

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	Bunscoil Phádraig Naofa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Tuam Co Galway
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17282H

Date of Evaluation: 29-03-2017



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	29-03-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Meeting with SEN team• Meeting with SNAs• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Pupil group discussion• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Bunscoil Phádraig Naofa operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. This all-boys school caters for pupils from second to sixth classes. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), Urban-Band 2, the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school benefits from Home-School-Community Liaison (HSCL) services and the School Completion Programme (SCP).

There are 247 boys enrolled across ten mainstream classes, one special class for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and two special classes for pupils with a mild general learning disability (MGLD). There are six support teachers on the staff.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- This is an inclusive school that values and celebrates the diverse needs of its pupils. The school engages with external programmes and interventions to support the social, behavioural and emotional needs of pupils.
- The overall quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. The focus on oral language development across the curriculum needs to be stronger.
- The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, with some very high standards observed in some settings.
- The school competently manages the resources it receives to support pupils with special educational needs. The support teachers' caseloads and timetables need to be reviewed.
- The teachers' willingness to work collaboratively is commendable. Considerable improvement has been achieved by the staff in implementing *Literacy Lift-Off* and *Maths Matters* effectively.
- It is praiseworthy that a whole-school approach to planning has been adopted. Planning for differentiation needs to be more specific.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- At whole-school level, greater emphasis should be placed on the development of pupils' oral language skills.
- In revising teachers' caseloads and timetables, consideration should be given to allocating more time to in-class support in order to further support differentiation and collaborative learning activities.

- Planning for differentiation in mainstream settings should be more specific. All teachers should use the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* documentation.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Overall, the quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. This inclusive school values and celebrates the diverse needs of its pupils. The school's commitment to the integration of pupils in the special classes into mainstream settings is praiseworthy as is its practice in this regard.

In most settings, learning activities are purposeful and appropriately challenging. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy their learning and are motivated to learn especially in co-operative activities. High levels of engagement in learning were evident among the pupils during station teaching. The effective implementation of *Literacy Lift-Off* and *Maths Matters* is proving to be of benefit to all pupils. Pupils' standardised test results in English and Mathematics have improved in recent years. It is recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on progressing pupils' oral language abilities in developing the learning programme further across the school. The content of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) is differentiated appropriately. The very effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) facilitates independent and co-operative learning activities.

In the group discussion with a sample of pupils with special educational needs, all pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction with life in school and the progress they are making across all curriculum areas. In questionnaire responses, a few parents stated that they were unaware of their child's learning plan. The school should address this issue and engage further with parents about this.

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

The overall quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good with a very high standard observed in some settings. The teachers are dedicated and committed to their pupils. The quality of pupil management is very good. During the evaluation, a calm and orderly environment was evident and pupils' behaviour was exemplary. All school interactions observed were characterised by respect, courtesy and co-operation. The school has recently introduced team teaching. The willingness of teachers to explore new and innovative approaches and to work collaboratively is highly commendable.

In mainstream classrooms, some teachers have devised effective strategies to meet the needs of all pupils in their classes. Meaningful differentiation of content, process and outcomes is a feature of very good practice which was observed in some settings. This good practice needs to be discussed and implemented at whole-school level. In the support settings and special classes, almost all lessons are well-structured to enable pupils engage in active learning experiences and to interact with peers and teachers. It is praiseworthy that learning targets for individual pupils are formulated based on

identified needs. Appropriate base-line assessment data informs the high quality teaching observed in some lessons.

It is praiseworthy that a whole-school approach to planning has been adopted. However, individual support files should be developed to record pupils' learning and progress more clearly. It is recommended that planning for differentiation in mainstream settings should be more specific. All teachers should use the NEPS *Continuum of Support* documentation and these should be shared with parents.

A whole-school approach to standardised assessment is in place. A software package is used to track individual and whole-school outcomes year-on-year. In order to derive maximum benefit from the data yielded by these assessments, individual pupil attainments in literacy and numeracy should be benchmarked against performance in a suitable reasoning test.

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

The overall quality of the management and use of resources is good. There is a clear commitment in policy and in practice to the admission and inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Most of the teachers have taught in support settings. All settings are well resourced. Specialist equipment for visual and auditory impairment is used very effectively. The eleven special needs assistants (SNAs) provide high quality support for the pupils in their care and they work as a team to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

It is recommended that the organisation of the teaching caseloads be reviewed. In some cases, more than one support teacher was engaged in supporting the needs of individual pupils. It is recommended that more emphasis be put on collaboratively structured, well-resourced and well monitored in-class support programmes and interventions so that pupils are not regularly missing learning experiences with their class grouping.

The school engages with a wide range of external programmes and interventions to support the social, behavioural and emotional needs of pupils. Very effective links have been forged with the feeder primary schools and post-primary schools so that the transitioning of pupils in and out of school is very well supported.

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 Bunscoil Phádraig Naofa would like to acknowledge the report.

The board of management is delighted with the positive findings in the inspection.

The board is particularly pleased that the school was affirmed as an inclusive school that values and celebrates the diverse needs of its pupils, that the calm orderly environment and exemplary behaviour of the students was evident and that the report reflected the commendable effort made by teachers in working collaboratively.

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 board is 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 extending the successful in-class support that already exists.

The school is examining ways to place even greater emphasis on oral language and teachers are committed to using the NEPS continuum of support documents.

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;