

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	Holy Family School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Dunedin Park Monkstown Farm Glenageary
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19840C

Date of inspection: 27-09-2018



**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 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 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	27-09-2018
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

Holy Family School, Monkstown Farm, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin is a mixed primary school under Catholic patronage. There were 159 pupils enrolled at the time of this evaluation. School staffing comprises an administrative principal, eight classroom teachers, two teachers of classes for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), three special education teachers (SET), a teacher of pupils with English as an additional language and an Early Start class teacher. The school has a total of ten full and part-time special needs assistants (SNAs).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- A highly commendable commitment to inclusion is evident in the work of the staff and in the leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The overall quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Good quality teaching of pupils with special educational needs is evident with some examples of very good practice observed.
- While the collaborative practice of teachers is of a high quality, the co-ordination of pupils' support across the school needs to be strengthened.
- Useful planning is undertaken for pupils with special educational needs, however there is scope for further development of individualised planning for pupils in some contexts.
- Schools policies on provision for pupils with special educational needs require review and updating.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school's collaborative team approach to the co-ordination of support for pupils should be further developed for each section of the school.
- The good practice in devising individualised plans with clear targets, enabling pupils' progress in learning to be monitored more effectively, should be extended across all support settings.
- School policies on provision for pupils with special educational needs should be reviewed and updated in light of the current guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills; policies on assessment, provision for pupils with an ASD, including the special classes, the Nurture Room project and other initiatives should be incorporated within the plan.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The overall quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has succeeded in cultivating an inclusive environment in which all pupils are welcomed and in providing pupils with a good range of positive learning experiences. It is evident from observations and interactions with pupils who have special educational needs that they enjoy their lessons and experience of learning. The school has developed a very good focus on pastoral care and the supports provided aim to address pupils' needs and development in a holistic manner.

In the group discussion with a selection of pupils from a number of classes, pupils were positive about the range of support they received and articulated positive views about their learning in school. In the questionnaires issued as part of the evaluation, parents also indicated high levels of satisfaction with the support provided for pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils in both mainstream and support settings were provided with suitable learning challenges in the lessons observed. Pupils engage beneficially, and the use of visual and concrete resources and information and communication technology (ICT), where appropriate, supports pupils' learning. Respectful classroom interactions and focused learning activities in literacy, numeracy and social and personal skills are a feature of practice. In the classes for pupils with an ASD, pupils were observed engaging positively and beneficially in their lessons. Pupils participated actively in lessons which were well structured and employed autism-specific methodologies and visual learning approaches. Good arrangements are in place to support the inclusion and active participation of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream settings. Regular and constructive daily links have been put in place between the classes for pupils with an ASD and other mainstream settings. The attention given to pupils' social and emotional well-being across the school and pupils' engagement in the recently established Nurture Room programme are highly commended.

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

Good quality teaching of pupils with special educational needs is evident, with some examples of very good practice observed. Attractive learning environments have been created in classrooms and support settings to facilitate pupils' engagement in learning. Aspects of positive practice observed include the effective use of team-teaching, station teaching in a number of classroom settings and the provision of targeted learning activities to individuals and groups in support settings. Teachers are conscious of the need to differentiate the learning tasks to accommodate the range of pupils' needs and abilities. They employ active learning methodologies and make good use of the available teaching resources, including ICT.

Classroom and special education teachers communicate on ongoing bases in relation to pupils' needs and their progress in learning. Pupils are provided with regular and constructive feedback on their work and effort and positive initiatives have been undertaken to promote literacy and numeracy across the school.

Useful planning is undertaken for pupils with special educational needs, however there is scope for further development of individualised planning in some contexts. The good practice of devising individualised plans with clear targets, enabling pupils' progress in learning to be monitored more effectively, should be extended across all support settings.

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

A highly commendable commitment to inclusion is evident in the work of the staff and in the leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school's culture and environment is welcoming and contributes to an inclusive school community which endeavours to promote parental involvement in the life of the school. The staff team makes good use of the teaching and learning resources in classrooms. A good balance is employed in relation to the provision of in-class, group and individualised support and early intervention approaches, as the school aims to focus resources towards pupils with the greatest levels of need. While the collaborative practice of teachers is of a high quality, a whole-school approach to the co-ordination of support for learning across the school is required. The collaborative team approach to the co-ordination of pupils' support should be further developed for each section of the school.

School policies on provision for pupils with special educational needs require updating and should be reviewed in light of the current guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills: *Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*. The school's policies on assessment, provision for pupils with ASD, including the special classes, the Nurture Room project and other initiatives should be incorporated within the plan.

The school liaises effectively with a variety of external agencies, including the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), to access support and advice in relation to pupils with special educational needs.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

We are very satisfied with the report and welcome the findings and recommendations. We feel that it is a true and accurate account of our provision for pupils with special educational needs. The evaluation gave us the opportunity to reflect on current practice, improve in certain areas and provide the opportunity to affirm the great work carried out by staff members on a day-to-day basis in Holy Family School. The recommendations in this report will help to improve the outcomes for the pupils of Holy Family School in the future.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

The Board of Management accepts the recommendations in the report and supports the staff in implementing the necessary changes to current practices. A Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) has already been appointed. It is envisaged that the appointment of the SENCO will help to further develop the collaborative team approach to the co-ordination of support for pupils. The good practice in devising individualised plans with clear targets, enabling pupil's progress in learning to be monitored more effectively, will be extended across all support settings by the introduction of a Student Support File (IEP) policy, co-ordinated by the SENCO. A committee has been set up to review and update policies on assessment, provision for pupils with ASD, including special classes, and the Nurture Room. This policy, given the context of the school, will be reviewed annually.

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;