Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Saint Vincent’s Infant Boys’ National School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>North William Street</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dublin 1</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>15816I</td>
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Date of inspection: 20-11-2019
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 inspectors 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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.
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| Inspection activities undertaken | • Analysis of parent questionnaires  
• Observation of teaching and learning  
• Examination of pupils’ work  
• Interaction with pupils  
• Feedback to principal and teachers |

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Saint Vincent’s Infant Boys’ National School caters for boys from junior infants to first class. The school is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and is included in Band 1 of the programme, Delivering Equality of Opportunity to Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. There were 108 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. School staff comprises an administrative principal, seven mainstream class teachers and six special education teachers (SET) including one shared Support Teacher and a home-school-community liaison co-ordinator. There are eight special needs assistants (SNAs) on staff.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
• A very positive atmosphere is nurtured by staff and respectful interactions are evident.
• The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good with some outstanding practice observed.
• While a comprehensive range of assessment approaches is available in the school, they are not always consistently implemented.
• The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special educational needs is very good with a few areas for improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• A strategic approach to the co-ordination of SEN provision, outlined in relevant policies, is needed to ensure consistent implementation of whole-school teaching, assessment and target setting approaches across mainstream and SEN settings.

DETAILS 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 very good. Pupils’ learning outcomes are broadly in line with their abilities. They regularly engage in a range of meaningful play-based activities with a literacy and numeracy focus as appropriate. Pupils’ learning experiences in numeracy lessons are based on strategies from Ready Set Go Maths and Maths Recovery. A particular emphasis is placed on language learning in lessons and this is highly appropriate in this school context where a significant number of pupils have needs in English as an additional language. A very positive atmosphere is nurtured by staff and respectful interactions are evident. Pupils respond well to the wide range of classroom management approaches employed. While a small
number of pupils present with very complex needs and behaviours of concern, teachers skilfully, respectfully and in a very sensitive manner address these needs. Meaningful inclusion is promoted proactively and is highly valued in this school.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good with some outstanding practice observed. Teachers’ very effective collective practice arises from the school’s commitment to professional development in literacy, numeracy and play-based learning approaches. In order to maintain teachers’ expertise in this regard, opportunities to implement Maths Recovery and Reading Recovery on an individual pupil basis should continue to be available as part of the suite of supports offered in the school. Overall, teachers’ planning in withdrawal and in-class settings is very effective. Student support plans are developed to a very high standard and they outline a detailed positive profile for each pupil as well as identifying their priority learning needs. While targets are identified in all learning plans they are not always sufficiently measurable or aligned to those identified for in-class activities. Assessment data gathered comprises both whole class screening and diagnostic testing; however, the full range of tests available in the school is not utilised. A more strategic approach to assessment is needed. The school has shared access to a Support Teacher and this role is focused on supporting the development of pupils’ behaviour for learning strategically and as required at different times of the year. A target cohort of pupils is identified and their progress is monitored regularly as part of their learning plans.

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 with a few areas for improvement. The school has demonstrated a long standing commitment to the provision of ongoing professional development of its staff in special education roles. It deploys its resources very effectively and with a necessary degree of flexibility to cater for pupils’ needs. This results in the provision of support that aligns to the principle that pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support. The Continuum of Support is used to identify the level of support needed by pupils. Additional information regarding the nature and time allocated to this support should be included in the school’s register of support. Very effective whole-school approaches in language, literacy and numeracy for pupils with SEN are evident. However, these approaches are not planned for strategically throughout the year and therefore their implementation is not assured. A strategic approach to the co-ordination of SEN provision is needed to optimise teachers’ expertise and to ensure that implementation of whole-school teaching and assessment approaches are a fixed feature of the school’s practices. These strategic approaches should be incorporated into the school’s SEN and assessment policies. Learning environments are optimised and are appropriately adapted to accommodate learners’ needs. A range of formal and informal communication tools is employed to ensure that the school liaises very regularly with parents to support pupils with SEN. Commendably, it has a structure in place to involve parents in policy review and development. Links with external agencies form a key part of the school’s approach to supporting pupils. In a parent survey completed as part of this evaluation, all parents agreed that they feel welcome in the school and that their child feels safe and well looked after in school. A well-established system ensures that relevant information is transferred from preschool settings to the school and as the school shares its HSCL with its neighbouring senior primary school the transition of pupils is very well supported. The board of management applies the concession for pupils in first class to have a shorter school day, as is provided for in Circular letter
11/95. It should review whether the continued application of this concession is in the educational interest of pupils at first class level in this school.
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.

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<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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<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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