An Roinn Oideachais

Department of Education

Ag Tacú le Soláthar Sábháilte na Scolaíochta

Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Ita's Special School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Crushrod Avenue Drogheda Co. Louth
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18936K

Dáta na Cuairte:

Date of Visit: 03-03-2021

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WHAT IS A SUPPORTING THE SAFE PROVISION OF SCHOOLING (SSPS) REPORT?

The safe and sustainable provision of schooling in the context of the current public health pandemic is an important national priority. Ensuring that schools are safe learning and working environments for all is vital and the detailed guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE) to all schools and settings is designed to support the ongoing provision of schooling. The guidance provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID–19 for staff, learners, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of the safe and sustainable provision of schooling for the health and wellbeing of students and of society as a whole.

The Inspectorate carries out a programme of SSPS visits to schools and centres for education in order to provide an assurance to the public that the Department's guidelines are being implemented and to support schools in implementing them.

An SSPS report is a report that is published following an SSPS visit.

DURING AN SSPS VISIT THE INSPECTOR:

Engages with: • Principal • Lead Worker Representative(s) • Selection of staff members	Reviews: • COVID-19 Policy Statement • School's risk assessment to see that Covid-19 is added as a risk • School's arrangements for signing in and out
Observes: • Physical distancing arrangements • COVID-19 signage • Sanitising units • Isolation area	Conducts: • Level 1 Child Protection Checks

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

The checks conducted during this inspection are based on the COVID – 19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of schools. The checks are grouped into four main areas:

1. Planning
2. Appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
3. Provision of staff training
4. Implementation of control measures

Each main area has a number of checks; these are the specific actions that a school should take in relation to each area.

When the inspector determines that the school has not fully implemented one of the checks, the report provides some additional comment on the check. It also advises on actions that the school should take in order to fully implement the guidance provided.

The report also indicates whether or not the school met the requirements in relation to the three child protection checks conducted during the visit.

A *Guide to Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling (SSPS)* is published on the website of the Department of Education and can be accessed here. This guide details how SSPS visits are carried out and also provides the full framework used by inspectors during the visits.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the 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.

AREA 1: PLANNING		
1.	**The school has a COVID-19 policy in place**	**Yes**
1a.	*The policy contains, at a minimum, the commitments set out in Appendix 1 of the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable opening of schools*	*Yes*
1b.	*There is evidence that the policy was shared with staff, pupils/students and parents*	*Yes*
1c.	*The school principal and Lead Worker Representative (LWR) confirm that they are familiar with the revised COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Post-Primary / Primary and Special Schools*	*Yes*
2.	**The school has updated its health and safety risk assessment to identify the hazards and outlining the relevant control measures associated with COVID-19**	**Yes**
2a.	*The school's risk assessment includes COVID-19 as a risk and identifies associated control measures*	*Yes*

AREA 2: APPOINTMENT OF A LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE		
3.	**The school has appointed a Lead Worker Representative**	**Yes**
3a.	*The name of LWR(s) is available*	*Yes*
3b.	*The members of school staff that were spoken to during the visit were aware of the identity of the LWR*	*Yes*
3c.	*A discussion with LWR(s) shows that he/she is aware of the role and responsibilities of a LWR(s) as outlined in Appendix 8 of the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable opening of schools*	*Yes*
3d.	*The LWR(s) confirms that he/she has completed training for LWRs*	*Yes*
3e.	*The LWR confirmed that (s)he receives protected time, in line with DE guidelines, to enable them to carry out their duties in that role*	*Yes*

AREA 3: PROVISION FOR STAFF TRAINING		
4.	**The school has ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education**	**Yes**
4a.	*The members of school staff that were spoken to during the visit confirm that they have completed relevant training*	*Yes*
5.	**All staff have completed a Return to Work (RTW) form**	**Yes**
5a.	*The principal confirmed that all staff have completed a RTW form*	*Yes*
5b.	*The members of school staff that were spoken to during the visit confirmed that they completed a RTW form*	*Yes*

AREA 4: CONTROL MEASURES		
6.	**The school has procedures in place for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19 in line with the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable opening of schools**	**Yes**
6a.	*The school principal and the LWR are aware of the procedures for dealing with a suspected case*	*Yes*
6b.	*An isolation area is ready*	*Yes*
6c.	*Contact telephone numbers for parents are available*	*Yes*
6d.	*The school has a supply of PPE available*	*Yes*
7.	**The school has displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19**	**Yes**
7a.	*There is visual evidence of posters and signage throughout the school*	*Yes*

8.	**The school has made changes to the school and classroom layout to support physical distancing and to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school in line with section 5.4 of the Department guidelines**	**Yes**
8a.	*There is visual evidence of reconfigured classrooms that takes account of the minimum physical distancing requirements*	*Yes*
8b.	*A sanitising station is available at the main entry and exit points to the school*	*Yes*
8c.	*Sanitising stations are available at regular intervals throughout the school*	*Yes*
8d.	*Teachers, other staff and students wear face coverings in line with current DE guidance/requirements*	*Yes*
8e.	*Visitors to the school are requested to wear face coverings*	*Yes*
8f.	*The school has measures in place to decrease interaction and increase physical distancing outside of classrooms*	*Yes*
8g.	*Arrangements are in place to facilitate physical distancing in the staff room*	*Yes*
8h.	*There are measures in place for good ventilation that take account of current DE guidelines/requirements.*	*Yes*
9.	**The school has made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school**	**Yes**
9a.	*A contact log is maintained for visitors*	*Yes*
10.	**The school principal confirmed that enhanced cleaning arrangements that reflect the Department's guidance are in place**	**Yes**

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of St Ita's Special School welcomes the very positive findings of the recent Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling inspection which was conducted on 3rd March 2021.

The report recognises the considerable work conducted by the Board, Principal, Lead Worker Representatives and staff prior to the opening in September 2020. It affirms the planning, preparation and control measures put in place to minimise the risk of Covid-19 for pupils, staff, parents and guardians. All efforts have been made to ensure that the school is as safe as possible for everyone.

The report acknowledges the continuing efforts of the whole school community, staff, pupils and parents, in maintaining these standards. The Board appreciates the detailed guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school will continue to implement these measures and will review as needed to continue to provide a safe, supportive environment for teaching and learning.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

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