

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

**Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with
Special Educational Needs**

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Saint Patrick's Boys' National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Millbourne Avenue Drumcondra Dublin 9
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	11525A

Date of inspection: 24-01-2020



WHAT IS AN EVALUATION OF PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?

The Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a focused evaluation of provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream primary schools. As this inspection model places a particular emphasis on the quality of learner outcomes for pupils with special educational needs, most of the time spent in the school by inspectors is given to visits to mainstream classes and support settings.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated provision for pupils with special educational needs under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs
2. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs
3. The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special educational needs

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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Date of inspection	24-01-2020
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Meeting with SEN team• Meeting with SNAs• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Pupil group discussion• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Patrick's Boys' National School, which operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, is an urban school for boys from junior infants to sixth class. Within its overall provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) the school has two special classes for pupils with a specific speech and language disorder (SSLD); in accordance with the school's enrolment policy girls may be enrolled into the special classes. There were 492 pupils enrolled in the school at the time of the evaluation.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- The overall quality of teaching of pupils with SEN is very good.
- The promotion of the wellbeing of pupils with SEN and their inclusion in all aspects of the life of the school are highly commendable.
- Currently, a majority of support provision is achieved through the withdrawal of pupils with SEN from mainstream lessons for support.
- Expertise in SEN is invested largely in a cohort of experienced staff at present.
- The management and use of resources to support pupils with SEN are very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school's provision for the use of team teaching and in-class support for pupils with SEN should be developed further to include the best practices identified by this evaluation in pedagogy, planning, tracking and recording.
- A strategic plan for CPD and capacity building for the maintenance of collective expertise in SEN going forward should be developed.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The overall quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good; pupils are making very commendable progress in line with their assessed needs. The school's provision for pupils with a specific speech and language disorder is highly successful. Pupils in the special class settings demonstrate clear and substantial progression in their communication and social skills and all are benefiting from integration with the mainstream classes. During the evaluation it was evident that successes in the two special classes for pupils with a specific speech and language disorder are also linked in important ways to the high level of speech and language therapy support that has been maintained for the pupils. Pupils with additional learning needs are achieving at their levels of abilities and at times surpassing the intended learning objectives of lessons.

During support teaching lessons, both in withdrawal and in-class settings, pupils engaged very productively with the tasks set to support their learning. Overall, very good levels of enjoyment and motivation were evident during pupils' learning experiences. In many instances it was evident that pupils with SEN derived satisfaction and happiness from the learning experiences prepared for them and that this is related to their sense of making progress and of achievement. The interactions observed among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very respectful and positive, and conducive to the pupils' sense of wellbeing. The integration of pupils with SEN and reverse integration are very commendable features of the school's operation. All parents of pupils with additional learning needs who completed a questionnaire as part of the evaluation felt their child was included fully in classroom and school life. During the focus group discussion, pupils with additional learning needs expressed high levels of satisfaction about their learning in school. Almost all parents of pupils with additional learning needs felt the school was helping their child to progress in reading, writing and Mathematics and helping their child to interact with others.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The overall quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The provision for individual pupils in the special classes for pupils with an SSLD responds very commendably to the diversity of their learning needs through regularly-monitored individualised target setting and planning. The individualised learning plans in the special classes are linked to a comprehensive assessment profile of each learner garnered through communication with all relevant parties. In the special classes, comprehensive and very effective teaching addresses both receptive and expressive language needs, the production of speech sounds, language message content, syntax and grammar and developing the nuances of speech in interaction with others. The lesson structures observed were very commendable. All teachers in special education teaching roles hold high expectations for pupils' learning, communicate these expectations effectively, and in a large number of instances facilitate pupils in internalising them. Commendable collaboration and communication among staff members are in evidence in planning for pupils' needs. Plans identify clear, relevant learning objectives that are contextualised to learning needs, and learning objectives reflect a developmental and incremental approach to progressing pupils' learning. There is need for a whole-school format for planning to be considered, going forward, and for collective target-setting practice to reflect the very good practice in a good number of instances where targets are very results-focused. Communication with parents is strong, as evidenced by staff input and parent questionnaire responses. There is a clear, agreed role for parents in identifying their children's individualised learning targets. Almost all parents of pupils with additional learning needs who completed a questionnaire as part of the evaluation indicated satisfaction with the consultation on the part of the school with them.

Teachers design and prepare in advance a sequence of learning tasks and activities suitable for the specific learning objectives of the lesson or series of lessons but also flexible enough to allow for emerging learning opportunities. At the time of the evaluation a majority of the support for pupils with additional learning needs is provided through the withdrawal model and a greater balance with in-class support is needed. Developing further the model of team teaching and maintaining consistency of practice in planning are advocated. Teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to pursuing relevant continuing professional development (CPD). A number involved in SEN provision have obtained relevant qualifications and have engaged in a range of CPD courses and further study relevant to pupils' learning needs. Expertise in SEN is invested largely in a cohort of experienced staff at present. To ensure staff mobility and continuity of provision there is need for school leadership to develop a strategic plan for CPD for the maintenance of collective expertise in SEN going forward. During different lessons observed, teachers modelled enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning for pupils with SEN, and created opportunities for pupils to be self-motivated to engage in, extend and enjoy their learning.

3. THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES RECEIVED TO SUPPORT PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The management and use of resources to support pupils with SEN are very good. School leadership articulates and inculcates a very strong culture of commitment to the inclusion of pupils with SEN. The school is deploying its resources in line with the principles and actions outlined in *Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*. The Continuum of Support is implemented and there is a clear, shared understanding for the effective deployment of resources going forward; pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest levels of support. School leadership strategically maximises the available teaching resources in the school to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and its deployment of teachers is very good. Very successful attention is paid to early intervention; comprehensive provision is made for the special classes for pupils with an SSLD. Very good quality resources, including information and communications technology (ICT) resources, support the learning of pupils with special educational needs; an extension to the use of ICT in certain settings is advocated.

The quality of display and organisation of the classrooms and SEN settings as places for the learning of language and priority numeracy skills is very good. Very good centres of interest to stimulate learning are prepared in different settings for pupils with an SEN. There is ongoing and meaningful engagement with parents and external agencies in support of meeting pupils' needs as effectively as possible. Very valuable links have been established and maintained with a number of departments within Dublin City University facilitating support for diagnostic assessment and parallel learning opportunities.

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 of 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;