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**CASE STUDY 1: SCHOOL A**

**Case study from the new teacher allocation model pilot project**

School A is a two-teacher school with two part-time support teachers. The school did not gain additional staffing under the pilot. It decided to use the themes of the pilot to help in the flexible deployment of its teaching resources to specifically target needs identified by the teachers.

**Step 1:** Identification of pupils with special educational needs

The new model allowed the school to blend the duties of the existing learning-support and resource teacher roles into one flexible approach allowing greater continuity and catering for a greater number of pupils. At the beginning of the pilot year, the school reviewed its existing approaches to identifying pupils’ needs, in light of the staffing arrangements and the needs of all of its pupils. Teachers analysed the results of standardised tests and also shared their own observations of pupils’ learning needs. They identified some pupils with learning needs who had not been entitled to additional teaching under the old allocation model and the school was now able to provide substantial support to these pupils without the requirement for a professional diagnosis. The school used the group consultation method as part of its problem solving approach to agreeing interventions.

**Step 2:** Setting learning targets

The teachers found the Continuum of Support approach to be very useful in matching interventions to pupils’ needs. The pilot project allowed the school to deploy the Continuum of Support earlier in the pupils’ educational journey in order to proactively meet their needs. Targets were set using the Continuum of Support to guide interventions for pupils, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, language and social and behavioural needs. By using the pilot guidelines and by availing of CPD during the pilot the school improved the quality of its target- setting. Pupil support plans were designed to meet pupils’ needs and to affirm their efforts.

**Step 3:** Planning teaching methods and approaches

The school increased its emphasis on identifying and addressing the needs of pupils in the mainstream classrooms as part of its approach to the Continuum of Support. Pupils were supported through differentiation in mainstream classes, in-class support teaching and small group withdrawal. In planning teaching approaches, the staff paid particular attention to matching the interventions to pupils’ needs and to ensuring that teaching led to continuity and progression in pupils’ learning. The incorporation of specific targets and objectives in planning helped the school to successfully break down learning into logical and incremental steps related to pupils’ abilities and priority needs.

**Step 4:** Organising early-intervention and prevention programmes

The teachers engaged very positively with NEPS and SESS, and were able to access supports on programmes relevant to the school’s identified needs. During the pilot year the school introduced programmes such as Toe by Toe, phonics programmes, precision teaching, elements of Reading Recovery, Mata sa Rang, Lego group, social stories and early-intervention and multi-sensory approaches.

**Step 5:** Organising and deploying teaching resources

The school welcomed the flexibility and professional autonomy associated with the allocation model which enabled them to intervene earlier based on pupils’ needs. The school was able to allocate responsibility to better address particular academic, language and social needs. In reviewing the pilot project, the staff emphasised the real contribution of class teachers in identifying and addressing needs proactively. The teachers decided to offer some interventions at class level and others through small group withdrawal. The school used the flexibility of the model and good communication with parents to provide support to a greater number of pupils.

**Step 6:** Tracking and recording

Planning and assessment for pupils with special educational needs improved in the school and this enabled teachers to monitor and record progress for pupils using a range of formal and informal measures. At the end of the pilot year, teachers were able to demonstrate substantial progress, particularly in behaviour, social skills and reading