Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Holy Rosary Primary School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Old Court Avenue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tallaght</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dublin 24</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
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Date of inspection: 06-11-2019
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.

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.

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.
Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

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<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>06-11-2019</th>
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| 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
Holy Rosary Primary School is a co-educational primary school located in Firhouse, Tallaght. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and it participates in Band 2 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 595 pupils enrolled in the school. The teaching staff comprises an administrative principal and deputy principal, twenty four mainstream class teachers, fourteen special education teachers (SETs), one of whom is shared with another school in the locality, 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 quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good overall, with some examples of very good practice observed during the evaluation.
- The quality of learning for pupils with SEN is good and learning experiences are positive and constructive.
- A very supportive learning environment permeates the school and the leadership and co-ordination of SEN supports is highly effective.
- The school has effectively used the Continuum of Support framework in the deployment of its teaching resources.
- In some special education settings, short-term planning is not prepared on a weekly basis; targets in some support plans are not sufficiently specific.
- Teachers maintain a commendable range of assessment information; there is scope to analyse this data more systematically to inform target setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Short-term planning in special education settings should be completed on a weekly basis, as recommended in the Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.
- Learning targets in all support plans should be presented in specific and measurable terms based on an analysis of assessment information and should identify the next incremental steps in pupils’ learning progress.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
The overall quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. An inclusive and supportive environment is evident throughout the school and pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction in relation to their learning experiences and the supports they receive. Parents of pupils with special educational needs commented favourably on the manner in which their children are cared for and included in school life when responding to the Inspectorate questionnaire. Overall, learning programmes are matched to pupils’ learning needs, as identified through use of the Continuum of Support framework. In the lessons observed in mainstream classes and withdrawal settings, pupils were stimulated and suitably challenged through respectful engagement and participation in meaningful learning activities linked to the development of literacy, numeracy and social skills. While there is evidence that pupils with special educational needs are making appropriate progress in their learning, there is scope, in some areas, to more closely align assessment outcomes with planned learning targets for pupils’.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and some examples of very good teaching were observed during the evaluation. Learning environments are stimulating and the use of concrete and visual resources assists with pupils’ understanding. All teachers demonstrate very positive classroom management skills. In the lessons observed, teachers used a range of pedagogical approaches to actively involve pupils in their learning. Some very effective differentiation of lesson content was noted in mainstream classrooms. Classroom teachers and special education teachers communicate effectively with each other in relation to pupils’ needs and their learning progress. While all teachers prepare written plans for their work, the short-term planning in special education settings should be completed on a weekly basis, as recommended in the Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools. All teachers maintain a commendable range of assessment information from standardised tests and screening tests. While this information is used well to inform planning for pupils’ needs in many settings, there is scope to analyse this data more systematically to identify the next incremental steps in pupils’ learning progress and to set specific and measurable learning targets in the individualised planning process. The use of such targets will assist the school in accurately tracking incremental progress in pupils’ learning.

3. THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES RECEIVED TO SUPPORT PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
The school manages and uses the resources it receives to support pupils with special educational needs very effectively. School policies are inclusive and the whole school plan for special education reflects Special Education Circulars 12/2017 and 007/2019. Effective leadership ensures that there is a whole school approach in the coordination and deployment of resources for children with special educational needs. Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, plan their interventions carefully to address pupils’ priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Continuum of Support plan. The school has embedded the Continuum of Support framework in the work of the school to ensure that pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support. Support teaching is deployed through an effective combination of in-class interventions and withdrawal of pupils in groups or individually. Support
plans for learning and personalised plans for pupils with special educational needs reflect consultation with parents and external professionals. Almost all parents expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they received to discuss their children’s progress with teachers. There is evidence of very good collaboration between class teachers, SETs and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to support pupils’ identified needs. The school is proactive in providing a range of supports for pupils’ wellbeing, self-regulation and sensory needs through effective interventions and the provision of facilities such as the sensory garden and the sensory pod.
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><strong>Very Good</strong></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 <strong>outstanding</strong> 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><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 <strong>very good</strong> 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><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><strong>Fair</strong></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><strong>Weak</strong></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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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 staff of Holy Rosary Primary School welcome and acknowledge this report and are pleased with the positive findings of the inspection.

The report affirms the good practice undertaken by all school staff in providing positive and constructive learning experiences for pupils with Special Education Needs.

We are also pleased that the report recognises the very stimulating, supportive and inclusive learning environment which permeates the school and that parents see their children as being cared for and included in school life.

The school is also recognised as having effectively embedded the continuum of support framework in its practice and in being proactive in the provision of a range of supports for pupils’ wellbeing.

We welcome the recognition in the report of the highly effective management and co-ordination of SEN supports and resources.

Area 2   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 welcomes the recommendations in this report and is fully committed to their effective implementation.

Short-term planning in special educational settings is now being completed on a weekly basis.

We are committed to making the learning targets in all support plans more specific and measurable, as recommended. We have begun this process, in consultation with NEPS, and hope to embed it in our practice going forward.