

**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>	O'Connell Primary School (Scoil Uí Chonaill)
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	North Richmond Street Dublin 1
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	17881G

**Date of inspection: 12-11-2019**



## **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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

## **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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

## Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

<b>Date of inspection</b>	12-11-2019
<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 and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

O'Connell Primary School is an all-boys' senior primary school in North Richmond Street, Dublin 1. The school is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools' Trust. It has ten mainstream classes catering for pupils from second to sixth class and one special class for pupils with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). There are six special education support teachers, one support teacher and 12 special needs assistants (SNAs) on the school staff. There are 180 pupils enrolled in the school.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of pupils' learning is very good.
- The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good with highly effective collective practices.
- While assessment approaches are good overall, some areas require further attention.
- Overall, the management and use of resources received to support pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school's policies associated with SEN provision require review.
- The school demonstrates a very strong commitment to the inclusion of pupils with SEN.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assessment practices require development to ensure more effective monitoring of pupils' progress during in-class sessions and to inform target setting in learning plans for pupils in the special class and with needs in English as an additional language (EAL).
- A review of policies associated with SEN provision, namely the policy for provision for SEN, assessment policy and enrolment policy should be undertaken to ensure that they are fully reflective of the school's current provision and Department guidelines.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Overall, pupils' learning experiences are of a very good quality and their learning outcomes are broadly in line with their abilities. Pupils engage in a very wide range of literacy and numeracy activities, that are implemented on a whole-school basis. Learning activities in numeracy are underpinned by *Maths Recovery* strategies that are embedded throughout the school. Pupils'

learning in literacy is informed by the school's implementation of *Write to Read* and the use of a graded reading scheme. Collectively, these learning activities are contributing to pupils' enjoyment in learning and motivation to learn. Pupils' behaviour as observed during the evaluation is very good with respectful interactions evident in all settings. The pupils are afforded regular opportunities to engage in a range of initiatives, projects and competitions linked to subjects across the curriculum resulting in appropriately challenging and interesting experiences for pupils, including more able pupils. Provision for pupils with needs in EAL is a developing feature of practice and, increasingly, the emphasis in all lessons should focus on the development of pupils' expressive and receptive language skills. Analysis of the data gathered from the school's testing of pupils' language abilities should be further optimised to support planning for language learning. Meaningful inclusion of pupils is evident across class settings. Pupils attending the special class are assigned a base class in mainstream settings and reverse integration of pupils in the special class into the mainstream classes is undertaken appropriately. Further development of this approach is encouraged. Detailed support plans are in place for all pupils with SEN. Learning targets for pupils in the special class do not always address the full range of impairments associated with autism; information gathered from the use of relevant diagnostic tests is needed to inform target setting.

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

Overall, the quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers trained in the numeracy programme *Maths Recovery* have developed their expertise to a very high level and they have built capacity very effectively across the school. Teachers are currently undertaking a similar approach to developing their expertise in the literacy programme *Write to Read* and in extending their practices to the special class setting. The development of very effective collective practice is commendable. There is a strong commitment towards the use of information and communications technology both as a teaching and as a learning tool in all settings. While teachers' planning in withdrawal and in-class settings is of a very good quality, there is need to track pupils' progress more regularly and to monitor their achievements in line with the learning outcomes set for them. A comprehensive whole-school approach to screening assessment using standardised tests and school designed tests in literacy and numeracy and those appropriate to assessing EAL is in place. Data gathered from these assessments is analysed very effectively to inform the continuum of support for pupils with SEN in mainstream settings. This data analysis also has the potential to further inform learning plans for pupils with needs in EAL specifically focusing on the acquisition of expressive and receptive language skills. The use of diagnostic assessment tests appropriate for pupils with SEN, needs to develop further in the special class. Data gathered from such tests should be used to generate targets in pupils' learning plans linked to the full range of impairments associated with autism. The role of the support teacher is focused on supporting the positive management of individual pupils' behaviour, on implementing the school's *Discipline for Learning* programme and on supporting implementation of the National Educational and Psychological Service (NEPS) wellbeing programmes *Friends for Life* and *Fun Friends*.

## **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 with a few areas for improvement. The school demonstrates a very strong commitment to the meaningful inclusion of pupils with SEN and it holds weekly care team meetings to promote positive school experiences for pupils with particularly complex needs. School leadership has a very well structured deployment of resources system in place with particular emphasis on prevention and early intervention in mainstream settings. Provision of support is based on the principle that pupils

with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support. The school's physical environment is optimised to very good effect and is used to reflect pupils' learning and to celebrate their achievements. The school's policies associated with SEN provision across all settings, namely the SEN policy, Assessment policy and Enrolment policy are not sufficiently reflective of current provision and Department guidelines. A review of these policies should be progressed. The school has established strong and meaningful links with parents and regularly engages with a range of outside agencies to support pupils. In a parent survey completed as part of this evaluation all parents agreed that their child is fully included in school and classroom life and that the school is helping their child to progress with reading, writing and Maths. The school shares its Home-School-Community Liaison co-ordinator (HSCL) with its feeder infant primary school and this contributes to the smooth transition of pupils into the school. There is an effective transition programme in place to support pupils moving into second level schools with appropriate attention and consideration given to transition arrangements for pupils in the special class.

## 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 of quality 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;