

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with**  
**Special Educational Needs**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Chroí Íosa
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	St Anne's Road Blarney Co. Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	20399W

**Date of inspection: 21-03-2018**



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**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 inspectors 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 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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	21-03-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Meeting with SEN team</li><li>• Meeting with SNAs</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Pupil group discussion</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Chroí Íosa is a co-educational national school situated in the village of Blarney, Co. Cork. The school currently operates on a dual campus due to the amalgamation of the boys' and the girls' schools in August 2012. The board of management employs eleven mainstream class teachers, five full-time special education teachers, one full-time teacher in the speech and language class and one shared special education teacher.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed in a number of teaching and learning settings.
- While the school's management and use of resources for pupils with special educational is good, the deployment of one support teacher as a full-time class teacher is in breach of circular 0013/17 and requires immediate attention.
- Student support files are of high quality and contain valuable information on pupils' learning.
- Varying practices is evidenced among support teachers in the recording of the monthly progress records and in documenting the learning achievements of pupils.
- Teaching in mainstream classrooms is characterised by appropriate differentiation; however, this good practice is not reflected in some teachers' short-term planning.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support teachers should agree a common format in the recording of the monthly progress records and in documenting the learning achievements of pupils.
- The good differentiation practice observed in mainstream classrooms should be clearly identified in all teachers' planning.
- The board should ensure that all resources allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately and in accordance with the terms of Circular 0013/2017.

## **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 (SEN) is very good. Pupils demonstrate a knowledge appropriate to their stage of development and apply this knowledge to manage their learning and to support their well-being. The pupils achieve the appropriately differentiated learning objectives. An atmosphere of inclusion prevails, pupils are very well supported and their opinions are acknowledged and affirmed. Relationships and interactions in support settings and in classrooms create and sustain co-operative and affirming learning environments. During the group interview with pupils, the pupils were positive about their time in school and they value the variety of supports provided for them.

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

The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed in a number of teaching and learning settings. The teachers plan carefully and instruction time is managed effectively. A variety of practices is in evidence in the recording of the monthly progress records and an agreed format for all teachers involved in SEN is recommended.

Teachers make very effective use of assessment approaches to set baselines of pupils' attainment against which progress can be measured. Student support files are of high quality and contain valuable and detailed information on pupils' learning. Learning targets are SMART and are focussed on addressing the priority learning needs of pupils. The pupils' achievement of learning targets should be documented regularly by all the support teachers at the review stage.

Teaching in mainstream classrooms is characterised by suitable differentiation in ability based groupings. These good practices should be reflected clearly and consistently in all teachers' planning. In the lessons observed, teachers were sensitive to the learning needs of pupils and managed them in a caring and considerate manner. Lessons were purposeful and appropriately challenging. Teachers achieve a very good balance between in-class support and the withdrawal of pupils. Commendably, these in-class initiatives in literacy and in numeracy incorporate a pre-testing and a post-testing phase to monitor and evaluate the impact of the initiatives on pupil learning outcomes. A spirit of collaboration among teachers is very much in evidence. Support teachers meet regularly to discuss, review and develop practice in the ongoing support of pupils. They value this collaboration as a means to improve pupil learning and to enhance their own professional development. A number of worthy whole-school initiatives are in place to address the pupils' learning needs in literacy, in numeracy and in social and emotional development.

The class for pupils diagnosed with speech and language difficulties is appropriately structured to include communal, group and individual learning activities. Well-structured learning programmes, incorporating the Primary Language Curriculum, are employed successfully to address the learning needs of pupils. The speech and language therapist is centrally involved in classroom activity and she, together with the classroom teacher, makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' skill development. The process of integrating pupils into mainstream classrooms for selected curricular areas is managed effectively.

Assessment practice in the school is very good. Teachers plan effectively for assessing relevant aspects of pupils' learning, using both assessment of learning and assessment for learning strategies. A variety of practices is in evidence in the recording of such data and teachers should reach agreement on the recording of assessment data in monitoring the progress of pupils.

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

The school's management and use of resources to support pupils with special educational needs is good. The board of management has overseen the establishment of a well-maintained school environment to support pupils' learning. A well-resourced professional development library is accessed regularly by teachers to inform and to further develop good practice. A range of concrete and visual material is utilised effectively. Tablets have been recently introduced to aid pupils' learning in station-teaching. Teachers should ensure that the learning activities pursued by pupils with these tablets addresses the intended learning objectives and leads to improved learning outcomes. The board, in November 2017, deployed one support teacher as a full-time class teacher. This arrangement should be discontinued and the board should ensure that all resources allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately in accordance with Circular 0013/2017.

The principal and teachers play a significant role in the development of very good practices in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Teachers recognise that continuing professional development and collaboration are intrinsic to their work. They use formal meetings for planning, for reflection and for further development of good practice. A strategic approach to the management of continuous professional development is in place. Many teachers have undertaken additional professional development and this expertise is fittingly shared with colleagues. Teachers maintain valuable links with relevant agencies and with external professionals in their support of pupils' learning. The school's policy on staff rotation affords teachers a variety of teaching experiences, while allowing for continuity in the special education setting. The special needs assistants play a significant role in meeting the care needs of pupils and in helping them to access the curriculum. The findings of the parent questionnaires issued during the evaluation, indicate that a significant number of parents agreed that the school is helping their child to progress in their learning.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;

# **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 Scoil Chroí Íosa welcome and acknowledge the report and are extremely pleased with the positive findings in the inspection. The board are particularly pleased that the good practice and sincere commitment to all pupils are recognised and affirmed by the inspectorate. The board are appreciative of the positive affirmation received from the parents, in their responses to the questionnaires. We are proud to be recognised as a welcoming and inclusive school. The board also acknowledges and celebrates the good quality of teaching and the effective management and use of resources. It welcomes the fact that all pupils enjoy school, feel safe and are well looked after.

### **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 is fully committed to the ongoing development of the education of all pupils in Scoil Chroí Íosa and welcomes the recommendations of the inspectors. An action plan is currently being devised to address these recommendations.