

**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	Colehill Mixed N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Colehill Longford Co Longford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	14672F

Date of Evaluation: 17-05-2017



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 the model places a particular emphasis on the quality of learning outcomes for pupils with special educational needs, most of the time inspectors spend in a school during this evaluation is spent in 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:

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

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	17-05-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Analysis of parent questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Pupil group discussion• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Colehill Mixed National School is a co-educational mainstream primary school under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. It is situated in a rural community outside Ballymahon, Co. Longford. At the time of the evaluation there were 128 pupils on roll. There were five mainstream class teachers, one full-time learning support teacher and a part-time resource teacher working in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The school is a welcoming, inclusive learning environment.
- All pupils are making good progress in their learning across the curriculum. There is a need to further develop the pupils' abilities in oral language.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and all teachers display well-developed teaching skills. Currently too much emphasis is placed on teacher-directed learning and insufficient attention is afforded to group-based learning.
- The school manages the resources it receives to support pupils with special educational needs very effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should make well-planned learning activities that are designed to extend and enrich the pupils' vocabulary and to develop their oral language skills more integral to learning programmes in mainstream and support settings.
- Pupils should receive more frequent opportunities to engage in collaborative group-based learning during lessons.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

During a focus group discussion with a sample of pupils who are in receipt of support in the school all pupils indicated that they enjoy school and feel safe and secure in school. All parents who completed questionnaires administered during this evaluation indicated that their children feel well looked after in school and that they are fully included in classroom and school life.

Assessment data, including results of standardised tests, indicate that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, are making good progress in their learning. Pupils in all classes complete a broad range of very appropriate learning tasks across the curriculum. The overall quality of the pupils' written work in most settings is very good. There is a need to monitor the written work of pupils in receipt of resource teaching more carefully, so that it can be used to show their progress and to afford them an opportunity to reflect on their learning.

The majority of teachers prepare attractive learning environments that reinforce pupils' learning through attractive displays of their work and through using teacher-designed material that reinforces the key concepts and vocabulary of various subjects.

While most pupils can talk about their learning with a degree of understanding and confidence, there is a need to devote more attention to developing pupils' oral language. Explicit teaching of challenging vocabulary and well-planned learning activities that foster pupils' oral language competencies would further improve pupils' learning outcomes in oral language.

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

The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

All the teachers in both mainstream and support settings display well-developed teaching skills. During the observed lessons they explained the concepts and content of lessons very clearly and used questioning very well to check for understanding and to engage pupils in the learning activities. All teachers use a broad range of assessment strategies and have valuable data on pupil progress. Good attention is afforded to literacy and numeracy skills in all classes. Most teachers made very good use of resources and concrete examples to support pupils' learning. The majority of teachers identify relevant learning objectives for their lessons in their written plans. There is a need for the objectives in individual learning plans and in teacher planning documents for pupils in receipt of resource teaching to be more specific and measurable.

All of the pupils who participated in the focus group discussion indicated that they found the extra support teaching they receive in school very helpful, particularly in enabling them to understand mathematical concepts and procedures. The parent questionnaire returns indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the support teaching their child receives in school and the opportunities they receive to discuss their child's progress with teachers.

During the evaluation some good quality group work was observed in some classes. Overall, however the majority of lessons in both mainstream and support settings were teacher directed and in whole-class format. In order to improve the quality of teaching, teachers are advised to afford more frequent opportunities to pupils to engage in group-based learning activities. These should include well-planned opportunities for pupils to collaborate with each other, to discuss possible solutions to problems and to explain and justify their work to each other.

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

The school manages and uses the resources it receives to support pupils with special educational needs very well.

The school is an inclusive learning environment where all pupils are welcome. The continuum of support informs the school's approach to special educational needs. A number of very good programmes, including *Aistear*, *the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, are implemented very effectively in the school. School management could consider deploying some of the additional teaching resources the school will receive under the new resource allocation model to further support whole-school initiatives and group-based learning in mainstream classes. Very good links are maintained with parents of pupils with special educational needs and systems are in place to receive information from local early years' settings and to transfer information to post-primary schools.

Recommendations regarding special educational needs were made to the school in a previous whole-school evaluation and incidental inspection. School management and teachers are commended for the effective way they have implemented these recommendations.

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 staff of Colehill N.S. would like to acknowledge the report and are pleased with the positive findings in the inspection. The board and staff are particularly pleased that the good practice and sincere commitment to all pupils in our school are recognised and affirmed by the inspectorate and entire school community.

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 fully committed to the ongoing development of the education of all pupils in the school. In line with the recommendations in the report, the school is focusing on the explicit teaching of oral language and on incorporating more collaborative group-based learning opportunities throughout the school.

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 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;