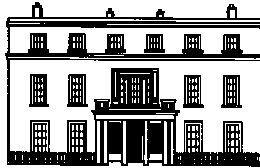


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Special Educational Needs
REPORT

Old Bawn Community School
Tallaght
Dublin 24
Roll number: 91336W

Date of inspection: 12 November 2013



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection:	11, 12 November 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal, SEN co-ordinator and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during nine class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, SEN co-ordinator and teachers.

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was uniformly of a high standard, and lessons observed were structured and purposeful.
- A range of formative and summative assessment practices were well utilised to ensure appropriate academic and pastoral supports for students with SEN.
- Priority SEN timetabling ensures that a core team of five appropriately qualified teachers provides most of the support teaching, in line with best practice.
- School policy and practices are open and welcoming for all learners.
- The newly introduced practice of mainstreaming first-year students with SEN in mixed-ability classes is highly commended.
- Strongly embedded links with local primary schools foster positive attitudes and promote good quality inclusion of students with SEN.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should devise systems for the effective sharing of information and individual education plans (IEPs) with subject teachers, so that all partners have assigned and agreed roles in the achievement of prioritised goals and learning targets for students with SEN.
 - Special education policy and planning documentation should be dated, and a record of review dates incorporated into the main policy documents.
 - Individualised planning for students with low incidence SEN should be further developed at whole-school level to include prioritised goals and time-bound, measurable learning targets.
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INTRODUCTION

Old Bawn Community School is a co-educational school with a current enrolment of 823 students. The school offers Junior Certificate (JC) and Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate (LC), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). An evaluation of special educational provision was conducted over a period of two days during which teaching, learning, and special educational provision were observed in nine settings.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was uniformly of a high standard, and lessons were structured and purposeful. Learning outcomes were clear and students generally engaged well in the learning process. Individual teachers utilised a range of different methodologies to promote good learning, including collaborative and active learning, sharing of learning objectives and student self-assessment for learning. The SEN team should now develop a systematic whole-school approach to facilitate the sharing of educational methodologies and expertise so that all teachers can utilise a wide range of effective teaching approaches.
- Differentiation, through teacher questioning and the provision of individual support, was evident. Resources were generally well utilised. However, the use of good-quality visuals could have been extended in some lessons. A range of formative and summative assessments had been undertaken, and these were used to ensure appropriate academic and pastoral support for students with SEN. They formed an integral part of learning content and progression in all the classes visited. Breaking down of tasks for students with SEN should be utilised by all teachers to develop independent learning skills.
- Students engaged in a wide range of learning activities. Students with SEN were well supported through the creation of positive learning environments and affirming interactions with teachers. Written work was well presented. Very good practice was observed where students were encouraged to record their own learning objectives and long-term goals in support lessons. Very good use was made of the school journal for homework, home-school communication, and behaviour monitoring, and students were required to have journals visible on their tables at all times.
- Team teaching configurations were well planned to support students with SEN within their own classroom settings. Team teachers should be cognisant, when planning active learning opportunities for students, of the intended learning outcomes of the lessons.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The school management demonstrates high levels of commitment to the provision of good quality inclusive education. The school is acutely aware of the need for continuity of support for students with SEN, and priority timetabling ensures that a core team of five appropriately qualified teachers provides most of the support. In addition, a group of twelve subject teachers provide supplementary teaching in literacy, numeracy, and their own specific subjects as required. The SEN team collaborates with the Care team to provide holistic supports to meet students' needs.
- Special education resources are deployed across a variety of appropriate settings. Models currently utilised include team teaching, withdrawal of students, and the creation of small class grouping or additional subject choices. The school should be mindful of the disadvantages of placing too many students with special needs or behavioural issues in

the same small class setting. The school is highly commended for the recent change from streamed to mixed ability class groupings for the present cohort of first-year students.

- Provision for students with assessed low incidence special educational needs is good. These students receive NCSE support allocations in literacy, numeracy and Social, Personal and Health Education through withdrawal teaching and in-class support. Reasonable accommodation is provided for school and certificate examinations. More able students are catered for through a range of initiatives which include the Trinity Access Programme and Maths Prism (NUI Maynooth).
- Full access to curriculum and course levels is provided for all students. Participation in TY is not obligatory, although all students who register for the TY programme are accommodated. The LCA programme is provided on a needs basis, year by year.
- The special-needs assistants (SNAs) have clearly defined roles, which they carry out to a very high standard. They make a valuable contribution to the support and inclusion of their assigned students.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- School policy and practices are open and welcoming for all learners, and are of a very good standard. However, planning and policy documentation should be dated, and a record of review dates and updated content maintained as an intrinsic part of the policy documentation.
- The school has devised and implemented a good quality code of behaviour, which provides a practical guide to appropriate behaviour expectations for students, parents and staff. Very effective whole-school summative and formative assessment policies are in place and are regularly reviewed. A student register and student profiles are centrally stored in two secure locations.
- Every subject teacher is equipped with the student register and a monitoring framework, which are utilised to maintain individual records of learning for the students in their classes. Many draw up IEPs for students with learning needs for their individual subjects. The school should devise systems for the effective sharing of information and IEPs with subject teachers, so that all partners have assigned and agreed roles in the achievement of prioritised goals and learning targets for students with SEN.
- Individualised planning for students with low incidence SEN should be further developed at whole-school level. The school should agree a common IEP template, and content should include a strengths and needs analysis, prioritised long term goals, and measurable learning targets. Collaboration with, and the provision of a copy of IEPs to subject teachers would enhance the sharing of professional knowledge and would augment correlation of support for students with SEN. Parents and students should be included in formal IEP meetings and reviews.
- Strongly embedded links with local primary schools foster positive student attitudes, and promote good quality inclusion of students with SEN. A comprehensive transfer programme assists the induction and orientation of incoming students. The school completion co-ordinator implements a range of literacy and self-esteem enhancing programmes within the school and with pupils in some of the local primary schools.

- The school has the capacity to self-monitor and self-evaluate inclusive practices and SEN provision, as demonstrated by its flexible approach to planning and review, to meet the diverse and changing needs of students year by year.
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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, SEN co-ordinator and 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; a response was not received from the board.

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