

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with
Special Educational Needs

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil na Croise Naofa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Geashill, Co. Offaly.
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	091911

Date of inspection: 09-03-2018



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

WHAT IS AN EVALUATION OF PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?

The Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a focused evaluation of provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream primary schools. As this inspection model places a particular emphasis on the quality of learner outcomes for pupils with special educational needs, most of the time spent in the school by inspectors is given to visits to mainstream classes and support settings.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated provision for pupils with special educational needs under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs
2. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs
3. The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special educational needs

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum, which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Date of inspection	09-03-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Meeting with SEN team• Meeting with SNAs• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Pupil group discussion• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil na Croise Naofa is a co-educational, mainstream primary school located in the village of Geashill and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The school also has two special classes for deaf children. At the time of the evaluation there was a total of 122 pupils enrolled in the school. There were five mainstream classroom teachers, three special education teachers (SET) and two special class teachers working in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good and a welcoming, educationally stimulating and inclusive atmosphere is palpable in all learning settings.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good, overall, with teachers demonstrating very good subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.
- Many commendable whole-school approaches in planning, teaching and assessment successfully guide the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is evidence of whole-school co-ordination in targeting the additional teaching resources towards the pupils with the greatest needs while also making provision for the early identification of needs and early-intervention strategies.
- While appropriate targets are identified in many individual educational plans, there is scope in some support plans to express the targets in more specific and measurable terms related to the intended learning outcomes for pupils.
- In the special classes for the deaf, while most pupils contribute very effectively to their lessons through a range of communication approaches, further analysis of assessment information to establish baseline communication profiles is needed for some pupils with complex communication needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To further assist with the monitoring of pupils' progress, targets in support plans should be expressed more clearly in specific and measurable terms related to the intended learning outcomes for pupils.
- Further analysis of assessment information to establish baseline communication profiles is recommended for pupils with complex communication needs.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Overall, the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good and a welcoming, educationally stimulating and inclusive atmosphere is palpable in all learning settings. During the lessons observed, pupils with SEN were actively and purposefully engaged in worthwhile learning tasks. Responding during the focus-group discussion, pupils indicated that they liked school, enjoyed their lessons and found their additional support teaching to be very helpful. In reply to the Inspectorate's survey, almost all parents of pupils with special educational needs agreed that their children were fully included in school and classroom life and that school work is matched effectively to their children's ability levels.

Assessment records and pupils' responses and written work during lessons provide evidence that almost all pupils are engaging effectively with skills and content across the curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs. They are progressing well in relation to their personal targets, including those in areas of communication, literacy, numeracy and social development. Pupils in mainstream classes and support settings are supported at an appropriate level through very effective and co-ordinated use of the Continuum of Support approach. Their reading skills are developing well and their work in a variety of genres is presented well through handwritten tasks or use of assistive technology.

In the special classes for the deaf, most pupils contributed very effectively to their lessons through a range of communication approaches including speech, visual methods, information and communications technology (ICT) and sign language. These pupils also have regular opportunities for supportive inclusion into mainstream classrooms. Further analysis of assessment information to establish accurate baseline communication profiles and realistic targets would be beneficial for a very small number of pupils with complex communication needs.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good, overall. All teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge in the lessons observed and the teaching approaches used were suitably differentiated to meet the range of learning needs evident. Most lessons incorporate a range of active and collaborative learning tasks and pupils' oral contributions are encouraged. All learning settings present bright and stimulating displays of teaching resources and displays of pupils' work and multi-sensory resources are frequently used to augment pupils' understanding. The quality of classroom planning ranged from good to very good. Many commendable whole-school approaches in planning, teaching and assessment successfully guide classroom practice.

Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is guided by the Continuum of Support model and provided through an effective combination of mainstream teaching, in-class supports, early-interventions and individual or group withdrawal. In the mainstream classes, teachers accurately identify opportunities and strategies to differentiate lesson content to meet particular learning needs and to monitor progress. Teachers in support roles provide highly effective supports for pupils in line with their identified needs and insightful progress records are maintained and used to guide planning. Good examples of collaborative and in-class support involving support teachers and

classroom teachers were noted, with the most effective practice attributable to careful joint planning and tracking of pupils' progress.

Assessment practices are effective, overall, with some examples of very good assessment evident. The school collates and monitors a range of standardised testing information to establish needs and to monitor progress. In addition, information from screening and diagnostic assessments is used to identify specific needs and to inform interventions. Data from teacher-designed tests and documented teacher observation is also analysed to establish learning needs. The school has fully embedded the effective use of the student files to ensure that pupils' needs are identified and addressed at each level of the Continuum of Support. While appropriate targets are identified in many individual educational plans, there is scope in some support plans to express the targets in more specific and measurable terms related to the intended learning outcomes for pupils. Such an approach will assist with the monitoring of progress and help to identify the direction of further intervention.

3. THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES RECEIVED TO SUPPORT PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The school manages and uses the additional resources it receives to support pupils with special educational needs very effectively. Many teachers have engaged with continuing professional development (CPD) related to special educational needs. Resources are deployed in accordance with the Department's guidelines and include a wide range of teaching approaches. There is also evidence of whole-school co-ordination in targeting the additional teaching resources towards the pupils with the greatest needs while also making provision for the early identification of needs and early-intervention strategies. As part of the individualised planning approach, teachers consult regularly with parents, professionals and external agencies. Almost all parents report that they are aware of their children's learning plans. Effective mechanisms are in place to seek relevant educational information from parents and early-years' settings about newly enrolled pupils' needs and also to communicate with post-primary schools about school leavers in a timely manner.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school.
3. The school has a Child Safeguarding Statement in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management is very pleased that this evaluation has found that the overall quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good and that a welcoming, educationally stimulating and inclusive atmosphere is palpable in all learning settings.

The Board is also delighted that the quality of teaching was found to be very good, with teachers demonstrating very good subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.

The Board concurs with these findings.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board of Management and staff are now focusing on the recommendations in the report and will implement them in full.