An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

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

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N An Ghleanna
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Glynn Enniscorthy Co. Wexford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	17005E
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	07/05/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	01/09/2026

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.

The board of management of the school 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.

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.

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>Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.
2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.
2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils.
3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta</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	06/05/2026 - 07/05/2026
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

SN an Ghleanna is a co-educational primary school located near Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ferns. At the time of the evaluation, staffing comprised six mainstream class teachers, including the teaching principal. There were three special education teachers and a special class teacher for pupils with autism. The school had four special needs assistants (SNAs). There were 138 pupils enrolled in the school.

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 positively with their learning tasks and displayed a good motivation to learn.
- Very good attention was paid to promoting pupils' wellbeing; teachers created supportive learning environments where pupils worked both independently and collaboratively.
- The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special and additional educational needs was very good; teachers in mainstream, support settings and the special class were very well prepared and delivered structured lessons with new learning purposefully linked to previous learning.
- The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special and additional educational needs was good; the school had a range of plans and policies in place to support pupils' needs.
- School management and staff created a warm and welcoming school environment; parents spoke very positively about the care and support their children received.

Recommendations

- To further support the learning needs of pupils with special and additional educational needs, and those with English as an additional language (EAL), teachers should allow pupils additional processing or thinking time when answering questions and make greater use of visual resources to support and deepen their language and comprehension skills.
- The school should document its good practice of collaboration with SNAs to formally outline the school's expectations for their role and deployment.
- To build on the very good practice observed in teaching and learning, the school should re-organise the provision of support for pupils with special and additional educational

needs, to ensure that additional teaching is provided for pupils with the greatest level of need.

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 needs was very good. Across all settings, pupils with special and additional educational needs engaged positively with their learning tasks and displayed a good motivation to learn. Lesson observations and pupil records indicated good achievement of relevant learning targets in the areas of literacy, numeracy, self-regulation and social development. Pupils who attended the group discussion held during the evaluation stated that they felt safe at school and that their learning was improving with the supports provided.

Meaningful inclusion, as appropriate, was a feature of practice in the newly established special class for pupils with autism, with the integration and reverse integration of these pupils and of pupils in the mainstream classes. Pupils' behaviour was very good, with very respectful interactions evident.

In withdrawal settings, special education teachers provided pupils with opportunities for successful interactions. They engaged in their activities and tasks with high levels of enjoyment and were encouraged to take chances with their learning. In the special class and in support settings, teachers used a good range of resources to promote the development of pupils' skills, including sensory toys and circuits, and purposeful movement breaks. In all settings a wide range of concrete materials and manipulatives was available and these, together with games and stories, were used well to reinforce skill development.

Very good attention was paid to promoting pupils' wellbeing. Teachers created supportive learning environments where pupils worked both independently and collaboratively. Pupils' work was celebrated through the use of attractive displays in some classrooms and corridors. In other settings, there was scope for further develop the inclusion of pupils' work as part of displays.

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

The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special and additional educational needs was very good. The school had a happy and supportive atmosphere. Teachers in mainstream, support settings and the special class were very well prepared and delivered structured lessons. New learning was purposefully linked to previous learning. A number of evidence-based teaching and learning programmes were in use across the school and teachers had high expectations for pupils' learning. A range of initiatives was in place, including *Aistear*, Maths Eyes, whole school phonological approaches and station teaching. Pupils had easy access to books and reading materials in classes. Commendably, these were updated regularly, with choice in the selection of books given to pupils. Information and communications technology (ICT) was also used to support teaching and learning.

In the very best instances, teachers placed a clear focus on explicitly teaching key vocabulary. They provided pupils with regular and creative opportunities to use this new language during lessons. Through the use of open-ended questions, they encouraged pupils to discuss their learning in order to embed new skills. An appropriate level of challenge was provided, based on pupils' assessed needs and linked to their support plans. This very good practice should be shared and consistently implemented school-wide. In some other classes, there was an over-reliance on teacher–directed instruction and pupils' auditory memory skills. To further support the learning of pupils with special and additional educational needs including those with EAL, teachers should allow pupils additional processing or thinking time when answering questions

and make increased use of visual resources to support and deepen their language and comprehension skills.

In the special class, staff delivered autism-appropriate teaching approaches and staff collaborated to facilitate transitions for pupils between mainstream and special class settings, as appropriate.

The quality of assessment was good overall. Mainstream and special education teachers gathered a range of assessment data on pupils' learning including, standardised tests, teacher-designed tasks, some diagnostic testing and teacher observations. Special education teachers demonstrated very good awareness of their pupils' needs, as documented in the student support files. To build on this good practice, teachers were advised to further analyse and use assessment data to plan for a reduced number of more consistently specific and measurable targets to inform programmes of support and identify the next steps in the pupils' learning.

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

The management and use of resources received to support pupils with special and additional educational needs was good. School management and staff created a warm and welcoming school environment. During their group discussion meeting with the inspectors, parents spoke very positively about the care and support their children received.

The school had a range of plans and policies in place to support pupils' needs. The register of pupils on the continuum of support was clearly laid out, stored and shared electronically. The school deployed its SNAs effectively to optimise support for pupils with a wide range of needs. During the group discussion with a sample of SNAs, they described how they felt valued and supported in their role and the effective collaboration which existed among all staff to support pupils. The school should document its good practice of collaboration with SNAs to formally outline the school's expectations for their role and deployment.

At the time of the evaluation, teachers provided support for pupils with special and additional educational needs primarily through individual or group withdrawal, with some in-class interventions. Special education teaching resources were generally allocated on a class level basis, rather than to provide additional teaching to pupils in most need of support. In line with departmental circular 0064/ 2024 on special education teacher allocation, the school should re-organise the provision of support to ensure that additional teaching is provided for pupils with the greatest level of need.

The school had very good links with outside agencies and other primary and post-primary schools. School leaders had practices in place to support the transfer of relevant pupil information to post-primary schools and from early learning and care settings. The school staff had engaged meaningfully with external agencies for support and advice. Further engagement with approaches to provide for the teaching and learning of pupils with EAL, and sharing of the learning from teacher professional learning, was advised.

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

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

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

The report has been shared with the board of management and school staff. By September, we hope to have in place an actionable plan to implement the recommendations and, step-by-step over the year, to record these changes at each board meeting. Each change will be recorded into the minutes of the board. Recommendations are viewed as a help to planning the way forward.

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