An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Evaluation of inclusive practices and provision for children with special and additional educational needs in primary schools

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Presentation Primary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Warrenmount Blackpitts Dublin 8
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	13611D
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	25/01/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	18/04/2024

What is an evaluation of inclusive practices and provision for children with special and additional educational needs?

The Evaluation of Inclusive Practices and Provision for Children with Special and Additional Educational Needs is a focused evaluation of provision for pupils with special and additional educational needs in mainstream primary schools. As this inspection model places a particular emphasis on the quality of learner outcomes for pupils with special and additional 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 and additional educational needs under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

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

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils/students.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Evaluation of inclusive practices and provision for children with special and additional educational needs

Date of inspection	25/01/2024
Inspection activities undertaken • Discussion with principal and teachers • Meeting with SEN team • Meeting with SNAs • Review of relevant documents	• 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

Presentation Primary School, Warrenmount is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and the trusteeship of the Presentation Sisters. It participates in Band I of Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion. At the time of the evaluation, staffing included an administrative principal, a home-school-community liaison co-ordinator (HSCL), twelve mainstream class teachers, six special education teaching (SET) posts and nine special needs assistants (SNAs). There were two special classes in operation for pupils with autism and an Early Start class. The school had participated in the School Inclusion Model (SIM) pilot programme, which aims to build schools' capacity to support children with additional needs through collaboration with clinicians and therapists. There were 204 pupils enrolled in the school at the time of the evaluation.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of learning for pupils with special and additional educational needs was very good; pupils engaged enthusiastically with their learning tasks and demonstrated a strong motivation to learn.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special and additional educational needs was very good overall.
- SET teachers demonstrated very good awareness of their pupils' needs and the school had a happy and supportive atmosphere.
- Assessment practices were effective overall.
- The management and use of resources to support pupils with special and additional educational needs was very effective.
- There were very good links with outside agencies, including the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO); parents spoke of the open door approach to communication in operation and that school staff were highly committed to the care and holistic development of their children.

Recommendations

- There was potential for a greater emphasis on the use of visual resources in literacy. In order to further develop pupils' language learning, teachers should provide an increased level of visual resources and meaningful oral language vocabulary activities to cater more fully for the range of pupil abilities in classes.

- There was a need to make a greater use of baseline data and diagnostic assessment tools. Teachers should use this assessment information to plan and devise more specific and measurable learning targets for pupils.
- In order to further support the sharing of information and good practice between SET and mainstream class teachers, closer links between SET and classroom teachers, to facilitate a smoother transfer of learning and approaches for pupils from withdrawal settings to the mainstream context, should be developed.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of learning of pupils with special and additional educational needs

The overall quality of learning for pupils with special and additional educational needs was very good. The pupils engaged enthusiastically with their learning tasks and demonstrated a strong motivation to learn. Visual timetables, movement breaks and sensory items supported pupils to regulate their emotions and achieve high levels of participation in learning.

Learning outcomes in almost all lessons observed were very good. Pupils were supported to understand and have a positive view of themselves. They were eager to share and to discuss their learning and were proud of their achievements in a range of curriculum areas including literacy, numeracy, the Visual Arts and Physical Education. Those who attended the focus group meeting reported that they enjoyed their learning and had a strong focus on achieving their personal goals. While there were considerable opportunities for pupils to use a very good range of concrete resources and manipulatives in all settings, there was some potential for a greater emphasis on the use of visual resources in literacy to further develop pupils' language learning and understanding.

Where particularly effective learning was observed, pupils were appropriately challenged and had regular success experiences. In a parent focus group discussion, all parents reported that their children were progressing well with their learning and were well included in school and classroom life. Pupils in the classes for autism experienced a range of curriculum areas which progressed their academic, social and emotional needs. They were provided with regular, structured opportunities to engage in learning with peers in mainstream classes through the school's successfully established integration practices. Very good use of autism specific methodologies such as visual schedules, choice boards, sensory tools and communication boards was observed. Parents agreed that this provision was very effective and a vital aspect of support for their children.

Names and photographs of teachers and SNAs on each classroom door supported all pupils to become familiar with all teachers and SNAs in the school. Very positive, respectful and supportive interactions were observed between teachers and their pupils.

2. The quality of teaching of pupils with special and additional educational needs

The quality of teaching for pupils with special and additional educational needs was very good overall. The school had a happy and supportive atmosphere. Supplementary support for pupils with special and additional educational needs was provided through a combination of individual and small-group withdrawal sessions and in-class support. SET teachers demonstrated very good awareness of their pupils' needs, as documented in the student support files and in their lesson preparation. SET members and class teachers were well organised and prepared for teaching and used a good range of teaching methodologies. Pupils had regular opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively during lesson.

A wide range of initiatives was in place, including the very effective use of Ready Set Go Maths, Guided Reading, Creativity in the classroom, Lego Therapy, Talk Time, Smart Moves, *Aistear*, and station teaching. Information and communications technology (ICT) was used effectively to support teaching and learning during many lessons observed. Classrooms were positive, affirming learning environments, where learning was well scaffolded and guided. School staff also created stimulating learning environments on school corridors, where pupils learning, interests and achievements were celebrated through very high-quality displays, particularly in the area of the Visual Arts and Social Environmental Science Education (SESE).

Teachers demonstrated their commitment to ensuring high-quality provision through their regular engagement in collaborative planning. A strong emphasis was placed on pupils discussing and describing their own learning. Teachers had high expectations for their pupils' learning. In some classes, very good use was made of playful teaching and learning approaches to pupils' language and concept acquisition, particularly in relation to explicitly teaching mathematical vocabulary. In a small number of settings there was potential for pupils to engage in meaningful oral language vocabulary-building activities to cater more fully for the range of pupil abilities.

Teachers devised student-support plans containing valuable information from a range of sources. It was highly commendable that these plans contained an up-to-date log of actions. Assessment practices were effective overall, with highly effective practice observed in a minority of lessons. In these instances, assessment information was analysed to provide very valuable information on pupils' learning and informed next steps in teaching and learning. While very consistent whole school approaches to assessment were established, there was a need to make a greater use of baseline data and diagnostic assessment tools. Assessment information should be further used to plan and devise more specific and measurable learning targets for pupils as part of these plans.

3. The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special and additonal educational needs

The management and use of resources to support pupils with special and additional educational needs was very effective. A member of SET team was assigned to co-ordinate special educational needs in the school and an SNA co-ordinator was also appointed. The deployment of SET teachers was based on the principle that pupils with the greatest level of need received the highest level of support. The deployment of SNAs was also flexible and responsive to pupils' needs across the school. SNAs reported that they felt valued and supported in their role and very good systems for communication and sharing of expertise were in place in the school.

Teachers and SNAs participated in ongoing professional learning in aspects of inclusive practice. Staff had engaged positively with speech and language therapists and occupational therapists as part of the SIM project. As a result, there was a greater whole-school understanding and an enhanced awareness of strategies to support pupils to participate in their learning.

Commendably, SET and mainstream teachers have engaged in some collaborative planning and there were very good structures in place to facilitate communication. There is however, a need to further support the sharing of information and good practice between SET and mainstream class teachers. Closer links between SET and classroom teachers to facilitate a smoother transfer of learning and approaches for pupils from withdrawal settings to the mainstream context, should be developed.

Effective practice was noted to support the transition of pupils into and out of the school. There were very good links with outside agencies, including NEPS and the SENO, as well as other primary and post-primary schools. Parents spoke of the open door approach to communication operated by the school and said that it was highly committed to the care and holistic development of their children.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective