

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Special Educational Needs
REPORT

Coláiste Phádraig
Roselawn
Lucan, County Dublin
Roll number: 60264A

Date of inspection: 4th December 2012



A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S

**REPORT ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	4 th and 5 th December 2012
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and deputy principal• Interview with coordinator for special needs education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning in eight lessons• Interaction with students• Examination of students' work• Feedback to deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in all lessons observed was very good.
- The school is committed to providing an inclusive education for all, and this whole school commitment is reflected in practice.
- Senior management demonstrates a strong commitment to effective support provision for students with special educational needs.
- Very good practice was seen in the prioritising of the special education timetable at the beginning of each academic year.
- The school engages in an admirable range of pastoral care support strategies
- The school involves students, subject teachers, and parents as partners in the special education individual planning process, in line with best practice.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sections of the school's admission's policy should be reviewed and updated to reflect the school's inclusive practices as witnessed during the course of the inspection.
 - It is recommended that individualised planning for students be further developed at whole school level to include time-bound measurable learning targets in all individual education plans (IEPs).
 - It is recommended that the school provide separate additional support for students with special educational needs and newcomer students whose first language is other than English to better target their discrete needs.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Phadraig CBS in Lucan is a voluntary secondary school for boys, operating under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools' Trust (ERST), with a current enrolment of 730 students. The college offers the Junior Certificate programme, Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate (LC), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in all lessons observed was very good. Teaching was purposeful and student centred. Teachers effectively employed a range of suitable strategies to engage students including clear instructions, sharing of learning objectives, and key vocabulary. Teachers were caring and patient in their provision of differentiated supports and accommodations for individual students.
- High-quality examples of appropriate teaching methodologies and approaches were employed including team-teaching, mainstreaming with accommodations, one to one and small group withdrawal for additional learning support.
- The whole school support for collaborative practices is highly commended. A range of cooperative learning methodologies are successfully used to support inclusion in the mainstream and support classes. The good use of visual prompts merits further development at whole-staff level.
- Effective systems are in place to share pertinent information on students across the school. In all lessons, teacher knowledge of individual students' needs was used effectively to create positive learning environments. Teachers and students displayed good working relations which supported learning. Appropriate levels of praise and affirmation for effort were the norm.
- Comprehensive assessment modes are in place, and summative and formative assessments are used in tandem to draw up IEPs.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- A whole-school commitment to inclusion is very evident in planning and practice. The school has evolved a flexible range of student-centred responses to meet students' needs and all students have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. However, sections of the school's admission's policy, which refer to the availability of resources, do not reflect the school's inclusive practices as witnessed during the course of the inspection. The school is advised to review and update these sections.
- The special education needs coordinator, assisted by a team of three qualified resource teachers efficiently organises, and monitors the provision. The guidance counsellor and the team meet weekly to discuss individual cases, and to plan and organise provision. Senior management demonstrate a strong commitment to providing effective support for students with special educational needs at whole school level.
- Current practice of prioritising the special education timetable at the beginning of each academic year is in line with best practice. This ensures that a small core team of appropriately qualified teachers provides the majority of the support teaching. This is good practice.

- A high quality learning support plan for English, which outlines incremental language and literacy targets from first year to senior cycle is well utilised for students attending learning support classes
- Teachers engage in a range of good practices to plan instruction for students with additional needs. They are supported by the SEN team who provide pertinent information on students, and teaching strategies to promote inclusion. The school implements an efficient referral system for students who are considered to be at risk.
- The special education team carry out regular reviews of students' supports including assessment results, teacher recommendations, student work, and parent wishes. However, in the interests of best practice the school and parents should collaboratively agree, set a review date, and formally sign off where supports are to be reduced for students with low incidence special educational needs who are identified as becoming more independent.
- A very well-organised pastoral care structure has been developed including a buddy system, and breakfast and lunch clubs, managed by staff volunteers with senior prefects and members of Gluais. Extra-curricular supports and initiatives for students who are exceptionally able is a positive aspect of policy and practice.
- The school has established a successful transition process for new students. Information booklets are provided for all incoming first year students and their parents. In addition introductory visits to the school are facilitated for students with additional needs.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The special education team demonstrates a capacity to plan and implement to a very high level, with planning and record-keeping focusing on the development of literacy, numeracy, and social skills. Roles and responsibilities of all personnel are clearly defined.
- The special education team maintain collaborative links with the management, the guidance department, subject teachers and special needs assistant (SNA), and with relevant external agencies.
- The special education student register documents that the allocated resource hours are being used for their intended purpose and are responsive to the individual needs of the students. In addition the IEP process has been established in line with best practice. Subject teachers are consulted, and students and their parents are involved as partners. To further develop this good practice a whole school approach to the setting of time bound, measurable learning targets in all IEP documents is advised.
- Additional teaching is well planned utilising available resources and a range of models of support. It is recommended that the school provide separate additional support for students with special educational needs and newcomer students whose first language is other than English. Each group has differing and discrete needs that would be best addressed independently.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this report were discussed with the deputy principal, special needs coordinator, special education team members, and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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.

Published April 2013

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 Coláiste Phádraig are delighted that the excellent work done in our school's Special Needs Department has been so well highlighted in this inspection report.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

With regard to the main recommendations we will take action as follows:

- Review and update our admissions policy.
- Make every effort to further develop individual learning plans and set measurable learning targets for all I.E.P (Individual Educational Plans). We must identify here that the limitations on work in this area is affected strongly by the reduction, by the Department of Education & Skills, in the general allocation of SEN hours.
- Endeavour to provide separate additional support for students with special educational needs and newcomer students whose first language is other than English.
- *This is already being done but we will make every effort to extend it to all concerned students with the time and resources available to the school*