

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

Subject Inspection in Special Educational Needs (SEN)

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Beneavin De La Salle College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Beneavin Road Finglas Dublin 11
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	605110

Date of Inspection: 27-04-2017



WHAT IS A SUBJECT INSPECTION?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Special Educational Needs (SEN) under the following headings:

1. Learning, teaching and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

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.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	26 and 27 April 2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff• Interaction with special needs assistants (SNAs)

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Beneavin De La Salle College is a secondary school for boys with an enrolment of 482. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools Programme (DEIS). In addition to the Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school offers the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year Programme (TY) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was good with a few examples of highly effective practice.
- There is a high level of commitment to the provision of quality inclusive education and towards ongoing improvement of learning outcomes for all students.
- A core team of teachers, led by a co-ordinator with a relevant post-graduate qualification, is in place to support students with SEN.
- Inclusive practices are evolving; there is scope for further development in the area of co-operative and differentiated teaching.
- The use of hours allocated to support SEN students allows for a responsive and flexible approach to meeting established and emergent needs although the manner in which resources are deployed should be documented clearly.
- Individual learning plans are maintained for some students who receive supports but this area warrants development so that learning support for all SEN students is provided in a planned and co-ordinated way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Whole-school approaches for the effective inclusion of students with SEN should now be a focus for further development and planning for continuous professional development (CPD).
- Learning from previous whole-school CPD activities, related to teaching students with SEN, should be examined and consolidated into key strategies that can be embedded across teachers' practice.
- Co-operative teaching should be further developed as an effective means to support students with SEN in lessons.

- A school provision plan that documents the use of resources allocated to support students with SEN should be available to inform planning and the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's provision.
- Evidence of planning for individual student's learning should be documented through the development of student support files that identify needs-based, measurable targets which inform planning, teaching and assessment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was good with a few examples of very effective practice where students were actively engaged and teaching was appropriately differentiated. A good range of learning contexts was observed including small-group withdrawal, whole-class lessons, team teaching, a structured reading lesson and a behaviour support group.
- The school is promoting greater use of co-operative teaching which is very good practice. Team teaching was a feature of half of the lessons observed; the effectiveness of these lessons varied from satisfactory to very good. Teachers should plan for and implement co-operative teaching that measurably improves learning outcomes for students with SEN. The development of a shared understanding of the benefits of this approach is recommended. Some training has been provided and this should be built upon when the opportunity arises.
- In one instance, very effective team teaching was observed where it was evident that teachers had planned collaboratively and with clarity of purpose. The resulting teaching was dynamic and students enjoyed their learning.
- In the most effective lessons observed, students participated actively in the learning activities which included meaningful group or paired activities. Also, differentiated materials and tasks were used and astute teacher assessment facilitated students' engagement and learning. However, this was not observed in all lessons. Teachers should work together to share and develop effective practices that ensure higher levels of active student participation in lessons. Additionally, methodologies that best support SEN students should be explored and implemented.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school support for SEN students is good. Students' needs are diverse across the school and effective mechanisms are in place to address this.
- It is very good practice that all students are enabled to access a broad and balanced curriculum. The introduction of French for all students in recent years and the change to mixed-ability classes is a measure of the school's commitment to inclusive practice.
- The quality of co-ordination of SEN support is good. A core SEN team has been established and is led by a co-ordinator who has a relevant post-graduate qualification. The team provides support through individual or small-group withdrawal and is developing a co-operative teaching model of support for students in collaboration with some subject teachers. There are plans to provide specialist SEN training to another teacher on the team; it would be beneficial to extend training to a wider range of teachers over time.
- There is excellent collaboration between the SEN team and the Care and Behaviour Support teams. Together, they provide very good-quality holistic support for students. Counselling and

support is provided if required by the Guidance Counsellor and by other external supports. As appropriate, the teams use the *Continuum of Support* framework to plan for students with support needs.

- There is a range of noteworthy initiatives to support students with emotion regulation and behavioural needs. *Slí Eile* was set up under the guidance of the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) and provides targeted interventions for twenty-five students and general support for the wider student body. Several other valuable strategies, that support wellbeing and behaviour, are in place including the *A-Team*, *Lunchtime Crew* and a breakfast club. Restorative practices are used effectively in the management of behaviour.
- Teachers provide after-school tuition, an Easter Revision Week and a variety of other initiatives that benefit students' development. Significant resources have been sourced in the community to support the students and their families including family counselling through St Vincent de Paul and initiatives in conjunction with Dublin City University.
- The work carried out by the SNA team provides very well for students' care needs. A high degree of awareness was observed in how the SNAs worked, particularly in supporting social skills development for students with ASD. The student-centred approach observed is commended.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning and preparation for SEN is good. School management has a clear vision and a keen focus on developing teaching and learning for all students. Various mechanisms for tracking performance are in place and information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support planning for improved student outcomes. Additionally, implementation of the DEIS plan shows improvements in literacy and numeracy. This careful analysis at whole-school level has significant potential to enhance the management of provision for students with SEN.
- The SEN co-ordinator consults with primary schools, parents, students and teachers. Information from standardised tests, psychological reports, assessment data and teacher reports also informs planning for the distribution of supports to students.
- It is good practice that supports are provided in a flexible manner allowing for changing needs. However, a clearly documented school provision plan should be developed each year and should be reviewed regularly. The plan should identify how, when and by whom support is provided. The co-ordinator and members of the core teaching team should be timetabled for such work to ensure effective and optimal use of resources allocated to the school.
- Some individual plans for students' learning are in place. It is necessary to implement a more coherent system for developing and using educational support plans for those with SEN. Plans should be based on prioritised needs and should include measurable targets for learning. Detail of identified, appropriate strategies and interventions should be included to inform teachers' planning for differentiation.
- Information related to students' learning needs is communicated electronically to all staff. As some information is confidential, it is recommended that the level of accessibility to student-specific data be reviewed to ensure information is only shared on a needs basis.
- Very good emphasis is placed on preparing students for key transitions. A highly supportive transition from primary school programme, '*Belonging Plus*', is in place. At senior cycle, a transition programme for students takes place in the first week of fifth year. It is commendable that parents are also involved in these processes. Transition to post-school settings is also planned for and the school has developed good links with relevant providers.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and members of the Student Support Team, including the SEN co-ordinator at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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 <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;