their own family home. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, for example, patting an old toy. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, for example, when handling historical artefacts.

P Scale	Description
3 (i)	Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, for example, vocalising for more sound in a simulation of historical events. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, for example, looking at, and touching, old objects. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, for example, when exploring an antique mechanical toy. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, for example, recalling gestures used in a dramatisation of a historical story from session to session.
3 (ii)	Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, for example, prompting an adult to look through a family album with them. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, for example, becoming excited at a key moment in a video of a school trip or family holiday. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, for example, eye-pointing to an old toy from their own past. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, for example, moving around a historical site. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, gesturing towards the location for a new activity at the end of a session.
4	Pupils recognise themselves and other people in pictures of the recent past. They link the passage of time with a variety of indicators, for example, weekend activities, summer holidays or seasonal changes. They use single words, signs or symbols to confirm the function of everyday items from the past, for example, 'cup', 'bed', 'house'
5	Pupils know they took part in past events and they listen and respond to familiar stories about their own past. They begin to communicate about activities and events in the past, for example, saying or signing 'baby toys', in response to personal items from their own early childhood. With some prompting or support, they answer simple questions about historical artefacts and buildings, for example, identifying a bowl as being made out of wood
6	Pupils recognise and make comments about themselves and people they know in pictures of the more distant past. They recognise some obvious distinctions between the past and the present in their own lives and communicate about these, for example, noting their attendance at a different school in the past. They begin to pick historical artefacts out from collections of items, for example, identifying old plates, items of clothing or hand tools.
7	Pupils begin to recognise some distinctions between the past and present in other people's lives as well as their own and communicate about these in simple phrases and statements. They listen to and follow stories about people and events in the past as well as events in their own lives. They sort objects to given criteria, for example, old toys and new toys.
8	Pupils indicate if personal events and objects belong in the past or present. They begin to use some common words, signs or symbols to indicate the passage of time, for example, now/then, today/yesterday. They can recount episodes from their own past and some details from other historical events with prompts, for example, past school or local events. They answer simple questions about historical stories and artefacts.

Table 1: History P "Performance" Scales - Adapted from orderline.education.gov.uk

The class acted out a story about a Roman child, and replica and authentic artefacts were used to complement the story, enabling the children to familiarise themselves more with the objects. The final section of this lesson looked at 'old and new' objects; a selection of paper activities were used before artefacts of the same items were introduced.

Lesson three recapped about Romans and the kinds of objects that Romans used and how we find them. The main purpose of this lesson was for the children to look at how artefacts are decorated and for them to make their own pots and decorate them. This inclusion of creative work helps the children to express themselves and also recall information about things they have learnt, and try to replicate designs from objects they have looked at and touched.

The data collection for the pilot study consisted of classroom observation and then feedback sessions with the teaching staff completing the observation schedules. During lesson one the data showed that during the introductory section those children with higher attainment levels (P5-6) concentrated on the discussion and also took part in questions and answer sessions about the topic that was being covered, a level of interest/behaviour overshadowing those with lower levels who could not “get a word in edgeways”. When it came to explaining the role of the archaeologist in learning about history a video was shown of some children digging and finding objects. The use of video and audio automatically drew in the more profoundly disabled children of the group. To aid the discussion of what an archaeologist finds, a homemade stratigraphy board with detachable artefacts was used, before a discussion on what the children thought the objects were. During the conclusion of the session, ‘real’ artefacts were briefly considered to see if the children could comprehend what the objects were; those with multiple and profound disabilities often have problems with their

motor skills, therefore use of artefacts allowed them to practically engage rather than simply be spoken to. During a feedback session with the teaching staff, it was stated that the session had gone well overall, but it was suggested that when we did the next session that we move the children with the lowest abilities to the front and those with higher abilities to the back of the carpet, in order to give them a chance to take part in the session. It was also commented how one child (with profound disabilities), paid uncommonly close attention when the video was played.

During lesson two the data collected demonstrated that the information I took from the feedback session had worked, and those lower ability children (after being moved to the front of the classroom) had increased their enjoyment and engagement levels, whilst those children with a greater ability had maintained their higher levels. During the storytelling aspect of the lesson the roles were quite reversed, returning those lower level children to the standards of the previous lesson. The paper activity section seemed to make the concept too abstract for those children on the lower P scales, but they excelled with the tangible objects, despite apparently feeling the need to 'stick them back together' like a puzzle.

In the final lesson, the data showed that the levels of enjoyment and engagement for the whole class had improved greatly from the first lesson. The chance for the children to complete a more tactile

activity increased their enjoyment greatly, which subsequently made them more engaged in the topic and activity at hand.

The sheer challenges faced by these children in terms of their learning was the motivating factor which saw me change my research to a higher ability (in communication and academic ability) class for the main study. During this pilot, I was able to address two of my main concepts of the research – engagement and enjoyment – which were benefitted by an object oriented approach, however the inclusion of other aspects of curriculum such as literacy, numeracy, drama and creativity, hindered my ability to relate the research purely to an object oriented approach and I was unable to collect sufficient data to register any meaningful improvement of learning which is one of this research's main objectives.

Main Study

For the main study, there was a change in the sample class as the pilot study indicated that not all aspects of the research i.e. measuring engagement, enjoyment and learning could be established with the initial sample class. Adaptation of activities and lessons also had to take place, in order to take into consideration the change in age and ability ranges of the children now participating in the research data collection.

This research employed a mixed method approach as the subcategories being researched (enjoyment, engagement and

learning) were conducted through a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This holistic approach to data collection was based on the central concepts of all work and research completed with children with Special Educational Needs, as their perceptions of the world, ranging in many different ways, necessitates a comprehensive and inclusive analysis.

Mixed-method research is a means of adopting more than one type of data collection, which may be: a mixture of qualitative and quantitative or could be a mix of quantitative *or* qualitative (Brannen 2005). Founded late in the 20th Century, mixed-methods came from the need to combine both empirical and phenomenological approaches to research. Still in its infancy, in recent years its uptake has increased especially within most social science and health disciplines (Tashakkari & Teddie 1998:3; Giddings 2006: 196-7; Mertens 2010: 294). According to Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004:14), the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches can be regarded as superior research when compared to more traditional mono-methods. The success of this method will increase as more researchers/investigators study and help advance its concepts. Methodologists and researchers can help this growth by moving the debate beyond methodological competitiveness to a more collective approach to dealing with social and health disparities and issues (Giddings 2006:202).

For the main study, a large amount of the data collection was composed through classroom observation in order to collate

information regarding levels of engagement, while interviews were used to measure enjoyment and a form of assessment was used to quantify learning.

Observation

Observation is most commonly used within a school environment over any other type of data collection (Croll 1986: 1). It is a useful tool to record many aspects of classroom behaviour, whether for collecting data on teacher/pupil interaction, teachers appraisals, or a researcher simply needing to see how a subject is taught etc (Wragg 1999: 3). An ethnographic approach to research, where the researcher spends time before, during and after any data had been collected, allows the researcher to have increased validity as it is he/she documenting classroom behaviours, and it also prevents the teachers from manipulating the data set (Wragg 1999: 2).

	Group 1				Group 2			Group 3		
Session 1: Who were the Romans?	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
Listening to the teacher										
Contributing to the question/answer section										
Remaining focused										
Interacting with others										
Interested in the topic										
Are they engaged in the activity?										
Session 2: Roman house and home										
Listening to the teacher										
Contributing to the question/answer section										
Remaining focused										
Interacting with others										
Interested in the topic										
Are they engaged in the activity?										

Table 2: Observation Schedule

The researcher must immerse themselves and prevent any interference of the data. The benefit of already knowing the sample class enables the interpretation of information that is seen or heard. In relation to this project the focus of the observation was the children within the class and how they engaged during the history lesson conducted by the researcher. The teacher and teaching assistants were given observation schedules. This schedule measured the level of engagement during the lesson by using and adaptation of the Likert Scale, where 1 indicated little or no engagement and 5 constant engagement. Engagement was quantified as the following categories: listening to the teacher; contributing to the question/answer sections; remaining focused; looking around the room; looking bored (yawning, playing with something etc.); interacting with others; interest in the topic; participating in the activity; and moving away from the activity (see table two). The observers were given a detailed explanation of the schedule to increase validity and reliability.

Interviews

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
Q1. Have you enjoyed the history lessons?										
Q2. Have you enjoyed looking at objects from the past?										
Q3. Do you think using objects is a more enjoyable way of learning about the past?										

Table 3: Interview data collection

When conducting the interviews for the collection of enjoyment data, anonymity was sacrosanct due to the vulnerability of the children being assessed as they had identified SEN, and given that some children were in the Social Services system, because of this all data was coded and all names were omitted.

Children were asked questions at the end of the lesson to see what they have and have not enjoyed. In order to prevent bias, the interview was observed by a teacher or teaching assistant and was recorded by a questionnaire 'style' answer sheet.

Interviews are considered as a more 'human' form of collecting data, as the subjects being interviewed are no longer simply viewed as data which can be manipulated (Cohen et al 2010: 349). Interviews could be described as the most logical method of discovering how people comprehend the world around them (Kvale 1996: 1).

Kvale argues that there are two main theoretical ideals of interviews as a research model, firstly the seeking out of information (closed questions) using a quantifiable method, and secondly an ethnographic (qualitative) approach allowing the interviewees to freely converse with the interviewer (1996:3-4).

The interview is a flexible tool for the collection of data, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard (Cohen et al 2010: 349). There are many positives to using interviews for data collection purposes: it is cost efficient, it

enables a more subjective approach. The interviewer can choose the structure of the data collection: formal, less formal and completely informal depending on the type of data that needs to be obtained (Foddy 1993: 4-11; Cohen et al 2010: 351). However, interviews are not to be taken too lightly as there are many things to consider when designing an interview schedule: understanding of the question (for both the interviewer and interviewee), the interviewer must be sympathetic of the external cultural/social context within which the questions are being asked, a trial of the process needs to be undertaken to ensure that it is an effective data collection (Foddy 1993:4-11).

The interviews took place in another classroom with each child and a teaching assistant in order to comply with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) regulations and to ensure the highest level of validity and reliability of the data collected. It was agreed through discussions with the teaching staff of the school that recordings of any activities were prohibited. This was due to some of the children participating in the data collection being on the Social Services register, therefore demanding that any paperwork bearing their details (i.e. name, age, class number, SEN etc.) must not be allowed to leave the school's premises. Due to this all work submitted by the children would only carry their initials and no other information.

The questions that were asked had to remain clear and simple. One of the greatest challenges of interviewing children is their frequent

reluctance to answer questions or simply say yes or no, however one of the reasons for this sample being chosen was due to their openness to be questioned and their somewhat higher communication levels in comparison to those of the pilot sample.

Question 1: *Have you enjoyed the history lessons?* The purpose of this question was to establish the broad level of enjoyment; this could then be developed in further questions to be more specifically related to the research at hand. This continual advancement from simple to complex is something that is inherent in the research as a whole.

Question 2: *Have you enjoyed looking at objects from the past?* This question directly related to the context of the research, object oriented learning.

Question 3: *Do you think using objects is an enjoyable way of learning about the past?* This question combined both aspects of the data analysis, enquiring if the child enjoyed looking at objects, and whether or not it helped them learn about the past.

The interviews on a whole worked well and with the final question the children were able to answer in more detail, and most did. During the pilot study this would have been impossible, as the children had such low communication levels that it would have been difficult just to get them to answer the first two questions. This again shows why it was the right idea to change the sample group.

Assessments

The participants' level of learning was assessed through the correct answers to the activities being used. The activities were designed to suit the children's needs and so there was an even mix of images and text, the questions on the activities progressing from simple to complex to further understand their learning when completing the activity. A mark was given to each correct answer and this was recorded for analysis.

During the lessons, forms of assessment will be carried out through a series of activities which test the children's learning throughout the historical topics being covered. Learning is a much more complex concept to measure and quantify. There are as many different ways of assessing learning as there are definitions of what learning means and the many different forms it takes.

According to the Museums, Libraries and Archives council *learning* is defined as "a process of active engagement with experience, a way of allowing people to understand the world around them, and the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, ideas and feelings" (MLA 2008). It is this definition of learning which would be used as the benchmark by which the collected data was considered.

The activities that took place consisted of elements added to general primary schooling topics. This is needed for two reasons, the first being that in primary education each subject topic is made

up of many different factors which are to be included in all aspects of schooling life: literacy, numeracy, creative development, language (speaking and listening), and vocabulary. The second reason is that for children with complex SEN's the introduction of a new topic has to be slow, starting with vocabulary before moving on to discussion and finishing with an activity helping them to bring together the aspects of the topic they have learnt and adjudging if they can recall this information.

The first activity consisted of a matching exercise which used words and images. The task required the children to match the correct images to the words (an introduction to the topic included some of these words and images). The second activity had the children describe an object as 'object detectives', using authentic and replica objects they were asked a series of questions to see what they thought an object was and how a Roman may have used it. In order to gauge their understanding and learning, this activity was replicated at the end of the second lesson, by looking at an object and completing a sheet, which gave the child background information about an object and they had to surmise what the object might be. To complete the assessment section of the data collection a quiz was undertaken to assess their learning throughout the second lesson, within which they had been introduced to a Roman Soldier who taught them all about his daily life and what objects he would use.

Sampling

In relation to the selection of a sample, it was agreed (by the researcher) that due to some specific limitations that only one school and one class would be selected for the data collection.

These limitations were two-fold: the first related to the nature of the MA being part-time, the researcher's work/time commitments only allowed the research to be conducted on a one day a week timescale; secondly, the distance of the school from the researcher's home. This was due to the difficulty in acquiring a school closer by, as all of the special schools contacted in the York area were unable to place me due to the high allocation of neighbouring teacher training university courses. So a school further afield was required.

The reasoning behind the research being conducted in a special school was due to the need to create an environment within which the research could take place that offered a wide range of special educational needs. The activities and data collection would gather a wider range of data from that which could be collected from a mainstream school.

As already stated, the group of children participating have mainly the following primary stated SEN: Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties, Moderate Learning Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Knowing that this does not include all forms of known SEN, from table four it shows that according to the

Department of Education that the SEN of this sample group covers the largest amount of children currently statemented, as you can see from the table below:

	Pupils with statements of SEN							
	Boys				Girls		Total	
	No.	%			No.	%	No.	%
Specific Learning Difficulty	8,615	5.6			2,745	4.7	11,360	5.4
Moderate Learning Difficulty	23,990	15.6			12,655	21.7	36,645	17.3
Severe Learning Difficulty	16,495	10.7			9,545	16.4	26,045	12.3
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	5,125	3.3			3,975	6.8	9,100	4.3
Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties	26,590	17.3			3,630	6.2	30,220	14.2
Speech, Language and Communications Needs	20,685	13.4			7,485	12.9	28,175	13.3
Hearing Impairment	3,595	2.3			2,900	5.0	6,495	3.1
Visual Impairment	2,030	1.3			1,580	2.7	3,610	1.7
Multi- Sensory Impairment	300	0.2			215	0.4	510	0.2
Physical Disability	8,160	5.3			5,905	10.1	14,065	6.6
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	35,995	23.4			6,105	10.5	42,105	19.8
Other Difficulty/Disability	2,495	1.6			1,505	2.6	4,000	1.9
Total (8)	154,075	100			58,260	100	212,335	100

Table 4: Adapted from “DfE” (2011)

Table five displays that the curriculum group selected (Yrs 5-6) for the data collection, also have some of the highest levels of primary SEN needs shown from all of the curriculum groups.

	SpLD	MLD	SLD	PM LD	BESD	SLCN	HI	VI	MI	PD	ASD	Other	Total
Nur	200	540	325	275	915	4,880	190	115	15	525	680	405	9,065
Rec	620	1,950	240	110	3,915	13,675	375	335	35	1,020	1,330	1,040	24,650
1	1,390	5,060	205	80	6,240	15,540	570	415	40	1,255	1,350	1,390	33,535
2	2,825	9,045	255	65	8,000	13,240	655	465	40	1,290	1,390	1,650	38,930
3	4,545	11,880	315	45	8,485	10,755	750	440	45	1,220	1,465	1,750	41,705
4	5,855	13,320	315	50	8,855	8,575	730	445	50	1,095	1,595	1,740	42,625
5	7,325	14,935	375	55	9,425	7,265	670	410	50	960	1,660	1,775	44,910
6	8,070	15,310	390	35	9,590	5,785	690	375	40	945	1,640	1,765	44,630
Total	30,830	72,040	2,420	715	55,425	79,715	4,630	3,000	315	8,310	11,110	11,515	280,050

Table 5: Adapted from “DfE” (2011)

Within the class there were three groups of pupils. These groups have been pre-assigned by the teacher according to their abilities in relation to their National Curriculum levels and their willingness and suitability to work together. This latter point is due to the nature of the pupils' SEN, as some have high behavioural issues and can be volatile and extremely disruptive if placed with certain pupils. With this in mind, once the data had been collected from the two lessons, it was collated and analysed.

The class that took part in the research already have established working groups, and are mostly grouped by their similar ability, though in some cases groups are based on their suitability to work together. For this research, the children have been separated into three groups: High, Medium and Low ability. The term 'ability' here denotes the child's ability to complete tasks and understand the work being done as required for the key stage two standards.

Ethics

In relation to the ethical implications of the research with the sample taking part they are classed as vulnerable due to their stated SEN, and because of this certain precautions needed to be put in place. The researcher was required to submit a current Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check, as well as a letter being sent out to the parents/guardians of each child taking part to inform them of the research proposal and how and why I would be

collecting data and offer them the chance to decline their child's participation. All of these were returned with full acceptance.

Another consideration was that during the collection of interview data, a member of the teaching staff would also be present and all data collected would be coded (with initials for participants) in order to preserve the anonymity of the children taking part in the research.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure validity and reliability throughout the research, certain concepts and procedures need to be adhered to. The first being in the stage of design, relating to the planning of the project: adequate time scale, appropriate methodologies and what sample will be used (Cohen et al 2007: 144). The gathering and analysis of data is also subject to an investigation of their validity and reliability. This research adopted a triangulation method of data collection (observation, interviews and assessments), using three methods to find the answer to an over-arching concern. However in relation to the validity and reliability of the data collected using these methods, each have their own individual concerns.

When using observational data the researcher has to consider both the internal and external issues of validity and reliability. The external environment in which the data collection took place should be considered: issues such as interference from 'outside' the classroom from teachers, or any 'coaching' from the researcher.

Internal considerations focus on the issues of researcher manipulation and giving appropriate guidance for the teaching staff when completing the observation schedules.

Interview data is much more self-explanatory in relation to validity and reliability. The researcher must maintain a professional approach asking the same questions to each participant and ensuring that all questions asked relate to the research at hand.

In relation to assessment data, each participant completed the same tasks, given the same timescale to complete and all were marked in a consistent way, at either a yes/no, right/wrong answer.

Data Analysis

As the information detailed above has suggested with the three separate, yet connected, forms of data collection (observation, interview and assessment), three different forms of data analysis must be conducted. The data analysis consists of three chapters detailing what analysis has been done in relation to the three integral concepts of engagement, enjoyment and learning.

The observational data collected from the completed schedules of *engagement* were analysed by using the already established classroom working groups (group one, two and three). Calculations consisted of the mean of interval responses and the increase/decrease of percentages calculated from session one and two and how these change dependent on the activity that has been completed. The observation schedule was adapted from the pilot

study to include a greater focused approach to the purpose of the data collection (see table two).

The following data analysis is that of the data collected via interviews in order to record the participants' *enjoyment* in the subjects and lessons conducted. The participants were asked three short, closed quantitative questions where the respondent answered "yes or no". The qualitative aspect came with the final question which enabled the respondent to elaborate with extra comments. The analysis was simply recording the number of yes and no answers with any additional comments.

The final dataset to analyse was *learning*. This component was measured through assessments of the work of the participants. This data has been analysed by the activity rather than in the working groups. The percentage of scores attained will be displayed alongside the percentage difference of each participant's scores to that of the overall total that could be achieved, which will help to determine the effectiveness of the separate activities.

The data analysis chapters will then be concluded with an overall analysis of the data (discussion) to quantify the relationship between the three key components of the research and that of the literature research completed.

Data Analysis

The main study took place in a special school. The school caters for children with statemented special educational needs in the North Yorkshire area. It houses a Primary and Secondary department accommodating children aged three to sixteen with the following range of SEN: Moderate, Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties; Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties; Physical and Sensory Impairments; Dyspraxia; Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; and Autistic Spectrum Conditions inc. Asperger's.

Within the Primary department there are five classes (Primary1-5), which cover Early Years to Year 6, organised not solely by the age of the children (as in most mainstream schools) but also by their schooling ability in correspondence with National Curriculum standards which for some will relate to P scales rather than key stages (see table one).

Each of the primary class gradients are achieving greater amounts of the Key Stage National Curriculum requirements – P5 being the most advanced. As previously stated the school caters for multiple ranges of SEN, however, for the basis of this research children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD); Moderate, Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties and those on the Autistic Spectrum (ASD) will be considered alongside each child's own degrees of severity within their statemented SEN.

Class Name	Key Stage/Year Group	Main Types of SEN
Early Years (P1)	EYFS/Key Stage 1	Moderate, Severe and Complex Learning difficulties; Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties; Physical and Sensory; and ASD
P2	Key Stage 2 – Year 2	Down’s Syndrome; Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties; Physical and Sensory and ASD.
P3	Key Stage 2 – Year 3	Moderate, Severe and Complex Learning difficulties; Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties; Physical and Sensory; ASD and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
P4	Key Stage 2 – Year 4	Moderate, Severe and Complex Learning difficulties; Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties; Physical and Sensory; ASD and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
P5	Key Stage 2 – Year 5-6	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; Moderate, Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties and ASD.

Table 6: Information on Classes at time of Data Collection

As stated within the literature review section of this thesis, there are many types of SEN and subsequently the activities that have been produced for this research are mainly suitable for the types of SEN being studied; however, they can be adapted further to suit other learning abilities, difficulties or impairments.

The findings chapters will be separated according to the research questions being answered. The first chapter will consider: *do they engage with the subject of the past when using an object oriented approach?*, looking at the observation based data collected for each of the hierarchical groups within the class. The next chapter will focus on: *do they enjoy the subject of the past when using an object oriented approach?* The interview data will be the focus of this chapter. Finally, *do they learn about the past when using an object oriented approach?*, using the data collected from activities completed. Each of these chapters will include an introductory section charting which data was collected and will conclude with

an analysis of the data attained and what this can tell us about the value of the research being conducted.

Chapter 6: Engagement

A review of literature connected with data collection concluded that the most suitable form for this research, (an evaluation of the level of engagement of the pupils), was classroom observation (Croll 1986: 1). This enabled the researcher to conduct the lessons and have a teacher complete the observation schedules. The reason that I personally conducted the session was due to my already established specialism in using objects to help children learn about the past, whereas the teacher did not have a suitable subject background and was unsure of how to conduct the lesson using objects.

The observation schedules for lesson 1 (see table 7), allowed the teacher to monitor the levels of engagement of each child within their groups. According to a series of prompts, he was recording the amount to which the children were displaying levels of listening, focus, interaction, interest, and general engagement, using an interval response scale of 0-5.

Group one, considered the highest ability group according to National Curriculum attainment targets, had a variety of statemented SEN (see table two). Their behavioural issues mean that they can often under-achieve in subjects that require constant ‘concentration’ such as Maths and English, but excel in more physical subjects such as Science and P.E. They are generally more kinaesthetic learners, requiring active learning teaching strategies.

	Group 1				Group 2			Group 3		
Session 1: Who were the Romans?	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
Listening to the teacher	5	5	5	4	3	3	0	5	5	5
Contributing to the question/answer section	5	5	3	2	3	2	0	5	3	3
Remaining focused	4	4	4	4	3	3	0	4	5	4
Interacting with others	5	5	4	2	3	2	0	5	5	3
Interested in the topic	5	5	4	3	2	2	0	5	4	3
Are they engaged in the activity?	4	4	4	3	3	3	0	5	5	3
Session 2: Roman house and home										
Listening to the teacher	5	5	5	3	3	3	0	5	5	5
Contributing to the question/answer section	5	5	0	3	2	3	0	5	5	5
Remaining focused	5	5	5	4	2	3	0	5	5	3
Interacting with others	5	4	3	3	3	2	0	5	5	3
Interested in the topic	5	3	4	4	3	3	0	5	5	3
Are they engaged in the activity?	5	5	5	4	3	3	0	5	5	5

Table 7: Completed Observation schedule for Lesson 1

Scale	Comments
0	Not present - Not attended session or not there to be recorded due to poor behaviour and being dismissed from the classroom.
1	Not at all - Not listening to the session, looking bored, not paying attention etc.
2	A little - Paying attention to only one or two aspects of the lesson and not completing any work
3	Intermittently - Doing some work and then stopping and then doing some more
4	Mostly - Concentrating on most of the work and doing the activities but not entirely completing them
5	Constantly - Listening to the introductory session and remaining focused and completing activities.

Table 8: Response scales and descriptions

Analysis of the observational data collected from sessions one and two show that most scored highly on the interval scale in both sessions and those others made improvements of their scores in the final observed session (see table ten).

Case Number	Statemented SEN	Additional Information
1	BESD	Categorised as being disruptive and require a method of continual behaviour management (tools such as timers and traffic light cards can aid this management). A teacher must organise engaging activities which combine physical and mental exercises in order to achieve learning goals.
2	Mildly on the Autistic Spectrum	Low level of communication and social skills which can lead to low levels of attainment. They also can have selective interests in topics being studied, others can seem simplistic, however if you find something they are interested in they may thrive.
3	Multiple Learning difficulties (Mild ASD & BESD).	This child has a complex combination of Learning and Behavioural problems which can lead to frustration if a subject seems too simplistic or the teacher has a lack of subject specific knowledge. Activities need to be dually engaging for their mind and body.
4	BESD	Same as C1

Table 9: Group One: SEN Statements

Engagement	Group 1 - Session 1					Group 1 - Session 2				
	C1	C2	C3	C4	Mean	C1	C2	C3	C4	Mean
Listening to the teacher	5	5	5	4	4.75	5	5	5	3	4.5
Contributing to the question/answer section	5	5	3	2	3.75	5	5	0	3	3.25
Remaining focused	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4.75
Interacting with others	5	5	4	2	4	5	4	3	3	3.75
Interested in the topic	5	5	4	3	4.25	5	3	4	4	4
Are they engaged in the activity?	4	4	4	3	3.75	5	5	5	4	4.75
Mean score for each pupil	4.66	4.66	4	2.83		5	4.5	3.66	3.5	

Table 10: Group 1: Completed Observation Schedule including Mean calculations.

Table ten indicates that, in relation to the variables data, that the lowest scores were related to interaction and the child's perceived interest in the topic. The highest scores concerned listening, focus and their overall engagement.

The observational data from group one has shown that despite their individual and complex needs, an object oriented approach to teaching and subsequent learning has had a largely positive effect.

Overall analysis of their data will be discussed later in the discussion chapters.

Group two consisted of children achieving the middle level attainment targets. During this session of observation, data was only collected from C5 and C6, due to the absence of C7 during the first lesson; however, data was collected from the second lesson.

Case Number	Statemented SEN	Additional Information
5	High BESD & Multiple Learning Difficulties.	This child has multiple learning difficulties such as Dyslexia and ADHD. Their short attention span and lower academic ability can lead to them being extremely disruptive. This is why some aspects of the data collection for this child, was disrupted due to their behaviour.
6	ASD	This child enjoyed learning about history and had very detailed knowledge about certain aspects of the topics being covered, however as we had to go at a slightly slower pace during some aspects of the lesson to allow the other pupils to learn, they quickly became frustrated, and aggressive.
7	ASD	This child have very low communication abilities and became disruptive by other pupils especially those with BESD.

Table 11: Group Two: SEN Statements

Table twelve (below) shows that these children attained average scores, due to their SEN and short attention spans. C5 was especially volatile during the lessons and was asked to leave the classroom and was easily provoked by other children within the class. The group tended not to engage in the activities which required them to apprehend the subject being studied, though their low scoring could also be due in part to the more dominant characters in the class, such as those in Groups one and three, which may have prevented them from being able to participate in the class. This type of behaviour was seen in the pilot study, where those more subdued pupils were marginalised and so their engagement was hard to quantify.

Engagement	Group 2 - Session 1				Group 2 - Session 2			
	C5	C6	C7	Mean	C5	C6	C7	Mean
Listening to the teacher	3	3	0	2	3	3	0	2
Contributing to the question/answer section	3	2	0	1.66	2	3	0	1.66
Remaining focused	3	3	0	2	2	3	0	1.66
Interacting with others	3	2	0	1.66	3	2	0	1.66
Interested in the topic	2	2	0	1.33	3	3	0	2
Are they engaged in the activity?	3	3	0	2	3	3	0	2
Mean score of each pupil	2.83	2.5	0		2.66	2.83	0	

Table 12: Group 2: Observation Schedule including Mean calculations.

This group requires lessons which are highly engaging, while also providing activities with elements of continual development from the simple to the complex, possibly also requiring extra classroom support. In relation to this research, these children were asked to complete the same activities as classmates in the other groups, but adequate time was given to enable them to complete these at their own speed. In order to prevent disruption by other groups, this group was moved away from group one's pupils who can disturb and prevent group two's children from participating in the lessons. The final group consisted of children who were considered to be achieving low levels of subject attainment, also those with the highest levels of SEN (see table thirteen).

Case Number	Statemented SEN	Additional Information
8	BESD	Lack of concentration and they also have difficulty in completing activities.
9	High ASD and High BESD	Highly intelligent and able to retain large amounts of detailed information about very specific topics. Despite this their behavioural issues can create volatile environments and so will require highly engaging activities to maintain their attention.
10	High ASD and High BESD	Same as C9

Table 13: Group Three: SEN Statements

An interesting observation from the data is that although they are considered to be the lowest on the attainment levels, it actually scored highly within the engagement criteria when using a different approach to usual teaching strategies.

Engagement	Group 3 - Session 1				Group 3 - Session 2			
	C8	C9	C10	Mean	C8	C9	C10	Mean
Listening to the teacher	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Contributing to the question/answer section	5	3	3	3.66	5	5	5	5
Remaining focused	4	5	4	4.33	5	5	3	4.33
Interacting with others	5	5	3	4.33	5	5	3	4.33
Interested in the topic	5	4	3	4	5	5	3	4.33
Are they engaged in the activity?	5	5	3	4.33	5	5	5	5
Mean score of each pupil	4.83	4.5	3.5		5	5	4	

Table 14: Group 3: Completed observation schedule with Mean calculations

Table fourteen (above) shows a clear positive impact of using objects during the lesson. It is group three that shows the real potential of this research, as they score low levels on assessments and due to their SEN they are the some of the most difficult children to teach because of their perceived inability to perform the most simplest of tasks. However, introducing a more tangible approach to teaching can enable these children to understand complex and in some cases abstract concepts.

Chapter 7: Enjoyment

To complement the other areas of data analysis and in order to assess the level of enjoyment, the chosen form of data collection was interviews. As already discussed within the methodology chapter, the children were asked a series of questions, though their information was not audio recorded in order to maintain anonymity and was conducted with a member of the teaching staff present. The data was analysed as a whole with any over-arching relationships between other data collected being discussed in the next chapter.

	Question 1. Have you enjoyed the history lessons?	Question 2. Have you enjoyed looking at objects from the past?	Question 3. Do you think using objects is a more enjoyable way of learning about the past?	Comments	% of Yes	% of No
C 1	Yes	Yes	Yes		100	
C 2	Yes	Yes	Yes		100	
C 3	No	No	No	History is boring		100
C 4	No	Yes	Yes	History is hard but this made it easier	67	33
C 5	Yes	Yes	Yes		100	
C 6	Yes	Yes	Yes		100	
C 7	Yes	Yes	No	History is hard but I prefer reading	67	33
C 8	Yes	Yes	Yes		100	
C 9	Yes	Yes	Yes		100	
C 10	Yes	Yes	Yes		100	

Table 15: Interview responses and percentages

Have you enjoyed the history lesson? was used as the initial question in order to set a concise focus to this element of the data collection. On the whole the question received a highly positive response. C3 (multiple learning difficulties) and C4 (mild on the autistic spectrum) replied that they did not enjoy the lessons. C3 in particular answered negatively to all questions asked and commented that “history is boring”; when the overall data collection was discussed with the class teacher, they said that C3 on numerous occasions has reported negatively when asked questions, a possible result of their SEN.

Case Number	Question 1 - Have you enjoyed the history lessons?
C1	Yes
C2	Yes
C3	No
C4	No
C5	Yes
C6	Yes
C7	Yes
C8	Yes
C9	Yes
C10	Yes
% Yes	80
% No	20

Table 16: Question one: Calculated percentages of responses

Case Number	Question 2 - Have you enjoyed looking at objects from the past?
C1	Yes
C2	Yes
C3	No
C4	Yes
C5	Yes
C6	Yes
C7	Yes
C8	Yes
C9	Yes
C10	Yes
% Yes	90
% No	10

Table 17: Question two: Calculated percentages of responses

Have you enjoyed looking at objects from the past? This question received the highest positive response with ninety percent agreeing that *yes it was enjoyable*. This shows that the introduction of objects had a positive impact on their enjoyment levels in the

history lessons. Table sixteen (above) shows that again, C3 replied negatively to the question asked.

The final question: *do you think using objects is a more enjoyable way of learning about the past?* combines two of the research topics and so was intrinsically linked to the research question. C4 found all elements of the lessons enjoyable but stated that “History is hard but this made it easier”.

Case Number	Question 3 - Do you think using objects is a more enjoyable way of learning about the past?
C1	Yes
C2	Yes
C3	No
C4	Yes
C5	Yes
C6	Yes
C7	No
C8	Yes
C9	Yes
C10	Yes
% Yes	80
% No	20

Table 18: Question three: calculated percentages of responses

C7 (see table fifteen) stated that “history is hard but I prefer reading books”, which shows that although object oriented learning appears to make learning history more accessible not all pupils enjoy a practical approach. In relation to the groups allocated by the teacher it is group three that scores complete marks by answering ‘yes’ to all questions asked.

	Yes %	No %
Group 1	67	33
Group 2	89	11
Group 3	100	

Table 19: Total percentage of groups

In the next chapter the data from the separate data forms will be brought together to analyse the true value of engagement, enjoyment and learning when using an object oriented approach.

Chapter 8: Learning

For the assessment of learning, a series of activities were completed and were scored according to the number of accurate answers. As with the observation scores those who have highest and lowest attainment targets were the highest achievers. For the purposes of this chapter all data collected from each activity will be collated and analysed as a whole.

Each of the activities had an element of progression from simple to complex. Often when working with children, teachers cannot start a topic with a composite activity such as giving the children an object and expecting them to quantify it (i.e. age, material, use). This is especially so when working with children with SEN, a point which was illustrated by the pilot study in that without any background information children can only perceive the objects in a one dimensional sense: dirty equals old and numerous broken pieces must fit back together. In order for children, and people in general, to understand objects as concrete tools for understanding the past, they need to know why they are looking at these items and what can be inferred from investigating them. It is the role of the practitioner, whether teacher (inside the classroom) or museum educator (outside the classroom) to provide this background information and to instil a universal understanding of the use of objects as valuable sources of information.

There were four activities in total, two being completed during the first lesson and the final two completed alongside the interviews during the second lesson.

	Case Number	A1 (scores out of 8)	A2 (scores out of 2)	A3 (scores out of 7)	A4 (scores out of 6)
Group 1	1	8	2	6	6
	2	8	2	7	1
	3	8	1	7	6
	4	8	1	7	1
Group 2	5	8	0	0	5
	6	6	0	4	6
	7	0	0	7	6
Group 3	8	8	2	6	6
	9	8	2	7	0
	10	8	1	3	1

Table 20: Scores from activities one to four

The first activity used the key terms list that had been produced for the background/introductory session, to enable the pupils to match images to a select number of those key terms. Activity one showed that the majority of the pupils could match images to words, a simplistic task, the purpose of which was to gauge how well informed the children were after the introductory session, which attempted to combine both visual and audio information into one activity. It was also an attempt to see how familiar they were with the images and words as these would be used during all sessions and lessons.

The second activity involved looking at a series of objects (which were boxed due to their rarity or delicate nature) on the table, before the children had to select two objects and complete a 'history detective' sheet for them. The activity asked them a series

of descriptive questions: “what colour is it”, “what do you think it could be”, and “how do you think the Romans may have used it”. The progression of this activity from the previous task in terms of its level of difficulty can be clearly seen from the gathered data, as few children gained full marks. This shows that as the complexity of the work intensifies the data begins to reveal those who have acute difficulties, and how their SEN directly affects their learning levels. Literature has shown that this is the most common issue when teachers are planning lessons suitable for all learning levels of the specific children in their classes. This is most prominently the case with the scores of groups one and two.

When the objects were first introduced to each of the groups and the activity is set out as with the observational data group two scores low or not at all; therefore, despite the introductory session and their excitement at being able to touch objects, the children still have difficulty in completing the activity, possibly in part due to a lack of extra support (i.e. Teaching Assistant). The reason for this is that the researcher asked for minimal interference from the teaching staff as they needed to complete the observation schedules. It is possible that, if this group continually scores below average on any activity, it could be because they have become complacent and require too much support from teaching staff, no longer motivating themselves to complete the work. This point is again mirrored in the literature review which was concerned with debates arising in relation to SEN, in that it has been questioned

whether or not some children have SEN at all, or if they are the result of “lazy teaching”. Should this be the case, a larger amount of engagement based activities would have to be used in order to maintain their concentration, leading to higher attainment levels. However, the group’s apparent difficulty could relate purely to their SEN. Should this be the case, a re-evaluation of their attainment targets and even group re-allocation should be considered by the teacher. It is clear from the data collected that those children who are considered to be in the lowest attainment group scored the highest in these more practical activities.

Activity three was conducted a week later, and after an introductory session involving an element of ‘living history’ the children were again able to examine and observe objects, though this time images of the objects were on an activity sheet, which had them find their object (on the table) and record what they thought that object was. The purpose of this was to remove some elements of the structure of the session, which from introductory reading about the nature of some SENs had suggested that structure is a paramount component of teaching especially those with ASD, so by removing some elements of structure the researcher was able to see if any external factors had affected the data collected.

It is this activity which shows the most variance in scores attained. Group one had the most correct answers, with C2, 3, and 4 acquiring full marks and C1 with only one incorrect answer. The intermediate group had an interesting set of data, especially from

C7, who was absent from all other elements of data collection and yet due to an interest in history scored full marks. This clearly illuminates the need to teach history, as the inclination is apparent in some children, so to remove it (as some literature has suggested, due to it being suggested to be too complex for children to learn) would prove a disadvantage to many children, especially those with SENs such as ASD who have a tendency to be selective in relation to learning topics.

C5 was sent out of the class due to misbehaviour after being taunted by the children in group one. Group three generally scores highly, but C10 having high levels of behavioural problems and being high on the Autistic spectrum, prevented them from completing this task to a high ability. However, interestingly they fully took part in discussions about the topic, despite finding it hard to complete written activities, another aspect of their respective conditions.

For the purposes of the final activity, the selection of objects was decreased in order to have control over the amount of work that was completed to avoid any differences in the amount of data collected.

Activity four consisted of the pupils being given images of objects and descriptions before having to locate their objects and complete the activity. The data collected showed that only half of the pupils achieved full marks and those who only gained one correct answer

did so due to their loss of interest in the activities and their subsequent deterioration of behaviour levels. This activity shows that although elements of structure suit the learning styles of the sample group, a greater emphasis on assessment or written work does not.

Table twenty-one shows all the assessment scores (in percentage form) and also includes a final column for the percentage difference the pupils were from gaining full marks on all activities. This aids the researcher to confirm which activities worked well and which ones did not and can also pinpoint which children appear to have ‘academically’ gained the most from the sessions (mostly C1 and C8).

Case Number	A1	A2	A3	A4	Total	% missing
1	100	100	85.71	100	385.71	3.57
2	100	100	100	16.66	316.66	20.83
3	100	50	100	100	350	12.5
4	100	50	100	16.66	266.66	33.3
5	100	0	0	83.33	183.33	54.16
6	85.71	0	57.14	100	242.85	39.28
7	0	0	100	100	200	50
8	100	100	85.71	100	385.71	3.57
9	100	100	100	0	300	25
10	100	50	42.85	16.66	209.51	47.62

Table 21: Percentages of scores attained

From the assessments as a whole, it is clear that the desired outcomes of the exercises were fulfilled and from the object oriented teaching style that the children did in fact learn about the past. Their enthusiasm to touch artefacts and their anticipation for

the next lesson proved that they were in fact engaging, enjoying and learning about the past.

	Case Number	A1	A2	A3	A4	Activity with the worse marks
Group 1	1	8	2	6	6	3
	2	8	2	7	1	4
	3	8	1	7	6	2
	4	8	1	7	1	4
Group 2	5	8	0	0	5	2 & 3
	6	6	0	4	6	2
	7	0	0	7	6	
Group 3	8	8	2	6	6	3
	9	8	2	7	0	4
	10	8	1	3	1	4

Table 22: Activities with low scores

Elements that could have been improved relate to the final two assessment activities, these relied too heavily on the participants completing the paper activity rather than completing a more hands-on activity, which did appear to suit their learning capabilities more. The factors which may have been the cause of a lack of completion of the final activities are: the complicated nature of the activity; the time of day in which the activity took place, as the children may have been tired and not working at their optimum levels; lack of assistance given by the teaching staff or caused by other pupils in the class. The data shows that it is more likely to have been due to the complexity of the activity as the easier activities required minimal effort from the pupils (see table twenty-two).

The next chapter will look at all data collected and analysed and draw conclusions from it and how it related to the literature review

undertaken and the overall nature and purpose of the research that has been conducted.

Chapter 9: Discussion

From an analysis of literature the collection and analysis of data, object oriented approaches do promote learning about the past for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), perhaps as the objects gave these children tangible evidence of a seemingly intangible concept. Determining how beneficial this teaching strategy was became the rationale of this study. In order to assess its benefit the children's engagement, enjoyment and learning were analysed as I believe these are all important components of a successful and meaningful school experience.

It is important to now look at how these key elements (engagement, enjoyment and learning) connect to the literature analysis categories of: *special educational needs, history teaching and object oriented learning* and how they relate to the analysis of the data collected.

Special Educational Needs

From the literature surrounding SEN, it is clear that in order to understand how children with SEN learn you must first understand their *statement of SEN* this can then help to determine how subjects and the curriculum can be covered. The usefulness of these *categories* is shown through the literature and the data. From planning and the execution of the lessons it shows that having a primary understanding of the individual children's learning styles enabled the researcher to prepare suitable activities in order to

increase the sample's engagement, enjoyment and learning about the past. The literature research suggested that children with SEN do benefit from active learning with tactile resources such as the artefacts/objects which were used within this research. It is appropriate now to discuss what specific alterations were made for the children within the sample and their specific SEN categories (BESD, MLD and ASD), and how making these considerations have benefitted their learning and understanding of the past.

Behavioural Learning Needs (BESD)

The data showed that during the observation sessions most of those children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) increased their engagement levels from session one to session two (the latter session being where objects were introduced) and this positive response to the tactile approach continued through to the activities and the interviews. The child with highest level of BESD (C5) was also considered to have other multiple learning needs, which due to the complexity of their SEN it is believed that they showed a decrease in engagement from the first to the second sessions and had the lowest percentage of learning as assessed through the activities completed. C5 was easily distracted by other pupils in the class and became volatile at points and was asked to leave the session. If C5 could have been grouped not with C6 and C7, but in the group with children with ASD (group three mostly) a less distracted group, they may have been able to concentrate more in order to gain much higher marks

in the observation and activities sections. C5 did however enjoy the lessons and so overall these activities had a positive impact on all those with BESD, but a reallocation of groups within the usual classroom lessons may be suggested.

The issue touched on here is a limitation to the research. If the researcher had been able to separate the class into her perceived attainment groups (which were calculated from the findings of the initial lesson), this would have enabled her to truly look at those with high, medium and low levels of learning, whereas the researcher's understanding of the teacher's choice of groups is down to simply which children work better together, which are less volatile etc. rather than what level they are working at within that lesson. The researcher also understands that a teacher would generally prefer to have the pupils working in the same working groups for every lesson that they teach, rather than having them move around. However this may not enable the pupils to gain their full potential from certain subjects.

Multiple Learning Needs (MLD)

The child labelled as having solely Multiple Learning Difficulties (MLD) is C3. This child, despite achieving high marks within the observation (although showing a slight decrease from session one to two) and activities, replied negatively to all the questions during the interviews. Peer pressure in this group is very much apparent, especially from the dominant member of the class (C1) and their behaviour has such an effect on C3 and others and can cause them

to circumvent and simply not want to participate. They don't seem to mind fun and new activities but as soon as there is an element of record or assessment being done they attempt to avoid the situation.

As those with MLD have various learning difficulties, they can be a difficult group to work with as the practitioner would need to take into consideration many elements when thinking about how to teach any subject, but it is still believed by the researcher that if these children had been able to work with those children of similar learning abilities such as C9 and C10 who both have ASD and also elements of BESD, it would remove the disruption from other members of the initial group one. These three pupils (C3, C5, C9, and C10) scored similar scores on the observation and the assessments.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The children on the Autistic Spectrum, on a whole, showed an increase in engagement and enjoyment; however it is with the activities where the real mix of scores presents itself. C7 was not present from the whole of lesson one, however they completed both activities in the second lesson and gained full marks. On a whole, C7 enjoyed the lessons but said that they did prefer reading over using objects, however if a long term study could have been conducted this may have changed their perspectives. The literature suggested that ASD children can be extremely intense when it comes to a particular subject of interest, so much so that they can refuse to complete any form of work. This did not occur in the

lessons conducted by myself. The observation skills used during the object handling sessions helped to channel this obsessive nature when coupled with an activity where they were required to analyse and interpret an object this behaviour was adapted into a more productive use. This is further shown when looking at the data collected from C9 and C10.

C9 and C10 are at the most severe end of the ASD spectrum and are coupled with BESD. They have extreme difficulty in concentration, communication and can often display volatile behaviour, especially when asked to do something they are not interested in. It is these two children that showed the most positive overall data, high scores on the observation schedules and showed an improvement of engagement from one session to the other. In their usual lessons they require constant help and guidance from teaching staff when it comes to reading and completing activities, so this shows that using objects can benefit these children's focus and understanding of the past.

The overall reason for singling out the debates within the special educational needs literature review is to show that most teachers of SEN children will likely say that they are unsure how to approach the subject of history as it is concerned with past societies and they already have the challenge of getting the children to understand the present. The research also covers the dichotomy of Special vs. Mainstream which is in relation to the most suitable place for learning to take place for children with SEN. The data collected

showed that although the research was conducted within a special school, that the activities used could be adapted for more inclusive ‘mainstream’ classroom practices, as in reality object oriented programmes could benefit most if not all children in their attempts to understand the past. I see this everyday working in a museum environment where we show children, schools, and families the true potential of objects aiding our understanding of the past and the present. This can also be seen through the investigation of literature surrounding history teaching.

History Teaching

The analysis of teaching strategy literature and practices already in place in schools today – coupled with the pilot study data collected – helped to focus the main study and allowed me to plan for the activities that I then used. From the context of engagement, those children in the pilot study had significantly higher levels of engagement from one lesson to another. They enjoyed having someone other than the teacher conducting the lesson and they also engaged well with the activities. The decision not to continue the main study with this class came purely down to the amount of valid data that could be collected as not all elements of the research could be quantified (i.e. learning).

The age and ability of the main study group suited the research aims better and subsequently it was easier to collect data for each of the sub-questions. The structure of the lesson and the activities

that were conducted did not detach themselves from the History National Curriculum standards which state: *“During Key Stage 2 pupils learn about significant people, events and places from both the recent and more distant past. They learn about change and continuity in their own area, in Britain and in other parts of the world. They look at history in a variety of ways, for example from political, economic, technological and scientific, social, religious, cultural or aesthetic perspectives. They use different sources of information to help them investigate the past both in depth and in overview, using dates and historical vocabulary to describe events, people and developments. They also learn that the past can be represented and interpreted in different ways.”* (Department for Education website, 2011)

The latter point of the above quote relates to this research, the Department for Education giving further guidance on how teachers should help their pupils understand the past as: *“People represent and interpret the past in many different ways, including: in pictures, plays, films, reconstructions, museum displays, and fictional and non-fiction accounts. Interpretations reflect the circumstances in which they are made, the available evidence, and the intentions of those who make them (for example, writers, archaeologists, historians, film-makers).”* (Department for Education website, 2011)

Object Oriented Learning

The seemingly sparse previous research on object oriented learning further stresses the importance of this research. Having been unable to find specific examples of this method’s effectiveness not just in SEN teaching but in history teaching in general, the data collection was based on other aspects of the research. My background as a learning facilitator specialising in archaeology (the study of objects

to better understand the past) I could bring my own personal experience of teaching school groups in a museum and school environment to give contextual background to this field of literature. This aided the planning of the activities that were part of the assessment of learning.

When looking at the data analysed, it is the interview data that clearly shows the benefit of using an object oriented approach during history lessons. Question two *have you enjoyed looking at objects...* received a 90% positive response which, combined with the 80% positive response from the third question *do you think using objects is a more enjoyable way of learning about the past*, shows that the overall benefit of an object oriented approach is a high one for all of the sample group.

After this overall analysis a consideration must now be made to possible limitations of the research conducted.

Limitations of the Research

The main potential weakness of the research is that it only concerned data collected from one special school, whereas it would have benefitted from a wider collection incorporating either another special school or within a 'mainstream' school where the classes only have a few SEN children. This was not possible, as previously stated, due to the researcher's timetable in relation to her employment and the lack of availability at other schools to participate in the research.

The secondary limitation relates to the type of SENs covered, as the sample group only contained three main types of SEN: BESD, MLD and ASD. It would have been of a greater research importance to have covered as many SENs as possible within the data collection and even different ages of children (e.g. all of the Primary department).

Chapter 10: Conclusion

To conclude this research a re-analysis of the research questions and themes is required. *Does object oriented pedagogy promote learning about the past for key stage two children with special educational needs: do they engage, enjoy and learn?* Research has shown that using current methods of teaching history to children with SEN does not foster a greater amount of understanding as the children don't seem to learn as much as they could. Whereas using a different, more versatile method of teaching appeals to the varied audiences' learning styles and helps these children gain more from the experience and a varied range of skills at the same time.

Teaching history should be concerned with teachers helping pupils to learn about the past using various methods/teaching styles/aids to help them better understand a time different to the current. It should also assist them in their understanding of concepts such as chronology; cause and effect; and change and continuity etc. which are stipulated in the current curriculum standards.

For those children who have difficulty learning any subject, a more tactile approach to teaching enables even the most severely disabled person/child to learn. I am not solely suggesting that a purely object oriented approach would suffice for all learners but if it was incorporated into current teaching methods on a greater scale it would benefit a higher ratio of pupils to understand the complex subject of the past.

The findings showed that this specific group of key stage two children with SEN did engage, enjoy and learn about the past using an object oriented approach, most showing improvement from session to session. The most interesting data came from those children considered to have the lowest of attainment levels due to the severity of their SEN actually achieved consecutive high marks in every session. Their historical enquiry skills were the most developed as they were able to by the last sessions determine what the objects were used for and what they can tell us about the people who left them behind. This tactile approach to learning about the past suited the pupils learning styles greater than a more passive approach, which can be seen from the observation schedules in the first session to the second session.

In relation to further study, I would suggest improving on the research already completed and work on the suggested limitations discussed above. The study would need to include a collaborative special and mainstream school research project focusing on a larger sample group of SEN children.

To conclude, there is a great benefit to learning about the past for children with SEN, through the use of an object oriented approach as it truly brings the past to life in a colourful and meaningful way; something that their everyday life misses due to their complex needs and their understanding of the world around them.

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