

Inclusive Education Practices in Islamic Primary Schools: Insights from Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation Stages

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik, focusing on the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation involving the principal, classroom teachers, special assistant teachers, and counseling teachers. The data were analyzed using an interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the school implements inclusive education through a regular classroom model combined with a pull-out approach, allowing students with special needs to learn in inclusive settings while receiving individualized support. In the planning stage, the school develops structured annual programs and establishes an organizational system involving key stakeholders. The implementation process demonstrates adaptive practices in curriculum modification, teaching strategies, and assessment, although challenges remain in terms of limited professional support, insufficient teacher training, and inadequate infrastructure. The evaluation stage is conducted periodically every six months and is used as a basis for program improvement through collaborative decision-making. In conclusion, inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik has been implemented in a structured and adaptive manner, but further improvements are needed to enhance its effectiveness and sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION

Education constitutes a fundamental pillar in human life, playing a crucial role in shaping individual quality, dignity, and social responsibility (Abad-Segura, 2020). Therefore, ensuring equitable access to education is essential as part of the broader commitment to human development. Education can be understood as a conscious and systematic effort aimed at fostering the holistic development of individuals, encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, and moral dimensions. This process occurs continuously across all levels and stages of education, reflecting its dynamic and lifelong

nature. Furthermore, education significantly influences human behavior, particularly in guiding individuals toward normative values and ethical conduct (Abbas et al., 2021).

In the Indonesian context, education is formally defined under Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System as a deliberate and well-planned effort to create a conducive learning environment and learning process (Abdussalam et al., 2019). This aims to enable learners to actively develop their potential, including spiritual strength, self-control, intelligence, personality, noble character (Achadi, 2020), and essential life skills. Education, therefore, is not merely a means of knowledge transmission but also a fundamental human need that supports the sustainability of life and societal advancement (Beyene et al., 2023). Additionally, the right to education is recognized and protected both nationally and internationally, including in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which emphasizes the universal right of every individual to access education (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024).

One significant development in contemporary education is the emergence of inclusive education (Navas-Bonilla et al., 2025). Inclusive education refers to an educational approach that provides equal opportunities for all learners, including those with special needs and those with exceptional talents, to participate in learning within regular educational settings. This approach aims to eliminate discrimination and ensure that all students receive appropriate educational services according to their needs. In recent years, inclusive education has become an important issue within the national education system, as it emphasizes equal access and participation for students requiring special support in mainstream schools (Navas-Bonilla et al., 2025; Walton & Engelbrecht, 2024).

The global commitment to inclusive education has been strengthened through various international agreements, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the World Conference on Education for All (1990), which underscore the obligation of all countries to ensure access to quality education for every child without exception. In line with this, Indonesian educational policy also supports inclusive education, as stated in Article 5 paragraph (1) of the National Education System Law, which affirms that every citizen has equal rights to obtain quality education.

The implementation of inclusive education involves integrating students with special needs into regular schools, allowing them to learn alongside their peers in a supportive and adaptive environment. This approach not only facilitates academic development but also promotes social interaction, tolerance, and mutual respect among students. Inclusive education programs have increasingly become a distinctive and competitive feature of educational institutions, as they respond to the diverse needs of society, particularly for parents seeking inclusive learning environments for their children (Apriliani et al., 2024; Julien, 2024). At the institutional level, inclusive education is implemented through various strategies, including curriculum adaptation, individualized learning approaches, and the provision of special assistance by trained support teachers. Collaboration with external institutions is also essential to ensure optimal support for students with special needs. These efforts reflect the commitment of schools to create an inclusive, equitable, and responsive educational environment (Perkins et al., 2024; Wulan & Sanjaya, 2022).

One of the institutions implementing inclusive education is MI Nurul Huda Gresik. The school has developed inclusive learning practices that accommodate students with diverse needs within a regular classroom setting. Through structured planning, systematic implementation, and continuous evaluation, the school strives to ensure that inclusive education is carried out effectively. The presence of special assistant teachers and collaboration with relevant institutions further strengthen the implementation of inclusive programs in the school.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study aims to explore the implementation of inclusive learning models for students with special needs at MI Nurul Huda Gresik. The study focuses

on examining the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of inclusive education, as well as identifying the key stakeholders involved in its successful execution. Accordingly, this research is entitled: "The Implementation of Inclusive Learning Models at MI Nurul Huda Gresik." Based on the research problem, the objectives of this study are as follows: To analyze the planning of inclusive education programs for students with special needs at MI Nurul Huda Gresik. To examine the implementation of inclusive education programs for students with special needs at MI Nurul Huda Gresik and to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive education practices at MI Nurul Huda Gresik.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design aimed at comprehensively understanding the implementation of inclusive learning models for students with special needs at MI Nurul Huda Gresik. A qualitative descriptive approach is considered appropriate as it enables the researcher to explore and interpret social phenomena in their natural context without relying on numerical data (Arif et al., 2025). The researcher adopts a phenomenological sensitivity by temporarily bracketing prior assumptions and allowing empirical realities to emerge from the field. This approach facilitates an in-depth understanding of behaviors, perceptions, and interactions occurring within inclusive classroom settings.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data are obtained directly through in-depth interactions with key informants, including the school principal, classroom teachers, and special assistant teachers. These informants are selected purposively based on their involvement and relevance to the implementation of inclusive education. Meanwhile, secondary data are collected from supporting documents such as lesson plans, individualized education programs, institutional records, and relevant previous studies. Data collection is conducted iteratively, allowing the researcher to refine and expand the sample based on emerging findings during fieldwork (Rahmayanti & Arif, 2021).

To ensure data richness and validity, multiple data collection techniques are employed, including observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations are conducted in an unstructured manner to capture authentic classroom dynamics and student interactions within inclusive settings. Semi-structured interviews are carried out to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, and strategies related to inclusive education practices. In addition, documentation is used to support and validate findings through visual and written records, such as photographs, institutional archives, and instructional materials (Zakiy, 2021).

The research instrument in qualitative inquiry is primarily the researcher, supported by interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation checklists. The researcher plays a central role in determining the research focus, selecting informants, collecting and interpreting data, and drawing conclusions. Data analysis follows an interactive model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involves selecting and simplifying raw data, while data display organizes information systematically to facilitate interpretation. The final stage involves drawing and verifying conclusions to ensure consistency and accuracy of findings.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, this study applies triangulation techniques, including source triangulation (Zakariyah et al., 2022), methodological triangulation, and time triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, while methodological triangulation involves cross-checking data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Time triangulation is applied by conducting data collection at different periods to ensure data consistency. Through these strategies, the study ensures

credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings related to the implementation of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Implementation of Inclusive Education Model

Following the completion of the research process, the next stage involves data presentation. This stage aims to systematically describe the implementation of the inclusive education model at MI Nurul Huda Gresik. The data presented in this section are derived from in-depth interviews with key informants and direct field observations, providing a comprehensive understanding of how inclusive education is practiced within the school context.

Based on interviews conducted with several informants, including the principal, classroom teachers, special assistant teachers, and guidance and counseling teachers, the researcher obtained in-depth insights into the implementation of inclusive learning. The findings indicate that MI Nurul Huda Gresik adopts a regular class with a pull-out model, where students with special needs participate in regular classroom learning alongside their peers for three days a week, and attend specialized instruction sessions in a resource room for two days a week. This approach is designed to balance social integration with individualized academic support. The implementation of inclusive education is carried out across multiple grade levels, although it is primarily concentrated in grades where students with special needs are enrolled.

Planning Stage of Inclusive Education

At the planning stage, several essential components were identified, including preparation, instructional planning, and organizational structuring. The school has officially been designated as an inclusive education provider through formal approval from the relevant educational authorities. In terms of instructional planning, lesson plans for students with special needs are generally aligned with those used in regular classrooms, with necessary adaptations implemented as needed. Structurally, the school has established an organizational system that includes a coordinator for inclusive education, supported by special assistant teachers and guided by counseling staff.

This planning process is reflected in statements from key informants. The school principal explained:

“The planning of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik is coordinated by the special assistant teacher coordinator, supported by other assistant teachers and guided by the counseling teacher.”

Similarly, the coordinator of special assistant teachers stated:

“The planning is formulated in the form of an annual work program for special assistant teachers, which includes various student-centered activities, such as regular meetings with parents.”

These statements highlight that inclusive education planning is systematically organized and involves collaboration among multiple stakeholders within the school. Furthermore, the institutional structure supporting inclusive education is clearly defined. As noted by one informant:

“The inclusive education coordinator is one of the teachers in this school and is formally included in the school’s organizational structure.”

In addition, the school has conducted internal socialization programs to ensure that all members of the school community understand the principles and implementation of inclusive education. As expressed by the inclusion coordinator:

“The school has organized socialization activities regarding inclusive education for all school members, including teachers, security staff, canteen staff, and administrative personnel.”

This indicates a whole-school approach in fostering an inclusive culture.

In terms of instructional implementation, the pull-out model is a key strategy applied by the school. A counseling teacher explained:

“Our school applies a pull-out learning system, where students with special needs receive additional support in certain situations through direct assistance from special assistant teachers.”

Additionally, the school collaborates with external institutions, such as resource centers, to address learning challenges faced by students with special needs. The overall planning framework includes the development of annual programs for special assistant teachers, encompassing activities such as parent meetings, student evaluations, class promotion meetings, outbound activities, pull-out sessions, and the assignment of special assistant teachers. These structured efforts demonstrate the school’s commitment to implementing inclusive education in a systematic and sustainable manner at MI Nurul Huda Gresik.

Process Stage of Inclusive Education Implementation Implementation of Educational Personnel

In the implementation process of the inclusive education model at MI Nurul Huda Gresik, the role of educational personnel is central to ensuring effective learning services. Based on field findings obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, the school has established a basic structure of inclusive education personnel, including one inclusion coordinator, a special assistant teacher, and several shadow teachers assigned to support students with special needs. However, the availability of professional experts such as psychologists, therapists, or medical personnel remains limited.

The importance of educators in inclusive education cannot be overstated, as they are key determinants of service quality. Teachers in inclusive settings are required to understand the diverse characteristics of students, both in terms of cognitive abilities and physical conditions. At MI Nurul Huda Gresik, the inclusion coordinator also functions as a special assistant teacher responsible for organizing learning support and coordinating shadow teachers. As stated by the school principal:

“Yes, our school has an inclusion coordinator, one special assistant teacher, and several shadow teachers. However, not all students with special needs are accompanied by a personal assistant, depending on their level of ability.”

Similarly, the inclusion coordinator explained:

“I serve as the inclusion coordinator, responsible for organizing and assigning tasks to shadow teachers, preparing student worksheets, and designing inclusive learning programs. I also directly assist one student with special needs.”

In classroom practice, not all students with special needs receive direct assistance from shadow teachers. Adjustments are made based on the individual needs and learning capacities of students. For instance, students are often seated in the front row to facilitate better supervision and comprehension. As noted by the coordinator:

“Usually, students with special needs are seated in the front row so that they are easier to monitor and can better understand the teacher’s explanations.”

Despite these efforts, the absence of in-house professional experts remains a challenge. As expressed by the counseling teacher:

“Currently, there are no specialized professionals such as psychologists or therapists in the school. If students experience difficulties, they are referred to the Resource Center in Gresik for further assessment and support.”

In addition, training and capacity-building programs for teachers regarding inclusive education are still limited. Not all educators have participated in formal training, as highlighted by the inclusion coordinator:

“Not all teachers have received training in inclusive education yet, but the school continues striving to provide the best possible support for students with special needs.”

Overall, while the school has established a foundational structure of inclusive education personnel, further development in professional support and teacher training is necessary to optimize implementation.

Curriculum Implementation

The implementation of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik is also closely related to curriculum adaptation. Based on the findings, the school adopts the 2013 Curriculum as the primary framework, with modifications in instructional processes and assessment methods to accommodate students with special needs. The curriculum for regular students follows standard guidelines, whereas for students with special needs, it is adjusted according to their individual learning abilities and challenges.

A classroom teacher stated:

“Our school uses the 2013 Curriculum. Regular students follow the standard curriculum, while students with special needs are taught based on their individual abilities.”

The school has developed supporting documents such as syllabi, lesson plans, and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), although some of these are not fully comprehensive. As explained by the inclusion coordinator:

“We have implemented individualized education programs and adapt learning to students’ abilities. Each student with special needs has their own individualized program.”

In practice, students with special needs learn in the same classroom as their peers, using similar materials, methods, and media, but with adjustments in the level of difficulty. Observations indicate that the presence of shadow teachers contributes to maintaining a conducive learning environment. In terms of assessment, evaluation for students with special needs differs from regular students, focusing on developmental progress rather than standardized benchmarks. As stated by a special assistant teacher:

“For assessment, report cards are adjusted based on the developmental aspects achieved by students with special needs.”

Thus, curriculum implementation reflects a flexible and adaptive approach, although further refinement in planning and stakeholder involvement is still required.

Implementation of Facilities and Infrastructure

Facilities and infrastructure are critical components in supporting inclusive education. However, findings at MI Nurul Huda Gresik indicate that these aspects are still under development. The school lacks dedicated spaces for inclusive education management, as the inclusion coordinator shares a workspace with other teachers. This condition was confirmed by the inclusion coordinator:

“There is no separate room for inclusive education teachers; we still share space with the general teachers’ room.”

Additionally, accessibility for students with special needs remains limited. Key facilities such as classrooms, libraries, and computer laboratories have not yet been fully adapted to accommodate diverse needs. Supporting tools for compensatory services are also insufficient, which may affect the effectiveness of inclusive learning implementation.

Despite these limitations, the school provides several supporting facilities, such as a playground and transportation services for students. These efforts demonstrate the school's commitment to gradually improving its infrastructure to better support inclusive education. Nevertheless, enhancing accessibility and providing specialized learning resources remain essential priorities for the sustainable development of inclusive practices at MI Nurul Huda Gresik.

Evaluation Stage of Inclusive Education Implementation

The implementation of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik is closely followed by an evaluation stage, which serves as a critical mechanism to assess both the process and outcomes of the program. Based on the findings from observations, interviews, and limited documentation, evaluation activities are conducted periodically to monitor the effectiveness of inclusive practices. The evaluation primarily focuses on reviewing the implementation of learning programs for students with special needs and identifying areas for improvement.

In terms of implementation, evaluation is conducted every six months, coinciding with the end of each academic semester before the distribution of report cards. This periodic evaluation involves key stakeholders, particularly the inclusion coordinator, special assistant teachers, and classroom teachers. As stated by the inclusion coordinator:

“We consistently conduct evaluations on a periodic basis, which is every six months. These evaluations are carried out through meetings before report cards are distributed.”

This structured schedule ensures that the progress of students with special needs is regularly monitored and discussed collaboratively among educators.

Furthermore, the evaluation process utilizes standardized instruments in the form of structured documents developed by the inclusion coordinator. These instruments are designed to capture students' developmental progress and assess the effectiveness of implemented programs. Although formal documentation of evaluation results was not fully available during the research, the use of structured instruments indicates an effort toward systematic assessment within the school.

Regarding the evaluation outcomes, the findings reveal that the results are primarily used as a basis for follow-up actions and program improvement. Adjustments may include revising, adding, or redesigning learning programs to better meet students' needs. As explained by the inclusion coordinator:

“The results of the evaluation are followed up by improving or redesigning the work programs, based on joint discussions and agreements between the principal, special assistant teachers, and classroom teachers.”

This collaborative approach reflects a reflective practice in inclusive education, where continuous improvement is prioritized.

Overall, the evaluation process at MI Nurul Huda Gresik demonstrates a cyclical and adaptive model, emphasizing regular monitoring, collaborative reflection, and program refinement. Despite limitations in documentation, the evaluation practices indicate a commitment to ensuring that inclusive education is implemented effectively and responsively to the developmental needs of students with special needs.

Table 1: Summary of Findings on Inclusive Education Implementation at MI Nurul Huda Gresik

Aspect	Key Findings	Interpretation
Planning	School officially implements inclusive education; has coordinator, assistant teachers, annual programs, and socialization activities	Planning is structured and involves collaboration, but still needs strengthening in program detail
Process (Human Resources)	Inclusion coordinator, special assistant teachers, and shadow teachers available; limited experts and training	Basic system exists, but professional support and teacher competence need improvement
Process (Learning & Curriculum)	Uses 2013 Curriculum with adaptations; applies pull-out model; individualized learning and assessment	Learning is flexible and adaptive to students' needs
Process (Facilities)	Limited accessibility and no special inclusion room; some supporting facilities available	Infrastructure not fully supportive of inclusive education
Evaluation	Conducted every 6 months; uses instruments; results used for program improvement	Evaluation is periodic and reflective, but documentation is still limited

Overall, the implementation of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik demonstrates a structured and progressive approach encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. The planning stage reflects institutional readiness through the establishment of organizational structures and collaborative program design. The implementation stage shows adaptive practices in teaching, curriculum modification, and the application of the pull-out model to accommodate diverse student needs. Meanwhile, the evaluation stage is conducted periodically and serves as a basis for continuous program improvement.

However, several challenges remain, particularly in the limited availability of professional experts, insufficient teacher training, and inadequate infrastructure to fully support inclusive practices. In addition, the lack of comprehensive documentation in the evaluation process indicates a need for stronger administrative systems. Therefore, while the current implementation has demonstrated positive progress toward inclusive education, further development in professional capacity, facilities, and systematic evaluation is essential to ensure more effective and sustainable outcomes.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, MI Nurul Huda Gresik has implemented an inclusive education model using a regular classroom system combined with a pull-out approach. In this model, students with special needs participate in regular classroom learning for three days a week and receive additional support in a specialized setting for two days. This approach reflects an effort to balance social inclusion with individualized academic assistance, aligning with contemporary inclusive education practices (Lama et al., 2026; Paramansyah & Rostandi, 2022). In the planning stage, the implementation of inclusive education begins with a structured strategy designed to achieve educational goals effectively. The school develops an annual work program managed by special assistant teachers (Mukhammad & Bon, 2026), which includes various student-centered activities such as class promotion meetings, outbound programs, parent consultations, pull-out sessions, and the organization of special assistant teacher roles (Agourida, 2024). These findings indicate that planning at MI Nurul Huda Gresik is systematic and oriented toward supporting the diverse needs of students with special needs, although further refinement is still required to enhance program comprehensiveness (Kim et al., 2024).

The implementation process shows that inclusive education practices at MI Nurul Huda Gresik have generally met several indicators of successful inclusion (Agus et al., 2023). The school provides opportunities for students with special needs to learn alongside their peers in the same classroom environment, which is consistent with the inclusive education concept emphasizing equal access and participation. This practice is in line with the perspective that inclusive education is a system that accommodates all learners by considering their diversity and individual needs, allowing them to develop their potential optimally (Lambrecht et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the implementation reflects principles similar to those proposed by inclusive education theorists, where schools are expected to create learning environments that are both challenging and responsive to students' abilities (Lambrecht et al., 2022; Lindner et al., 2023). MI Nurul Huda Gresik has attempted to provide appropriate educational programs and teacher support to ensure student success. However, the findings also reveal that several aspects still need improvement, particularly in creating a fully conducive inclusive learning environment. These include the need for better infrastructure, more intensive socialization among school members, and stronger collaboration with external professionals such as psychologists, therapists, and medical practitioners (Cipriano et al., 2023; Lindner & Schwab, 2025).

From the curriculum perspective, the school adopts the 2013 Curriculum with modifications in both instructional processes and evaluation methods (Cipriano et al., 2023). Although the curriculum used for students with special needs and regular students is generally the same, adjustments are made in the level of difficulty of learning materials and assessment criteria. Additionally, individualized learning programs have been introduced to support the development of students with special needs. The school has also conducted training and socialization activities related to curriculum modification for teachers. However, the development of instructional documents such as syllabi, lesson plans (Nur & Sabur, 2025; Wagner et al., 2023), and individualized education programs is not yet fully comprehensive, indicating an area for further improvement.

The pull-out model applied by the school serves as a key strategy in addressing the specific learning needs of students with special needs. Through this model, students receive individualized assistance from special assistant teachers outside the regular classroom during certain periods, while still maintaining interaction with their peers in inclusive settings. In addition, routine guidance sessions with counseling teachers further support students' academic and socio-emotional development. In terms of human resources, the presence of special assistant teachers and counseling teachers contributes significantly to the implementation of inclusive education (Rahman & Hakim, 2024). However, most special assistant teachers do not have a formal background in special education, which may affect the quality of support provided. Moreover, the absence of professional experts such as psychologists and therapists indicates a limitation in providing comprehensive services for students with special needs (Mendoza & Heymann, 2024). This highlights the importance of enhancing teacher competence through training and strengthening collaboration with external institutions (Donath et al., 2023).

Despite these challenges, the school has demonstrated a positive commitment to inclusive education by accepting students with special needs and supporting the development of their talents and potentials (Shutaleva et al., 2023). This reflects the fundamental goals of inclusive education, which emphasize equal educational opportunities and the creation of a non-discriminatory learning environment that respects diversity (Opoku & Nketsia, 2026). In the evaluation stage, the school conducts periodic assessments to monitor students' learning progress and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented programs (Ratna, 2025). The evaluation results are used as a basis for decision-making, particularly in revising or improving existing programs. If a program is found to be less effective, it is redesigned collaboratively by school stakeholders. Conversely, successful programs are continued with

necessary refinements. This indicates that the evaluation process at MI Nurul Huda Gresik is reflective and adaptive, supporting continuous improvement in inclusive education practices (Makoelle & Burmistrova, 2025). Overall, the implementation of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik demonstrates a positive direction toward achieving inclusive educational goals. However, to optimize its effectiveness, the school needs to strengthen professional support, improve infrastructure, enhance teacher competencies, and develop more comprehensive administrative systems (Walton et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of inclusive education at MI Nurul Huda Gresik has been carried out through a structured system encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. The school adopts a regular classroom model combined with a pull-out approach, allowing students with special needs to learn alongside their peers while still receiving individualized support. In the planning stage, the school demonstrates systematic efforts through the development of annual programs and organizational structures involving key stakeholders. The implementation process reflects adaptive practices in curriculum modification, teaching strategies, and student assessment, which are aligned with the principles of inclusive education that emphasize equal access, participation, and respect for diversity.

However, despite these positive developments, several challenges remain that need to be addressed to optimize the effectiveness of inclusive education. These include the limited availability of professional experts, insufficient training for teachers in special education, and inadequate infrastructure to fully support inclusive learning environments. Additionally, administrative aspects such as documentation and the completeness of instructional planning still require improvement. Therefore, strengthening professional capacity, enhancing facilities, and improving systematic evaluation and documentation are essential steps to ensure the sustainability and quality of inclusive education implementation at MI Nurul Huda Gresik.

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