

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with**  
**Special Educational Needs**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Naomh Bríd N S
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Knockananna Arklow Co Wicklow
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	18470N

**Date of Evaluation: 24-05-2017**



## **WHAT IS AN EVALUATION OF PROVISION 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

## EVALUATION OF PROVISION PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Date of inspection</b>	24-05-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Meeting with SEN teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Pupil group discussion</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Naomh Bríd, Knockananna, Arklow, Co. Wicklow is a co-educational mainstream primary school under Catholic Patronage. The school is located in a rural setting. Teaching staff consists of three mainstream class teachers, a learning-support teacher and a shared resource teacher.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The school provides an inclusive learning environment where all pupils are welcome; the good organisation of provision for pupils with special educational needs is supported by the effective management and leadership of the school.
- In the classroom and support settings, pupils engage purposefully in the learning activities and are affirmed in their efforts; good use is made of the teaching and learning resources available in the school, including information and communication technology (ICT).
- Good overall outcomes in learning are in evidence for pupils with special educational needs.
- The staged approach is used effectively in providing for pupils with special educational needs and a useful individualised planning process is in place; however, learning targets are not sufficiently specific in some instances and there is scope for strengthening the collaborative approach in the planning process for individual pupils.
- A detailed policy provides valuable guidance on the school's approach to assessment but policy and practice in relation to assessment for learning (AfL) and diagnostic assessment require further development.
- A number of teachers have availed of various opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) to develop their knowledge and skills in supporting pupils with special educational needs.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Drawing on the school's earlier work, the individualised planning process for pupils receiving support should be reviewed to incorporate the setting of more specific learning targets and to strengthen the collaborative approach in the development of plans for individual pupils.
- School policy on assessment should be reviewed to provide for wider use of AfL strategies and to enhance the use of diagnostic assessment approaches.
- An audit should be undertaken of the CPD needs of staff in the area of special education in order that professional development needs may be supported, as far as practicable.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- Good overall outcomes in learning for pupils with special educational needs are in evidence. In the multi-grade classrooms and support settings pupils engage purposefully in the learning activities and are affirmed in their efforts. A good range of approaches to support learning is conscientiously implemented across the school and pupils benefit from the well-organised lessons and structured activities. In each classroom pupils are facilitated in working in pairs and groups.
- In the support settings, lessons address a range of learning needs, including social, emotional, behavioural, literacy and numeracy concerns. Active participation in the lessons is fostered through the use of approaches which take account of pupils' needs and interests. Pupils are enabled to engage in a good variety of learning activities and have undertaken interesting tasks and projects. Pupils' work is carefully monitored and samples and records of the pupils' work are maintained.
- A detailed policy provides valuable guidance on assessment. Policy and practice in relation to assessment for learning (AfL) and diagnostic assessment require further development however. While the staged approach to providing for pupils has been effectively employed by the school, consideration should now be given to adopting the Students Support File materials, devised by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS.) Enhanced approaches to diagnostic assessment will also be important in establishing individual pupils' specific learning needs, facilitating the identification of clearer learning targets and the provision of more focused teaching methodologies for pupils receiving support.

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

- Overall, good quality teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs is in evidence. Attractive learning environments have been created to support pupils' participation. Aspects of positive practice observed include the use of group work, the use of concrete and visual materials in active learning methodologies, and the positive affirmation of pupils. Teachers are conscious of the need to differentiate the learning tasks to accommodate the range of age and ability in classrooms. Good use is also made of approaches such as station teaching and buddy systems. Very good use of ICT was observed in some of the teaching activities.
- The school has acquired some very good teaching programmes to support the diverse range of learning needs. The school should continue to develop its complement of evidence-based programmes and as far as practicable access the training and programmes such as the Friends for Life programme which is supported by NEPS.
- In the group discussion with a sample of pupils who are accessing support, pupils expressed positive views on their experience of school and on the support they are receiving with their learning. In the parent questionnaires, most parents indicated that they felt that the school was helping their child to progress in reading, writing, Maths and to interact well with others. A few parents didn't know whether the work their child is asked to do is matched to his or her ability. The school should address this issue with parents in a collaborative approach during the individualised planning process.

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

- The effective leadership and management of the school supports the good organisation of provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school environment is welcoming and contributes to an inclusive school community. A good balance is employed in relation to the use of in-class, group and individualised support activities. Good use is made of the teaching and learning resources available in classrooms. The school endeavours to promote whole-school approaches and to support parental involvement. It pursues approaches to early intervention and aims to direct resources towards the pupils with most needs. In the sample of parents who completed the questionnaire, almost all agreed that their child felt safe and well looked after in school.
- A number of teachers have availed of various opportunities for CPD to develop their knowledge and skills in supporting pupils with special educational needs. An audit should be undertaken of staff CPD needs in special education so that these professional development needs may be supported, as far as practicable.
- The school liaises effectively with a variety of external agencies, including the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and NEPS, to access support and advice in relation to 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 quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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 <b>very good</b> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;