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

**REPORT**

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Ballycanew N S</th>
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<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
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**Date of inspection: 05-04-2019**
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 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.

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**
05-04-2019

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<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<td>Discussion with principal and teachers</td>
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<td>Meeting with SEN team</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Meeting with SNAs</td>
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<td>Pupil group discussion</td>
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**SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Ballycanew NS is a rural, co-educational primary school under the Catholic patronage of the Bishop of Ferns. There were 210 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. School staff comprises an administrative principal, seven mainstream class teachers, four special education teachers (SETs) and three teachers of classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). There are twelve special-needs assistants (SNAs) based in the school.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**

- The quality of management and use of resources to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good; the principal is progressing a whole-school plan for improvement in provision for pupils.
- High levels of staff collaboration, openness and commitment, which include the introduction of newly-developed literacy and numeracy initiatives, are in evidence; there is potential to enhance the impact of these interventions.
- The overall quality of teaching for pupils with SEN in mainstream, special classes and support settings is good, with features of very good practice.
- The overall quality of learning of pupils with SEN is good; pupils experience an inclusive learning environment and demonstrate high levels of engagement.
- Teachers use a variety of approaches to assessment; there is a need to implement an agreed whole-school approach to assessment.
- Progress has been made on the implementation of the Continuum of Support; there is scope for further development of this approach and individualised planning.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The range of assessments in use in all settings should be enhanced and a more robust analysis of assessment data should be undertaken to guide more appropriately challenging programmes of learning and to plan for pupils’ progression.
- The plan to fully implement the use of student support files to ensure that pupils’ needs are identified and addressed at each level, including the classroom support stage, should be progressed and an agreed approach to the identification of specific, measurable and realistic targets and to the recording of pupils’ achievements should be implemented.
- To increase the impact of literacy and numeracy interventions, a focus on specific learning outcomes and skills in line with pupils’ differing abilities and a more consistent approach to monitoring pupils’ progress are needed.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
The overall quality of learning of pupils with SEN is good; pupils experience an inclusive learning environment and demonstrate high levels of engagement in lessons. They enjoy a broad range of learning experiences and engage in a variety of collaborative and active learning opportunities. During a focus group discussion, pupils with SEN reported that they enjoy their lessons and they spoke positively about the additional help they receive from staff members. In the special classes for pupils with an ASD, pupils develop language and communication and numeracy skills through individual station work with some group work. There are opportunities provided for pupils from the special classes to integrate with pupils in mainstream settings. The staff demonstrate an awareness of the potential to increase the level of integration for some of the pupils, as appropriate, in accordance with pupils’ individual needs. All parents who completed the parent questionnaire indicated that their child feels safe and well looked after in school and is fully included in school and classroom life.

Learning plans are prepared for pupils with SEN in consultation with class teachers, SNAs and parents, in addition to input from pupils as appropriate. Progress has been made on the implementation of the Continuum of Support and there is scope for further development of this approach and individualised planning. The school should progress its plan to fully implement the use of student support files to ensure that pupils’ needs are identified and addressed at each level, including the classroom support stage. In so doing, an agreed approach to the identification of specific, measurable and realistic targets and to the recording of pupils’ achievements is needed.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
The overall quality of teaching for pupils with SEN in mainstream, special classes and support settings is good, with features of very good practice. Overall, lessons are well structured, appropriately paced and there are clear explanations of lesson tasks. Teachers’ questioning is designed to stimulate appropriate responses from pupils and a good range of resources, including visuals, is used. Aspects of highly effective practice observed included meaningful differentiation of learning tasks to support pupils’ differing abilities and a cohesive approach by teachers and SNAs to the close monitoring of pupils’ achievement levels and their progression in learning. Teachers use a variety of approaches to assessment. A new assessment policy has recently been ratified and autism-specific assessment tools have been introduced. An agreed whole-school approach to assessment is now needed. The range of assessments in use in all settings should be enhanced and a more robust analysis of assessment data should be undertaken to guide more appropriately challenging programmes of learning and to plan for pupils’ progression.

The school management, teachers and SNAs have succeeded in creating a highly-supportive environment for all pupils. The range of support-teaching models includes team teaching, station teaching and the withdrawal of pupils individually and in groups for support. This year there has been a substantial increase in team-teaching approaches across the school, including the introduction of newly-developed literacy and numeracy initiatives. It is evident that teachers view collaboration as a means to improve pupil learning and to enhance their own professional development. There is potential to enhance the impact of these interventions. To this end, a focus on specific learning outcomes and skills in line with pupils’ differing abilities and a more consistent approach to monitoring pupils’ progress are needed.
3. THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES RECEIVED TO SUPPORT PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of management and use of resources to support pupils SEN is very good; the principal is progressing a whole-school plan for improvement in provision for pupils. The school is commended for its approach to inclusion. In the responses to parent questionnaires received, all parents agreed that their child is fully included in school and classroom life. High levels of staff collaboration, openness and commitment are in evidence. Teachers and SNAs collaborate effectively in responding to pupils’ needs. The SNAs play a significant role in meeting the care needs of pupils, in supporting inclusion and pupils’ access to a wide range of curricular experiences. School management strategically deploys teachers and SNAs to support pupils with SEN. The documentation of this considered approach in a policy on staff deployment should now be progressed. The principal and SET team plan to review the co-ordination of support for pupils across the school to ensure that the pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support. As part of the process, consideration is to be given to the timetabling of pupils’ support so that, as far as practicable, each pupil accessing support should receive the support required from one SET.

The teachers are committed to engaging in continuing professional development (CPD). For example, members of the in-school management and SET teams have developed a timeframe for reviewing pertinent resource materials from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). To optimise the impact of this work, the implementation of an action-planning approach to the implementation and monitoring of agreed actions will be beneficial. Information gained at CPD is shared with all staff members. Consideration now needs to be given to embedding learning from CPD programmes across the school and to identifying and progressing the school’s future CPD priorities. Some transition programmes have been put in place to support pupils transitioning to post-primary schools. Plans are in place to advance approaches to transitioning of pupils from early years setting through the use of the Mo Scéal transition templates. Commendable links have been established with external agencies to support pupils’ learning needs and well-being. The school liaises purposefully with a variety of external agencies, including the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and NEPS, to access support and advice with regard to pupils with SEN.
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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>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.</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>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 very good 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>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.</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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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>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.</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>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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management and staff of St. Enda’s N.S. welcome and acknowledge the report and are very pleased with the positive findings during the course of the inspection. We are very pleased that the pupils’ learning experiences are good, with some very good practice and that the high quality of collaboration, commitment, and openness among the school staff is acknowledged and affirmed.

The recognition of the credible progress that has been made in relation to the continuum of support is appreciated. The Board of Management continues to be fully committed to the ongoing development of the education of all pupils with special educational needs.

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

We accept and welcome the recommendations as outlined in the report.

The school will review the use of, and analysis of, assessment data to inform school-based supports and interventions.

The school is committed to continuing with our identified plan for the embedding of pupils support files into our school community which will also contribute to target setting for pupils of all ability levels.