

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

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

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	St Joseph's National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Rath Ghuaire Killucan Co Westmeath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	18640M

**Date of inspection: 14-02-2019**



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agus Scileanna**  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **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 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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 1 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

## Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

<b>Date of inspection</b>	14-02-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Meeting with SEN team</li><li>• Meeting with SNAs</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Pupil group discussion</li><li>• Feedback to principal, teachers and chairperson of the board of management</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Joseph's National School is a co-educational, mainstream primary school located in the village of Rathwire, County Westmeath, and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. At the time of the evaluation there were 279 pupils enrolled. There were ten mainstream classroom teachers, four special education teachers, and two special class teachers working in the school. One of the special education teachers is shared with a neighbouring school.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good; pupils demonstrate very high levels of awareness of their own learning.
- The school has created a warm, welcoming, inclusive learning environment for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall.
- There is scope to improve planning for differentiation.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is guided effectively by the Continuum of Support although target setting could be improved in some support plans.
- Successful integration and meaningful inclusion of pupils into mainstream settings is a particular feature of the school's practice.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assessment data should be analysed more systematically in order to guide approaches to differentiation in key subject areas in mainstream settings.
- Teachers should ensure that targets in pupils' individual support plans are outlined in very specific and measurable terms and based clearly on assessment data gathered.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is evident and they have a strong sense of making progress and of achievement. During the focus-group discussion, pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction in relation to their learning. In addition, they demonstrated very high levels of awareness of their learning achievements and individual learning styles. Furthermore, many pupils spoke of the skills they had developed to modify and adapt their behaviour when required, and recognised the need to do so themselves.

Learning for all pupils takes place in very inclusive, stimulating and supportive learning environments. Pupils are highly motivated to learn, and in the settings observed, pupils were highly engaged in their learning. They are able to work both independently and collaboratively on purposeful learning tasks. Analysis of the range of assessment data indicates that pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress overall.

Learning in the special classes is of a very good quality. Pupils are consistently encouraged to self-regulate their behaviours and to collaboratively negotiate the various learning activities of the school day. These include an appropriate mix of individual and group-learning tasks where social skills are nurtured effectively through respectful teacher-pupil interactions. In addition, pupils are provided with many regular and structured opportunities to engage in learning with their peers in mainstream classes through the successfully established inclusive practices of integration and reverse integration.

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

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers in both mainstream and support settings demonstrate very good pedagogical knowledge and highly effective classroom management skills which ensure high levels of sustained pupil engagement during lessons. Most teachers use a variety of teaching methodologies during lessons, ensuring that pupils have opportunities to learn both independently, and collaboratively in pairs or in groups. All teachers should ensure that the provision of collaborative learning opportunities is a consistent feature of the learning experience for all pupils.

All teachers provide a range of planning for their teaching. In the most effective plans, good provision is made for differentiated learning for the range of pupils, clearly based on available assessment information. The analysis of assessment data to guide planning for differentiated learning should be a feature of teachers' short-term planning in all mainstream settings. Short-term planning in support settings is currently prepared fortnightly. Special education teachers are advised to prepare weekly short-term planning in line with the *Learning Support Guidelines (2000)*, in order to better track and assess the incremental learning of the pupils.

Support for pupils with special educational needs is provided in a variety of ways, including in-class supports, team-teaching, early interventions, and individual or group withdrawal. The Continuum of Support is used to identify pupils for targeted intervention and to provide individualised planning. A very good range of assessment information is gathered in relation to pupils' learning profiles. All special education teachers should ensure that targets set for pupils in individual support plans are stated in very specific and measurable terms, and that each target clearly derives from the available assessment information.

Teaching for pupils in the special classes is very good. A range of autism-specific teaching methods is deployed to support pupils' social, communication, language, and cognitive needs. Teachers ensure that the pupils have a broad experience of the range of curriculum subjects. Very good use is made of a wide range of resources, including digital technologies. A variety of assessment strategies, including some autism-specific assessment tools, is used to gather and document a significant volume of valuable information regarding pupils' overall progress. Assessment data should now be used to consistently set very specific and measurable targets for all pupils in their individual support plans.

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

The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's policy and practice is highly inclusive. The learning environments provided by the school are attractive, stimulating and supportive of learning. Strong leadership in the coordination and the flexible delivery of supports is evident. Special education teachers, with support from the special needs assistants, are effectively and strategically deployed in supporting pupils' learning. A wide variety of physical resources is utilised to provide a positive learning experience for pupils. Early interventions are well-planned and effectively implemented. The Continuum of Support is well embedded in the school's practice. As part of the individualised planning approach, there is effective and meaningful engagement with parents, professionals and external agencies. In response to the Inspectorate survey, almost all parents agreed that they are happy with the opportunities provided to discuss their child's learning with teachers, and that their child is fully included in school and classroom life.

## 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 quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;