An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with
Special Educational Needs

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Naomh Padraig N S</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Doire Liam Óig Rosenallis Co Laois</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>18513F</td>
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Date of Evaluation: 29-11-2016
WHAT IS AN EVALUATION OF PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?
The Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs 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 FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>29-11-2016</th>
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| Inspection activities undertaken | • Observation of teaching and learning  
• Examination of pupils’ work  
• Interaction with pupils  
• Pupil group discussion  
• Feedback to principal |

• Discussion with principal and teachers  
• Meeting with SNA  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Analysis of parent questionnaires  
• Observation of teaching and learning  
• Examination of pupils’ work  
• Interaction with pupils  
• Pupil group discussion  
• Feedback to principal

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Doire Liam Óig National School is a mainstream primary school under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It is one of two primary schools in the village of Rosenallis, Co. Laois. At the time of the evaluation there were 109 pupil on roll. There were four mainstream class teachers and one full-time learning support teacher on staff. The school also had a resource teacher for twelve and a half hours.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

• Pupils with special educational needs enjoy school and are treated very fairly there. Their attainments in standardised tests are good and most pupils are achieving to their potential in literacy and numeracy. Currently pupils with special educational needs do not have sufficient opportunities to engage actively in their learning in mainstream classes.

• Good quality lessons were observed in support settings. Teaching and learning activities in mainstream settings are not differentiated appropriately.

• The school manages the resources it receives to support pupils with special educational needs effectively. While a number of whole-school initiatives in literacy and numeracy are in place, at present there is no early intervention programme for pupils in junior classes.

• Very good links are maintained with parents of pupils with special educational needs and the parents indicate that they are very happy with the support their child receives in school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Teachers should provide pupils with special educational needs with more opportunities for active learning and for collaboration with other pupils during lessons in mainstream classes.

• Teachers should differentiate lesson material and learning activities to cater for the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
• An early intervention programme should be implemented in the junior classes as part of a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy, and as part of the school’s approach to the prevention of learning difficulties.

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 is satisfactory.

In the group discussion with a sample of pupils with special educational needs, all pupils indicated that they enjoyed school and were treated very fairly and respectfully in it. Pupils’ standardised test results in English and Mathematics are very good. Other test data available in the school indicates that most pupils are achieving to their potential in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs complete good quality work in support settings. This includes a range of writing tasks, work on reading skills and on Mathematics.

The learning experiences provided to pupils with special educational needs in mainstream settings require improvement. Teachers should provide greater opportunities to pupils to engage actively with challenging tasks and to use appropriate resources to support their learning.

Pupils’ learning is supported through some whole-school approaches in English and Mathematics. These should be extended to include an early-intervention programme for pupils in junior classes and a whole-school approach to writing for all pupils. Guidance contained in chapter two of the Learning Support Guidelines may be useful to teachers in devising the early-intervention programme. The whole-school approach to writing should include both writing genres and the writing process.

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

Teaching in support settings is good. Lessons were clear and focused on objectives appropriate to pupils’ needs. Teaching approaches were suitable for the lessons and the pupils engaged in meaningful learning activities. In further developing the learning programme in support settings, a greater emphasis should be placed on progressing pupils’ oral language abilities.

Teaching in mainstream settings requires improvement in order to cater effectively for the varying needs of the pupils. All teachers have effective classroom management skills. Interactions in all classes were positive and affirming and all learning environments celebrated and supported pupils’ learning. During this evaluation whole-class teaching was the main method observed and questioning was predominately between teacher and individual pupils. Consequently pupils did not receive sufficient opportunities for active learning or for collaboration and discussion with other pupils. Lesson material or learning activities were not differentiated. The lessons therefore were not appropriately challenging for some pupils. While pupils receive verbal feedback on their work, teachers should provide pupils with constructive written feedback on their work and opportunities for them to reflect on their progress.
3. THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES RECEIVED TO SUPPORT PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the management and use of resources is good.

The enrolment practice of the school demonstrates a commitment to the admission of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of teachers have taught in support settings and many have undertaken relevant professional development courses. This is very good practice. All learning environments are accessible and suitable for all learners. The school makes very good use of assessments to screen for possible learning difficulties. It also maintains clear records on pupils’ progress in whole-school assessment tests. Very good links are maintained with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Responses from all parents who completed questionnaires as part of this evaluation were very positive about the support their child receives in school. The school effectively deploys its special needs assistant. It maintains appropriate contact with the National Educational Psychology Service and with outside agencies, such as the Health Service Executive.

Teachers should make use of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment’s Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Mild Learning Difficulties to inform teaching and learning activities for relevant pupils.

At the time of this evaluation the school had just appointed a part-time resource teacher. In revising the caseloads and timetables arising from this appointment, consideration should be afforded to allocating more time to in-class support in order to further support differentiation and collaborative learning activities.
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.

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<td><strong>Very Good</strong></td>
<td>Good provision is of a very high standard. The areas for improvement 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.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td>Good provision clearly outweighs 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 very good standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td>Satisfactory for provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>Fair provision 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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td><strong>Weak</strong></td>
<td>Weak provision 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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

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

Following the report received on 13/1/’17 the Board of Management have agreed to implement the following recommendations:

   a) Arrange station teaching in infant classes in association with the Aistear programme which is currently being utilised and availing of Learning Support and Resource time to assist the class teacher.
   b) Arrange maths groups according to abilities in classes 1st – 6th in conjunction with Learning Support and Resource time for a specified time during the week.
   c) Alongside the oral advice currently in place teachers will provide written feedback on pupils’ work when appropriate

In Light of circular 01/17 the Board would ask that the current provision of Broadband be upgraded. At present using on line resources is proving practically impossible.

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