An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with
Special Educational Needs

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aínm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Na Croise Naofa</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Avenue De Rennes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mahon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cork</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
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Date of inspection: 22-10-2019
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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Analysis of parent questionnaires</strong></td>
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<td>• Discussion with principal and teachers</td>
<td>• Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meeting with SEN team</td>
<td>• Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>• Meeting with SNAs</td>
<td>• Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>• Pupil group discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Feedback to principal and teachers</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil na Croise Naofa is a co-educational primary school located in Mahon on the south side of Cork city. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross and there 172 are pupils enrolled. The school participates in the Delivery of Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), an action plan of the Department of Education and Skills to promote and enhance educational inclusion. Staffing comprises of an administrative principal, nine mainstream class teachers, seven special education teachers (SETs), a behaviour support teacher and a shared home-school-community liaison (HSCL) teacher. In addition, six special-needs assistants (SNA) are employed in the school. The school has an early start class for preschool pupils which was not included in this evaluation.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

• This is a highly inclusive school which demonstrates a strong commitment to the holistic development of all pupils.
• The quality of pupil learning with special educational needs (SEN) observed during the evaluation was good.
• High-quality teaching was observed during the evaluation with some excellent practice noted; there is scope to define the role of the behaviour support teacher and to extend the SETs knowledge of diagnostic testing.
• Pupils are motivated and engaged and are very positive about their learning activities and the support that they receive.
• Teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) and adopt a collaborative approach to sharing professional practice.
• A comprehensive range of detailed policies support SEN provision throughout the school; there is scope to revise the current admissions policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• The role of the behaviour support teacher should be defined and criteria for admission to the programme should be established.
• Special education teachers should take the opportunity to collaboratively review the school’s suite of diagnostic tests and familiarise themselves with their use and application.
• The school’s admissions policy should be reviewed and revised to reflect the school’s inclusive nature in accordance with the provisions of Circular 0013/2017.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The overall quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs observed during the evaluation was good; very good learning was observed in some instances. Pupils are highly motivated and display a sense of achievement in their learning. High-quality pupil engagement was evident in a wide variety of appropriate learning activities. Lessons observed were well structured with a clear focus on targeted key skills, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Interactions with pupils and standardised test results indicate good overall learning outcomes. This is an inclusive school where staff demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the holistic needs of all pupils. Particular attention is paid to developing the social and emotional well-being of the school population.

- In a group discussion with a selection of pupils from a number of classes, pupils were very affirming about the range of support that they receive and articulated positive views regarding their learning experiences within the school. In the questionnaires issued as a part of the evaluation, parents also indicated high levels of satisfaction with the current support provided for pupils with SEN.

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

- The teaching observed during the evaluation was a high quality with some excellent practice noted. Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate methodologies which make lessons both stimulating and effective. The school has organised a range of approaches to meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, including in-class support and the withdrawal of small groups and individual pupils.

- Teachers long-term planning is detailed and is based on a very good understanding of pupil strengths and areas requiring development. The newly-formulated template for short-term planning should be further refined and such planning should be undertaken on a weekly basis in accordance with the provisions of the DES Circular 0013/2017. Key aspects of the DEIS improvement plan has been incorporated into teacher planning and contribute directly to the effectiveness of SEN teaching.

- The continuum of support process is well embedded in the practice of the school. Individual student support files are of a very high quality with targets clearly focused on identified areas in need of development. However, in some instances, there are too many targets and it is advised that these be reduced with a view to a more focused approach on achieving specified learning goals.

- The school places a very commendable emphasis on positive pupil behaviour and the school’s behaviour support teacher is deployed in a very effective manner. The approaches taken in the activities undertaken by this teacher are highly effective in providing ongoing support and cultivating positive behaviour amongst the school population. It is recommended that criteria for pupil inclusion in this programme be clearly stated and that the role of the behaviour support teacher be formally outlined.

- The school employs a good range of approaches to assessment and has a comprehensive suite of diagnostic tests suitable for evaluating the ongoing needs and progress of SEN pupils. It is recommended that all staff involved in SEN provision take the opportunity to collaboratively review these diagnostic tests and familiarise themselves with their use and application.
3. THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES RECEIVED TO SUPPORT PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- The overall quality of management and use of resources to support pupils with SEN is good. The newly-appointed principal is liaising closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator to familiarise herself with all aspects of current SEN provision. Learning environments throughout the school are stimulating and attractive and the building and grounds are maintained to a very high standard.
- The school has procured an extensive range of educational resources, including information and communications technology (ICT). These are used to very good effect to support teaching and learning. There has been a strong strategic approach to staff availing of CPD and there is a commendable collaborative sharing of good practice at the regular formal SEN meetings.
- Strong partnerships have been established with parents with the support of the shared HSCL teacher. There is regular consultation with parents regarding their children’s progress and in the formulation of an individual education plans which they are requested to sign.
- The special-needs assistants are effectively deployed and work in collaboration with other staff to support the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream classroom settings.
- The school liaises very effectively with a wide variety of external agencies, including the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and Túsla. It also collaborates effectively with a number of local community organisations with a view to addressing the holistic needs of the school population. In addition, the school has established a formal transition programme for sixth class pupils and maintains strong links with local post-primary schools.
- A comprehensive range of policies which offer clear guidance regarding the day-to-day operation of SEN provision, have been ratified. However, it is recommended that the school’s admissions policy be reviewed and revised to reflect the inclusive nature of the school and to ensure that it is in accordance with the provisions of Circular 0013/2017.
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>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<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 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><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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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

The Board welcomes the affirmation by the Inspectorate of the very good work carried out by the staff of Scoil na Croise Naofa in the provision for 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 recommendations of the report will be duly implemented and will be reflected in all future planning. The new Board of Management will review the Admissions Policy to reflect the inclusive nature of our school.