

Special Education in Post-Primary Schools – The Last 10 Years



Greater Inclusion, Retention or Diagnosis?

Mary Byrne
Head of Special Education

Structure of presentation

- Changes over the years
- What is working well?
- Where are the challenges?
- Greater Inclusion, Retention or Diagnosis?

Section 2 – EPSEN 2004

- A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs ... would be inconsistent with....
 - the best interests of the child ... or
 - the effective provision of education for other children

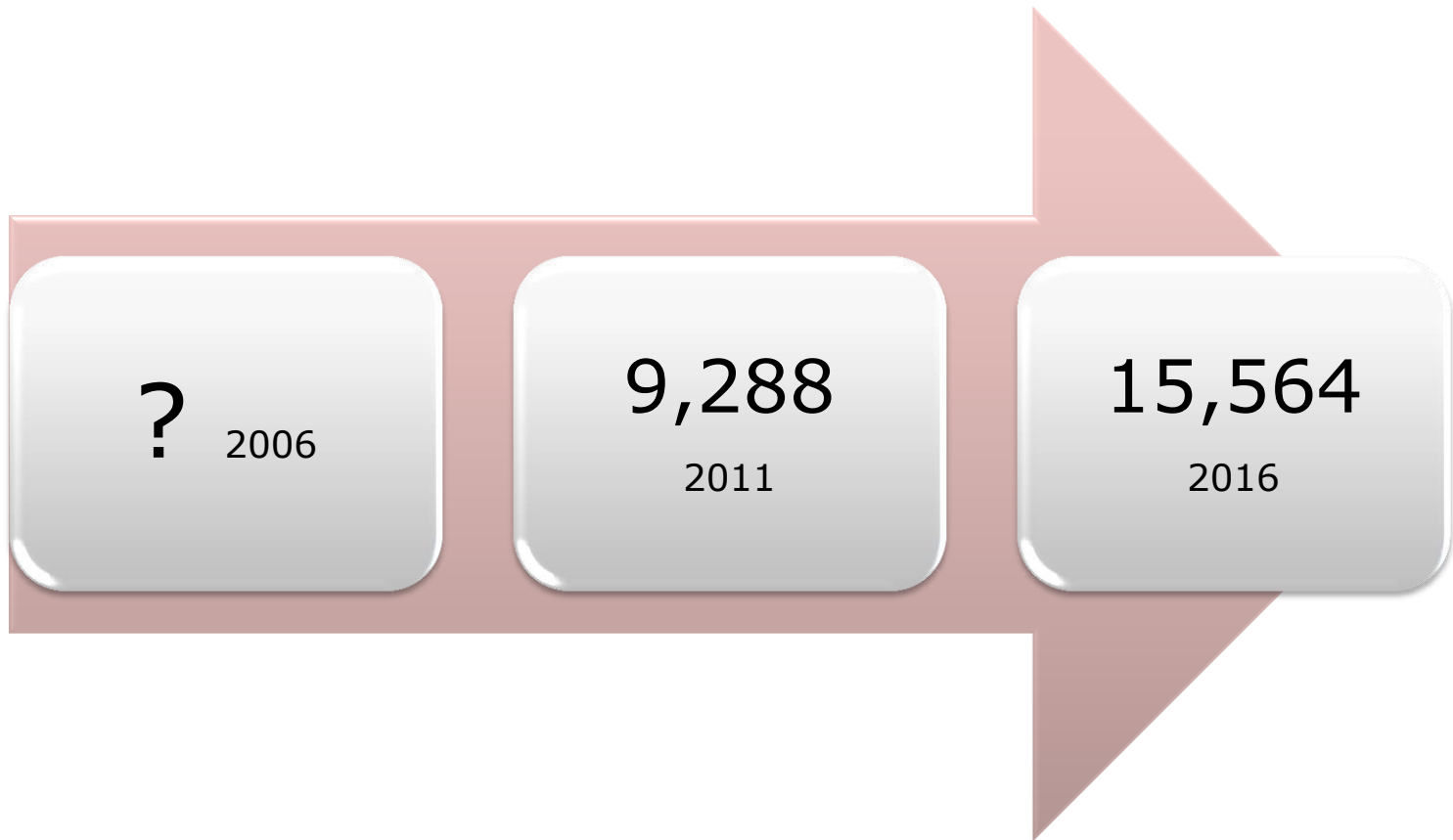
14% increase in PP school population

303,031
2005

323,843
2011

345,550
2015/2016

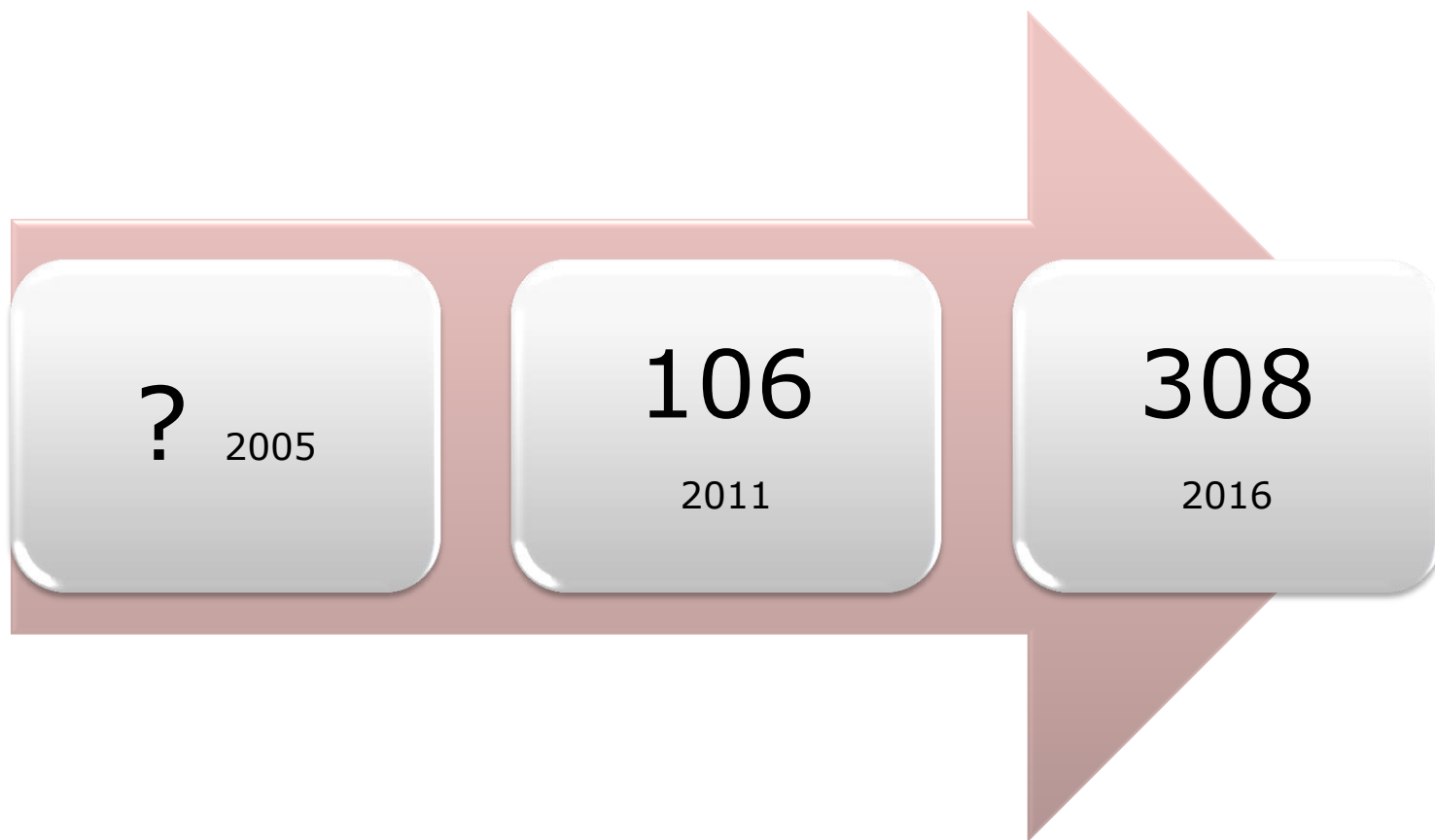
Last five years - 68% increase in PP low incidence disabilities



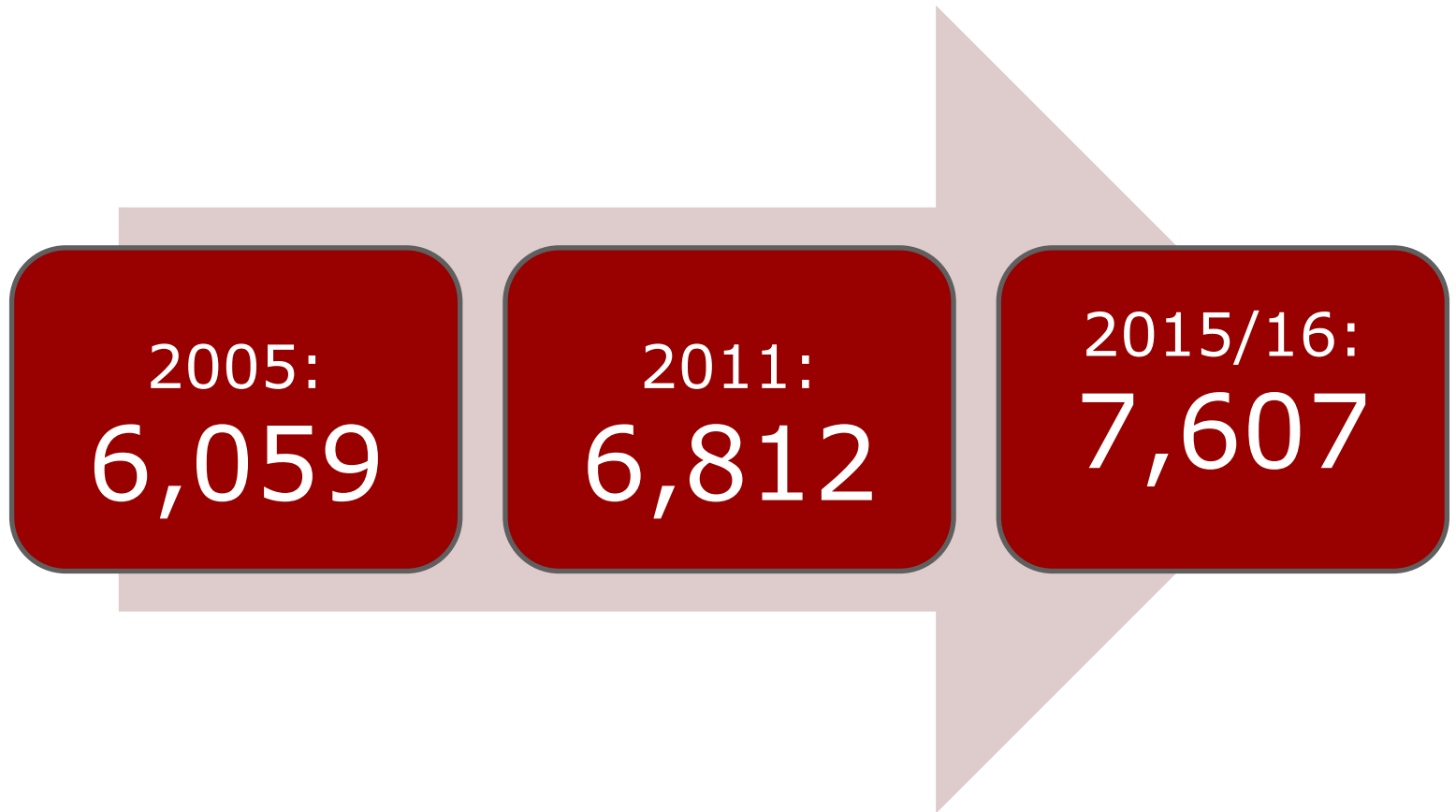
PP LI student profile (RTHs)

	2011	2016	%
ASD	1759	3869	120%
Physical	1945	3685	89%
Multiple	688	1231	79%
SSLD	826	1410	71%
Mod GLD	247	169	(32%)
EBD	2613	3872	48%
SEBD	428	481	12%

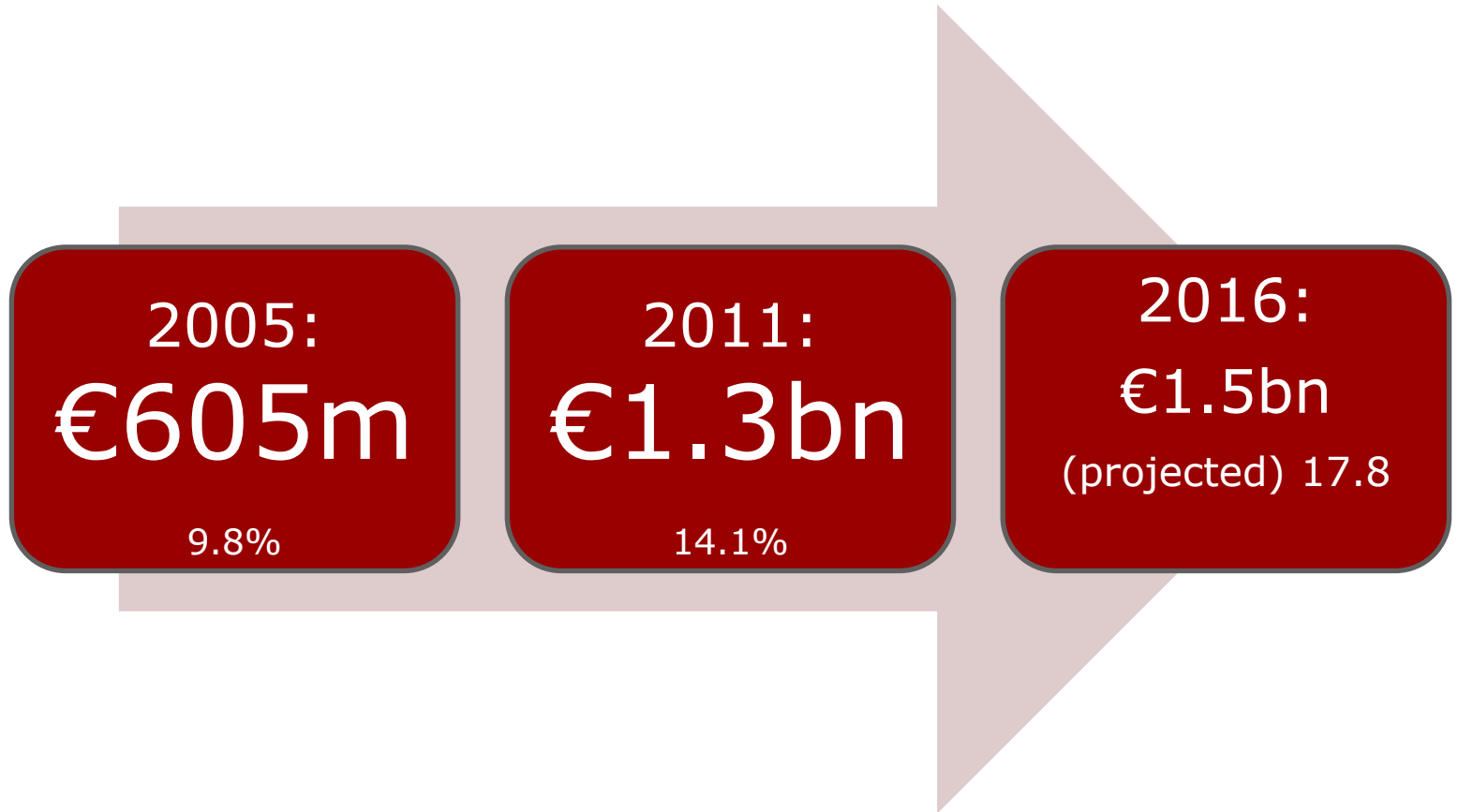
190% increase in PP special classes



Enrolment in Special Schools up 26%




Special Education Spend



45% increase in sp ed teachers

	2011	2016	
Learning Support Teachers	675	742	+10%
Resource Teachers	2115	3077	+45%
Special Class teachers	159	462	190%
Total Teachers	2949	4,281	+45%
SNAs	2005	2571	+28%

Some other changes

- Loss of middle management posts
- Increase in Student : Teacher Ratios
[2006/07: 13.07:1; 2016/17: 18.7:1]
- Huge turnover of experienced Principals and Teachers
-  85% allocation for Low Incidence...
- Change to High Incidence hours
- Curricular changes – Level 1 and Level 2 Junior Cycle

What is working well?



Research

- 3 recent NCSE reports:
 - Experiences of PP students with SEN (University of Manchester)
 - Evaluation of Education Provision for Students with ASD (Mary Immac)
 - Project Iris (U/Northampton, TCD, ICEP 2015)

Inclusion works when?

- School culture of welcome with strong leaders
- High aspirations and expectations for all students
- High standards for teachers and CPD/specialist training expected and promoted
- Parental engagement is encouraged
- Positive staff/student relationships

Good progress

- 87% of PP schools surveyed felt SEN resources allocated had positive impact for teachers
- Improving teacher knowledge
- Strong in-school leadership & good structures
- Most parents and students satisfied with SEN provision
- JCSP & LCA significant benefits in providing access and well-matched content
- SNA support highly valued by parents and teachers – often by the student

Improved retention rates

1998 entry cohort – 83.6%

2008 entry cohort – 90.6%

DEIS – 68.2% (2001) to 82.41%
(2008)

But all isn't rosy in the garden.....



Research challenges – in school

- Teachers' knowledge –
 - Only 38% feel confident in differentiating
 - Individualised planning
 - Better assessment and teaching linkages needed
- Expectations for students with SEN
- Deployment of resource teaching hours
- SNA support
- Data on achievements
- Bullying

Research challenges – System

- Drift to special school
 - Increased number of students 12+ enrolling in special schools
 - Reasons for leaving post-primary
 - Emotional 68%
 - Social 57%
 - Academic 57%
 - Behavioural 55%
- (NABMSE 2011 report)

Research Challenges - System

- Lack of therapeutic services
- Inequitable RT model
- “Soft barriers”
- Special Classes
 - uneven distribution
 - academic & social ability
 - must meet mainstream enrolment
 - inclusion practice is variable...



Challenges - CPD

Do we have the right CPD model for PP?

- Fewer PP schools apply
- Fewer PP principals apply
- Generally PP Resource Teacher attends
(@ primary it is the class teacher)

SESS figs for 2015

- 11,196 primary teachers – 13,666 days
- 4,484 pp teachers – 5,418 days

Impact of S. 2 of EPSEN??

- 68% increase in LI @ PP in 5 years..
- Increased teachers & SNAs
- Increased no of special classes

However

- No reduction in special school population
- Increasing drift to special schools @ 6th class
- Increased numbers in special classes
- Little, if any, data on impact of resources or student outcomes other than academic



So.....is it

**More inclusion or greater diagnosis, or
higher retention?**

Considering that overall level of support in schools is.....

- c.59,000 teacher posts in system
- 12,000+ learning support and resource teacher posts in schools
 - 5,000+ in-school already
 - 7,452 available to NCSE (for 2016-2017 school year)
 - 7,430 allocated
- 1,147 Special Classes (around 75% for students with ASD)
- c. 1,200 Special School Teachers
- 12, 800+ SNAs in schools

How do we ensure schools aren't..



last semester



BEINGLOL.COM

Questions: How do Post-Primary Schools

- Embed a culture of inclusion as a whole-school reality?
- Ensure principals are committed to inclusion?
- Ensure teachers in specialist roles are knowledgeable and experienced and promote high standards of teaching?
- Collect, analyse and use student outcome data?
- Ensure that additional resources are allocated to best effect and students are progressing in line with ability?



How do post-primary schools?

- Ensure that all students have access to suitable programmes and certification?
- Ensure that students' independent life skills are developed?
- Include students' voices?
- Ensure that parental expectations are heard, considered and managed where inappropriate?

QUESTIONS

?

