

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	Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Mourne Road Drimnagh Dublin 12
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17355I

Date of inspection: 07-02-2018



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Date of inspection	07-02-2018
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

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS is an urban, Catholic, single-sex school catering for pupils from second to sixth class. The school has two classes for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). At the time of the evaluation there were 119 pupils enrolled at the school. Staff at the school comprises one administrative principal, ten teachers, seven special needs assistants (SNAs) and school secretary. The school participates in Band 1 of the Department's programme for *Delivering Equality in Schools* (DEIS).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- This is an inclusive school with staff demonstrating high levels of commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils.
- There is high quality teaching in the school in mainstream, support settings and special classes.
- The school is successful in securing good learning outcomes for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- The school's assessment policy requires updating and review.
- The school is making very good efforts to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) through a combination of in-class and withdrawal of groups and individuals; there is need for further refinement of the programmes of learning both in-class and in withdrawal settings.
- There is very good management and use of resources to support pupils with SEN.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school's assessment policy should be updated and reviewed to ensure a consistent whole-school approach to assessment and the use of assessment information to monitor and track progress and to plan programmes of learning.
- To ensure that the planned programmes of learning in withdrawal and in-class support settings fully meet the needs of all pupils with SEN, greater use should be made of assessment information in planning to identify more specific targets and to plan differentiated learning for individuals and groups of pupils based on identified needs.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The school is successful in securing good learning outcomes for pupils with SEN. Pupils with SEN enjoy school and display positive attitudes to school. It is evident from interactions with pupils with SEN that they enjoy their lessons and learning and are highly motivated to learn. In the group discussion pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons and learning and in particular spoke positively about how they enjoyed reading and participating in a wide range of activities in school. Some high quality samples of their work in a range of curriculum areas are on display in corridors and around the school. Very effective strategies have been devised to meet the learning needs of pupils with SEN such as structured arrangements to provide one-to-one support when appropriate. Attendance levels at the school are very good. There is some good use of assessment by individual teachers including teacher observations, checklists, teacher-designed tasks and tests and diagnostic tests to monitor pupil' learning. The school's assessment policy has been in place for a number of years. The policy should be updated and reviewed to ensure a consistent whole-school approach to assessment and the use of assessment information in monitoring and tracking progress and in planning programmes of learning. Development of assessment for learning approaches and inclusion of the pupils' voice in learning plans are also recommended.

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

Overall the quality of teaching in mainstream, support settings and special classes is very good. Teachers are very well prepared and deliver well-structured and carefully planned lessons. Teachers' questioning is clear and designed to stimulate appropriate responses from pupils. During the learning activities, teachers provide appropriate support to pupils with SEN and all pupils are meaningfully included in lessons. High levels of commitment to the care and wellbeing of all pupils is evident. Pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher relationships are positive in all learning settings and attractive and stimulating learning environments support and encourage pupils' learning. Resources are used effectively to support lessons and to ensure that lessons are interesting and enjoyable. The school is making very good efforts to support all pupils in their learning and to deliver support using a combination of in-class and withdrawal approaches. While some good quality samples of planning for pupils with SEN were in evidence a number of the planned programmes, both in-class and in support settings, would benefit from a deeper analysis and use of assessment information to inform the support provided, to identify specific targets and to plan for differentiated learning for individuals and groups of pupils.

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

Management and use of resources to support pupils with SEN is very good. There is a clear commitment in policy and in practice to the inclusion and holistic support of pupils with SEN. Resources are deployed in line with the NEPS Continuum of Support. Each pupil with SEN has been placed on the continuum, and the school is making very good efforts to ensure that pupils with the greatest level of needs have access to the greatest levels of support. The school engages well with a wide range of external programmes and interventions to support the social, behavioural, and emotional needs of pupils. Information and communications technology (ICT) is effectively used in many learning settings. The school communicates well with parents and in the parent questionnaires

most parents indicate that they are happy with the opportunities they receive to discuss their child's learning with teachers.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

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 of 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;