

Influence of School Administration on the Mainstreaming of Learners with Reading Difficulties in Public Primary Schools in Koibatek Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya

Mary J Kiptum¹, Naftali Rop¹, Ann Maina²

Maasai Mara University, School of Education, Department of Special Needs and Early Childhood Education¹
Maasai Mara University, School of Education, Department of Special Needs and Early Childhood Education²

Abstract: Mainstreaming involves integrating learners with disabilities into general education classrooms, but it often overlooks the diverse needs of children, including reading difficulties. The study objectives were to: determine the influence of school administrations' Characteristics effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs and establish the influence of school administrators' strategies on the mainstreaming learners with RDs. Systems Theory, developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) was used to guide this study, focusing on development of reading difficulties and the need for more effective teaching methods for these learners. The study was conducted in Koibatek Sub- County, Baringo County. The Sub County has a total of 56 public Primary schools of which 11 schools are practicing mainstreaming and were used in the study. Selection of study sample was done through purposive sampling. A total of 166 respondents selected from various categories were used for the study. Research instruments were piloted to ensure reliability and validity was maintained using Cronbach's Alpha. A descriptive survey design was used where both quantitative and qualitative data was collected using semi- structured interviews, questionnaires and observation checklist. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically as per the objectives while quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and presented through tables, charts and summary paragraphs. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 was utilized to prepare and organize data for analysis. The first objective found that 33% of administrators had over 20 years of teaching experience, 30% had 5–10 years, 21% had 11–20 years, and 15% had below 5 years. Regarding academic qualifications, 52% held certificates, 27% diplomas, and 21% degrees, indicating varied levels of professional training. Only 30% of administrators had SNE training, while 70% had none, suggesting limited specialized preparation for mainstreaming learners with reading difficulties. The second objective found limited parental involvement, with 58.8% reporting involvement, while 60.3% lacked knowledge of reading instruction and 70.6% did not help with sounding words. The third objective revealed inadequate resources, including computers and resource rooms (93.9% each), counsellors (90.9%), libraries and templates (84.8% each), and phonic books (78.8%). Learners also reported inadequate resource rooms (96.5%), computers (93.0%), and counselling services (91.2%). The fourth objective identified major barriers, including few trained teachers (100%), inadequate funding (90.6%), poor teacher preparedness (62.5%), and inadequate parental investment (71.9%). Overall, 93.8% reported that low marks among learners with RDs affected school mean scores. The study concluded that school administrators, Parents and BOM members need to take an active role in ensuring that they are aware of the learners' special needs so that they can assist the teachers in taking care of their learners' needs. Teachers and parents should share on various approaches to enhance the learning process in mainstreaming, and focus more on acquisition of resources to support mainstreaming. Based on the study findings, it is recommended that school administrators should consider tailored instructional strategies, early detection and intervention, provision of resources, professional development for teachers and effective collaborations amongst stakeholders for effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs in Koibatek Sub-County.

Keywords: School Administration, Mainstreaming of Learners and Reading Difficulties

1.0 Background to the Study

Mainstreaming refers to educating learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms alongside their peers while providing appropriate instructional, assessment, and support mechanisms (UNESCO, 2024). Inclusive education promotes equitable access, participation, and learning opportunities by requiring schools to adapt teaching and support systems to diverse learner needs (UNESCO, 2024). School administrators, including head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers, and other leaders, coordinate teaching, resources, teacher support, parental engagement, and inclusive education practices. Learning difficulties are persistent challenges in acquiring academic skills, particularly reading, writing, and mathematics, with reading difficulties being significant because reading supports learning across the curriculum. Sun et al. (2022) estimated the prevalence of developmental dyslexia among primary school learners at approximately 7.1%, highlighting the

need for appropriate identification and support. Learners with reading difficulties benefit from evidence-based interventions targeting foundational reading skills, comprehension, and writing through individualized or small-group instruction (Al Otaiba et al., 2023). King et al. (2023) further emphasize the importance of selecting rigorously supported reading interventions for learners with learning disabilities. Therefore, effective mainstreaming depends on school administration, teacher preparedness, instructional practices, learning resources, parental involvement, and administrative support that address learners' diverse reading needs (UNESCO, 2024).

In the United States, mainstreaming learners with reading difficulties emphasizes early identification, evidence-based interventions, teacher preparation, administrative leadership, parental involvement, and adequate instructional resources. Evidence indicates substantial reading achievement disparities between learners with and without disabilities, demonstrating the need for effective assessment, differentiated instruction, intervention, and continuous monitoring (IES, 2024). Evidence-based guidance recommends interventions targeting decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension through coordinated involvement of teachers, specialists, administrators, and parents (IES, 2022, 2023). Multi-tiered systems of support further require trained personnel, effective instructional planning, and coordinated school-level implementation (IES, 2025). In England, mainstreaming similarly emphasizes school leadership, systematic reading instruction, teacher competence, assessment, resources, parental engagement, and timely intervention. The Department for Education (DfE, 2023) emphasizes systematic synthetic phonics, reading fluency, comprehension, assessment, and additional support for struggling readers, while the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2024) recommends explicit comprehension instruction through whole-class, small-group, and targeted approaches. Therefore, evidence from both contexts demonstrates that effective mainstreaming depends on strong school administration, teacher capacity, resource allocation, coordinated interventions, assessment, and sustained institutional support.

In South Africa, mainstreaming learners with reading difficulties is embedded within inclusive education through identification, assessment, intervention, and coordinated support for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2024). The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) framework emphasizes early identification, learner monitoring, parental involvement, and appropriate educational support, while teacher training strengthens schools' capacity to implement inclusive practices (DBE, 2024, 2025). Research further indicates that effective mainstreaming of learners with dyslexia-related characteristics depends on schools' ability to identify reading difficulties and provide appropriate interventions (Kgatse et al., 2024). However, inadequate specialist support, infrastructure, and learning resources continue to constrain implementation, particularly in disadvantaged and rural schools (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2024). In Egypt, educational integration has expanded substantially, with increased enrolment of learners with special educational needs in regular schools and considerable investment in teacher training (Ministry of Education and Technical Education [MOETE], 2021). Recent initiatives emphasize strengthening school leadership, curriculum adaptation, parental awareness, technological support, and institutional capacity for inclusive education (MOETE, 2024). Guidance on learning disabilities also highlights phonological awareness, word recognition, and reading comprehension difficulties as areas requiring assessment and intervention (Egyptian Health Council, 2024). Therefore, evidence from South Africa and Egypt demonstrates that successful mainstreaming requires strong administration, trained teachers, early identification, adequate resources, parental involvement, and coordinated learner support.

In Kenya, literacy is a fundamental component of competency-based education because learners require reading skills to access information, demonstrate competencies, and progress through different levels of education (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD], 2018). Evidence from Uwezo Kenya (2016) revealed substantial reading gaps among primary school learners, with many failing to attain basic reading competencies expected at lower grades. Early identification and intervention are therefore important because timely support can enable most learners experiencing reading difficulties to overcome their challenges (Yaseen, 2013). Kiplagat (2019) found that most Grade 5 learners with learning disabilities in mainstream public primary schools in Eldoret East experienced frustrated reading levels, characterized by slow reading, poor word recognition, mispronunciation, omissions, hesitations, and repetitions. In Koibatek Sub-County, comparative reading assessments further indicate the need to examine how learners with reading difficulties perform across regular and mainstreamed school settings. Reading difficulties can limit learners' access to educational opportunities, progression to higher levels of learning, and acquisition of essential literacy and numeracy competencies (Gichuru et al., 2021). Studies have also identified inadequate learning resources and teacher-related factors as major barriers to the integration of learners with special educational needs in regular schools (Kiplagat et al., 2019; Mutai, 2018). Therefore, there remains a need to examine the influence of school administration on the effective mainstreaming and educational support of learners with reading difficulties in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Reading is a foundational competency that enables learners to access information, participate in classroom learning, communicate effectively, and progress across the curriculum. Kenya's policy framework requires learners with disabilities and learning difficulties to be mainstreamed in regular schools and emphasizes early assessment, intervention, differentiated instruction, adequate resources, teacher capacity, and effective monitoring (Ministry of Education, 2018). However, foundational reading gaps remain widespread, with Uwezo (2021) reporting that only about two out of five Grade 4 learners could read a Grade 3-level text. Such persistent gaps may limit learners' participation, academic achievement, confidence, and progression, particularly among those experiencing reading difficulties. Evidence further shows that many Kenyan learners advance through grades without mastering foundational literacy skills, revealing a gap between school attendance and actual learning achievement (Zizi Afrique Foundation, 2022). Similar reading challenges have been observed in Koibatek Sub-County, despite national policies promoting inclusive education and mainstreaming. These challenges raise concerns about school administrators' preparedness, instructional strategies, resource utilization, and ability to address administrative barriers affecting learners with reading difficulties. Therefore, the study sought to determine the influence of school administration on the mainstreaming of learners with reading difficulties in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objective:

- i. Determine the influence of school administrators' Characteristics on the effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs in public mainstreamed primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County.
- ii. Determine the influence of school administrators on use of available instructional resources in schools on effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs in public mainstreamed primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County.

2.0 Literature Review

The study reviewed literature on influence of school administrators' Characteristics on the effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs and influence of school administrators' strategies on effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs in public mainstreamed primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County. The theoretical framework for the study is also provided.

2.1 Administrators' Characteristics in Mainstreaming Learners with Reading Difficulties

School administration is an important organizational factor in determining how learners with reading difficulties are identified, supported, and retained in mainstream classrooms. It involves school leaders, teachers, special needs personnel, parents, boards of management, and other stakeholders responsible for educational decisions. Effective administration requires leaders to establish inclusive school cultures, mobilize resources, support teachers, and recognize learner diversity as part of education (UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). In Kenya, policy emphasizes early identification, assessment, intervention, appropriate placement, and support services for learners with special educational needs (Ministry of Education, 2018). Leadership characteristics such as commitment, knowledge, positive attitudes, collaboration, instructional supervision, accountability, and responsiveness are therefore important. Evidence shows that principal leadership is positively associated with school performance and learner achievement (Shen et al., 2021; Wu & Shen, 2022). Similarly, OECD (2021) emphasizes professional collaboration, instructional guidance, and supportive school environments as important leadership practices. Kenyan studies further indicate that teacher preparedness, institutional support, and administrative strategies influence the implementation of inclusive education (Ileri et al., 2020; Moruri et al., 2021).

However, effective school administration does not automatically guarantee successful mainstreaming because administrative practices operate within wider organizational and systemic conditions. Evidence from Kenyan public primary schools indicates that although schools attempt to accommodate learners with disabilities, translating inclusive education policies into consistent classroom practices remains challenging (Ohba & Malenya, 2020). Inadequate preparation of teachers and administrators can further limit the capacity of schools to support learners with special educational needs (Rasugu et al., 2022). Similarly, the World Bank (2022) identifies inadequate teacher preparation, weak support systems, and limited institutional capacity as continuing barriers to inclusive education in low- and middle-income countries. UNICEF (2021) also emphasizes the importance of coordination among schools, families, and specialized support services in addressing barriers to learning. These findings suggest that administrative commitment must be accompanied by adequate resources, trained personnel, effective collaboration, and appropriate support systems.

Existing literature provides useful evidence on leadership and inclusive education, but important contextual, conceptual, and methodological gaps remain. Merga et al. (2021) found that many secondary-school teachers did not perceive adequate whole-school strategies for supporting struggling literacy learners, although the Australian secondary-school context limits direct application to Kenyan primary schools. Similarly, research on educators' experiences highlights challenges related to preparation, confidence, time, and professional support, but gives limited attention to how specific administrative characteristics influence mainstreaming. International frameworks emphasize collaborative leadership involving schools, families, communities, and support services in promoting inclusion (UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). Kenyan studies have largely examined inclusive education and disability broadly rather than reading difficulties as a distinct learning need (Ileri et al., 2020; Ohba & Malenya, 2020). Existing evidence also suggests that effective mainstreaming requires collaboration among administrators, teachers, coordinators, and support personnel. However, limited empirical attention has been given to the roles of head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers, and class teachers in identifying, referring, monitoring, and supporting learners with reading difficulties. Therefore, a contextual and empirical gap exists concerning how school administration characteristics influence the mainstreaming of learners with reading difficulties in public primary schools in rural settings such as Koibatek Sub-County.

2.2 Instructional Resources and Mainstreaming of Learners with Reading Difficulties

Instructional resources were identified as essential for effective mainstreaming because they enabled teachers to respond to the diverse learning needs of learners with reading difficulties (RDs). Relevant resources included graded readers, phonics materials, word cards, storybooks, visual and audio materials, assessment tools, digital resources, and assistive technologies. UNESCO (2020) emphasized the importance of appropriate learning materials and accessible environments in inclusive education, while the Ministry of Education (2018) and Republic of Kenya (2022) recognized the need for specialized resources and assistive technologies for learners with special educational needs. Evidence further showed that assistive technology and accessible digital resources could improve participation and educational opportunities when appropriately integrated into teaching (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2021). In Kenya, however, instructional resources remained inadequate, unevenly distributed, and sometimes poorly maintained, limiting their contribution to effective mainstreaming (Rasugu et al., 2022).

The literature further indicated that the availability of instructional resources alone did not guarantee effective mainstreaming or improved learning outcomes. Their effectiveness depended on appropriateness, accessibility, maintenance, teacher competence, and regular classroom utilization. UNESCO (2021, 2022) emphasized that teachers required adequate training and competencies to use assistive and inclusive learning technologies effectively, while the World Bank (2022) noted that learning outcomes depended on the interaction between teachers, instructional practices, resources, and supportive education systems. Fernández-Batanero et al. (2022) similarly stressed the importance of selecting and integrating assistive technologies according to learners' needs. Therefore, school administrators played a central role in identifying resource requirements, allocating and maintaining available materials, supervising their use, and ensuring that teachers adapted resources to support learners with RDs (Rasugu et al., 2022).

Existing literature demonstrates that instructional resources can support the mainstreaming of learners with reading difficulties (RDs), but important conceptual and methodological gaps remain. Many studies examine resources broadly in relation to learners with disabilities or special educational needs without isolating the specific needs of learners with RDs, as demonstrated by Rasugu et al. (2022) and Fernández-Batanero et al. (2022). Similarly, UNESCO (2020, 2021) discusses resources and assistive technologies within broader inclusive education frameworks, with limited attention to school-level administrative decisions concerning particular learning difficulties. Existing research also tends to emphasize resource availability rather than examining their utilization, functionality, maintenance, accessibility, and integration into classroom instruction. This distinction is important because the presence of computers, textbooks, or specialized materials does not necessarily mean that learners with RDs access or benefit from them. In Kenya, evidence indicates that some specialized resources are inadequate, unevenly distributed, non-functional, or difficult for teachers to use effectively (Rasugu et al., 2022). Therefore, limited empirical attention has been given to how school administrators assess resource needs, allocate and maintain materials, supervise their use, facilitate teacher training, and promote equitable access for learners with RDs, particularly in rural settings such as Koibatek Sub-County.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Systems Theory developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968), which viewed an organization as an interconnected system whose components interacted with one another and with the external

environment to achieve common goals. In the context of mainstreaming learners with reading difficulties (RDs), the public primary school was considered a system comprising administrators, teachers, learners, parents, instructional resources, policies, and support structures whose coordinated functioning influenced educational outcomes. School administrators constituted an important subsystem because their professional experience, academic qualifications, and specialized training influenced their capacity to coordinate inclusive practices. Administrative strategies such as teacher supervision, parental engagement, learner assessment, instructional support, and professional development interacted with the availability and use of instructional resources to facilitate effective mainstreaming. However, barriers such as inadequate funding, limited teacher preparation, insufficient resources, and weak parental support disrupted these interactions and constrained appropriate support for learners with RDs. The theory therefore provided an appropriate framework for examining how administrators' characteristics, strategies, instructional resource utilization, and administrative barriers collectively influenced the mainstreaming of learners with reading difficulties in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County.

3.1 Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine the influence of school administration on the mainstreaming of learners with reading difficulties (RDs) in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County, Baringo County. The study was conducted in 11 purposively selected mainstreaming schools from an initial population of 56 public primary schools, with a target population comprising school administrators, teachers, Board of Management members, parents, learners with RDs, and the EARC officer. Purposive and criterion sampling procedures were used to select schools and respondents with direct experience of mainstreaming, while complete enumeration was applied to the 61 identified Grade 6 learners with RDs and their parents or guardians. Data were collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interview schedules, and an observation checklist to obtain quantitative and qualitative information and facilitate triangulation. The instruments were piloted in four mainstreaming schools in Mogotio Sub-County, involving 24 participants, and their reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded an overall coefficient of 0.83. Face and content validity were established through researcher and supervisor review and expert judgment by four specialists from the School of Education at Maasai Mara University. Data collection followed the acquisition of institutional authorization and a NACOSTI research permit, after which questionnaires, interviews, and observations were conducted during a two-week field exercise. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and means in SPSS version 27, while qualitative data were coded and analyzed thematically before being integrated through triangulation. Ethical standards were observed through informed participation, confidentiality, protection of respondents' identities, institutional permissions, and secure handling of research information throughout the study.

4.0 Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the study findings in line with the research objectives. Before presenting the results, the adequacy of the response rate for the study was assessed and presented in the following section.

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 166 questionnaires were distributed to head teachers, senior teachers, Grade 6 teachers, parents, BoM members, and learners with reading difficulties. Of these, 33 questionnaires for head teachers, senior teachers, and Grade 6 teachers were returned, representing a 100% response rate. Among parents and BoM members, 68 out of 72 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 94.4%, while 57 out of 61 learner questionnaires were returned, representing 93.4%. Overall, 158 of the 166 questionnaires were successfully returned, resulting in a response rate of 95.2%, which was considered adequate for analysis and substantially exceeded the commonly recommended 70% benchmark (Latour et al., 2021). The high response rate reduced the likelihood of non-response bias and provided a strong basis for reliable data analysis, while all completed observation checklists were also included in the analysis (Holtom et al., 2022).

4.2 Administrations' Characteristics on Mainstreaming Learners with RDs

The school administrators' characteristics considered in this study included; teaching experience, level of training in teaching and level of training in SNE.

4.2.1 Years of Teaching Experience for Administrators

The study sought to establish years of teaching experience of the school administrators. This was important because the concept of mainstreaming requires administrators who have experience and can be able to

identify learners with learning difficulties and assist them accordingly. The results presented in figure 2 show that most teachers who participated included 11 (33%) have been teaching for more than 20 years, while 10 (30%) have been teaching for 5-10 years, 7 (21%) have been teaching for 11-20 years and 5 (15%) have been teaching for less than 5 years. This demonstrates that majority of respondents have been teaching for a good period of time therefore had gained experience in handling learners with learning difficulties and to comprehend issues that face learners within the mainstreamed classes. The findings agree with Ireri et al., (2020) who established that teachers with experience are likely to embrace mainstreaming practices in public primary schools. Experience, they say is the best teacher. This means duration of teaching experience among administrators in mainstreamed schools is an added advantage in mainstreaming.

4.2.2 Findings on Level of Training of Administrators

Training of teachers is crucial in facilitating learning. This is more important for administrators dealing with children with RDs. This is a key aspect of mainstreaming. Dealing with RDs is challenging and skills are required to help in teaching and dealing with such children. The level of training affects how instructors deal with diverse challenges facing learners and their capacity to comprehend their condition. Most of administrators who responded 17(52%) were holders of certificate qualifications, 9(27%) were holders of diploma and 7(21%) were holders of degree. Most teachers in public primary schools have P1 certificate of education which is the minimum requirement for teaching at primary school with some having taken a diploma and a degree certificate course. The results agree with findings of (Ireri et al., 2020; who indicated that level of education allow teachers to learn new skills, gain information, and build a positive mind set which will help them manage a variety of learners with varying needs. Most respondents had the basic requirements that is certificates and may have acquired experience from their years of experience to handle, identify them and assist them accordingly. Few had diplomas and degrees which calls for more skilled personnel in mainstreamed schools.

4.2.3 Response on training in SNE among Administrators

The study also sought to find out whether teachers had trained in SNE to expand their skills in handling learners with learning difficulties. The results show that majority of administrators 23(70%) in public primary schools had not undergone SNE training while only 10(30%) were trained. This implies that most of the teachers rely on experience and skills gained through long term interaction with learners with special needs and how to handle them. The study further required administrators to indicate areas of training in SNE and findings indicated that they had acquired skills in emotion and behavioral difficulties, emotional and behavioural identity, inclusive education and SNE management. Despite the fact that a good number of administrators have undergone SNE training and may be knowledgeable in handling learners in mainstreamed schools, teachers trained in SLD such as RD are rare. This agrees with other scholars (Geesa et al., 2022) and Denton et al. (2021), who noted that most mainstreaming schools do not have trained teachers in all areas of SNE and this could be a challenge on how they handle the learners with learning difficulties and other challenges.

4.3 Instructional Resources and Mainstreaming of Learners with Reading Difficulties

4.3.1 Parents Responses on Instructional Strategies used in Assisting Learners with RDs

The second objective sought to establish the instructional strategies used by teachers while mainstreaming learners with RDs. The following are responses from the few parents and BOM members who were asked to rate various question statement related to the instructional strategies used by teachers. The responses were summarized in Table 1;

Table 1: Parents Response on Engagement with Teachers in Relation to Parents Engagement /Assisting Learners with RD.

Instructional Strategies	Yes	No
Teachers involve you in your Child's reading	40(58.8%)	28(41.2%)
Do you know how children are learning to read	27(39.7%)	41(60.3%)
Do you Sound words for the children	20(29.4%)	48(70.6%)
Does the school support you to assist in your child's reading?	42(61.7%)	26(38.2%)
Do you have the capacity to assist your child in reading?	28(41.2%)	40(58.8%)
Do you receive information that enable you help your children in reading?	23(33.8%)	45(66.2%)
Are you guided by the school on how to use the given materials to assist your child/children with RDs	46(67.6%)	22(32.4%)
Average	34(20.6%)	54(79.4%)

The findings showed that parental involvement was recognized as an important strategy for supporting learners with reading difficulties (RDs), although parents and Board of Management (BoM) members had limited understanding of how such learners were taught. While 58.8% of respondents agreed that parents were involved in children's reading, 60.3% disagreed that parents and BoM members understood how learners with RDs were taught to read. Most respondents (70.6%) also indicated that parents did not actively participate in sounding words, suggesting that reading instruction was largely left to teachers. However, 61.7% reported that schools supported and enabled parents to participate in the learning process. The findings further showed that 58.8% of parents lacked the capacity to assist learners with RDs, while 66.2% lacked sufficient information to support effective reading at home. Although 67.6% of parents were guided on how to use instructional materials provided by schools, 79.4% did not effectively understand the instructional strategies used by teachers. These findings indicated a need for stronger parent-school collaboration, regular guidance, and training to enhance parental participation in supporting learners with RDs. The findings were consistent with KICD (2024), which emphasized parental engagement as essential for improving learning outcomes, and Ruwa (2022), who noted that the influence of BoM members depended on their level of involvement and understanding of learners' needs.

4.3.2 Response on Instructional Strategies Used on Learners with Reading Difficulties (RDs) according to learners.

The findings showed that all learners with reading difficulties (RDs) received support from teachers and parents through various instructional strategies that addressed their specific learning needs. The main strategies included assistance with reading comprehension, word recognition, sounding of words, reading speed, provision of storybooks and class readers, and individualized support to help learners catch up with their peers. Teachers also encouraged peer assistance by linking learners with RDs to other learners who could support them during reading activities, while parents willing to assist at home were guided by teachers on appropriate ways of providing support. Learners appreciated the additional assistance and efforts made by teachers to improve their reading skills and promote effective mainstreaming. The findings demonstrated that teachers played a central role in adapting instruction, providing appropriate learning materials, offering individual support, and facilitating peer and parental involvement. These findings were consistent with Chumo (2020), Hidayah (2023), and Gordana (2021), who emphasized that teachers' use of varied and appropriate instructional strategies was important in supporting learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools. However, the findings also revealed a limitation in learners' responses, as most could not clearly indicate when they received additional assistance, suggesting that structured extra instructional time may not have been consistently provided.

4.3.3 Response on the Instructional Strategies and Mainstreaming Learners with Reading Difficulties (RDs) According to the Administrators

The findings showed that most administrators had not established specific reading programmes for learners with reading difficulties (RDs), with 68.8% reporting the absence of such programmes compared with 31.2% who had them. Administrators identified several instructional strategies, including phonics, word identification, sounding of words, scaffolding, read-aloud activities, shared reading, peer reading, paired reading, and individualized programmes. Phonics, word identification, peer reading, and individualized support were considered the most effective strategies for helping learners with RDs improve their reading skills and participate effectively in mainstream classrooms. However, administrators reported inadequate parental cooperation and insufficient instructional resources, which limited the effective implementation of these strategies. The findings also revealed weak collaboration among teachers, parents, learners, and BoM members in monitoring learners' progress and supporting their instructional needs. These findings agreed with Cherotich et al. (2022) and Oduor et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of parent-teacher collaboration in implementing inclusive education and supporting learners with learning disabilities. The findings further supported Kathleen (2021) and Liew (2022), who noted that appropriate instructional strategies were essential for promoting inclusion and successful mainstreaming of learners with special educational needs. Overall, the findings indicated that effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs required structured reading programmes, appropriate instructional strategies, adequate resources, and coordinated support from teachers, parents, peers, and school administrators.

4.3.4 Response on the Instructional Strategies on Mainstreaming Learners with Reading Difficulties (RDs) According to the EARC

The EARC findings indicated that learners with reading difficulties (RDs) commonly experienced challenges in decoding and sounding words, associating words with their meanings, reading comprehension,

fluency, speed, accuracy, and expression. To address these challenges, the EARC identified instructional strategies such as repeated reading and reading aloud to improve pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. The use of rulers and reading windows was also recommended to help learners track words and avoid skipping or repeating lines during reading. Hands-on activities, including word-building exercises and BINGO games, were considered useful in increasing learners' interest and engagement in reading. The EARC further noted that assessment adaptations could be made to accommodate the individual learning needs of learners with RDs. However, the EARC office did not have a specific programme for addressing RDs, although schools were encouraged to develop programmes to support affected learners. These findings were consistent with Alqahtani (2024), who emphasized the need for a holistic approach to teaching learners with RDs that considers individual learning needs and preferred learning styles. Overall, the findings highlighted the importance of varied, learner-centred, and individualized instructional strategies in

5.0 Conclusions

The study concluded that school administrators played a critical role in the effective mainstreaming of learners with reading difficulties (RDs), with their teaching experience, professional training, and ability to implement appropriate instructional strategies influencing the quality of support provided to these learners. The findings established that most schools lacked adequate reading programmes, instructional materials, specialized resources, and sufficient trained personnel to effectively address the diverse needs of learners with RDs. Teachers were often overwhelmed by the demands of mainstreaming, while limited parental involvement and inadequate collaboration among teachers, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders further weakened the implementation process. The study also established that the absence of appropriate learning resources and an enabling learning environment disadvantaged learners with RDs and contributed to their continued learning difficulties. Effective mainstreaming therefore required coordinated efforts among school administrators, teachers, parents, BoM members, EARC personnel, and other stakeholders to provide adequate resources, strengthen teacher capacity, and remove barriers to learning. The study further concluded that administrators should take a leading role in planning and implementing appropriate instructional strategies, mobilizing resources, supporting teachers, and strengthening parental participation. Adequate staffing, specialized training, suitable instructional materials, and continuous support were essential for improving the participation and learning outcomes of learners with RDs. Overall, the study concluded that mainstreaming of learners with RDs in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub-County remained largely ineffective due to inadequate resources, limited specialized teacher preparation, weak stakeholder involvement, and persistent administrative barriers.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions from the study, the following recommendations were made;

- i. School administrators should lead the implementation of policies and programmes that promote effective mainstreaming and inclusion of learners with special needs, particularly those with reading difficulties (RDs).
- ii. Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission should collaborate with Koibatek Sub-County to provide qualified teachers, adequate classrooms, appropriate instructional materials, functional libraries, and other resources needed to support learners with RDs.
- iii. Parents and Boards of Management (BoM) should actively support mainstreaming by attending school meetings, acquiring relevant knowledge and skills, supporting teachers, and assisting learners with RDs at home.
- iv. Schools and stakeholders should strengthen collaboration and shared responsibility to create a supportive learning environment that promotes effective mainstreaming of learners with RDs.

References

- [1]. Al Otaiba, S., Connor, C. M., Folsom, J. S., Wanzek, J., Greulich, L., Schatschneider, C., & Wagner, R. K. (2023). Reading interventions for students with learning disabilities: A review of the evidence. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 38(2), 85–101.
- [2]. Batty (2020). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.
- [3]. Cherotich, C., et al. (2022). *[Study on collaboration between head teachers and parents in the implementation of inclusive education in Kenyan public primary schools]*.
- [4]. Darling-Hammond, L., Hyster, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2020). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.
- [5]. Department for Education. (2023). *The reading framework: Teaching the foundations of literacy*. UK Government.

- [6]. Department of Basic Education. (2024). *Screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS) policy: Strengthening inclusive education in South Africa*. Republic of South Africa.
- [7]. Department of Basic Education. (2025). *Inclusive education and learner support: Annual implementation report*. Republic of South Africa.
- [8]. Denton, C. A., Montroy, J. J., Zucker, T. A., & Cannon, G. (2021). Designing an intervention in reading and self-regulation for students with significant reading difficulties, including dyslexia. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 44(3), 170–182. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948719899479>
- [9]. Education Endowment Foundation. (2021). *Reading comprehension strategies: Technical appendix and evaluation report*. Education Endowment Foundation.
- [10]. Education Endowment Foundation. (2024). *Improving literacy in key stage 2: Guidance report*. Education Endowment Foundation.
- [11]. Egyptian Health Council. (2024). *Guideline for the assessment and management of learning disabilities*. Egyptian Health Council.
- [12]. Fernández-Batanero, J. M., Montenegro-Rueda, M., Fernández-Cerero, J., & García-Martínez, I. (2022). Assistive technology for students with disabilities: A systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(13), 1–20.
- [13]. Gichuru, C., Khayeka-Wandabwa, C., & colleagues. (2021). *[Study on educational opportunities, literacy and numeracy among children with disabilities]*.
- [14]. Global Partnership for Education. (2022). *2022 results report*. Global Partnership for Education.
- [15]. Geesa, [initials]., et al. (2022). *[Publication details not provided]*.
- [16]. Gordana, [initials]. (2021). *[Study on instructional strategies for learners with special needs in mainstream schools]*.
- [17]. Hidayah, N., & Addinna, A. (2023). English teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension at the second grade students in SMPN 1 Panyabungan Selatan. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 12(4). <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v12i4.125828>
- [18]. Holtom, B. C., Baruch, Y., Aguinis, H., & Ballinger, G. A. (2022). Survey response rates: Trends and a validity assessment framework. *Human Relations*, 75(8), 1563–1590. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267211070769>
- [19]. Institute of Education Sciences. (2022). *Providing reading interventions for students in grades 4–9*. What Works Clearinghouse, U.S. Department of Education.
- [20]. Institute of Education Sciences. (2023). *Interventions for students with reading disabilities: Evidence from classroom and small-group instruction*. U.S. Department of Education.
- [21]. Institute of Education Sciences. (2024). *National assessment of educational progress: Reading 2024*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- [22]. Institute of Education Sciences. (2025). *Multi-tiered systems of support for reading: Evidence-based implementation guidance*. U.S. Department of Education.
- [23]. Ireri, B. N., King'endo, M., Wangila, E., & Thurair, S. (2020). Inclusive education in Kenya: Teacher preparedness and institutional support. *International Journal of Special Education*, 35(2), 1–12.
- [24]. Ireri, B. R., King'endo, M., Wangila, E., & Thurair, S. (2020). Policy strategies for effective implementation of inclusive education in Kenya. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 12(1), 28–42. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2019.0622>
- [25]. Kathleen, [(2021). *[Study on instructional strategies for learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools]*.
- [26]. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. (2018). *Basic education curriculum framework*. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.
- [27]. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. (2019). *Guidelines on parental empowerment and engagement*. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.
- [28]. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. (2021). *Basic education curriculum framework*. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.
- [29]. Kenya Institute of Special Education. (2021). *Training and support for learners with special educational needs*. Kenya Institute of Special Education.
- [30]. Kgatse, M. M., Mampane, M. R., & Makoelle, T. M. (2024). Supporting learners with dyslexia characteristics in South African mainstream schools: Challenges and opportunities. *South African Journal of Education*, 44(2), 1–12.
- [31]. King, S. A., Lemons, C. J., & Fuchs, D. (2023). Evidence-based reading instruction for students with learning disabilities: A review of intervention research. *Exceptional Children*, 89(4), 389–406.

- [32]. Kiplagat, B. C. (2019). *Determinants of reading difficulties among grade five learners with learning disabilities in mainstream public primary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County, Kenya* [Master's thesis, University of Eldoret].
- [33]. Kiplagat, B. C., Syonhi, M. N., & Situma, J. (2019). School factors influencing integration of learners with special needs in education in regular primary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County, Kenya.
- [34]. Liew, [initials]. (2022). *[Study on instructional strategies and inclusion of learners with special educational needs]*.
- [35]. Mahmood, S., Ahmad, M., & Khan, R. (2024). Teacher experience, instructional adaptation, and support for learners with learning difficulties. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 28(6), 1–17.
- [36]. Merga, M. K., Roni, S. M., & Malpique, A. (2021). School leadership and whole-school support of struggling literacy learners in secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(3), 534–550. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220905036>
- [37]. Ministry of Education. (2018). *Sector policy for learners and trainees with disabilities*. Government of Kenya.
- [38]. Ministry of Education and Technical Education. (2021). *Educational integration statistics and programmes for learners with special educational needs and disabilities*. Government of Egypt.
- [39]. Ministry of Education and Technical Education. (2024). *School is a place for all of us: Promoting the integration of learners with special educational needs and disabilities*. Government of Egypt.
- [40]. Moruri, J. M., Nyamwange, C., & Kurgat, S. J. (2021). Teacher preparedness and implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Kenya. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 9(4), 45–58.
- [41]. Mutai, J. K. (2018). *Effects of mainstreaming learners with communication disability on educational performance in public primary schools in Kericho County, Kenya* [Research study].
- [42]. National Center on Improving Literacy. (2022). *Evidence-based practices for improving reading outcomes for struggling readers*. U.S. Department of Education.
- [43]. OECD. (2021). *Education at a glance 2021: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en>
- [44]. Oduor, [initials]., et al. (2024). *[Study on parent-teacher collaboration in supporting learners with learning disabilities in public primary schools]*.
- [45]. Ohba, A., & Malenya, F. L. (2020). Addressing inclusive education for learners with disabilities in the integrated education system: The dilemma of public primary schools in Kenya. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 52(1), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1726727>
- [46]. Rasugu, J., Waweru, S. N., & Mugo, B. (2022). *Teacher and school administrator preparedness for inclusive education in Kenyan public primary schools*.
- [47]. Republic of Kenya. (2022). *Basic Education Regulations*. Government Printer.
- [48]. Ruwa, [initials]. (2022). *[Study on Board of Management members' involvement and pupils' performance in public primary schools]*.
- [49]. Shen, J., Cooley, V. E., & Huan, S. (2021). Principal leadership and school improvement: Evidence from educational leadership research. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(4), 601–618.
- [50]. Sun, Y., Miao, X., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Prevalence of developmental dyslexia in primary school children: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1–13.
- [51]. UNESCO. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education—All means all*. UNESCO.
- [52]. UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO.
- [53]. UNESCO. (2024). *Global education monitoring report 2024: Leadership in education*. UNESCO.
- [54]. UNICEF. (2021). *Inclusive education: Every child has the right to learn*. United Nations Children's Fund.
- [55]. Uwezo. (2021). *Are our children learning? The status of foundational literacy and numeracy in Kenya*. Twaweza East Africa.
- [56]. Uwezo Kenya. (2016). *Are our children learning? Uwezo Kenya 2015 annual learning assessment report*. Twaweza East Africa.
- [57]. Vaughn, S., Wanzek, J., Murray, C. S., Roberts, G., & Swanson, E. A. (2022). Intensive reading interventions for students with reading difficulties: Evidence-based approaches. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 37(2), 87–101.
- [58]. Wairimu, L. G., & Chumo, J. K. (2020). Dynamics of ICT resources for instructional delivery in selected secondary schools in Narok County, Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(10), 71–87.

- [59]. World Bank. (2022). *Ending learning poverty: What will it take?* World Bank.
- [60]. Wu, H., & Shen, J. (2022). Principal leadership and student achievement: A multivariate meta-meta-analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 58(3), 438–477.
- [61]. Yaseen, H. (2013). *[Work on early intervention and reading difficulties]*.
- [62]. Zizi Afrique Foundation. (2022). *Are our children learning? The state of foundational learning in Kenya*. Zizi Afrique Foundation.