

1.9 EVALUATION OF PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Appendix 1.9 *Evaluation of Provision for Students with Additional and Special Educational Needs in Post-Primary Schools* is published as an additional appendix to *A Guide to Inspection in Post-Primary Schools 2016*. This guide sets out how the Inspectorate conducts inspections in post-primary schools and outlines common features of all inspection models at the three stages of an inspection: before the inspection, during the inspection and after the inspection. It was effective from 01 September 2016 and replaced previous guides which described each inspection model individually.

This appendix sets out the focus, features and the inspection activities of the Evaluation of Provision for Students with Additional and Special Educational Needs in Post-Primary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation of Provision for Students with Additional and Special Educational Needs in Post Primary Schools (SEN-PP) is designed to evaluate a school's provision for:

- students on stage one of the Continuum of Support who receive support within mainstream classes
- students on stage two or stage three of the Continuum of Support who receive support within the mainstream classes and/or in support settings
- students in special classes

It was developed to ensure consistency and coherence between the evaluation of provision for students with additional and special educational needs and the special education teaching allocation model for schools which was introduced in September 2017. In this context, particular attention is paid to the school's use of the *Continuum of Support* and its adherence to the principles and actions outlined in *Guidelines for Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Post-Primary Schools* (September 2017). The model also reflects the publication of *Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools*, which was published by the Department in September 2016.

EVALUATION FOCUS

The SEN-PP model addresses the following questions relating to the quality of a school's provision for students with additional and special educational needs:

1. a. How good are the learning outcomes for students with additional and special educational needs?
b. How good are the learning experiences of students with additional and special educational needs?
2. How well is the school using the resources it receives for students with additional and special educational needs to improve learning experiences and learning outcomes?
3. How effective are the structures and systems that the school has in place in fostering the inclusion, equality of opportunity and holistic development of students with additional and special educational needs?

In addressing these questions, inspectors use two main sources of evidence:

1. The school's **own reporting** of learning experiences and learning outcomes, its use of resources and the structures and systems it has in place to facilitate inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of students with additional and special educational needs
2. **Inspectors' evaluation** of learning experiences and learning outcomes, its use of resources and the structures and systems it has in place to facilitate inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of students with additional and special educational needs.

FEATURES OF THE EVALUATION

Schools receive ten school days' notice of the evaluation by phone call from the inspector, which is followed up by an e-mail to the school. An information note describing the evaluation process is included in the emailed notice.

The evaluation typically involves up to three days in a school and all meetings, lesson observations and feedback, at which the draft preliminary findings and recommendations of the inspection are presented and discussed, are completed within these days. The evaluation is generally conducted by two inspectors.

Prior to the in-school inspection, the school principal is requested to complete a standard school information form in electronic format or to provide the form that is available on the website of the Department and has already been completed. The completed form is returned to the reporting inspector (preferably by e-mail) within five working days of the receipt of the notification. Prior to the inspection visit, the principal is requested to provide the inspector with the school's provision plan containing a list of all students in the school who are in receipt of additional teaching support and the year and class in which they are in. He/she will also be asked to confirm that the inspector has access to complete and accurate timetable information.

OVERVIEW OF INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Before the inspection visit	Inspectorate activity	<p>Notification of evaluation</p> <p>Forwarding of invitation to parents to complete an online parent questionnaire</p> <p>Confirmation that the inspector has access to complete and accurate timetable information</p> <p>Selecting the sample of students and parents for the group discussions and forwarding to principal</p> <p>Devising an initial timetable for the evaluation</p>
	School activity	<p>Completion and/or forwarding of standard school information form</p> <p>Forwarding the list of all students in the school who are in receipt of additional teaching support</p> <p>Securing parental permission of students selected to participate in student focus group meeting</p> <p>Confirmation of availability for parent focus group meeting</p> <p>Ensuring inspector has access to complete and accurate timetable information</p> <p>Ensuring that the required policies are available for inspection visit</p>
During the inspection visit	<p>Inspectorate activity</p> <p>Typically up to three school days</p>	<p>Examination of school provision plan and planning of visits to learning settings</p> <p>Evaluation of teaching and learning in mainstream and support settings</p> <p>Interaction with students and review of students' work</p> <p>Meeting with the special education team</p> <p>Meet with special needs assistants</p> <p>Student focus group meeting</p> <p>Parent focus group meeting</p> <p>Review of assessment data and school documents relevant to students with additional and special educational needs</p> <p>Level one child protection checks</p> <p>Feedback to individual teachers and to principal and key members of the special education team</p>
After the inspection visit	School activity	Response at factual verification and school response stage, if relevant
	Inspectorate activity	<p>Forwarding of questionnaire returns to school</p> <p>Issue of draft report for factual verification and for school response</p> <p>Publication of the final report on the Department website</p>