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Implementation of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education for Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Classes at Purworejo 01 Lumajang State Elementary School

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Abstract

Inclusive education requires schools to provide learning services that accommodate the needs of all students, including students with special needs. This study aims to describe the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Culture) learning, as well as teacher strategies in assisting students with special needs in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study type. Research subjects were determined through purposive sampling involving the principal and PAI and Character Building teachers. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that learning uses the same curriculum, materials, and teaching modules as for regular students, while teacher strategies are carried out through mentoring and providing re-explanations at the end of the lesson, as well as consultations with health workers. The conclusion of the study shows that the implementation of inclusive

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learning has been running, but has not fully accommodated the individual needs of students with special needs due to the lack of curriculum adjustments and limited expert staff.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Islamic Religious Education, Learning Implementation, Special Needs Students, Teacher Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an educational approach that provides opportunities for all students to receive educational services without discrimination, including students with special needs. Through the implementation of inclusive schools, all students learn together in the same class and receive learning services tailored to their individual needs, abilities, and characteristics. Thus, each student has an equal opportunity to develop through the support of teachers, peers, and an inclusive school environment (Tyas et al., 2023). The implementation of inclusive education is not only oriented towards equal access to education but also requires schools to be able to provide a learning process that can accommodate the diverse characteristics of students.

This phenomenon was also found at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang. The school accepts all prospective students without discrimination based on physical condition or learning ability, including students with special needs. In practice, students with special needs are placed in the same class as regular students and participate in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Culture) lessons with the same material and assignments. Learning adjustments are made through direct mentoring by teachers when regular students work on assignments independently so that the learning process can continue collaboratively in the inclusive classroom.

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Budi Pekerti) in the inclusive classroom faces unique challenges due to the presence of three students with special needs in grades 1, 2, and 6, who are unable to read and write. This situation requires teachers to adapt learning strategies so that students with special needs can continue to participate in the learning process without compromising the achievement of learning objectives for regular students. Therefore, teachers are required to implement flexible learning strategies that are tailored to the individual needs of students with special needs (Mutmainna et al., 2026).

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In practice, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Culture) teachers implement several learning strategies, including individualized instruction (Individualized Instruction), demonstrations and hands-on practice, cooperative learning by combining regular students and students with special needs in study groups, and the use of visual and concrete media such as pictures, hijaiyah letter cards, educational videos, and learning aids. The implementation of these strategies is in line with the implementation of individual service programs in inclusive schools, which emphasize the importance of adjusting learning strategies based on the characteristics and needs of each student with special needs (Laili et al., 2025). In addition, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in inclusive schools also requires adjustments to learning strategies so that the learning process takes place effectively for all students (Sri Pasca et al., 2026).

Based on these conditions, this study aims to describe the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Budi Pekerti) learning for students with special needs in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang and to find out the strategies of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Budi Pekerti) teachers in assisting students with special needs during the learning process. This study is important because it provides an overview of the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in inclusive elementary schools involving students with special needs in regular classes. The novelty of this study lies in the focus of the study on the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Budi Pekerti) learning and teacher assistance strategies in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang which has students with special needs in grades 1, 2, and 6 with characteristics of not being able to read and write.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type. Case study research is an in-depth study conducted on an individual, group, organization, or an event over a certain period of time to obtain a complete description of the phenomenon being studied, resulting in data that is then analyzed systematically (Hardani et al., 2020). In this research, the case study focuses on the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education for students with special needs in the inclusive class of SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang, specifically related to the implementation of learning and teacher strategies in assisting students with special needs during the learning process.

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The main instrument in this study was the researcher who directly acted as data collector. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted on May 4, 2026, to directly observe school conditions, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Budi Pekerti) learning in inclusive classes, and the presence of students with special needs learning alongside regular students. Interviews were conducted with the principal and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Budi Pekerti) teachers to obtain information regarding learning implementation, mentoring strategies, and obstacles faced in learning for students with special needs. Documentation was used as supporting data, including teaching modules, grade data for students in grades 1, 2B, and 6, and photographs of classroom learning activities. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was carried out through source triangulation by comparing information from the principal and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Building (Budi Pekerti) teachers, as well as technical triangulation by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation (Abdul Fattah, 2023).

The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling technique, namely the selection of informants based on the consideration that the informants have knowledge and information that is in accordance with the research objectives. The research informants consisted of the Principal of SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang, namely Mrs. Farida Sulistyowati, S.Pd.SD., who provided information regarding the implementation of learning and school policies for students with special needs, and the Islamic Religious Education and Character Building Teacher, namely Mrs. Nailul Karimah, S.Pd., who provided information regarding the implementation of learning, mentoring strategies, and obstacles faced during the Islamic Religious Education and Character Building learning process for students with special needs in inclusive classes.

The research was conducted at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang, located on Jalan Raya Purworejo, Purworejo Village, Senduro District, Lumajang Regency. The location was selected based on the presence of students with special needs who study in regular classes even though the school is not an inclusive school designated by the government. The research procedure was carried out in three stages, namely the pre-field stage, the field stage, and the report writing stage. The pre-field stage was carried out by determining the research location

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and conducting various research preparations. The field stage was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation activities on May 4, 2026, in accordance with the research focus. Next, the report writing stage was carried out by systematically compiling the research results based on the data obtained during the research process.

RESULTS ANDDISCUSSION

Data Exposure and Analysis

1. **Implementation of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning for students with special needs in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang**

Based on an interview with principal Farida Sulistyowati on May 4, 2026, it was revealed that the curriculum used for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Culture) for students with special needs in inclusive classes was the same as for regular students. She explained:

"Islamic Religious Education (PAI) uses the same curriculum, the same learning process, and they study in the same classroom. Assessments are definitely different because, for example, we give a minimum score to another child with a certain Minimum Competency (KKM) and what can we do with them? If they can't do it, they'll just get the grade they need, so they'll stay in first grade for six years. That's how they end up as little kids."

Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher Nailul Karimah also explained that the curriculum used in classes with children with special needs is the same as that used in other classes:

"The lesson plans/teaching modules are the same, the media is the same, everything is the same as the others, because the teachers don't have an inclusive background. The curriculum uses the independent curriculum and deep learning, so the assessments are definitely different."

From the results of observations conducted by researchers on May 4, 2026, it also showed that children with special needs were indeed placed in the same class as regular students (inclusion).

In addition, there are several obstacles faced by Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers in assisting students with special needs in inclusive classes, namely the lack of focus of children with special needs during learning, as shown in the results of an interview with Nailul Karimah as an Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher:

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"My child isn't focused, isn't concentrating on the lesson, so I go straight to the child. I reprimand them directly or teach them individually."
This statement was also reinforced by Farida Sulistyoati as the principal:
"There are three types of inclusion here: grades 1, 2, and 6. Those in grade 1 are able to follow the lessons, but if they don't do their homework promptly, they'll be distracted, but they can. Those in grade 2 can't read or write, and those in grade 6 can't read, and their children are overactive."

The obstacle faced, apart from difficulty focusing, is the lack of expert staff at the school, as shown in the interview with Farida Sulistyowati as the principal:
"Students with special needs here aren't just physical, but mental. We also need guidance. If we had mentors or teachers who were originally trained in special needs education, I'm sure they'd have a wealth of knowledge, which is something we don't have. We hope to have an inclusive teacher within each institution. If not, we have inclusive staff on standby at the regional coordinators. Any teacher experiencing student issues can provide counseling."

The above statement was also reinforced by Nailul Karimah as teacher of PAI and Budi Pekerti subjects:
"Because I myself don't have any knowledge about inclusive children, I never learned about this in college, and there hasn't been any training to date. So that's also our obstacle: there are no experts, no one with a background in special needs or inclusion."



Figure 1. Learning activities in grade 6

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It can be concluded that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Budi Pekerti) for children with special needs in inclusive classes uses the same curriculum, namely the independent curriculum with a deep learning approach. Students with special needs receive the same learning, in the same class as regular students, with the same teaching modules, the same learning methods as other students, and their assessments are given a minimum score according to the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM).

2. Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers' strategies in assisting students with special needs in inclusive classes at Purworejo 01 Lumajang State Elementary School

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Culture) teachers' strategies for assisting students with special needs in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo include providing stimulus at the end of the lesson. As seen in an interview with Nailul Karimah, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Culture) teacher:

"Services for children with special needs are actually the same as for other children, but usually when the teacher has explained the lesson and the other students are doing their assignments, for example, then I go to the child with special needs and re-explain the explanation as thoroughly as possible."

The above statement is also reinforced by an interview with Farida Sulistyowati as the principal that the teacher provides stimulus at the end of the lesson:

*"The service is the same as others, but as best we can, it's not like in special needs schools where one teacher handles each child. Yes, we still can't provide the supplies they deserve, but it's not that easy to provide, so we do our best. When teachers have free time, for example, while other students are working, there may be special services from...*Teacher."

The school has also made efforts to assist students with special needs by consulting with a local doctor regarding treatment. As stated in an interview with Farida Sulistyowati, the school principal:

"I consulted with a doctor at the Senduro Community Health Center. The doctor recommended taking her to a psychologist. I told her parents, and I brought them in, and I told them to go to a psychologist. Then they took her to the first grade. The second grader said she didn't want to be

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tired. We can't force her; we can't pry into whether the child or the parents are tired. But I give her a thumbs up because she's been taken to a psychologist several times."

It can be concluded that the strategy of the school and teachers of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education at SDN Purworejo 01 for children with special needs is by teachers providing stimulus at the end of the lesson, and consulting with health workers who are experts in handling children with special needs and then discussing it with parents. The obstacles faced by teachers of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education in accompanying students with special needs in inclusive classes are children with special needs who lack focus during learning and the lack of experts in the field of inclusion at the school which is an obstacle for teachers to provide proper services to students. The special needs found at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang are not physical but mental/cognitive.

Research Findings

1. **Implementation of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning for students with special needs in inclusive classes at Purworejo 01 Lumajang State Elementary School**

   The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Culture) for children with special needs in inclusive classes uses the same curriculum, namely the independent curriculum with a deep learning approach. Students with special needs receive the same learning, in the same class as regular students, with the same teaching modules, the same learning methods as other students, and their assessments are given a minimum score according to the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM).

2. **Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers' strategies in assisting students with special needs in inclusive classes at Purworejo 01 Lumajang State Elementary School**

   The strategy of the school and the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers at SDN Purworejo 01 for children with special needs is for the teacher to provide stimulus at the end of the lesson, and consult with health workers who are experts in handling children with special needs, then discuss it with each parent of the child with special needs.

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DISCUSSION

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning for students with special needs in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang

Research findings indicate that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Budi Pekerti) for children with special needs in inclusive classes uses the same curriculum, namely the independent curriculum with a deep learning approach. Students with special needs receive the same learning, the same teaching modules, and the same learning methods as other students.

This finding aligns with the theory of Diajeng Tyas et al., who stated that in inclusive education, every individual is invited to learn together in the same school environment, regardless of their differences. This means that students with special needs or disabilities have an equal right to receive a quality education, without discrimination. This definition forms the foundation for all inclusive education approaches (Tyas et al., 2023).

Conceptually, inclusive education requires curriculum adjustments for students with special needs, because if they are not adjusted and treated the same as regular students, their opportunities to achieve learning goals according to their potential will not be optimal, because during the learning process they cannot understand in the same way as regular students.

Thus, at Purworejo 01 Public Elementary School in Lumajang, there has been no curriculum adjustment for students with special needs; they use the same curriculum as regular students. Therefore, inclusion in this school means uniting students with special needs with regular students in the same class. Inclusion is not only about uniting students with special needs and regular students in the same class, but also ensuring that each student receives learning services that are appropriate to their individual needs and characteristics.

Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers' strategies in assisting students with special needs in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang

The research findings show that the strategy of the school and the PAI and Budi Pekerti subject teachers at SDN Purworejo 01 for children with special needs is by the teacher providing stimulus at the end of the lesson, and consulting with health workers who are experts in handling children with special needs, then discussing it with the students' parents.

This finding is not in line with the theory of Devi Laili et al. who stated thatIndividualized Service Programs (IPPs) are designed to meet the specific needs of each student with special

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needs. The IEP, adapted from the phrase Individualized Educational Program (IEP), is a learning plan tailored to each student's wishes, focused on the student, and involving collaboration with them. The IEP, or Individualized Learning Program, is a learning activity that focuses on individual guidance and support to help students catch up and optimize their abilities. IEPs are specifically designed for students with special needs with the aim of developing their full potential (Tyas et al., 2023).

The research findings also show that the obstacles faced by Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers in assisting students with special needs in inclusive classes are that children with special needs are less focused during learning and the lack of experts in the field of inclusion in schools which is an obstacle for teachers to provide proper services to students. The special needs found at SDN Purworejo 01 Lumajang are not physical but mental/cognitive.

This finding is in accordance with the theory of Diajeng Tyas et al., which states that there are various characteristics of special needs, one of which is cognitive needs. Cognitive needs where students with cognitive needs face challenges in understanding, processing, and retaining information (Tyas et al., 2023).

Researchers also believe that providing stimulus at the end of the lesson is still less than optimal. Simply providing stimulus at the end without any other strategies means the lesson wasn't designed for students with special needs from the start. This situation indicates that students with special needs must adapt to the regular classroom. Therefore, the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education (Culture) teachers cannot be considered ideal implementations of inclusive learning.

So, the strategy implemented by Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers at Purworejo 01 Lumajang Public Elementary School is to provide stimulus at the end of the lesson for children with special needs. When regular students have understood what the teacher has conveyed, the teacher then approaches the students with special needs to re-explain the material. and consults with health workers who are experts in handling children with special needs and then discusses it with the students' parents.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education for students with special needs in inclusive classes at SDN Purworejo 01

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Lumajang still uses the same curriculum, teaching modules, materials, and learning processes as for regular students, while adjustments are only made to the aspects of assessment and mentoring during learning. The strategy implemented by teachers is carried out by providing mentoring and re-explanation to students with special needs at the end of the lesson when regular students are working on assignments. In addition, the school strives to provide support through consultations with health workers and communication with parents. However, the implementation of learning still faces obstacles such as low focus of students with special needs, the lack of inclusive education experts, and the lack of learning adjustments specifically designed to suit the characteristics of students with special needs.

This study has limitations because it was only conducted in one school with a limited number of informants. Therefore, the results of the study cannot describe the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in all inclusive elementary schools. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve more schools, informants, and the characteristics of students with special needs to obtain a more comprehensive picture of inclusive learning practices. Practically, the results of this study can be used as evaluation material for schools in developing more adaptive Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies, improving teacher competency through inclusive education training, and strengthening collaboration with experts and parents so that learning services for students with special needs can be more optimal.

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