An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills  

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with  
Special Educational Needs  

REPORT  

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Ballyduff N S</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Ballyduff West  
Kilmeaden  
Co. Waterford |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 13635R |

Date of inspection: 03-05-2019
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; a response was not received from the board.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school’s child protection procedures were conducted:
1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Date of inspection 03-05-2019

| Inspection activities undertaken | • Observation of teaching and learning  
• Examination of pupils’ work  
• Interaction with pupils  
• Pupil group discussion  
• Feedback to principal and teachers |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Discussion with principal and teachers  
• Meeting with SEN team  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Analysis of parent questionnaires | |

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ballyduff National school is a co-educational primary school located in Kilmeaden, sixteen kilometres west of Waterford city. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore and there are currently 226 pupils enrolled. School staffing consists of an administrative principal, nine mainstream class teachers, three special education (SET) teachers, two teachers for children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and one teacher for a pre-school ASD class. This pre-school class was not visited during the evaluation. The school also employs eight special needs assistants (SNAs).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

• The overall quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good; there is scope to develop a more consistent approach to completing individual educational planning for pupils.
• The overall quality of teaching is very high with some excellent practice observed.
• This is an inclusive school with staff demonstrating high levels of commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils.
• Parents and pupils expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the support they receive from the school.
• There is very effective leadership and co-ordination of the SEN team with high levels of collaboration among staff evident.
• The quality of management and use of resources to support SEN is very good: there is scope to review the schools’ admissions and SEN policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Teachers should implement an agreed, consistent approach to completing the individual planning section of student support files.
• The school should review and revise its SEN policy to incorporate the provisions of Circular 0013/2017 and revise its admissions policy to reflect the inclusive nature of the school.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Very good quality learning outcomes for pupils were observed during this evaluation. In all settings, pupils were very well supported and appropriately challenged through meaningful and respectful interactions. They clearly enjoyed well-paced learning activities and engaged in a very positive manner. These activities were targeted and based on planned learning outcomes to address identified learning needs. In a focus group held as a part of the evaluation, pupils spoke very positively about their learning and the support they receive from their teachers and SNAs. Parent questionnaires indicate that the majority of parents are happy regarding the school’s educational provision for pupils with additional needs.

The school promotes a strong culture of inclusion and the staff place a strong emphasis on and demonstrates a commitment to the wellbeing and the social and emotional development of all pupils. The school management has ensured that all pupils with SEN have access to attractive stimulatingly learning environments and a very good range of concrete, visual and tactile learning resources. The school promotes a range of models of support including in-class support, station teaching and the withdrawal of individuals and groups. Practice is well-developed and ensures the promotion of social inclusion and appropriate opportunities for integration and reverse integration for pupils in classes specifically for ASD.

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

The quality of teaching was very good with practice observed ranging from good to excellent. Teachers ensure that learning environments are supportive and well-organised. Very good differentiated activities and questioning were observed in classrooms visited. Teachers are well prepared and facilitate a range of learning tasks which are clearly based on pupils’ identified needs. Good quality planning supports this work. Teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to collaboration and regular effective communication occur between mainstream class teachers, special education teachers and teachers in the classes for pupils with ASD. They have engaged in a wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) which impacts positively on differentiated teaching, meaningful inclusion and effective integration.

The school has embraced the continuum of support model and student support files are comprehensive and clearly support planning for high quality provision for pupils with SEN. There is scope, however, to establish an agreed, consistent approach to completing the individual planning section of student support files. The school has a commendable whole-school approach to assessment and an effective system for tracking and monitoring individual pupil progress. It has recently formulated a digital strategy which incorporates an effectively-planned approach to the use of information and communications technology (ICT) for pupils with SEN.

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

The overall quality of the management and use of resources to support SEN is very good. There is very effective leadership and co-ordination of the SEN team with high levels of collaboration among staff. The board of management has overseen the establishment of an attractive and well-
maintained school to support all pupils’ learning. The organisation of special education provision within the school has ensured the pupils with the greatest needs are prioritised. This needs-based approach is a significant strength of the school.

The school has a wide range of policies which successfully guide the day-to-day provision for SEN. It should now review and revise its SEN policy to incorporate the provisions of Circular 0013/2017 and revise its admissions policy to reflect the inclusive nature of the school. The schools SNAs play a significant role in meeting the care needs of pupils and assisting them in accessing the curriculum. Commendable personal care plans have been formulated for all pupils being supported by SNAs.

Transitions into school, within school and post-primary schools are managed very well. The school has established and maintained valuable links with relevant agencies and with external professionals in their support of continuity in the pupils’ learning experiences.
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 quality of the school’s provision of each area.

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Very Good</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> 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 <strong>outstanding</strong> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> 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 <strong>very good</strong> standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td>Weak</td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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