

**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	St Clare's Convent N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Harold's Cross Road Dublin 6W
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16651H

Date of Evaluation: 25-11-2016



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

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Clare's Convent National School is a co-educational school serving children in the parish of Harold's Cross, under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school has two classes for children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), one of which is a class for preschool age pupils.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Highly commendable commitment to the inclusion of all pupils is evident in the culture and practice of St Clare's National School.
- The quality of the leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is highly effective and is to be seen in the very good organisation and collaborative practice across the school.
- The teaching and learning observed in supporting pupils with special educational needs are of a very high quality and high standards are expected of all pupils.
- The learning environments created in classrooms and support settings, and the use of resources across the school, are of a very good standard.
- Comprehensive whole-school policies developed in relation to the provision for pupils with special educational needs and assessment guide practice in classrooms.
- A useful individualised planning process has been developed and there are many instances of learning targets that are specific, with some good examples of the involvement of a team approach in the development of pupils' individual plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Building on current good practice in planning for individual pupils, consideration should be given to further developing the practice of setting more specific learning targets and to extending and strengthening the team approach in constructing pupils' plans.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Overall, very good outcomes in learning are in evidence for pupils with special educational needs. The engagement and involvement of the pupils in the learning activities observed in the classroom and support-teaching settings is very good. A range of approaches to support pupils' learning is conscientiously implemented and they benefit from the well-organised and structured learning activities provided. In the classroom and support settings, pupils are facilitated in participating and working in well-organised groups. Structured individual work is undertaken as appropriate. Approaches undertaken address cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural concerns. Pupils benefit from the skilfully provided support in both the organised activities of the classrooms and in the unstructured settings, such as the playground. Pupils engage purposefully with the materials employed to support their involvement, including

information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers aim to continually improve the outcomes for pupils. Across the school pupils achieve very good outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

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

- Very high quality teaching of pupils with special educational needs is in evidence. In providing support through individualised and small group lessons, teachers skilfully employ methodologies to address pupils' learning needs arising from specific difficulties in literacy and numeracy, and from disabilities, such as Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and ASD. Aspects of commendable practice observed include the effective use of collaborative work and the use of active learning methodologies, with visual and concrete materials employed appropriately. Pupils' active participation in lessons is fostered through the use of topics and activities which take account of their interests and needs. Pupils are enabled to engage in a good variety of well-structured learning tasks and receive constructive and positive feedback on their work and efforts. The progress of pupils accessing support for learning is carefully monitored; samples and records of the pupils' work are maintained. Attractive learning environments have been created to support pupils' involvement in their learning. Teachers are conscious of the need to differentiate the learning tasks to accommodate the range of pupils' abilities. Good use is made of strategies such as station teaching in a number of classrooms.

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

- A culture of inclusion is in evidence in this school. Impressive school leadership and highly committed and effective teaching facilitates very good practice in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Comprehensive whole-school policies for pupils with special educational needs and for assessment guide practice in classrooms. Very effective organisational arrangements facilitate the implementation of a carefully planned programme of support for pupils presenting with a wide range of needs. Opportunities for inclusive activities are consistently pursued across classrooms. A staged approach to intervention and provision of support for pupils is in evidence. There is a high level of communication and parental involvement in relation to pupils with special educational needs attending the school.
- Careful planning is undertaken for pupils with special needs. Support and mainstream class teachers meet frequently to discuss pupils' programmes and individual education plans (IEPs). While a useful individualised planning process has been developed, this would benefit from further focus on the setting of more specific learning targets and a strengthening of the team approach in the development of pupils' individual plans.
- The teachers and special-needs assistants work collaboratively and there is very good communication in responding to the needs of pupils. A good balance is employed in relation to the use of in-class, group and individualised support activities. In the infant and junior classrooms, there is a committed and effective emphasis on the early identification and provision of support for pupils experiencing difficulties in learning. Very good co-operation has been established with the support services and agencies, including the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Visiting Teacher Service.

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 of St. Clare's NS acknowledges the report and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

The Board of Management is extremely proud of the findings which identify the high quality leadership, the commitment, co-operation and hard work of all staff to the inclusion of all children. This reflects the ethos of the school and charism of the founder.

The Board of Management is particularly pleased that the inspection team highlighted the innovative structures our school has developed to support 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.

The school remains fully committed to the ongoing development of the education of all pupils with special educational needs.

In line with the recommendations in the report the school is focusing on the individual educational plans with particular emphasis on refining the specific learning objectives.

Furthermore, the Board will continue to facilitate the upskilling of staff in the area of special educational needs to enhance the knowledge and expertise of the staff. The school community in accordance with the Franciscan ethos has an ongoing commitment to all pupils to achieve their potential as learners.

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 very good 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;