

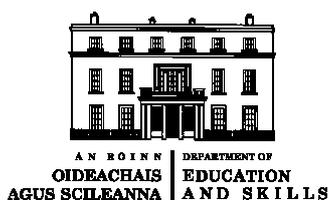
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**

**REPORT**

**Central Remedial Clinic Special School**  
**Vernon Ave, Dublin 3**  
**Uimhir rolla: 18317F**

**Date of inspection: 1 October 2010**



## 1. Introduction

The Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) School is a special co-educational national school under the patronage of the Central Remedial Clinic catering for pupils with physical disability and associated difficulties in North Dublin. The majority of pupils have special educational needs arising from Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida and other medical conditions. Pupils have access to a range of support services, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, psychology, seating, nursing and medical. The profile of the pupils attending has changed over time and the majority now present with complex special educational needs arising from a physical disability and associated disabilities. The pre-school classes are well-subscribed and provide an additional choice to parents who require a multidisciplinary approach for a child with complex special educational needs. At the post-primary stage, the school provides a range of academic, vocational and life-skills programmes. 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.

## 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- The board of management comprises experienced members and works in a highly effective manner to support and develop the work of the school.
- The principal and in-school management team demonstrate committed, strategic and purposeful leadership in the management and organisation of the school.
- The teachers demonstrate high levels of professionalism in their work and effective teaching was observed across a range of curriculum areas.
- The CRC provides a caring and supportive environment for the pupils, and the school staff, special needs assistants, administrative and ancillary staff work conscientiously on behalf of the pupils.
- The active involvement of staff in the development of a range of programmes to meet the needs of pupils is commendable.
- The pupils participate actively and demonstrate interest and pride in their work and their achievements in learning.
- The school and clinic personnel co-operate well in addressing the needs of the pupils.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Building on existing good practice, it is recommended that interdisciplinary collaboration be extended within the classrooms in relation to the implementation of plans to address the special needs of individual pupils.
- Co-operative teaching should be further developed with classes and groups, for whom such an approach would be appropriate and beneficial.
- Where practicable, opportunities for using the wider school environment for pupil activities should be explored.

### **3. Quality of School Management**

- The board of management comprises experienced members who demonstrate very good knowledge of the work of the school. The board works collaboratively and is conscientious in relation to its duties. A priority concern of the board is to maintain its current level of supports. The chairperson and board of management are commended for their ongoing commitment to the support and development of the school.
- The school principal demonstrates very effective and committed leadership and is highly respected within the school community. She works collaboratively with the school staff and promotes co-operative approaches with the range of disciplines attending to the needs of the pupils. The effective leadership and management of the school are supported by a very capable and committed in-school management team. The team contributes substantially to the development of the school in the areas of organisation, curriculum and pastoral care. Team members meet regularly and communicate frequently with staff colleagues.
- The twenty members of the teaching staff have a wide range of professional experience and many have post-graduate training in the education of children with special needs. The school also has two teachers on a part-time basis for Music and Physical Education. Many of the thirty special needs assistants have undertaken training and attended courses relevant to their work. Where feasible, the board of management supports the ongoing continuing professional development of staff. Excellent secretarial, administrative and care-taking supports assist the school in its work. While a formal Parents' Association is not currently in place, there is considerable and positive parental involvement with the school.
- The school buildings are well presented and maintained. Excellent classroom accommodation has been provided in the recent extension to the school. A wide range of teaching resources is available in all classrooms. An excellent in-school support system to support the use of ICT in the classrooms has been developed. Where practicable consideration should be given to extending the use of the school playground and outdoor areas.

### **4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- A comprehensive range of policies addressing organisational, curricular and pastoral areas has been developed through ongoing formal and informal processes of whole school planning. Teachers undertake long and short term planning of a high standard with appropriate references to the relevant curriculum documents and to the pupils' individualised plans. Carefully developed planning has been undertaken for pupils participating in non-academic programmes and in programmes leading to certification through the Junior Certificate, JCSP or FETAC.
- A commendable inter-disciplinary planning process has been put in place to meet the special needs of the pupils. Interdisciplinary collaboration should be further developed through the integration of the approaches used to implement plans for individual pupils in the classroom setting.
- This school has engaged in a series of useful self-evaluation processes leading to the successful planning and implementation of numerous initiatives with an emphasis on addressing the needs and expanding the learning experiences of the pupils. It is important that these developmental processes be continued and strengthened.

## Child protection policy and procedures

School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department's *Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools*. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

## 5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- A broad and balanced curriculum is provided across the school. The teachers employ a good range of teaching methodologies and there is a suitable emphasis on active learning approaches and the use of ICT in classrooms.
- The development of the language and communication skills is given conscientious attention. Communication skills are fostered through dedicated lessons in English and through activities undertaken in other curriculum areas. At all levels there is a strong emphasis on choosing highly motivating topics to encourage the pupils to communicate. Frequent use is made of daily news sessions and commercial and teacher-prepared materials along with IT are employed to stimulate and support pupil participation. With the younger pupils the activities are well supported by visual and concrete materials and the lessons are rich in language, nursery rhymes and songs. Pupils are taught as a whole class, in groups or individually and the work includes circle-time activities with much individual attention. The differentiation strategies employed provide for the use of picture symbols, verbal prompts, picture and communication boards along with switch accessed and touch screen communication aids. Alternative and augmentative communication approaches are used with some pupils and LÁMH is being promoted across the school. There is good collaboration between the teachers and speech and language therapists in addressing the language needs of the pupils. Consideration should be given to having a written protocol for reviewing a pupil's mode of communication and procedures to follow when a device is not working properly.
- Tá cead ag formhór na ndaltaí a fhreastalaíonn ar an scoil seo gan Gaeilge a fhoghlaim de bharr raon mhíchumais foghlama. Mar sin féin, tá gnéithe den teanga agus den chultúr le feiceáil agus foghlaimíonn daltaí mar gheall ar raon traidisiún a bhaineann le cúrsaí stairiúla, sóisialta agus ealaíne.
- *The majority of pupils in this school present with a range of learning disabilities and are entitled to an exemption from studying Irish. Nonetheless, aspects of the Irish language and culture are in evidence and pupils learn about a range of cultural traditions of historical, social and artistic interest.*
- In Mathematics, teachers recognise the diversity of learning needs and a differentiated programme is provided. A good range of mathematical equipment is available to support learning. The lessons observed were well-structured and involved the use of concrete materials and discussion. In the junior classes the emphasis is on early mathematical activities. Suitable and relevant programmes are undertaken with pupils in the senior primary and post-primary classes. Mathematical activities are often linked to the pupils' experiences and to projects related to aspects of the environment. The use of such active learning approaches and practical tasks is commended.
- In the area of Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) a range of interesting activities is undertaken. Teachers endeavour to facilitate the pupils being active in the learning process and pupils were observed engaging positively in a variety

of topics and projects in History, Geography and Science. The school has successfully participated in the Green Schools programme. The school endeavours to enable the pupils to access facilities in the community and to use the resources of the local area. Staff are conscious of the importance of the area of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and a broad and relevant programme is provided across the school.

- In Arts Education, pupils have opportunities to participate in enriching learning experiences and to express themselves. Some excellent practice was observed as pupils engaged purposefully in activities in the Visual Arts, Drama and Music. The pupils also participate with enthusiasm in the programme provided in Physical Education.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- The CRC School provides an environment in which the pupils are received with respect and care and their efforts are affirmed. The pupils respond positively and co-operatively and engage purposefully. An effective and regular system of individualised planning for pupils, involving the relevant school and clinic personnel and parents, has been put in place. The school and clinic staff work conscientiously to provide suitable programmes for each pupil. Across the school a broad range of programmes have been developed to meet the diverse range of the needs of the pupils. Opportunities for co-operative teaching should be further developed with classes and groups, for whom such approaches would be beneficial. Where appropriate, consideration could also be given to extending the involvement of senior pupils in the IEP process and in setting and monitoring their own learning goals.

*Published June 2011*

## 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 of the Central Remedial Clinic Special School welcomes the Whole School Evaluation Report which affirms the high standard of organisation, collaboration, teaching and learning being promoted within the school. The report was very positive, constructive and balanced and it acknowledges the many significant developments which have taken place in the school over the last six decades. The Board wishes to express its appreciation to the team of Inspectors for the courteous, professional and helpful manner in which they carried out the inspection.

The Board welcomes and endorses the Inspectors' acknowledgement of the very high level of commitment, professionalism and creativity of the school staff. The report also recognised the effective interdisciplinary collaboration involving clinic and school staff as well as parents.

The strengths outlined in the report give valued positive reinforcement to the Board, the staff and the parents as well as encouragement to continue to work creatively and collaboratively to provide a stimulating and productive working environment for pupils and staff.

##### **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 and staff welcome the positive and practical advice offered by the Inspectors both during their visits and in their report. We appreciate the conclusions and key recommendations. The school is endeavouring to incorporate these recommendations into present and future whole school and classroom planning and to expand on existing good practices in the areas outlined in the report.

**Interdisciplinary Collaboration** is an essential element of our school planning and practice. We are continuing to work with CRC therapy and psychology departments in order to expand and improve the level and types of collaboration and cooperation. This collaboration is all aimed at meeting the diverse and changing needs of all our pupils with special needs. This collaboration will be examined during the on-going review of the IEP process in the school.

**Co-operative Teaching:** This is acknowledged as a very beneficial teaching approach for many of our classes and especially for our pupils in the Post Primary section of our school. In the new school year staff will be examining existing and new options including the creative use of the shared areas, subject teaching and grouping especially for senior classes following state examination courses and resource teachers working in the class alongside class teachers.

**Wider School Environment:** The school has always attempted to expand pupils' horizons and experiences and to bring education out of the classroom and into the wider community as appropriate. Given the physical needs of our pupil population we accept that we need to look beyond the difficulties and restrictions and get classes out into the wider environment where possible and beneficial. We have made a start already by creating a new school garden, suitable for use as an outdoor classroom, we have plans for a new accessible playground and have organised and held our first ever whole school outing in conjunction with another school. We will continue to expand links for two-way visits to other schools, to museums and places of educational and cultural interest as well as bringing in events and visitors to the school environment.

Finally we note that the Inspectors acknowledged in the recommendations that these practices were already in place but needed to be expanded or developed.