

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	Scoil Mhuire na nGrás
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Greenmount Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	12473M

Date of inspection: 19-02-2020



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 inspectors 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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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	19-02-2020
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

Scoil Mhuire na nGrás, Greenmount is a coeducational school located on the south side of Cork city. It has an administrative principal and eleven mainstream class teaching posts. The school has eight special education teaching posts (SETs), two special class teachers for pupils with developmental language disorder, a special teacher for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and a part-time Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher who is shared with another school in the area. The school also has the services of eleven special needs assistants (SNAs). There are currently 239 pupils on the roll. The Presentation Brothers are the trustees of the school and it is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative, which is the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The school provides a broad range of support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and the overall quality of learning is very good.
- There are targeted and effective interventions for pupils with SEN throughout the school and the overall quality of teaching observed was very good; the impact of all approaches on pupils' learning outcomes is closely monitored
- Teachers have engaged both collectively and individually in a wide variety of continuous professional development (CPD) and this has informed the approach to assessment and the very effective implementation of a range of evidence-informed initiatives; the high-quality of assessment data available presents opportunities to further target some interventions.
- There is very effective management and use of resources to support pupils with special educational needs; some scope exists to further develop the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) in this context.
- The school has established strategic partnerships with a variety of agencies which serve to extend and enhance the provision for pupils with SEN.
- A comprehensive range of policy documents guides provision for pupils with SEN. Some scope to update the admissions document for the special class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) was noted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To enhance the very effective use of resources to support teaching and learning, the school should explore opportunities to extend the role technology in provision for pupils with SEN.
- As a next step in the very well developed programme of support for Mathematics, it is advised that the school's high-quality assessment data be used to ensure greater flexibility in the composition of groups receiving support in specific skills and content areas.
- The policy for admission to the special class for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) should be reviewed to reflect the school's current good practice.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The learning outcomes for pupils with SEN observed during the evaluation were very good. In mainstream classes, support settings and special classes, pupils were supported and challenged through respectful and positive interactions. They engaged enthusiastically in meaningful activities, which were aimed at enhancing learning outcomes in areas including language, literacy, numeracy, social and emotional wellbeing and the development of fine and gross motor skills. Pupil progress in all settings is carefully tracked and monitored. The recently agreed decision amongst the staff to include progress reports on the achievement of learning targets will enhance the very well-organised individual pupil files.

The school actively promotes a culture of inclusion and the learning experiences provided for pupils are very good. They were observed to enjoy their lessons and learning and they commented very positively on the supports they receive in various settings. School management and staff have made very effective use of a range of resources to provide stimulating learning environments for pupils and a good variety of concrete, visual and tactile materials is used to support their engagement and understanding. The range of interventions in place throughout the school provides opportunities for pupils to experience support in classroom settings, small groups and individually in accordance with their assessed levels of need. As a next step in the very well developed programme of support for Mathematics, it is advised that the school's high-quality assessment data be used to ensure greater flexibility in the composition of groups receiving support in specific skills and content areas. Pupils in special classes are integrated with their peers in a planned and coordinated manner and the practice observed provided very useful opportunities for inclusion and peer-mediated learning.

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

The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Early intervention is a defining feature of the school's support programme. Evidence of the existence of very effective partnership with other agencies in this regard was noted and is highly commended.

Teachers prepare, facilitate and implement a variety of support interventions in an effective manner. They have engaged both collectively and individually in a wide range of continuous professional development (CPD) and this has informed the approach to assessment and the very effective implementation of a range of evidence-informed initiatives. As a next step in the

comprehensive programme of support for Mathematics, it is advised that the high-quality assessment data available be used to inform greater flexibility in small group interventions, reflecting variations in pupils' abilities and support needs across the range of mathematical skills and content areas.

High levels of collaboration and cooperation were noted between mainstream teachers, SETs and special class teachers. The staged approach to providing support for pupils is implemented in a very effective manner. Teachers generally displayed an in-depth understanding of the range in ability levels amongst pupils and, in general, good levels of differentiation in questioning, support and task provision were noted. The school has a clear action plan in place for the ongoing development of differentiated teaching provision and the ongoing influence of this whole-school approach is evident in classrooms. Individual plans are prepared for pupil in receipt of support at stages two and three of the continuum of support process and teacher short-term planning is closely linked to the overall targets for each child.

High quality provision was observed in special classes for pupils with developmental language disorder. Collaborative and very effective working relationships were observed between teachers and the speech and language therapists. Very good collaboration with the base schools of the pupils attending this two year language intervention was also noted. In the class for pupils with ASD, individualised targets are established for pupils, and the intervention is very structured and effective.

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

The principal and the SEN coordinator lead the implementation of a reflective and very effective approach to supporting pupils with SEN. A comprehensive plan is in place to prioritise pupils requiring the greatest levels of support and there is a clear commitment to the concept of early intervention. A range of visual and multi-sensory approaches to actively involve pupils in their learning and to cultivate understanding are used effectively in classrooms. While some good use of information and communication technologies was noted, the school should explore opportunities to further extend the role technology in provision for pupils with SEN.

A meeting with SNAs indicated that they have a clear understanding of their roles in supporting pupils to maximise their learning potential while simultaneously cultivating and supporting the development of their skills as independent learners. The school is very conscious of extending opportunities for professional development to SNAs and evidence of developing practice in this area is highly commended.

The school has established strategic partnerships with other schools and agencies that contribute in an effective manner to the overall quality of provision. Features of the positive impact of these partnerships include; the development of an agreed, streamlined approach to admission into the two-year programme for pupils with developmental language disorder, access to play therapy and provision of art therapy. A number of pupils learning English as an additional language also have access to provision for storytelling in their first language. In a questionnaire issued to parents as part of the evaluation, almost all indicated very positive views of the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Practice in the school is generally underpinned and informed by a comprehensive suite of well-developed policy documents. Some scope for development was noted in the policy guiding

practice in the special class for pupils with ASD. It is recommended that this whole-school policy document be reviewed and updated to ensure it both reflect current effective practice and ensure maximum access to the provision in the future.

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;