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>St Mary’s Senior N S</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Rowlagh  
|                               | Clondalkin  
|                               | Dublin 22 |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number    | 19647I               |

Date of inspection: 11-10-2019
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**: 11-10-2019

**Inspection activities undertaken**
- 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**

St Mary’s Senior NS is a co-educational primary school for pupils from third to sixth class located in Rowlagh, Clondalkin. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and it participates in Band 1 Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. At the time of the evaluation there were 220 pupils enrolled in the school. The teaching staff comprises of an administrative principal, ten mainstream class teachers, five fulltime and one shared special education teachers (SET), one special class teacher, a home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and a teacher allocated under the Department’s Support Project.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**
- The leadership and co-ordination of supports for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are very effective.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall; all teachers display very effective pedagogical skills.
- The quality of pupils’ learning is good, overall, and learning experiences are very positive and supportive.
- Pupils with SEN demonstrate very high levels of self-awareness about their own learning styles and progress.
- The school has effectively embedded the Continuum of Support approach to the deployment of its teaching resources; targets for literacy in some support plans are not sufficiently specific.
- A very inclusive and supportive learning atmosphere for pupils with special educational needs exists in the school; however, the enrolment policy contains some clauses which do not reflect this inclusive approach.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Targets for literacy in all support plans should be outlined in specific and measurable terms especially in relation to oral language development.
- The school’s enrolment policy should be revised so that it fully reflects the inclusive atmosphere evident in the school and takes account of Circular 13/17.
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 good, overall. In the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed their learning and engaged very positively in worthwhile and relevant learning tasks. Responding during the focus group discussion, pupils with special educational needs spoke very positively about their learning experiences and the nature of support provided for them. They demonstrated good self-awareness in relation to their preferred learning styles and their personal learning achievements.

Learning environments are very stimulating, inclusive and supportive. Learning programmes are very well designed to take cognisance of children’s prior learning and learning targets are carefully matched to pupils’ priority needs. Analysis of school assessment data indicates commendable progress on outcomes for pupils with SEN over their time in school. While these pupils are making very good progress in numeracy and social skills, school records indicate some areas of literacy require further development.

Learning outcomes and experiences for pupils in the special class are very good. They learn through an appropriate blend of supports in the special class itself and also through well-supported integration in mainstream classes.

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

The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, overall. Teachers in mainstream, special class and support roles demonstrate very good pedagogical skills. Classroom management throughout the school is very effective and positive. Teachers use a commendably broad range of teaching methodologies to motivate and support the learning. Opportunities are provided to pupils to learn independently, as well as collaboratively in pairs and in groups.

All teachers plan effectively for their lessons. The school’s approach to individualised planning reflects the Continuum of Support and the Guidelines for Primary Schools - Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools. Classroom teachers devise effective classroom support plans to initiate additional supports for pupils with SEN, and thereafter the level of support is escalated according to assessed need.

Targets in most support plans are very specific and measurable, and comprehensive reviews of learning programmes are conducted twice per year. Consequently, the learning journey for most pupils with special educational needs is progressing effectively. In some cases, targets for literacy in pupils’ support plans could be expressed in more specific language with further emphasis on oral language development. Supports for pupils with SEN is provided through a range of effective in-class and withdrawal teaching approaches.
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 very good. The leadership and coordination of SEN provision is very effective and consequently resources are allocated and used very effectively to stimulate and support learning.

Special education teachers (SETs) are effectively and strategically deployed and it is evident from their work with the SNAs and other staff members that a collaborative school culture is in place. The school’s support teacher role is appropriately deployed to enhance pupils’ learning experiences and to support their learning. The Continuum of Support is well embedded in the school. As part of the individual planning process, the school seeks to engage with parents, teachers and relevant external professionals to identify the next steps in pupils’ learning. Most parents of pupils receiving additional support indicated that they were aware of the targets in their child’s learning plans. There is evidence that SETs have undertaken continuing professional development (CPD) and that this is positively impacting on teaching and learning.

A very welcoming and inclusive atmosphere is evident throughout the school. In their responses to the Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all parents of pupils receiving additional supports agreed that their child is treated fairly and enjoys school, that the work is matched to their child’s ability and that their child gets help when required. To fully reflect the inclusive atmosphere noted during the evaluation, the school’s enrolment policy requires revision to remove the clauses which refer to possible deferral of enrolment for pupils with SEN pending the allocation of additional resources to the school contrary to the terms of Circular 13/17.
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 of 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>Very Good</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> 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.</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>Good</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> 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 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>Satisfactory</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> 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.</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>Fair</td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong> 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>Weak</td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong> 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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