

## A Study about SENCO Impact

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### 1. Who is a SENCO?

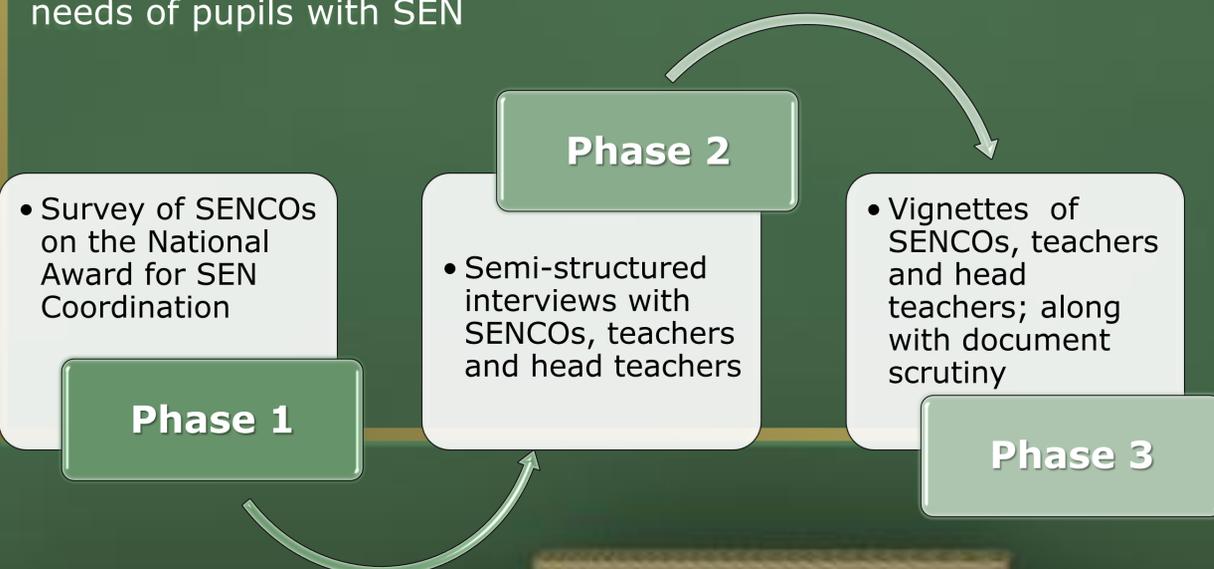
A Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in England co-ordinates assessment and provision for supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), helping teachers to develop and implement appropriate planning and resources for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. (DfE, 1994)



\* Image from school in which data was collected for this research project

### 2. Research Aims and Methodology

- To consider how SENCOs contribute to teachers' SEN-skills
- To investigate how SENCOs motivate teachers to manage the needs of pupils with SEN



### 3. Findings

- Complexities in being 'agents of change'

*"I tend to think of what I am doing as sort of red, amber, green... and quite often the SENCO role is an amber, which to me is the sort of thing I go home at night and worry about and think I really should have done something about that today... there's a lot of guilt around my SENCO role because I still don't feel I am doing it well enough."* [SENCO]

- National/institutional SEN-ethos
- SENCOs' experience/knowledge

*"All I can say is that the SENCO role does change because of... the government's changing policies ... so suddenly you're telling teachers, 'Well it's all changed.' I think the main thing is that the SENCO has got to be respected and that SENCO has to have the knowledge."* [Teacher]

*"I think if you are a teaching SENCO, you're able to approach (teachers) in a way... (we) understand, so I think that could be positive, but I also think that can be the opposite where you have, well, 'Why are you telling us what we need to do (if you are not a teaching SENCO)?'"* [Teacher]

- Professional identity: taking change on board

*"People don't like change; many changes are happening at the minute... it is difficult for some teachers to accept... I understand that as a teacher myself... we think 'Well, what is a SEN child?' And when we're finally given a definition of it, we come back and we're like 'Oh my God, that's not right!'... Give (us) time to adapt to it."* [SENCO]

### 4. Outcomes

This research has informed the nature of support mechanisms for SENCOs, teachers and head teachers, who utilise findings to facilitate effective initiatives and exchanges which meet the needs of children with SEN, e.g. SEN-skill audits.