

**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>	Little Island NS
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Little Island Co. Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	18497K

**Date of Evaluation: 18-05-2017**



## **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 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 PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Date of inspection</b>	18-05-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Meeting with SEN team</li><li>• Meeting with SNAs</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

Little Island is a co-educational national school and is situated in East Cork. The school has eight mainstream class teachers, three full-time learning support/resource teachers, and one resource teacher shared with Bartlemy National School.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

### FINDINGS

- The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- The positive whole-school approach among staff to the inclusion of pupils is a feature of very good practice.
- A range of effective methodologies is used to provide for the diversity of needs. Identification of this very good practice in whole-school documentation would promote a consistency in approach for all staff.
- Education plans include specific, measurable, agreed, relevant and timed (SMART) targets. In some cases, the strategies identified to address the areas of social and emotional development are restricted to the support setting.
- Teachers have undertaken valuable additional professional development.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The very good practice observed with regard to language development and differentiation should be clearly reflected in whole-school plans and in teachers' individual planning.
- The strategies that address the areas of social and emotional development should be extended to group work in the mainstream setting.
- To build the staff's capacity to address the school's current and future priority areas, a more strategic approach to the management of continuous professional development is advised.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. Lessons observed were purposeful and appropriately challenging. The pupils with special educational needs are highly motivated and eager to engage in their learning. Support files are well prepared and these files document the progress and learning of pupils. During the group interview with pupils, high levels of satisfaction were expressed with school life and pupils' concerns were very well articulated.

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

The quality of teaching in mainstream and in support settings is very good. The teachers plan carefully and instruction time is managed effectively. To ensure a greater consistency among teachers in regard to short-term planning in the SEN settings, teachers are advised to set clear learning objectives, together with a record of completion of learning activities.

Personalised education plans include detailed information on pupils' learning. Learning targets are SMART and are focussed on priority learning needs. In some cases, the strategies that address the areas of social and emotional development should be extended to group work in the mainstream setting. Staff is advised to ensure that all education plans are signed and dated. The productive learning activities observed in teachers' practice in addressing pupils' language needs should now be documented in school policy. Teachers are advised to utilise established instruments that are recognised by the Department of Education and Skills to set baselines for learning.

The teachers are very aware of the learning needs of pupils. They achieve a very good balance between in-class support and the withdrawal of pupils. A range of approaches to provide for the diversity of needs in classrooms is employed. Pupils who present with specific gifts and talents are given particular attention. The good practice identified in differentiation in mainstream classrooms should be reflected clearly in teachers' planning.

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

The positive whole-school approach to the inclusion of pupils and to responding to their individual needs is a feature of very good practice in this school. The board of management has overseen the establishment of a well-resourced and well-maintained school environment. Attractive and pleasant learning environments have been created to support pupils' learning. A range of resources, including information and communications technology, has been accessed to support pupils' learning. Senior management has played a significant role in the development of very good practices in relation to supporting the pupils with special educational needs. SEN staff meet on a weekly basis for planning and discussion purposes. Management should ensure that these meetings, although necessary, do not impact negatively on pupil-teacher contact time.

Teachers make effective use of the continuum of support in addressing the learning needs of pupils. There is evidence of good collaboration with external professionals. Teachers have undertaken additional professional development. A more strategic approach to the management of CPD is recommended in relation to special educational needs. This will build on the staff's capacity to address the school's current and future priority areas.

The school's policy on staff rotation affords teachers a variety of teaching experiences while allowing for continuity in the special education setting. The special needs assistants play a significant role in meeting the care needs of pupils and in helping them to access the curriculum.

The results of the parent questionnaires indicate that a significant number of parents agreed that the school was helping their child to progress in reading, in writing, in Mathematics and in social development. For some parents, a renewed awareness of their child's learning plan may be necessary.

### 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 <i>very good</i> 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;

# **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 and the staff of little Island NS are pleased that this report affirms the good practice being undertaken by the staff in our school with regard to the provision of education for children with SEN. The report's findings and recommendations are valuable and welcome and will be used to guide our reflection and follow up actions.

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

Work has begun to review and further develop our SEN policy to include the areas recommended in the report.