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**CASE STUDY 2: SCHOOL B**

School B is a large boys’ school in an urban area with over 400 pupils.

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

The school sought to ensure that its additional teaching resources were used to facilitate the development of an inclusive school, and that support provided to pupils was based on their identified needs and informed by regular reviews of progress. Summaries of professional reports, teacher checklists, as well as standardised test results (Senior Infants to 6th class) were examined. Parents were consulted when planning Classroom-Support interventions.

A staged response in keeping with the Continuum of Support was utilised. The deputy principal, as lead resource teacher, consulted with class teachers to identify needs and to use documented evidence to signal any changes to be made in provision. This was used to inform the pupils’ new teachers about their needs in June in preparation for September. Through the use of the Continuum of Support, decisions could now be made earlier on how best to support pupils in their new classes. The school used a wider range of standardised tests than previously to establish baselines before and after intervention. Teachers also used their own checklists for Classroom Support interventions.

**Step 2:** Setting learning targets

Special education support teachers worked more collaboratively with each other and with class teachers. Teachers targeted key areas of oral language, literacy social skills and numeracy.

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

Class teachers liaised with the learning support teachers. They were able to identify learning needs early and to use differentiation effectively within mainstream classes. Strong team work was a significant strength of the school. Support teachers worked collaboratively with class teachers to provide in-class support. Reading Recovery and its spin-off, Literacy Lift off, were introduced in Senior Infants. Staff members availed of relevant CPD from the various support services for schools to develop their capacity.

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

As a result of the teachers’ collaboration, there was a greater emphasis on using additional support as a preventative measure. For example, interventions were provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language, and homework clubs and chess club were established as after-school activities. Teachers drew effectively on the NEPS guidelines for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Support for younger pupils improved as a result of participation in the pilot and the introduction of Aistear. The school introduced other innovations, including the use of an individualised reading scheme and enrichment programmes, particularly in the area of comprehension, for all pupils in senior infants. As part of its early-intervention programme with junior infants, a particular set of pupils was selected for small group tuition in literacy and numeracy for up to fourteen weeks. Maths Recovery was implemented over the fourteen-week period with pre-test and post-test assessments. Reading Recovery was implemented and monitored over twenty weeks. Intensive interventions on phonics (sound linkage) were provided over four to six weeks through the English Learning Support group.

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

The model gave the school the ‘leeway’ to devise new approaches and to optimise its allocation of resources. This applied especially to pupils with social and emotional difficulties, including pupils with anxiety. A decision was made to create teams of support teachers who would use discrete time-bound interventions for social skills teaching. The school operated a mixture of team-teaching and withdrawal for English and Mathematics which worked very well, while in class team-teaching was used to develop social skills, with small group withdrawal to reinforce the teaching of key skills.

**Step 6:** Tracking and recording

The school developed a register of pupils with a clear description of the how pupils were supported at each level of the Continuum of Support. In a simple clear document, the principal and Special Educational Needs team could monitor where pupils were on the Continuum of Support. As a result, record-keeping for pupils with special educational needs has improved. More consultations now take place between the class teachers and the learning support teachers. Target-setting is more precise. The school has reviewed how information relevant to each class is transferred towards the end of each school year. Each classroom teacher maintains a specific support file for pupils in the class. These files contain samples of pupils’ work ,professional assessments, pupil feedback and target-setting signed by parents, teachers and pupils. Checklists from the NEPS Behavioural, Emotional & Social Difficulties guidelines were adjusted and tailored to the school’s needs.

Meetings with parents about devising individual education plans (IEPs) take place during parent-teacher meetings in November. Since adopting the new approach, the school also arranges additional follow-up meetings to review IEPs in April. This is much appreciated by parents, and the emphasis is on reviewing progress in literacy, numeracy, behaviour and social development and other IEP targets. The school has seen a 90% attendance rate by parents at these meetings. Informal meetings also take place between members of the special education team, class teachers and parents when the need arises. These meetings may be face-to-face meetings or may be carried out by phone call.