

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

**Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with**  
**Special Educational Needs**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Naomh Bhríde
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Emper Ballynacargy Co Westmeath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	00941D

**Date of inspection: 7 February 2018**



## **WHAT IS AN EVALUATION OF PROVISION 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 of the school 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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	7 February 2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Meeting with Special Needs Assistant</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Analysis of parent questionnaires</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Pupil group discussion</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Naomh Bhríde is located in Emper, Co. Westmeath, which is a rural community between Mullingar and Longford. At the time of the evaluation there were twenty-seven pupils in the school. The school has two mainstream class teachers and a special education teacher, who is shared with another local school. At the time of the evaluation a special needs assistant (SNA) had recently been appointed in the school. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the school and feel well-looked after there. The parents are very satisfied with the support their child receives in the school.
- The overall quality of learning is good. However, the learning experiences provided to some of the pupils with special educational needs are not appropriately challenging.
- Some very good teaching was observed during the evaluation. Teaching in the support setting is not sufficiently focused on the identified priority learning needs of the pupils.
- Teachers maintain good quality assessment records on all pupils. The school has yet to develop a satisfactory means of monitoring and recording the progress of pupils with special educational needs in meeting their priority learning needs.
- The school is making very good use of the resources it receives for pupils with special educational needs.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Learning activities in support settings should be designed to address the specific, identified learning needs of the pupils.
- A particular emphasis should be placed on increasing the engagement of pupils with special educational needs in their learning and in enabling them to experience success as learners.
- Learning targets for pupils with special educational needs should be more closely aligned to their priority learning needs and should be regularly reviewed and updated.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The overall quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs is good.

All pupils who participated in the focus group meeting indicated that they enjoy school and feel safe and well looked after there. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs in standardised tests of reading and Mathematics is very good and their written work is of a good or very good standard. In interactions with the inspector during the evaluation the majority of pupils were able to discuss topics that they had covered in class with understanding and with confidence.

Teachers provide all pupils with a wide variety of interesting learning activities, both across the curriculum and in cross-curricular projects. These experiences are very beneficial for pupils with special educational needs.

Learning activities provided to pupils in the support setting are not aligned with their identified priority learning needs. In order to improve the outcomes for these pupils, the learning activities provided to them should be carefully designed to address their identified learning needs. A particular emphasis should be placed on providing challenging skills-based work in this setting. This would be particularly beneficial in developing these pupils' sense of themselves as learners and in enabling them to experience success as learners.

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

The quality of teaching observed during the evaluation ranged from fair to very good.

All teachers demonstrated very good classroom management skills and the relationship between pupils and teachers was positive in all settings.

Lessons in mainstream settings were of a high standard. They were well prepared and capably delivered. All observed lessons had a very good balance between teacher talk and pupil participation, however in the observed language lessons there was scope for pupils to use the target language more frequently. The learning activities provided to pupils in the support setting were not sufficiently aligned to their identified learning needs and did not challenge them adequately. It is recommended that learning activities for these pupils be designed to elicit greater levels of engagement and participation by the pupils. Teachers in mainstream classes have created attractive learning environments, with materials that reinforce pupils' learning and that celebrate their work on display. This should now be replicated in the support setting.

Good quality assessment records are available on all pupils. These records include standardised test information, class-based tests and teachers' individual records. During the evaluation some good use of assessment for learning was also observed. The school has yet to develop a satisfactory means of monitoring and recording the progress of pupils with special educational needs in meeting their priority learning needs. In order to achieve this learning targets established for pupils with special educational needs should be closely aligned with their identified learning needs and be regularly reviewed and updated in light of the pupils' progress.

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

The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The school has a broad range of Information and Communication Technology resources available for pupils and implements a range of whole-school programmes in literacy and in numeracy to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to continuing professional development and very good use is made of resources such as the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in both upskilling teachers and in supporting pupils.

Teachers receive information from the local early-years setting regarding pupils who are enrolled in their school and they ensure that post-primary schools receive all relevant information on pupils with special educational needs. Very positive relationships are established between school personnel and parents of pupils with special educational needs. All parents who completed the questionnaire administered during the evaluation indicated that they were very happy with all aspects of the support their child receives in school, including the opportunities they receive to discuss their child's progress.

Pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest levels of support within the school. The recently appointed SNA will further assist pupils with the greatest need in accessing the curriculum.

### **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 / in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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 and indeed the staff of Scoil Naomh Bhríde welcomed and would like to acknowledge this recent SEN inspection report.
- The Board of Management is particularly pleased with the overall positive findings in the inspection.
- The Board of Management acknowledges and celebrates the very good attainment of pupils with SEN in standardised tests (Reading & Mathematics) and written work. It welcomes the fact that all pupils enjoy school, feel safe & well looked after and that they enjoy a positive relationship with teachers in all settings.
- It celebrates and cherishes the very positive relationships established between the school and parents of pupils with special educational needs.
- It commends its teachers for their very good classroom management skills, professional practice, high standard of lessons, attractive learning environments, very good management & use of resources and for their sincere diligence, loyalty and commitment to the school, its pupils and indeed wider community.
- The Board acknowledges that its school met all requirements in relation to Child Protection procedures and best practice.

### **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 is fully committed to the ongoing development of the education of all pupils in the school and welcomes the recommendations of the SEN inspector. An immediate action plan is currently being devised to address these recommendations.