

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Special Educational Needs (SEN)

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Rosmini Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Grace Park Road Drumcondra Dublin 9
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91344V

Date of Inspection: 10-03-2017



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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	10-03-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during ten class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Pobalscoil Rosmini is a community school under the trusteeship of the Rosminian Order and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board. The school is part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for educational inclusion. A broad range of curricular programmes is on offer to cater for the diverse needs of all students, including those identified as having SEN. Pobalscoil Rosmini is closely associated with Child Vision: National Education Centre for Blind Children, and is committed to providing for students with visual impairment (VI). The school provides currently for some students with complex SEN and/or VI through the provision of special classes. The school occupies temporary accommodation located on the grounds of Dublin City University (DCU). One of the special classes is accommodated temporarily within the facilities of Child Vision: National Education Centre for Blind Children.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of teaching was very good, with many examples of excellent practice.
- In all lessons observed, students were engaged in their learning and, in most instances, demonstrated good levels of learning.
- The principal, deputy principal and teachers demonstrate a high level of commitment to the provision of very good-quality inclusive education.
- Given the current location and openness of the school's temporary campus, school management and staff are very aware of potential health and safety risks and child protection issues that may arise.
- The school community demonstrates a commitment to the improvement and enhancement of inclusive structures and practices through providing continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities to staff, although some more targeted intervention is required.
- Very good group and individual support plans have been developed for students attending special classes; support plans for students with SEN who attend mainstream classes focus on providing information, while student support files have not yet been formally developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- School management and the board of management should conduct a health and safety audit and risk assessment of the current school campus and continue to make every effort to secure the appropriate level of resources to ensure the safety and care of all students.

- School management and the board should seek mobility and orientation training for at least one teacher, to provide increased access to this support for students with VI.
- Student support files should now be developed and the educational support plans within these should include targets that are assessable and specific in supporting students' identified, individual and priority learning needs.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Overall, the quality of teaching was very good, with many examples of excellent practice in evidence. It was excellent practice that all lessons were student centred and, in nearly all cases, a variety of strategies was used to engage students. These included very good questioning of students, the use of acronyms to aid memory, teacher modelling, and the thoughtful creation of tasks whereby students could apply the skills being learned.
- In all lessons, students were engaged in their learning and, in most instances, demonstrated good levels of learning. This was achieved through high-quality lesson preparation and, in many cases, through careful planning of tasks to meet individual needs of students. This very good lesson preparation was underpinned by teachers' very good knowledge of the needs, abilities and interests of individual students.
- Classes visited were formed on the basis of whole-class groups, special-class settings, team-teaching settings, small groups, and individual withdrawal. Lessons focused on a range of learning intentions, including the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and on a range of curricular areas including English, Mathematics, Irish, History, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), and Geography. Excellent practice was observed in a number of lessons where there was a clear focus on the development of personal, communication and social skills.
- Very positive teacher-student relationships were observed. There was a very tangible sense that students were cared for. Teachers and special-needs assistants (SNAs) demonstrated commitment to understanding the needs of their students and to doing their best to meet those needs. Student interactions were very positive also. They communicated respectfully with each other and helped one another.
- In the special class settings, students were encouraged to be active participants in their learning. This was achieved through purposeful planning of lesson content and through high-quality preparation of a range of resources to engage students. Personalised learning and teaching strategies were used and tasks were tailored depending on individual student's abilities. Information and communication technology and assistive and adaptive technology, in addition to music, real-life contexts and humour, were used to very good effect. Teaching was skilful and patient. At times, some students' participation in lessons had to be coaxed and encouraged; this was excellent practice.
- In all lessons observed in the special-class settings, activities to support students' communication and development of their social and life skills were planned very effectively. These activities included quizzes, questions and answers, presenting students with choices, and some opportunities for students to work together on set tasks. In a small number of lessons, opportunities for students to be involved more actively in their learning could have been provided. Lessons should, where appropriate, have provided students with opportunities to engage in structured independent and collaborative tasks. These tasks should

help to develop skills, promote team work and communication, enable students to think critically, make links with prior learning and reinforce learning.

- There was some excellent quality monitoring and assessment of outcomes for students conducted through formal and informal teacher observations and through mechanisms to track students' progress. This was particularly strong in the special class settings. However, within the mainstream and support lessons, greater emphasis should be placed on assessing outcomes for students with SEN relative to the targets set in their learning plans, which should now be developed.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Very good provision and whole-school support for SEN were evident. The principal, deputy principal and teachers demonstrate high levels of commitment to the provision of very good-quality inclusive education. A whole-school commitment to inclusion is evident in policy and practice.
- Very good whole-school structures are established to support students with SEN. Very careful timetabling of supports takes place in advance of the construction of the overall timetable, which provides continuity of support for students. It is also very good practice that mainstream, support teachers and SNAs plan purposefully to link curricular needs with the holistic development and care of students with SEN.
- All students have access to the full curriculum and individual timetables are developed for some students based on their individual abilities. There are high expectations for students to achieve their individual potential and very effective use and application of the continuum-of-support model reinforces this.
- Teaching and SNA supports are planned very carefully by school management. Both are deployed in a manner that attempts to ensure the health and safety of all students, and particularly of students who have a VI. School management and staff are very aware of potential health and safety risks and child protection issues that may arise, given the current location and openness of the school's temporary campus. These issues are challenging for the school community. Senior management and the board of management should conduct a health and safety audit and risk assessment of the campus. They should continue to make every effort to secure the appropriate level of resources to ensure the safety and care of all students.
- A commitment to the improvement and enhancement of inclusive structures and practices is evident through the provision of high levels of CPD for staff. The school has access to additional services and supports for some of its students through Child Vision. This is a good resource. However, in order to provide more structure and more access to mobility and orientation training, linked to targets set in students' individual support plans, the school should seek mobility and orientation training for at least one teacher. This would build capacity to further provide quality supports for students with VI and would enhance and develop their independence and life skills.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Very good-quality planning and organisation of special education provision takes place at whole-school and department level. Planning and preparation to appropriately and best meet the needs of individual students takes place well in advance of the beginning of the academic

year. Information is gathered from a variety of sources and outcomes are examined to inform planning to meet the needs of students; this reflects very good practice.

- Very good group and individual planning structures are in place for students attending the special classes. Teachers and SNAs plan purposefully to meet the curricular, holistic development and care needs of the students in these classes. Detailed individual educational support plans have been developed. The targets set in these plans inform lesson content and preparation for differentiated delivery and tasks.
- Plans for students with SEN who attend mainstream lessons and who are supported by a combination of in-class support, small group and/or individual withdrawal, were observed to be information giving only, as opposed to learning plans which should help to support students to access the curriculum and to develop skills. Student-support files, as advised by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), should be developed and include educational support plans with targets that are assessable and specific in supporting students' identified, individual and priority learning needs. The continuum of support, as evidenced in established school practice, should be documented in these files in addition to interventions and the assessment of outcomes for students. All teachers should access these plans in order to plan differentiated lessons to support students access the curriculum and to develop skills.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Rosmini Community School is pleased to endorse the very high level of commitment by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Teachers and S.N.As to the provision of very good inclusive education. The Board acknowledges the inspector's findings that the quality of teaching and learning in the school was very good, with many examples of excellent practice in evidence. It is encouraging to note the positive observation in relation to provision for students in special class settings.

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 accepts the recommendations contained in the report and views them as constructive actions that Board is committed to undertaking to further enhance S.E.N. provision within the school.

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;