

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

‘Trips are the thing we all remember from our school days’: The learning value of school trips for children with special educational needs from the perspective of primary school teachers

Jessica Wythe 

Department of Childhood, Youth and Community, Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences, Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK

Correspondence

Jessica Wythe, Department of Childhood, Youth and Community, Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences, Birmingham City University, Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 3TN, UK.
Email: jessica.wythe@bcu.ac.uk

Abstract

Various childhood and education theorists affirm the benefits of hands-on and contextual learning opportunities for children and young people. Learners with special educational needs and disability (SEND) often display low levels of engagement. Teachers may utilise innovative pedagogical approaches to increase learning engagement and participation, such as taking their classes on a school trip. This study explores primary school teachers' views of using school trips to enhance learning and development for learners with SEND in the United Kingdom (UK). A questionnaire was distributed through Microsoft Forms, and 54 primary school teachers from the United Kingdom participated in this study. A range of open-ended and closed questions facilitated the opportunity for the teachers to discuss the benefits and challenges of educational school trips for learners with SEND. The primary school teachers identified extensive affordances of educational school trips, with 100% of participants responding that school trips can have learning and developmental benefits for learners with SEND. Additionally, various skills were identified that the teachers believe school trips facilitate children with SEND to acquire and develop, including social skills. However, the teachers identified challenges and limitations to planning and implementing school trips, including accessibility and socio-economic barriers.

KEYWORDS

field trips, learning engagement, primary education, school trips, special educational needs and disability

Key points

- Educational school visits can have extensive benefits for children with a range of special educational needs, including outcome-based affordances, learning engagement-related benefits and skill acquisition and development.
- There are also various barriers that may deter primary school teachers from taking their classes on a school trip, including socio-economic barriers, physical and logistical limitations and pre-visit time implications.
- At present, educational school trips are currently not a mandatory element of the National Curriculum in the United Kingdom. However, for many humanities-based subjects, they are a recommendation. School visits and field trips are also not compulsory within international education contexts, although they are recommended as a tool to support and enhance specific subjects.

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2023 The Authors. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of National Association for Special Educational Needs.

- Childhood and education-based theorists and an extensive body of academic literature and research affirm the pervasive benefits of non-classroom learning opportunities for children and young people. Currently, less literature focuses on the affordances for learners with special educational needs, but both the literature reviewed, and the findings of this study are transferrable for practitioners to increase learning engagement and outcomes for all children.

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

There are many school trips that you may remember from your childhood. It does not matter where you are from or how old you are, we all remember the excitement of getting out of the classroom for the day, taking a packed lunch and spending money for the gift shop and making memories with our classmates. But in addition to being a fun day out and a break from the formal learning contexts, contextual and educational school trips can have extensive benefits for learning and development.

Childhood and education theorists affirm the benefits of hands-on, experiential, and contextual learning opportunities for children and young people (Kolb, 1984; Piaget, 1936). However, school trips at present are not a mandatory element of the national curriculum, and consequently, many children in the United Kingdom (UK) often miss out on these critical learning opportunities. School trips are also not a mandatory element of international curriculums in other countries. This study explores primary school teachers' perceptions of monopolising contextual school visits to enhance learning and development for learners with special educational needs.

The findings of this study will have benefits as the affordances of school trips and outdoor learning opportunities are areas that have been researched in the past, and the benefits of utilising school trips as a tool to enhance learning and development have been established. However, there is less SEND-related research presently, especially with the coronavirus restrictions, which significantly impacted external school visits. Consequently, this study addresses this limited field to explore whether the findings in 2023 are consistent with results over a decade ago by asking primary school teachers about their professional practice experiences.

Through online questionnaires distributed through Microsoft Forms, this small-scale study explores whether primary school teachers who work in mainstream school settings in the UK believe that school trips can support learning and development for children with SEND, and what challenges or barriers they have previously experienced when taking their classes on a school trip.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Educational school trips, commonly referred to as field trips, involve taking a group or class of children out of

the school setting to a site or location relative to what is being taught in the classroom. For example, suppose children are learning about the Normans in their history lessons. In that case, the teacher may then take their class on a school trip to a Norman castle or museum to facilitate for the learners to apply their taught knowledge in a real-life contextual situation.

Within this literature review, the affordances of providing learners with opportunities to learn and consolidate knowledge outside of the formal classroom setting, with a focus on children with SEND, have been explored. The literature reviewed also analyses some of the challenges and limitations to planning and carrying out educational school trips.

Theme 1: The benefits of learning outside the classroom opportunities

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is a pedagogical approach where teachers utilise various learning environments and contexts to enhance teaching and learning outside of the formal classroom setting. LOtC uses multiple learning environments, including indoor and outdoor areas within the school settings and broader contexts such as a park, a forest school or a school trip location (Waite, 2017). LOtC also facilitates learning opportunities and experiences to engage students in learning and consolidate and translate their knowledge into real-life contexts and situations (Beames et al., 2012; Seaman & Rheingold, 2013). For example, teaching children about money management and currency in the classroom during a mathematics lesson, then taking the class to a supermarket so they can physically experience using money in a real-life situation. The Council for LOtC affirms within its manifesto that opportunities to learn beyond the classroom can facilitate life-changing educational experiences, motivate disengaged learners and increase attainment and aspirations (Department for Education and Skills, 2006).

Theory and literature affirm that providing opportunities for children to learn through hands-on and practical learning experiences makes the taught concepts more memorable. Consequently, the learners are more likely to retain what they have learned than traditional and prescriptive teaching strategies in the classroom, where they may be less engaged and engrossed in what they are learning (Bhagat et al., 2015; Ludlow, 2020).

Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1936) reinforces that children learn most effectively by actively

exploring the environment through hands-on opportunities (Piaget, 2008). Similarly, experiential learning is the process of learning through experience. Devised by theorist David Kolb, experiential learning theory (1984) states that learning is an inevitable product of experience and occurs through ongoing interactions and engagement with the world (Kolb, 1984). This has explicit links to bell hooks' engaged pedagogy theory (1994), which concerns how learners progress in their lives beyond the classroom experience (Hooks, 1994).

It is common for teachers to employ kinaesthetic, or hands-on learning opportunities to engage learners in the classroom and to facilitate them to apply taught concepts to a real-life context. For example, the project approach to teaching builds on natural curiosity and stimulates curiosity, interests, and child enquiry. This pedagogical strategy can occur in or outside the classroom and facilitates learners to make and associate meaning within a real-life context and develop essential life skills, in addition to learning about the prospective topic (Chard, 1998; Katz et al., 2018). Correspondingly, a study by Beneke and Ostrosky (2015) emulates the learning and developmental benefits of utilising the project approach in an early years education context.

Retrospectively, if children are actively interested in what they are doing and learning, they would be more likely to participate in a LOtC opportunity that integrates their interests (Mobley & Fisher, 2014; Tranquillo, 2008). For instance, if the teacher takes their class out of the classroom and to the school science lab and carries out a practical science lesson that involves innovative teaching strategies and science equipment that would not logistically be used in the classroom. If children are interested in learning something and actively want to participate in the learning, such as if they are being taught in an engaging way, if their interests are integrated into the planned provision, or if there are cognitive or hands-on learning experiences involved, then they are more likely to be engaged with the learning and motivated to participate in the learning experience, meaning that they are more likely to attain the intended learning benefits for the planned provision (Birbilli & Melpomeni, 2008; Gunn & Delafield-Butt, 2016). Educational school trips provide opportunities for kinaesthetic and hands-on interactive learning, enabling children to explore new environments and providing context to what they have been learning about at school (Nawi & Fuziana, 2016).

Educational school trips can enable pupils to extend knowledge learned in the classroom and provide pupils with opportunities to give context to learned material. School trips allow you to personally and physically experience something rather than only being taught or told about a new or unfamiliar concept (Kelly, 2018; Simon, 2010). A study by Braund and Reiss (2006) shows that using out-of-school learning opportunities positively impacts teaching science. Results conclude that out-of-school science learning through school trips will

provide a context of the content taught in the classroom and will engage students to become more interested in the subject (Braund & Reiss, 2006). In addition to a change of scenery to the traditional classroom, school trips can capture and build on expressed interests and sustain motivation through kinaesthetic and transformative learning (Kelley, 2008; Simon, 2010).

A study by Whitesell (2016) analyses the impact of visiting science education institutions on science testing scores in the United States. Results demonstrate positive effects on testing scores and emphasise that school trips do contribute to student attainment in a positive way (Whitesell, 2016). Furthermore, Stark et al. (2018) hypothesised a positive relationship between active mobility within education and children's well-being. Results of their study suggest that active school travel is positively associated with children's psychological well-being, and the authors conclude that more opportunities to travel, such as going on school trips, should be implemented within education (Stark et al., 2018). Furthermore, in her book *The Participatory Museum*, Simon (2010) discusses how museums can increase audience participation, stimulate interests, and facilitate transformative learning and learning engagement for all visitors, not just children and young people (Simon, 2010).

The link between educational school trips and LOtC learning opportunities can be linked to Bourdieu's social capital theory. This theory discusses how people learn from each other to form and sustain a shared identity. Social capital may be achieved in this context through group learning opportunities or non-prescriptive creative learning experiences where learners can interpret tasks in their own way and then share their findings with their peers. Additionally, social capital theory concerns shared values to achieve a common purpose, which in this instance, could refer to primary school teachers ensuring that all learners reach their full academic potential through utilising engaging pedagogical strategies, or to the children who often have consistent goals of making friends, having a positive and engaging schooling experience in general and attaining the maximum capacity of any LOtC learning opportunities (Bourdieu, 1985).

Theme 2: The benefits of outdoor learning and school trips for learners with SEND

There are approximately 1.5 million students in the United Kingdom with a form of SEND, an increase of 77,000 since 2021, and currently, 12.6% of all pupils in UK schools receive SEND support (GOV.UK, 2022). These fecund statistics may have increased as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, which had a significant impact on learning and education. It is common for children with SEND to experience difficulty maintaining attention and focus when learning new concepts in education (Nind et al., 2004). Depending on the level of need, learners with

SEND may display low levels of engagement, limiting their learning opportunities and progression in comparison to their typically developing peers (Odom et al., 2010; Ruble & Robson, 2007). Consequently, as per the SEND Code of Practice (2015), primary school teachers are obliged to meet the needs of all learners in their care through inclusive practice approaches (Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health (DoH), 2015). To increase learning engagement and participation for learners with SEND, teachers may utilise creative or innovative pedagogical approaches, such as facilitating LOfC or kinesthetic learning opportunities to increase participation and motivation (Mobley & Fisher, 2014). According to Kolb, learning through experience means that children are more likely to retain and comprehend new concepts than if they are disengaged (Kolb, 1984). Retrospectively, multisensory, practical, and creative pedagogical strategies and learning opportunities are often monopolised and integrated within primary education and specialist provision settings to enhance the motivation and engagement of children with SEND (Colorosa & Makela, 2014; Dillon et al., 2006; Lisle, 2007).

A typical example of this within primary education and specialist provision settings is using an outdoor learning environment and integrating outdoor learning opportunities into practice. Research affirms the benefits of outdoor learning opportunities for all children. Outdoor learning is crucial for the brain's healthy development, and it facilitates children's fine and gross motor skills, balance, and dexterity (Bilton, 2010; Gray, 2018). Furthermore, outdoor learning opportunities also allow children to work with each other and develop social interaction skills—opportunities that may be limited in a traditional classroom.

Vygotsky's social learning theory (1978) suggests that learning takes place through children's interactions with their peers, adults and the environment. Vygotsky argues that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition, and language and community are integral to learning (Vygotsky, 1978). This links to Bourdieu's theory of social capital, which affirms that individuals can learn from each other to form and sustain a shared identity and goals (Bourdieu, 1985). Learners with SEND often experience challenges interacting with their peers, particularly if they have social, emotional or communication impairments (Parish-Morris et al., 2007). Therefore, outdoor learning opportunities that facilitate children to interact and work in partnership with each other are imperative (Schwab et al., 2021). Further research asserts that outdoor learning can significantly reduce anxiety for learners with SEND (Farnham & Mutrie, 2003) and outdoor learning participation can positively affect school attendance and learning engagement for learners with SEND (Price, 2013).

The link between educational school trips and LOfC learning opportunities can be linked to Bourdieu's

theory of cultural capital and habitus. Habitus relates to how individuals develop habits, skills and dispositions in response to life experiences. In this instance, this can be relative to the skills attained and developed for learners with SEND through LOfC, group learning and outdoor learning opportunities. Habitus is relative to academic outcomes and broader skills and habits, such as understanding the world and behavioural norms, which children will continue to use and develop throughout their lives (Bourdieu, 1985).

Although the literature reviewed emphasises the benefits of LOfC learning opportunities for learners with SEND, there is significantly less literature focusing on school trips or field trips, reinforcing the importance of research within this limited field of study.

Theme 3: The challenges and limitations of school trips for learners with SEND

Although the literature reviewed recommends that school trips are invaluable to learning and development, various factors impact the implementation of school trips within education. About 42% of primary school teachers and 41% of senior leaders have had to reduce the number of school trips and outings that they carry out due to financial reasons (The Sutton Trust, 2019). Economic issues in schools are a significant risk factor that can reduce how school trips can run. Budgets are being decimated, and data published by The School Cuts coalition reveal that £5.4bn has been cut from school budgets in England since 2015 and that 83% of public schools lose out on opportunities, such as school trips (School Cuts, 2019).

In response to these significant budget cuts, many primary schools often rely on parents or carers to contribute financially towards a school trip. Research reveals that requests to parents for voluntary contributions are increasing, and parents' average annual voluntary donation to the school is constantly rising (Department for Education, 2018; Parentkind, 2019). However, this approach may exclude pupils from a low socio-economic status family as paying this fee may be significantly more difficult (Gibson et al., 2018). This suggests that low socio-economic status can deter pupils or schools from participating in a school trip. Furthermore, if school trips rely too heavily on unsubsidised contributions from parents, school trips can be cancelled if not enough parents contribute to financing the trip (Department for Education, 2018). In turn, all pupils risk missing out on the benefits analysed above.

Another significant barrier to school trips being implemented was the coronavirus pandemic. Many settings, such as museums or galleries, were closed during the lockdown, meaning school trips had to be cancelled or postponed. After the initial lockdown, educational school trip settings reopened with social distancing

restrictions implemented, which had a prominent impact on how children interacted with these settings (Department for Education, 2020).

Furthermore, school trips are not a mandatory element of the national curriculum in the United Kingdom, or in any other countries around the world. For some subjects, such as history, the guidelines regarding what history-based content needs to be taught in Key Stage 2 are established within the curriculum reforms. However, less focus is on how this knowledge is translated to students (Howorth, 2015). Retrospectively, guidance is in place to outline how teachers should teach the history curriculum. For instance, the 2007 version of the National Curriculum for England states that when teaching history, students should have the opportunity to 'appreciate and evaluate, through visits where possible, the role of museums, galleries, archives, and historic sites in preserving, presenting and influencing people's attitudes towards the past' (QCA, 2007:117). However, the guidelines regarding teaching history in various localities are not mandatory legislation to which teachers must adhere. This may depict that there is not as much focus on teaching humanities subjects, and the Department for Education, which develops the national curriculum, prioritises core subjects, such as mathematics and literacy, over foundation subjects, such as art and history (Department for Education, 2013).

Research emphasises the positive effects of exposure to school trips within primary education and the findings of a study published by the Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) show that participating in LOTC experiences can improve writing skills. Each pupil participated in an engaging LOTC experience and then wrote about it using a structured layout provided by the EEF. Results demonstrate a significant improvement in writing skills, as the pupils were writing about something that interested them (EEF, 2014). Furthermore, research carried out in Scotland demonstrates that LOTC has a positive impact on numeracy attainment. The Education Scotland project introduced maths-based 'Outdoor Learning Hubs' in the playground to primary school children: results show that there was a significant increase in numeracy development, and, on average, children gained 2 months of general mathematics skills and 6 months of mental arithmetic skills (Education Scotland, 2017). Both studies demonstrate that school trips and LOTC opportunities enhance learning and development in core subjects. Yet, school trips are not a mandatory part of the primary national curriculum, which suggests that children may be limited from reaching their full academic potential.

For learners with SEND, the challenges and limitations of carrying out school trips can be more profound than their peers. In addition to the barriers explored above, additional considerations must be made. For example, depending on the level of need, a child with

profound SEND may need a 1:1 teaching assistant to attend the trip or additional risk assessments, evolve forms, or pre-visits to be carried out, which may be a deterrent for primary school teachers. Additionally, there may be accessibility barriers, particularly for students with physical disabilities or students with sensory processing disorders. While many school trip settings are inclusive and offer facilities for patrons with disabilities, this is an area that currently lacks academic research.

Furthermore, depending on the level of need, some children with SEND may experience anxiety or distress in response to being outside of the classroom. Many children with SEND find unexpected changes in routine challenging, and they may display behaviour that is perceived as challenging or potentially experience sensory overload if they visit an unfamiliar school trip setting (Gillott et al., 2001; Howlin et al., 2004). However, it is worth considering that SEND is experienced differently by different children, even if two children have the same SEND diagnosis, and these challenges will not be representative of all children with SEND.

The link between educational school trips and LOTC learning opportunities can be linked to Bourdieu's cultural capital theory. Cultural capital relates to the lived experiences of different individuals and has explicit links to social class. This theory emphasises the social and cultural advantage of middle or higher-class families. For example, a child from a higher-class family will be likelier to experience samples of high culture, such as going to the theatre or on holiday, than a child from a working-class family, as they have more financial dividends. This can relate to the theme of this literature review, as money can impact the experiences that children have during their education. Schools in higher-class areas will be more likely to have the financial capacity to take their children on school trips and experience the learning benefits explored within this literature review (Bourdieu, 1985).

Conclusion

This literature review evidences that while there is an overwhelmingly positive response to utilising and monopolising educational school trips as a tool to support and enhance learning for students generally and for learners with SEND, there are various challenges and limitations that are posed which may prevent a teacher from taking their class on a school trip.

At present, there is a prevalent gap in SEND research within this field of study, which accentuates the importance of this study being conducted. Literature involving primary school teachers' views concerning the affordances and challenges of school trips is also extremely limited. Correspondingly, this study research project will explore primary school teachers' perceptions and

opinions on whether and how school trips can support learning and development for learners with SEND. This study will also examine whether the limitations identified within this literature review are consistent with the views and experiences of primary school teachers in the United Kingdom.

The pre-eminent research question for this small-scale study: *Do primary school teachers believe that contextual school trips enhance learning and development for learners with special educational needs?*

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. Do primary school teachers believe that school trips have a positive impact on education for learners with SEND, and how?
2. What skills do primary school teachers believe school trips enable children with SEND to learn and/or develop?
3. What challenges or limitations do primary school teachers experience when taking children with SEND out of the classroom/on a school trip?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The research participants for this small-scale study were primary school teachers who work at mainstream primary school settings in the United Kingdom. Initially, the data collection was planned to be limited to three schools, but the decision was made to move the questionnaire online and share the link with teachers around the United Kingdom to increase the scope of responses, as it was anticipated that fewer responses would be attained from just three schools. Additionally, a link to the survey was circulated on LinkedIn to a professional network of primary school teachers around the United Kingdom. The survey received 54 responses, which provided a vast amount of research data to include within the data analysis process.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research data were gathered using questionnaire forms, which were shared and attained through Microsoft Forms, where research participants could anonymously answer as many questions as desired. After formulating a range of open and closed survey questions and testing the technical logistics of the form, the survey was open for 6 weeks to gather responses from a range of primary school teachers around the United Kingdom.

The inclusion criteria to participate in the study are as follows:

- You are a primary school teacher in the United Kingdom in a mainstream setting.
- You have taken your class on at least one educational school trip in the past.
- You have children or young people in your class with SEND who have attended a school trip that you have planned or carried out.

An online questionnaire was used as this facilitated for data to be attained from a more extensive scope of participants in the capacity of the small-scale research context. In turn, this will make the findings more transferrable and representative than an interview of just one teacher's values and perceptions.

The questionnaire used consisted of nine questions ranging from closed questions (to attain quantitative data) to open questions (to attain qualitative data). In the context of this study, using questionnaires meant that data could be attained from a wide range of primary school teachers. Questionnaires in this context were an effective strategy to attain as much data as possible from a range of different teachers to make the findings broader and more transferrable than attaining data from a smaller group of teachers from the same school, who may all have very similar experiences and consequently, impact the transferability of the findings of this study (Jones et al., 2013).

The theoretical basis of this research was built from Bourdieu and Wacquant's Reflexive Sociology. Within their work, Bourdieu and Wacquant advocate mixed-methods research paradigms, which involve mixing quantitative and qualitative methods. Reflexive Sociology acknowledges that knowledge and society are socially constructed, and that the social world is not objective (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This theory is consistent within the context of this study as each teacher who responded to the questionnaire has their own perceptions, values and experiences relative to taking their classes on educational school trips.

While this study does not explicitly use mixed-methods due to its small-scale nature, the questionnaire was built from this theory as it consisted of a range of open and closed questions to attain a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to best address the research aims and questions. The questionnaire and questions were developed using the prospective research aims and the three previously established research questions.

University ethical approval was attained prior to conducting the data collection phases, and the British Educational Research Association (2011) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2018) were adhered to throughout all processes of this study. For example, when participants named specific school settings or children's names within their responses, any identifying information was removed, or pseudonyms were used so that their comments could still be used without raising ethical concerns.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

When analysing the research data, Braun and Clarke's reflexive approach of thematic analysis was used to clarify common themes within the data, which then shaped the discussion of the research findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This approach to analysis facilitated synthesising the data from the different teacher perspectives together to address the three research questions (Nowell et al., 2017).

With the data displayed in [Tables 1 and 2](#), common themes emerged within the data, including academic benefits, learning and engagement benefits and skill-based benefits of the school trips. Any data that did not fit within any of these three themes was included in a fourth column titled 'wider factors', so that the responses from these teachers could still be included in the research data and findings. The data presented in [Table 3](#) were divided into two themes that emerged from the data analysis—the challenges of the school trips experienced by the primary school teachers, and strategies to overcome these established challenges. Finally, the themes that emerged when formulating [Table 4](#) were retrospective of the barriers and challenges experienced by the teachers prior to booking the trip and before, during and after the school trips.

In addition to organising the research data to best address the previously established research questions and aims, the thematic analysis process also enables researchers to be more objective when analysing research data, thus increasing the reliability and transferability of the research findings. This is because all perspectives are included within the data analysis process, and no responses are omitted—even if certain responses do not necessarily associate with one of the emerging themes, or research questions (Sayer, 2000).

FINDINGS

The charts below affirm that 100% of primary school teachers surveyed believe that school trips have a positive impact on education for all children and for children with SEND.

[Table 1](#) shows a range of academic, learning, and engagement benefits that primary school teachers believe that school trips can have for children and young people. Furthermore, this table shows some of the skills that they believe educational school trips can facilitate for children to attain and develop, and any other wider factors that do not fit into any of the three previous categories are also included within the table. The table displays representative entries from the participants as various primary school teachers shared the same or similar responses—to ensure that the table contents are clear and concise, identical or similar responses have been condensed.

[Table 2](#) shows a range of academic, learning and engagement benefits that primary school teachers believe that educational school trips can have for children and young people with SEND, and some of the skills that they believe educational school trips can facilitate for children with SEND to attain and develop. Any wider factors or responses that do not fit into the three previous categories are also included in the table under the 'Wider Factors (Other)' column. The table displays representative entries from the research participants as many of the primary school teachers shared the same or similar responses—to ensure that the table contents are clear and concise, identical or similar responses have been condensed.

[Figure 1](#) shows the different skills that the primary school teachers surveyed believe that school trips facilitate for children with SEND to develop when on a school trip. The words that appear larger are the more common responses.

The corresponding question on the questionnaire provided an optional opportunity for the teachers to expand on their responses and share any examples that they have observed on previous school trips (five responses).

Examples:

- We visited Sealife as part of a topic and science on animals and habitats. The children remembered their experiences and could use this in their work through discussion, books and symbols.
- Forest School has a major benefit to learning for children with SEN. It is child-led and they have the freedom to explore their own interests outdoors. This develops fine and gross motor skills, as well as confidence and self-esteem. They have activities they can join in with whilst there.
- Building confidence and experiencing success. I have not been on many trips where children are expected to sit still and write—the practical aspects support learning brilliantly.
- I had one learner that did not like to wait for anything and by going out on school trips to the supermarket, she learned that you must wait for the green man when crossing the road; otherwise, you get run over, you must wait in the queue to pay for your shopping, etc. Learning these skills had a big impact on how she then transferred these skills in the classroom.
- For my pupils, real-life skills are important. Learning how to make a shopping list, go to the shop, find the items and pay for them. Knowing what money you need, and what change to expect. How to visit a library. How to use a café. How to cross a road safely.

[Table 4](#) shows some of the barriers that primary school teachers have experienced before booking and before, during and after school trips that they have previously taken their classes on. The primary school teachers then had the option to share what changes to policy could be

TABLE 1 Why and how do primary school teachers believe that school trips have a positive impact on education?

Academic benefits	Learning and engagement benefits	Developing skills	Wider factors (other)
<p>It lets them see more of the world, gives them more understanding and allows them to express their thoughts before and after their trip.</p> <p>It lets them see more of the world, gives them more understanding and allows them to express their thoughts before and after their trip.</p> <p>Children who learn best outside of the classroom get to learn.</p> <p>A new way of learning and increases and provides students with experiences outside their everyday activities. Trips are a way of enhancing classroom learning by making real-world connections.</p> <p>So much learning can happen especially SEND. From crossing the road safely to maths to social skills to bringing a topic alive.</p> <p>Trips provide the opportunity for real-life learning, making connections between the classroom and the real world. They can motivate and consolidate learning. They provide the opportunity to put learning into practice. Trips are the thing we all remember from our school days.</p>	<p>It offers new educational experiences to children, many of whom may not otherwise get the chance to have those experiences.</p> <p>It also brings learning alive for the children. Able to have concrete interactions and engage pupils.</p> <p>Able to have concrete interactions and engage pupils in the subject at hand.</p> <p>Enrich learning, different, and wider experiences, consolidates learning, engages and excites learners.</p> <p>The practical experience and ability to engage yourself within the learning you are trying to do.</p> <p>Gives children real-life experiences, offers them opportunities to interact with their communities and puts lessons learned in school into context.</p> <p>To create interest, provide opportunities many do not have, build personal resilience for new experiences and learn 'doing' so more likely to remember.</p>	<p>School trips are essential to support social interactions and communication skills as well as gaining life skills for as much independence as possible.</p> <p>By giving the children the opportunities, it builds relationships, confidence and engagement.</p> <p>Real-life experiences, they experience things you would not teach within a classroom. They learn from each other how to behave in public.</p> <p>Life skills of being out and about. Learning from experts at different locations.</p> <p>They provide enrichment opportunities where children can learn valuable social skills and have an understanding of the outside world.</p> <p>Sensory information for children.</p> <p>Independence. Learn so much from the environment. Builds relationships with peers. Learn through experience. Supports communication. Supports literacy, writing and communication through experience.</p>	<p>They allow children to have experiences they may not necessarily have in their lives currently.</p> <p>Important to be part of the wider community. More memorable. Positive impact on well-being—seeing somewhere new, being in a different context with friends.</p> <p>Children are able to experience places they might not necessarily get to experience otherwise. They also get to experience trips with all of their friends, not just a select few.</p> <p>Enriches the curriculum, cultural capital, experiences, and opportunities some children may never get.</p> <p>New adventures and new opportunities.</p> <p>Relationship building (peer to peer, staff and peers).</p> <p>Children get to have new experiences and opportunities. They have great learning experiences.</p>

TABLE 2 How do primary school teachers believe that school trips enhance learning for children with SEND?

Academic benefits	Learning and engagement benefits	Developing skills	Wider factors (other)
<p>It is important to consider the different learning styles and allow pupils with SEN to be given the opportunity to become involved in visual and real-life versions of the learning that they may have previously not had the chance to experience.</p> <p>Learning beyond the classroom is even more crucial to students to SEND as their understanding of the world can be limited, and they need to experience to learn.</p> <p>Trips provide opportunities to expand learning and preparation for adult life. The more we take our learners out into the community, the more the community will accept our learners as adults.</p>	<p>School trips teach skills wider than those that can be taught in a classroom, it can engage pupils that find learning in a single environment difficult (those with ADHD for example) and offer the opportunity for children to experience the things that they have learned about.</p> <p>SEND children learn by doing. We used to teach independent travel to our students and get them used to travelling on buses and trains. We ate in restaurants, and it is amazing to see how they grow in confidence when ordering food without their parents doing it for them.</p>	<p>Life skills, being able to go to a shop or a cafe and buy themselves something using money. Social and communication is important and learning how to behave in public places is vital for promoting independence.</p> <p>Allows for a generalisation of skills (e.g., money). Allows for the development of social skills. Allows for children to experience new experiences and develop skills in expressing likes and dislikes.</p> <p>Builds on their personal and emotional skills. Experience, communication skills, life skills.</p>	<p>School trips are important for children with SEN as many parents avoid public places if their child has SEN due to meltdowns and difficult behaviour due to unknowns. I plan weekly trips for my pupils with PMLD and feel that it is vital for them to have these experiences and learn about their local community, also, some pupils do not receive the opportunities to explore or go out, therefore, it is vital that they have these opportunities.</p> <p>Some of our students do not get the same exposure as their mainstream peers. Families might not be able to take them on days out or even little trips in the community if they display challenging behaviours.</p>
<p>Depending on the extent of the child's SEN, it can be crucial to support them in being able to gain a much wider scope of the human experience and allow them to learn far more about society.</p> <p>We visited Sealife as part of a topic and science on animals and habitats. The children remembered their experiences and could use this in their work through discussion, books, and symbols.</p> <p>Making abstract concepts more concrete and interacting with real-life samples.</p>	<p>Practical application, hands-on experiences, immersive.</p> <p>Most young children learn best by doing including SEND children. To go and visit somewhere is far more memorable and exciting than sitting in a classroom.</p> <p>Yes - practical application, hands-on experiences, immersive experience - visiting a museum where pupils could hold things helped with abstract concepts like time in history.</p> <p>Puts learning into practice (maths).</p>	<p>Children get to have new experiences, different opportunities, and new learning experiences. Helps to develop confidence and social skills.</p> <p>Social skills (how to interact with people in the community), road safety, math skills (shapes on a walk, odd and even house numbers, paying for things), topic work (visiting a castle), physical development (e.g., going to trampoline park, going swimming).</p> <p>Independence and autonomy skills.</p>	<p>If schools can take children on trips, especially if the trips/activities are aimed at SEN, the children can have experiences they would not normally have. It makes learning inclusive. Children with SEN can be very sensory so exposure to different environments while support and with their peers is important.</p> <p>It can be challenging, but the benefits outweigh the barriers for sure.</p>

TABLE 3 Do primary school teachers believe that there are any challenges or limitations of taking children with SEND out of the classroom/to a new or unfamiliar setting/on a school trip? What strategies could be used to overcome these?

Challenges identified	Strategies used to overcome challenges
Never sure exactly how children are going to react.	Needs to be risk assessed depending on individual needs. Teachers/TAs need to pre-prepare students with SEND for the trip. Two adults may be needed if the child becomes overwhelmed and a plan into place if this happens.
Sensory overload with sights, smells and sounds, open spaces, overcrowding and unadjusted workshop sessions.	Accessibility for pupils with physical needs, suitable changing facilities with hoist,
SEN children can become unsettled and unpredictable on a school trip as they are out of familiar surroundings.	for our pupils who have not experienced certain places it is vital to introduce these, if slightly overwhelming, it is important to be exposed to new environments.
Behaviour management and staffing may need to be increased.	Making sure things are accessible—not every place has a hoist changing room available. Some may not have facilities that support children with sensory difficulties (e.g., workshops that require long sit times, focusing on the speaker, loud noises, etc.).
Transport issues. Health and safety forms are endless.	Our students all have an ASD diagnosis, and we have to do lots of social stories and visuals as new places bring lots of unpredictability.
Staffing, transport, unfamiliar settings/people, unexpected events/experiences.	We have also experienced members of the public who do not understand the needs of our students.
Unfamiliar surroundings can be overwhelming, SEMH needs involving challenging behaviour can be a risk especially if they are a flight risk.	Children with SEN need to be pre-prepared with photos, symbols and support to prepare them for change.
May be busy/noisy/unpredictable. Change of routine. Things can go wrong. Lack of suitable resources, food, toilets, etc.	Children with SEN should have a clear timetable of events and lots of pre-warning of expectations.
Behaviour concerns in public, safeguarding.	We provide social stories before the trip and lots of photos so the children know what to expect, we would have enough adults to give children that need a 1–1 so if they are not coping with the activities over the day, they can be taken to do something else that they are comfortable with.
Lack of staff to support children. Lack of equipment or transportation. Funding.	Facilities of the destination need to be thought out beforehand. (i.e., toileting)
New experiences can be unsettling.	Visual cards to show children what to expect are important.
Sen children like routine—breaking it can be difficult.	Preparing the child/children is key as anxiety can prove a difficulty as they may be visiting an unfamiliar place.
The concept of the unknown seriously dysregulates not only SEN children but trauma children.	It is a lot more prep. You need to have every moment planned and prepare the pupils with social stories, so they know what to expect.
Furthermore, if one child becomes dysregulated, this has a huge impact on the emotional regulation of other pupils who are then unable to manage a new situation.	Behaviour wise as soon as you are out the school gates you lose that backup support, so you need to know how to manage little behaviours, so they do not become big ones.
There are many limitations and challenges, the main being unknown terrain and completely different routines.	Briefing everyone on the procedures/ risk assessments. Absconding is far higher in SEN children; how will you manage? How do you manage if a child misbehaves on a trip with public watching?
The rules are extremely different on trips, there may be different adults and children.	
Anxiety for children due to new environments, change of routine, etc.	
Transition difficulties, noisy. Anxiety over smells Change of routine. Personal care needs.	
Some children have sensory difficulties which make some environments too difficult. New environments or just the journey can be too difficult for some.	
Unfamiliar surroundings or noises could set them into a spiral.	
Changes to routine are challenging for children with SEN—especially autism or ADHD, if not prepared for the change, they can be anxious or stressed.	

made to make the process of planning and carrying out a school trip easier and more manageable (six responses).

- Schools need adequate funding.
- The red tape around risk assessments is always a difficult one as there are always potentially higher unpredictable risks involved and this paperwork can be off-putting as it takes so much time to complete.
- Autism-friendly days and better facilities for toileting/ changing children and adults.
- Simpler paperwork and risk assessment.
- Maybe a list of SEN-safe (or SEN-aware) spaces for children to attend on school trips? General risk assessment and risk assessments in place generally for children who need them, which could be used for trip paperwork. Ensuring children have safe levels of staff support on a trip.
- Inclusivity on school trips, so that they are planned with each child's individual needs taken into account.

Chart 3 depicts the findings of a Likert scale where the teachers could rate on a scale of 1–5 (1: not likely and 5: very likely) how likely they would be to take their class on a school trip in the future. The responses were primarily positive, but two teachers responded with '1'.

DISCUSSION

This study explores whether primary school teachers in the United Kingdom believe that school trips can support learning and development for children with SEND and how, what skills school trips can support the acquisition and development of, and what challenges or barriers they have previously experienced when taking their classes on a school trip.

This research was shaped around the three previously established research questions and synthesised previous research and literature and my own primary

TABLE 4 What different barriers have primary school teachers experienced prior to booking a school trip, before, during and after a school trip?

Prior to booking the trip	Before the trip	During the trip	After the trip
<p>Cost is a huge factor. Funding for travel is tricky, and entrance fees can often be high.</p> <p>Financial costs, minibus reliability and time can be an issue. Ensure places are accessible and have disabled toilet facilities for those who require a larger cubicle or hoist, etc.</p> <p>Cost of having so many staff members needed, suitability for all children. School trips organised through a company/educational events team are aimed towards mainstream classes/children and do not come to a low enough level for SEN. Sometimes you need to explain that you need extra support, places for quiet time out, etc.</p> <p>Cost of living crisis...need trips that are low cost/free, anxiety around new places and change of routine for children, can become easily overwhelmed or overstimulated. Becoming too excited and not being able to focus on anything but the upcoming trip.</p>	<p>Staffing ratios and risk assessments. Teachers not considering that a child with SEND can participate in a trip with risk assessment and prior organisation put into place.</p> <p>Risk factors due to medical conditions. We locate all defib locations prior to the trip and require emergency medication.</p> <p>Staffing, we are fortunate to have 4 staff and 1 physio with 8 pupils, the physio pushes 4 pupils in a 4-seater buggy and 4 staff then 1:1 with more medically vulnerable, but if one of these members of staff is not in, this can then be difficult to have approval.</p> <p>Evolve forms can be very time-consuming! Minibus availability and lack of drivers.</p> <p>Getting enough volunteers to meet our requirements, loss of curriculum time, and time is taken to fill in risk assessments or attend pre-visits.</p> <p>Parents not wanting their children to go. Staff not wanting to support on a trip. Transport can be tricky.</p>	<p>Accessibility-coaches with wheelchair access tend to be more expensive. Most minibuses do not come equipped with the supports to lock in wheelchairs.</p> <p>Lack of understanding surrounding the needs of all pupils. It can sometimes be difficult to keep scheduling, and things do not always go to plan.</p> <p>Wheelchair access can sometimes prove to be a barrier.</p> <p>On the whole most place have been very accessible, however, I have experienced a lack of changing facilities, cafes that have not allowed a student to eat their own food even though everyone else has bought food.</p> <p>On one trip I was asked if I could get my students to be quieter.</p> <p>Behaviour: the risk of being asked to leave a place due to children's behaviour even though staff are fully trained to manage crisis behaviour.</p> <p>Accessibility at the site. Toilet facilities and changing facilities. Most places only have toddler changing rooms/beds.</p>	<p>Afterwards, usually social stories are needed around road safety and restorative conversations about hurting others, children often do not want to do these.</p> <p>The change of routine and children wanting to go again. Not understanding that we cannot.</p> <p>Challenging to support children through the transition from school to the school trip setting, and then back to school again.</p> <p>Some teachers focus on the negatives rather than the positives, and these can be a deterrent for future school trips. For example, if something goes wrong, this is fed back to the SENCO or senior leadership team which may affect a trip being agreed upon in the future.</p> <p>Lack of focus in the classroom after the school trip (all children, not just children with SEN) as they are so excited by the school trip and what happened.</p> <p>Not so much a barrier, but I like to get the children to write about the school trip, like a little evaluation, so they can reflect on what they have learned.</p>



FIGURE 1 What skills do primary school teachers believe that school trips enable children with SEND to learn and/or develop?

research methods to address these questions and contribute to the body of knowledge within this field of study.

Do primary school teachers believe that school trips positively impact education for learners with SEND, and how?

Many childhood and education theorists affirm the benefits of hands-on, experiential and contextual learning opportunities for children and young people (Kolb, 1984; Piaget, 1936). LoTc opportunities and innovative teaching strategies, such as the project approach, can have extensive benefits for children and young people, as they stimulate individual interests and learning engagement, and children can apply skills and taught knowledge within a real-life and situational context (Beames et al., 2012; Chard, 1998; Katz et al., 2018). Additionally, multisensory, practical and creative pedagogical strategies and learning opportunities, such as taking children on a school trip, are often utilised within primary education and specialist provision settings to enhance the motivation and engagement of children with SEND (Colorosa & Makela, 2014; Dillon et al., 2006; Lisle, 2007). Correspondingly, the findings of this study demonstrate that 100% of primary school teachers surveyed believe that school trips have a positive impact on education (Chart 1) and that school trips have a positive impact on education for children with SEND (Chart 2).

The primary school teachers surveyed identified various benefits of school trips (Table 1) and how school trips can benefit learning and development for learners with SEND (Table 2). One teacher responded, 'Learning beyond the classroom is even more crucial to students to SEND as their understanding of the world can be limited, and they need to experience to learn.' (Table 2). This can link back to Bourdieu's theory of habitus relative to academic outcomes and broader skills and habits, such as understanding the world and behavioural norms, which children will continue to use and develop throughout their lives (Bourdieu, 1985).

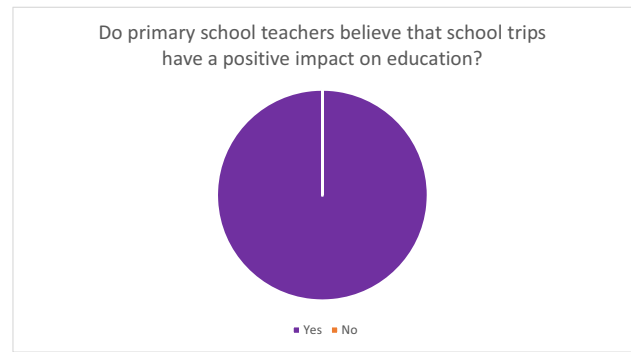


CHART 1 Do primary school teachers believe that school trips have a positive impact on education?

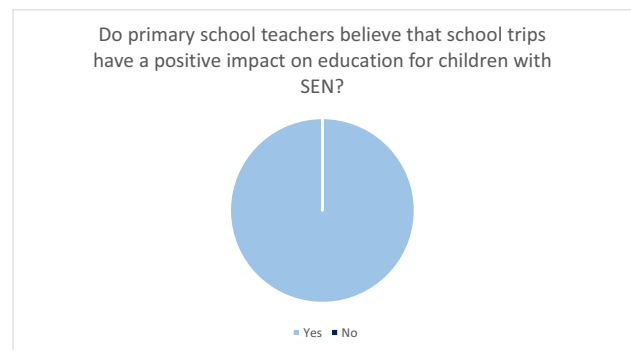


CHART 2 Do primary school teachers believe that school trips have a positive impact on education for children with SEN?

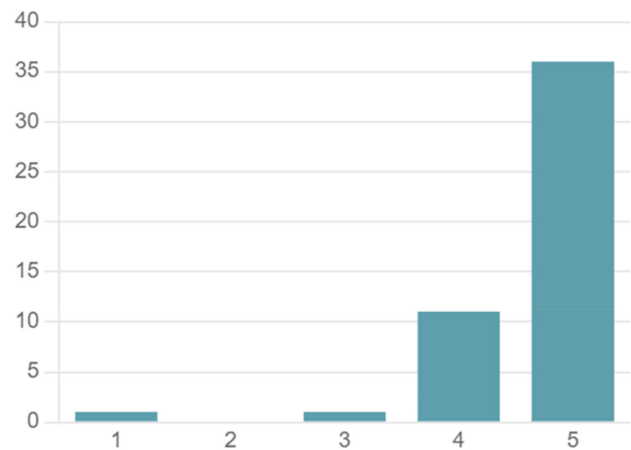


CHART 3 How likely are primary school teachers to take their class on an educational school trip in the future?

Additionally, another teacher responded, 'Trips provide the opportunity for real-life learning making connections between the classroom and the real world. They can motivate and consolidate learning. They provide the opportunity to put learning into practice' (Table 1). Depending on the level of need, learners with SEND may display low levels of learning engagement in the classroom (Odom et al., 2010; Ruble & Robson, 2007). To increase learning engagement and participation for

learners with SEND, teachers may utilise creative or innovative pedagogical approaches, such as facilitating LOTC or kinaesthetic learning opportunities to increase participation and motivation (Mobley & Fisher, 2014). This is also consistent with Kolb's theory of experiential learning, which affirms that learning through experience means that children are more likely to retain and comprehend new concepts than disengaged (Kolb, 1984).

In addition to the academic, learning and engagement benefits identified in Tables 1 and 2, the primary school teachers also identified some additional benefits of school trips for learners with SEND. One teacher responded, 'If schools can take children on trips, especially if the trips/activities are aimed at SEN, the children can have experiences they would not normally have. It makes learning inclusive.' (Table 2). This highlights the importance of facilitating LOTC opportunities for learners with SEND and the transferability of innovative and creative pedagogical strategies.

Additionally, it demonstrates that the benefits of school trips are far broader than solely academic or learning outcome focussed. For example, Stark et al. (2018) hypothesised a positive relationship between experiencing different learning environments and children's well-being (Stark et al., 2018). Conclusively, in line with the SEND Code of Practice framework (2015), primary school teachers must meet the needs of all learners in their care through inclusive practice approaches (SEND Code of Practice, 2015) and facilitating LOTC opportunities, such as educational school trips, can be an effective strategy to use.

What skills do primary school teachers believe school trips enable children with SEND to learn and/or develop?

It is clear from the literature reviewed, and the findings of this study that carefully planned and appropriate educational school trips can have extensive benefits for learners with SEND. While school excursions and contextual learning experiences can have positive implications for learning outcomes, these learning opportunities can also facilitate the acquisition and development of various skills—many of which children will continue to use and develop throughout their lives.

Figure 1 demonstrates the different skills that the primary school teachers surveyed believe that school trips facilitate for children with SEND to develop when on a school trip. Furthermore, Tables 1 and 2 also show a further range of skills linked to educational school trips. One area identified by various respondents within the questionnaire was social skills and social development—skills such as communication, confidence, learning from their peers and building relationships were identified by the primary school teachers as skills that school trips facilitate for children with SEND to develop. Some of the teachers also

identified examples where learners have previously developed skills when on a school trip in the past, including the Sealife Centre, forest schools and the supermarket (Page 20).

Literature affirms that learners with SEND often experience challenges interacting with their peers, particularly if they have social, emotional or communication impairments (Parish-Morris et al., 2007). Therefore, opportunities facilitating children's interaction, including LOTC opportunities or learning experiences on educational school trips, are imperative (Schwab et al., 2021). Such opportunities may be limited within the confinements of a traditional classroom. Facilitating opportunities for children to develop social skills links to Vygotsky's social learning theory (1962) which suggests that learning occurs through interactions with peers, adults and the environment. (Vygotsky, 1962). Similarly, Bourdieu's social capital theory affirms that individuals can learn from each other (Bourdieu, 1985).

What challenges or limitations do primary school teachers experience when taking children with SEND out of the classroom/on a school trip?

While there is a range of benefits of school trips, to facilitate a more balanced and objective argument for this study, it is imperative also to consider the challenges and limitations of school trips for learners with SEND. School trips at present are not a mandatory element of the national curriculum, and consequently, many children in the United Kingdom (UK), particularly those with SEND, often miss out on these critical learning opportunities for many reasons. Tables 3 and 4 show some barriers to school trips that the primary school teachers surveyed identified. One of the teachers responded to the survey with '[School trips] can be challenging, but the benefits outweigh the barriers for sure'. (Table 2). The teachers also identified potential changes which would make the school trip process more inclusive and manageable (Page 23).

Two main challenges of school trips for learners with SEND were identified repeatedly. Many of the primary school teachers identified accessibility factors that they have experienced on previous school trips. Physical factors, such as inappropriate care facilities and barriers to booking transport to the school location, were identified, as well as non-visible accessibility factors, such as a noisy or unfamiliar setting or smells and different rules or behavioural expectations were among the challenges and barriers that the primary school teacher have seen and experienced when taking children with SEND on a school trip in the past (Tables 3 and 4). While many school trip settings have made adaptations to be more inclusive for visitors with disabilities and impairments, such as Lincoln Castle building a lift so individuals with

a physical disability who cannot climb the stairs can still experience the medieval wall walk, many settings are not yet fully accommodating for visitors with physical and non-physical disabilities. This is an area that currently lacks academic research—and poses an opportunity for future research endeavors.

Many of the primary school teachers also identified financial barriers as a challenge to planning and carrying out school trips. One teacher responded, 'Cost is a huge factor. Funding for travel is tricky, and entrance fees can often be high' (Table 4), while other teachers mentioned the current cost of living crisis. Statistics show that 42% of primary school teachers and 41% of senior leaders have had to reduce the number of school trips and outings that they carry out due to financial reasons (The Sutton Trust, 2019). Correspondingly, the requests to parents for voluntary contributions are increasing, and parents' average annual voluntary donation to the school is constantly rising (DfE, 2018; Parentkind, 2019).

However, this approach may exclude pupils from a low socio-economic status family as paying this fee may be significantly more difficult (Gibson et al., 2018), which suggests that low socio-economic status can deter pupils or schools from participating in a school trip, meaning that the children may miss out on the previously discussed benefits. This can be linked to Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, as money and financial implications can impact children's educational experiences. Schools in higher-class areas will more likely have the financial capacity to take their children on school trips and experience the learning benefits explored within this study (Bourdieu, 1985).

Conclusively, there is one response to the survey that encapsulates the desideratum of this research project, 'Trips are the thing we all remember from our school days' (Table 1). This is consistent with my own values and interests as an early career researcher as I have experienced school trips myself as a child—and had such memorable experiences that I still relate to now during adulthood, which have fuelled my research interests.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this small-scale study were overwhelmingly positive. They affirmed the benefits of educational school trips for children with SEND: including learning and developmental benefits, curriculum benefits and skill acquisition and development. However, it is abundant that the school trip process does not come without challenges. Some areas for development were identified regarding the barriers that the primary school teachers surveyed experienced before a school trip, during the trip itself and when taking children with SEND out of the classroom, or to a new or unfamiliar setting, and after a school trip had occurred, particularly regarding socio-economic barriers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

At present, school trips are not a mandatory element of the national curriculum in the United Kingdom or internationally. The data and analysis of this small-scale study were overwhelmingly positive as they affirmed the benefits of school trips for children with SEND. In turn, the findings of this study present a positive case for encouraging primary school teachers to utilise school trips and opportunities to learn outside of the classroom, as these innovative pedagogical practices can increase learning engagement and stimulate individual interests, which has positive implications for learning and development and skill acquisition and development.

Further studies and research within this currently limited field would further contribute towards whether school trips should be a mandatory element of the national curriculum in the United Kingdom, or if educational school visits should be compulsory in global education systems.

LIMITATIONS

A main limitation of this study is the small-scale nature of this study. It would be beneficial to conduct further research using different methods with a larger sample group of primary school teachers. Attaining research data from the children and young people with SEND would also have a positive impact on the findings of the study, but the small-scale nature of this research and the ethical approval attained to conduct this study did not facilitate for this to occur at this time. While this was a small-scale study, the findings are important and significant and contribute towards the increasing body of knowledge and literature within this limited field.

Additionally, as the questionnaires for this study were completed anonymously, there was no way to trace back any of the responses to specific participants. As the link was shared online and through email, a snowballing approach was used to recruit research participants, and there is no way of verifying the identity or employment context of any participant, which may impact the credibility of the responses and the findings of the study. However, no responses stood out as rogue or fabricated, so all responses were included in the data analysis process.

A prevalent limitation of this research was the prevalent gap in the current literature within this field. Much of the literature reviewed was older, or not completely consistent with the areas covered within this research project—for example, there is more literature concerning the benefits of LOTC rather than school trips specifically, and the literature review identified a significant lack of SEND-based research. The novel findings of this study address this research gap and present opportunities for future research across different phases of education, locally and internationally, to explore the benefits and challenges to school trips for learners with SEND.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At present, there is very little current research that explores the benefits and challenges of school trips for learners with SEND. Retrospectively, it is clear that further research within this field is required to address this research gap, and this study's findings present potential future study opportunities—including studies concerning other phases of education, such as secondary schooling, further and higher education. Additionally, it would be interesting to explore how school trips are utilised and materialised in specialist provision settings, and to investigate what benefits and challenges specialist provision educators have experienced when taking their classes on external school trips. It was also fascinating how none of the participants mentioned the coronavirus pandemic in any of their responses, particularly when discussing the barriers to planning and implementing school trips, which may pose an area of focus for a future study.

The next steps of this research include a multi-perspective study that investigates the learning and skill-based benefits of school trips to heritage sites for learners with SEND—data will be gathered from staff, heritage experts and facilitators, who work at heritage sites in the United Kingdom, primary school teachers and educators and from the children themselves. This prospective study will build from the findings of this research project and the literature reviewed and referred to within this study to explore whether and how school trips to heritage sites can support learning and development and enhance the primary school history curriculum, what skills can be attained and developed on these school visits and what challenges or barriers there are to implementing school trips to heritage sites for learners with SEND.

FUNDING INFORMATION

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No conflicts of interest declared.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Due to the ethical restrictions concerning this study, supporting data are not available at this time.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Full ethical approval was attained through the Birmingham City University ethics committee in November 2022 - Project ID 1115.

ORCID

Jessica Wythe  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1417-1236>

REFERENCES

Beames, S., Higgins, P. & Nicol, R. (2012) *Learning outside the classroom: theory and guidelines for practice*. London: Routledge.

- Beneke, S. & Ostrosky, M.M. (2015) Effects of the project approach on preschoolers with diverse abilities. *Infants & Young Children*, 28(4), 355–369.
- BERA (British Educational Research Association). (2018) *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. London: BERA.
- Bhagat, A., Vyas, R. & Singh, T. (2015) Students awareness of learning styles and their perceptions to a mixed method approach for learning. *International Journal of Applied & Basic Medical Research*, 5(1), 58–65.
- Bilton, H. (2010) *Outdoor learning in the early years: management and innovation*. London: Routledge.
- Birbilli, M. & Melpomeni, T. (2008) Identifying children's interests and planning learning experiences: challenging some taken-for-granted views. In: *Early childhood education: issues and developments*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Bourdieu, P. (1985) *The forms of capital*. In *handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L. (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2013) *Successful qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Braund, M. & Reiss, M. (2006) Towards a more authentic science curriculum: the contribution of out-of-school learning. *International Journal of Science Education*, 28(12), 1373–1388.
- British Educational Research Association. (2011) *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. London: British Educational Research Association.
- Chard, S.C. (1998) *The project approach: making curriculum come alive: practical guide*. New York: Scholastic Teaching Resources.
- Colorosa, S.R. & Makela, C.K. (2014) Integrative literature review: styles of learning for autism Spectrum disorders and human resource development: informing performance management. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 5(13), 1–12.
- Department for Education. (2013) *History programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2. National curriculum in England*. London: Crown Publications.
- Department for Education. (2018) *Charging for school activities*. London: Crown Copyright.
- Department for Education. (2020, Updated in 2021) *Travel for children under 18 organised by educational settings*. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-advice-for-educational-settings/coronavirus-travel-guidance-for-educational-settings [Accessed 21st April 2023].
- Department for Education and Skills. (2006) *Learning outside the classroom manifesto*. Nottingham: DfES. Available from: www.lotc.org.uk/about/manifesto [Accessed 16 March 2016].
- DfE (Department for Education) and DoH (Department of Health). (2015) *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*. Available from: www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf [Accessed 27th March 2023].
- Dillon, J., Rickinson, M., Teamey, K., Morris, M., Choi, M.Y., Sanders, D. et al. (2006) The value of outdoor learning: evidence from research in the UK and elsewhere. *School Science Review*, 87(320), 107–112.
- Education Endowment Foundation. (2014) *Trial shows project based on a fun day out boosts writing skills by nine months*. Available from: www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/index.php?/news/trial-shows-project-based-on-a-fun-day-out-boosts-writing-skills-by-nine-mo [Accessed 20th April 2023].
- Education Scotland. (2017) *Outdoor learning hubs*. A Scottish Attainment Challenge Innovation Fund Project.
- Farnham, M. & Mutrie, N. (2003) Research section: the potential benefits of outdoor development for children with special needs. *British Journal of Special Education*, 24(1), 31–38.

- Gibson, M., Thomson, H., Banas, K., Lutje, V., McKee, M.J., Martin, S.P. et al. (2018) Welfare-to-work interventions and their effects on the mental and physical health of lone parents and their children. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2, 1–127.
- Gillott, A., Furniss, F. & Walter, A. (2001) Anxiety in high-functioning children with autism. *Autism*, 5(3), 227–286.
- GOV.UK. (2022) *Special educational needs in England*. Available at: www.explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england [Accessed 8th April 2023].
- Gray, T. (2018) Outdoor learning: not new, just newly important. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 38, 145–149.
- Gunn, K.C.M. & Delafield-Butt, J.T. (2016) Teaching children with autism spectrum disorder with restricted interests: a review of evidence for best practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(2), 408–430.
- Hooks, B. (1994) *Transgress*. In: *Teaching to transgress*. Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis.
- Howlin, P., Goode, S., Hutton, J. & Rutter, M. (2004) Adult outcome for children with autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45(2), 212–229.
- Howorth, M. (2015) *Teaching primary history*. London: A&C Black Advantage.
- Jones, T.L., Baxter, M.A.J. & Khanduja, V. (2013) A quick guide to survey research. *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons for England*, 95(1), 5–7.
- Katz, L.G., Beneke, S.J. & Ostrosky, M.M. (2018) *Implementing the project approach in inclusive early childhood classrooms: a hands-on guide for inclusive early childhood classrooms*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Co.
- Kelley, D. (2008) Education column. *Antennas and propagation magazine*, 50(4).
- Kelly, M. (2018) *Field trips: pros and cons*. Available from: www.thoughtco.com/field-trips-pros-and-cons-8401 [Accessed 20th April 2023].
- Kolb, D. (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Hoboken: Prentice Hall.
- Lisle, A.M. (2007) Assessing learning styles of adults with intellectual difficulties. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, 11(1), 23–45.
- Ludlow, A. (2020) *Midline movement: the positive effects on student behavior in a kindergarten classroom*. Master's Theses. Dominican University of California Masters of Science in Education, pp. 1–74.
- Mobley, K. & Fisher, S. (2014) Ditching the desks: kinesthetic learning in college classrooms. *The Social Studies*, 105(6), 301–309.
- Nawi, N.F. & Fuziana, A. (2016) An assessment of the effectiveness of field trips as a teaching and learning strategy: a case study of field trip to the parliament. *Journal of Academia*, 4(1), 1–11.
- Nind, M., Wearmouth, J., Collins, J., Hall, K., Rix, J. & Sheehy, K. (2004) *A systematic review of pedagogical approaches that can effectively include children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms with a particular focus on peer group interactive approaches*. UK: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.
- Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E. & Moules, N.J. (2017) Thematic analysis: striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1–13.
- Odom, S.L., Collet-Klingenberg, L., Rogers, S.J. & Hatton, D.D. (2010) Evidence-based practices in interventions for children and youth with autism Spectrum disorders. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 54(4), 275–282.
- Parentkind. (2019) *Annual Parent Survey 2019*. Available from: www.parentkind.org.uk/Research--Policy/Research/Annual-Parent-Survey-2019 [Accessed 9th May 2023].
- Parish-Morris, J., Hennon, E.A., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R.M. & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2007) Children with autism illuminate the role of social intention in word learning. *Child Development*, 78(4), 1265–1287.
- Piaget, J. (1936) *Origins of intelligence in the child*. London: Routledge.
- Piaget, J. (2008) *The psychology of the child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Price, A. (2013) Improving school attendance: can participation in outdoor learning influence attendance for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties? *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 15(2), 110–122.
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. (2007) *History Programme of study for key stage 3 and attainment target*. London: Crown Copyright.
- Ruble, L.A. & Robson, D.M. (2007) Individual and environmental determinants of engagement in autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 37(8), 1457–1468.
- Sayer, A. (2000) *Realism and social science*. London: SAGE Publications.
- School Cuts. (2019) *School cuts research fairly represents the facts*. Available from: <http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk/story/funding-crisis-explained> [Accessed 5th May 2023].
- Schwab, S., Lehofer, M. & Tanzer, N. (2021) The impact of social behavior and Peers' attitudes toward students with special educational needs on self-reported peer interactions. *Frontiers in Education*, 6(561662), 1–9.
- Seaman, A. & Rheingold, A. (2013) Circle talks as situated experiential learning: context, identity, and knowledgeability in "learning from reflection". *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 36, 155–174.
- Simon, N. (2010) *The participatory museum*. Santa Cruz, CA: Museum 2.0.
- Stark, J., Meschik, M., Singleton, P.A. & Schützhofer, B. (2018) Active school travel, attitudes and psychological well-being of children. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 56, 453–465.
- The Sutton Trust. (2019) School funding and pupil premium 2019. *The Sutton Trust: NFER Teacher Voice Survey*, 2019, 1–5.
- Tranquillo, J. (2008) *Kinesthetic learning in the classroom*. Paper presented at 2008 Annual Conference & Exposition. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1962) *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Waite, S. (2017) *Children learning outside the classroom*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Whitesell, E. (2016) A day at the museum: the impact of field trips on middle school science achievement. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 53(7), 1036–1054.

How to cite this article: Wythe, J. (2024) 'Trips are the thing we all remember from our school days': The learning value of school trips for children with special educational needs from the perspective of primary school teachers. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 24, 389–404. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12638>