

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	Scoil Bhrige agus Bhreandain Naofa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Corrandulla Co Galway
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19997M

Date of Evaluation: 07-12-2016



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 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; a response was not received from the board.

EVALUATION OF PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	07-12-2016
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

An evaluation of provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was undertaken in Scoil Bhrige agus Bhreandain Naofa, Corrandulla in December 2016. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. The school staff is comprised of an administrative principal, eleven mainstream class teachers, four special-education teachers and one part-time resource teacher. Two shared resource teachers work in the school also. The school has four special-needs assistants (SNAs).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- An inclusive, welcoming atmosphere permeates the school. Pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher relationships are very positive and learning environments support and encourage pupils' learning.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with some exemplary practice observed.
- While most pupils with special educational needs participate fully in mainstream class activities, there is scope for further differentiation of tasks to maximise learning opportunities.
- An effective individualised planning process for pupils accessing support has been put in place; this would benefit from further focus on more specific learning targets.
- Teachers' willingness to work collaboratively is highly commendable. There is a need to review the deployment and timetabling of support teachers.
- The SNAs play a significant role in meeting the care needs of pupils and in supporting inclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should plan strategically for the more effective deployment of the additional resources it receives in order to support pupils with specific learning needs.
- Teachers in some mainstream classes should place a greater emphasis on differentiated provision to meet the wide range of pupils' needs.
- Learning targets set in individual education plans (IEPs) and individual profile and learning programmes (IPLPs) should be expressed in more specific and measurable language to allow for better assessment of progress.

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. An inclusive, welcoming atmosphere permeates the school. There is a clear commitment in policy and in practice to the inclusion and holistic support of pupils with special educational needs.

In support settings, most pupils are provided with high quality learning activities designed to meet their identified needs. Feedback from a focus-group discussion with pupils indicated high levels of satisfaction with life in school, and with the support they receive.

In the mainstream settings pupils participate purposefully in classroom activities and demonstrate positive attitudes to their peers and learning. In some classrooms, teachers have devised very effective strategies to meet the learning needs of pupils such as independent and co-operative learning activities which are appropriately challenging. This exemplary practice should now be extended throughout the school. In response to Inspectorate questionnaires, all parents agreed that their child feels safe and well looked after in school and is fully included in school and classroom life.

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

Pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher relationships are very positive and all learning environments support and encourage pupils' learning. Teachers' willingness to explore innovative approaches and to work collaboratively is highly commendable.

Overall the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is of a high quality with some excellent practice observed. While most pupils with special educational needs participate fully in mainstream class activities, there is scope for further differentiation of tasks in some settings to maximise learning opportunities. Observed teaching in most support settings was focused, interactive and pupil-centred. Specialist report recommendations inform provision and it is praiseworthy that teachers address the diagnosed needs of pupils.

While all teachers engage effectively in planning, a whole-school approach to planning should be adopted. The school is advised to use the *Continuum of Support* documents provided by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and in particular for the classroom support stage. The IEP process is inclusive and in line with good practice. To enhance the effectiveness of these plans, learning targets should be expressed in more specific and measurable language, with a smaller number of targets identified.

Assessment practices including diagnostic assessments are very well developed throughout the school. In mainstream classes, the assessment information gathered should be used more effectively to inform differentiated learning activities and further enhance the learning experiences of all pupils.

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

The overall management and use of resources in support of pupils with special educational needs is good. To further improve the whole-school provision for special education, the school should plan strategically for the more effective deployment of the additional resources it receives to support pupils with specific learning needs. As far as it is practicable, pupils should receive support teaching from one teacher only.

The principal effectively supports meaningful engagement with parents and external agencies and is committed to the continuing professional development (CPD) of staff. The SNAs play a significant role in meeting the care needs of pupils, in supporting inclusion, and in pupils accessing a wide range of curricular experiences.

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
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 very good 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. 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.	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;