

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	Muire Na Mainistreach
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Muire Na Mainistreach Cill Airne Co Chiarrai
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18049G

Date of inspection: 20-04-2018



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 inspectors 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, 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

Date of inspection	20-04-2018
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 Mhuire na Mainistreach is an all-boys senior primary school located in the town of Killarney, Co. Kerry. It is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kerry and has an enrolment of 191 pupils. School staffing comprises an administrative principal, seven mainstream class teachers, four full-time special education teachers (SET), a part-time SET and a teacher for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The school also has a full-time teacher in a special class for pupils with multiple disabilities.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is good; there is scope for development in the monitoring of pupils' progress in some settings.
- While the overall quality of teaching is good, support for SEN pupils would benefit from a review of the impact of the models of support on pupils' learning.
- The overall quality of management and use of resources to support pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The manner in which special education teachers are deployed requires immediate attention.
- Parents and pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction with the support being received in the school.
- While the school has established good relations and communication with its feeder school, there is scope to improve the transfer of information on pupils with special educational needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The structure in place for monitoring, for recording and for documenting pupils' progress in learning, at the school support stage in particular, should be further developed.
- The school should implement a more rigorous approach to monitoring the impact of all models of support on the learning outcomes of targeted pupils.
- The deployment of special education teachers should be linked more closely with a whole-school identification of needs process.
- The practice of special education teachers assuming responsibility for the implementation of mainstream subjects with class groupings should be discontinued to ensure compliance with Circular 13/2017.
- A formal mechanism should be agreed with feeder schools to facilitate the coordinated transfer of all relevant information on pupils with special educational needs, to ensure continuity of provision for these learners.

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. There is a supportive and inclusive atmosphere in the school and a range of positive learning experiences is provided for pupils. There is a strong focus on pastoral care and the support provided is aimed at promoting social, emotional, academic, language and motor skills development. The active participation of pupils in the individual education planning process, which involves them working collaboratively with teachers in setting personal learning goals and targets is highly commended. In a focus group meeting with a selection of pupils, they were positive about the range of supports they received and articulated positive perceptions of their learning in school. The parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the support offered to pupils in the school in their responses to the questionnaires, issued as part of the evaluation.

In the lessons observed, pupils were generally provided with appropriate learning challenges and clear examples of progress in targeted areas were noted in records for pupils at the school support plus stage. However, the structure in place for monitoring, recording and documenting pupils' progress in learning at the school support stage requires further development. There are clear indications that pupils with English as an additional language are progressing in their learning. To further develop provision in this area, it is recommended that the Primary School Assessment Kit be used to establish a baseline of pupils' attainment against which progress can be assessed.

The school is commended for the attention devoted to pupils' social and emotional wellbeing. Closer adherence to the key features of the evidence-informed initiatives being implemented in the school is recommended. It is also advised that consideration be given to introducing the pre-assessment and post-assessment components of this initiative to monitor the impact of the work on targeted pupils.

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

The overall quality of teaching of pupils with special education needs was good with the practice observed ranging from satisfactory to very good. All teachers were well prepared for lessons and adopted a positive and inclusive approach to supporting pupils. The school is commended for extending the range of support-teaching models in recent times, to include team teaching, station-teaching and the withdrawal of pupils individually and in groups for targeted support. Very good examples of monitoring of the impact of particular models of support, most notably station-teaching, are in place. It is recommended however, that the school implements a more rigorous approach to monitoring the impact of all models of support on the learning outcomes of targeted pupils. This monitoring should clearly inform the ongoing development and selection of interventions which are having the greatest impact on improving the learning outcomes of pupils who present with special educational needs.

The school has commenced implementing the continuum of support process and the quality of individual education plans for pupils is generally good. A suitable range of diagnostic assessment tests are available and positive examples of their use to inform target setting for improved learning outcomes were noted. There is a need, however, to maximise their use in special education settings. A range of practices was observed in mainstream classes, regarding differentiation for pupils with special education needs. A more robust analysis of classroom and whole-school assessment data in

literacy and in numeracy is suggested. This would serve to inform the development of a more targeted approach to differentiation for the range of pupils' needs and abilities in all classrooms.

Very high-quality teaching was observed in the class for pupils with multiple disabilities. A clear baseline of pupils' needs is established and programmes of support are implemented in a systematic, targeted and reflective manner. The pupils are provided with opportunities to work in both mainstream and in the special class setting throughout the school day.

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 special educational needs is satisfactory. There is a positive attitude to inclusion and to supporting pupils. Learning environments are accessible, comfortable and suitable for all learners. A good range of resources including information and communications technology has been procured to support teaching and learning.

In addition to the teaching resources provided by the Department, the board of management, with the approval of the Patron, has also entered into a private employment arrangement for an additional five hours of support. Considerable work has been undertaken in the school to achieve the most efficient deployment of resources and the model currently in place provides for the allocation of named special education teachers to provide support at particular class levels. There is flexibility within this model to facilitate the implementation of initiatives such as station-teaching. It is recommended that this model be further developed and linked more closely with a whole-school identification of needs. It was noted that special education teachers have responsibility for the implementation of subjects with particular class groupings. This is in contravention of circular 13/2017. It is recommended that this practice be discontinued in favour of special education teachers providing targeted support to identified groups of pupils and informed by a rigorous analysis of relevant assessment data.

There is a broad range of experience and expertise in the SET team. Teachers have engaged with a variety of professional development courses. It is recommended that formal meetings be scheduled to facilitate the sharing of expertise and the collaborative upskilling of all staff.

As Scoil Mhuire is a senior boys' school, pupils are enrolled in second class. It is recommended that a formal mechanism be agreed with feeder schools for the transfer of all relevant information on pupils with special educational needs, to ensure continuity of support for this group of 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 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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Muire na Mainistreach N.S wishes to acknowledge the recent SEN inspection report and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

The Board of Management are pleased with the findings in the report. We feel it reflects the ethos and overall inclusive nature of our school.

The Board acknowledges that the report highlights that the quality of learning for SEN pupils is good, that parents and pupils themselves expressed high levels of satisfaction with the supports they receive in the school.

The Board is very happy that the school was commended for the attention devoted to pupils' social and emotional wellbeing.

The BOM are pleased with the positive feedback on our newly established MD Class.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. The school will review the overall structure for recording/documenting progress at the school support stage.
2. The school will review our approach to monitoring the impact of different models of support.
3. The school will review its whole school identification of needs process in relation to the deployment of SET teachers.
4. The school will review the deployment of SET to ensure compliance with circular 13/2017.
5. The school has adjusted its enrolment application forms to ensure the efficient transfer of all relevant information from our feeder schools.