

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	Scoil Iarlatha Naofa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Gearrbhaile Mionloch Béal Átha Na Slua Contae na Gaillimhe
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17863E

Date of inspection: 28-11-2018



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 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.

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Date of inspection	28-11-2018
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

Scoil Iarlatha Naofa, Garbally, is a rural co-educational primary school located approximately five kilometres from the village of Menlough, County Galway. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. There are three mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers (SETs); one SET post is shared with two other schools in the locality. Currently, there are seventy-three pupils enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The school is an inclusive learning environment where all pupils are welcome.
- The overall quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good; the quality of teaching in the lessons observed during the evaluation ranged from fair to very good.
- There is a need for improvement in the management and use of physical resources for pupils with special educational needs.
- Current models of support provision for pupils with special educational needs have scope for development.
- Currently, an SET is deployed to teach Mathematics to whole-class groups and this is contrary to Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circular 0013/2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The board of management should ensure that specific funding provided by the Department of Education and Skills to address the care needs of particular pupils be used for this purpose without delay.
- The principal should lead the staff in the implementation of collaborative, targeted in-class interventions in literacy and numeracy throughout the school.
- The organisation of support teaching should ensure that the deployment of resources is in compliance with DES Circular 0013/17.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The overall quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Most pupils are making good progress in accordance with their abilities. The majority of pupils demonstrated positive attitudes towards their learning and engaged in their learning activities with enthusiasm. All pupils in the focus-group discussion reported that they find their additional support teaching to be helpful. In response to the Inspectorate's survey, all parents of pupils with special educational needs agreed that their children were fully included in school and classroom life, and that school work is matched effectively to their children's ability levels.

During the evaluation, highly effective learner experiences were observed when pupils were engaged purposefully in collaborative learning activities. Opportunities for pupils to engage in collaborative pair and group work should be extended to all settings. In the withdrawal settings, pupils receive assistance with aspects of English, Mathematics, social skills, and life skills such as cooking. It is highly commendable that the school has prioritised the social and emotional needs of the pupils. The teachers have received training in *Friends for Life*, an evidence-based programme that promotes resilience and social and emotional competence in children and young people.

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

The overall quality of teaching in mainstream and support settings is good. During the evaluation, the quality of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from fair to very good. Aspects of commendable practice observed included links to prior learning, active learning methodologies, use of concrete materials and differentiated activities. These highly effective practices should be extended to all settings. Talk and discussion was a feature of provision in all lessons. Most classrooms are well organised. Stimulating learning environments are created with commendable displays of pupils' learning in a variety of curricular areas.

During the evaluation, the teaching of pupils in the support settings was provided in a positive and supportive manner. Learning activities were aligned with pupils' identified priority learning needs. It is highly commendable that the school has recently adopted The National Educational Psychological Service's (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* documentation. Teachers prepare student support files, which provide the basis for target setting for each instructional term. While most parents indicated in questionnaires that they were aware of their child's learning plan, a small number of parents were not. The school should follow up on this matter.

Currently, additional teaching supports are provided almost exclusively through the withdrawal of small groups for literacy, numeracy and social and life skills. The school has engaged recently in some in-class support. *Literacy Lift Off*, a differentiated reading and writing initiative, was piloted in the school. Very good outcomes were identified in assessments conducted by the school before and after the intervention. With a view to improving provision the principal should lead the staff in the implementation of collaborative, in-class support. More focused and targeted in-class interventions and team teaching should be implemented in literacy and numeracy throughout the school.

Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies to monitor pupil progress. Pupil profiles were available in each setting. A range of assessment practices was observed during the evaluation, including checklists, teacher-designed tests, standardised and diagnostic tests. Robust analysis and tracking of assessment data should be conducted to inform differentiated teaching strategies. In addition, the school should administer a general intelligence test.

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 satisfactory. The whole-school policy for special education has been reviewed to take cognisance of Special Education Circular 13/2017. The teachers are committed to engaging in continuing professional development (CPD). The special-needs assistants (SNAs) play a significant role in meeting the care needs of pupils, supporting inclusion and enabling pupils to access a wide range of curricular experiences. However, the board of management should ensure that specific funding provided by the Department of Education and Skills to address the care needs of particular pupils be used for this purpose without delay.

A special education teacher (SET) is deployed to teach Mathematics to whole-class groups. This is contrary to Department of Education and Skills Circular 0013/2017. The practice should be discontinued in favour of SETs providing targeted support to identified groups of pupils, informed by a rigorous analysis of relevant assessment data.

The school is an inclusive learning environment where all pupils are welcome. Almost all of the learning environments are accessible, comfortable and suitable for all learners. Currently, the staff room is used as a setting for the provision of some support teaching. The timetabling of this room should be reviewed in order to ensure that this teaching can take place without distraction or interruption.

Commendable links have been established with external agencies to support pupils' priority learning needs and wellbeing. Teachers receive information from the local early-years setting regarding pupils who are enrolled in their school and they ensure that post-primary schools receive all relevant information on pupils with special educational needs.

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;