Inclusive Education Framework

A guide for schools
on the inclusion of pupils with
special educational needs

ncse

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council for Special Education

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A guide for schools on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs

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Foreword

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has published this Inclusive Education Framework to provide an opportunity for every school to discuss and assess the way pupils with special educational needs are included in their schools.

We know that schools are actively seeking ways to improve how they support and include children with special educational needs. Sometimes it is easy to lose sight of how far the educational system has come in the last 10 years and it is important that we take time to acknowledge the great progress that has already taken place.

This framework invites schools to consider the quality of their inclusive practices. The framework comes with user-friendly tools which will enable schools to show what they are doing well; identify areas where they need to improve; rate their levels of inclusion; and put plans in place to address the areas for improvements.

I would encourage every school to use this practical resource to prioritise inclusion with all staff and in all areas of school life. It will re-affirm the significant progress made to date.

When a school decides to use this framework, they will receive a certificate of participation from the NCSE that can be displayed in the school, or on the school's website, as a public demonstration of the school's commitment to inclusion.

I hope that this framework will be a useful resource to schools.

Teresa Griffin
Chief Executive Officer

Acknowledgments

List of Acronyms

BOM   Board of Management

CSIE   Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education

DES   Department of Education and Skills [Science]

EADSNE   European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

EPSEN   Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs

IEP   Individual Education Plan

JCSP   Junior Certificate Schools Programme

LCA   Leaving Certificate Applied

NCCA   National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NCSE   National Council for Special Education

NEPS   National Educational Psychological Service

PDST   Professional Development Service for Teachers

RACE   Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations

SEN   Special Educational Needs

SENO   Special Educational Needs Organiser

SESS   Special Education Support Service

SNA   Special Needs Assistant

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Introduction to the Framework

1

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Inclusive Education Framework provides guidance to schools on what constitutes good practice for including pupils with special educational needs and is designed to provide clear signposts to schools on their journey towards inclusion.

The process it proposes:

- **facilitates reflection on inclusive practices**

- **promotes a collaborative approach to the implementation of inclusion in schools**

- **formulates a co-ordinated response to the educational challenges that inclusion may bring.**

The definition of special educational needs for the purpose of the framework is that contained within the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004): "[Special educational needs are]… a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition…" (Section 1, [1]).

The framework consists of ten structured themes relating to inclusion with a number of criteria under each. It has been designed for use in all educational settings including mainstream schools, special classes and special schools. The NCSE Council supports this commitment to its use across educational settings, which is in keeping with the functions outlined for the NCSE within the EPSEN Act (2004): "to ensure that a continuum of special educational provision is available as required in relation to each type of disability" (Section 20, [1] [g]).

As such, the features of this Inclusive Education Framework are not setting specific, but presented "under thematic headings rather than by the setting within which those practices take place" (Winter and O'Raw, 2010: 1).

The Inclusive Education Framework supports the good work that has been ongoing in schools over many years. It is a practical resource that invites schools to reflect critically and evaluate how inclusive values are promoted in classrooms, staffrooms and school yards and in interactions with all members of the school community. Self-reflection templates have been created to accompany the framework to facilitate this.

Aims of Inclusive Education Framework

- **Encourage whole-school and individual reflective engagement and discussion on the development of inclusion**

- **Support school professionals to plan, implement and review inclusive policies and practices**

- **Outline and demonstrate processes of individual and organisational planning and implementation**

- **Document schools' current and developing inclusive practices and record constraints and resources associated with inclusion**

- **Foster an ongoing individual and organisational commitment to inclusive practices and policies.**

Schools will receive a certificate of participation upon notification to their local special educational needs organiser (SENO) of their decision to engage in the Inclusive Education Framework process. This certificate may be displayed within the school or on the school's website as a public display of the school's commitment to inclusion.

Inclusive Education Framework

.... School

is participating in

The NCSE Inclusive Education Framework Initiative

A guide for schools on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs

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An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council for Special Education

NCSE Chief Executive Officer   NCSE Chairperson

1.1 How the Framework fits within School Development Planning

The framework should be viewed as a school development planning tool to promote the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Information gathered when using it can inform school development planning activities by highlighting inclusion issues that need to be addressed. Schools will find the framework useful in demonstrating their progress towards the implementation of the principles of inclusion. Engagement with the framework may heighten awareness of the professional development needs of staff in the area of special education and may prompt schools to request guidance and support from the school support services under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills, or to seek accredited specialist training for teachers from colleges of education or universities.

The framework will be most useful as an aid to developing internal reflective practices. Schools have the autonomy to decide locally how best to use it and how the output will influence their work. Engagement is voluntary and there is no obligation on schools to publish the findings.

1.2 Rationale

Under the EPSEN Act (2004)[1] the NCSE is required to disseminate to schools and parents appropriate information relating to best practice concerning the education of pupils with special educational needs.

The impetus to develop the framework began with a commitment in the NCSE's Statement of Strategy 2008-11 (NCSE, 2008) to develop and implement a framework to measure levels of inclusiveness. This process began in 2008 when the NCSE formally sought the advice of its consultative forum on what constitutes an inclusive education. The forum is a 20-member body, established under the EPSEN Act (2004), that the NCSE can consult directly on matters related to carrying out its functions. To assist the forum in its work, the NCSE commissioned a Literature Review on the Principles and Practices Relating to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs (Winter and O'Raw, 2010). The forum proposed developing an inclusive framework and self-evaluation tool for schools to assess, on a voluntary basis, their levels of inclusiveness.

The NCSE's consultative forum proposed a definition of inclusive education that was noted by the NCSE Council. The definition is based on a combination of the UNESCO (2005) definition and the description included within the Department of Education and Skills [Science] publication, Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines (2007). Inclusion is seen as a process of:

- Addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities and

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1   The full implementation of the EPSEN Act (2004) was deferred in 2008 due to economic circumstances. This is subject to on-going review.

- Removing barriers within and from education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school (Winter and O'Raw, 2010: 39).

This concept of inclusion promotes the active participation of the learner as the primary aim rather than simple placement or accommodation. It also emphasises the need for changes within the education system and the school to accommodate the learner. The goal, therefore, is inclusion, not integration and the onus for achieving this is placed firmly on governments, schools and the wider community. Essentially, the difference is between "being there" and "taking part" with integration prioritising the placement of pupils in particular settings and inclusion promoting actual participation and accommodation.

The NCSE Council agreed to the establishment of a multi-agency advisory group, representing key education and other stakeholders in Ireland, to oversee this work. Its members are listed in Appendix 4. A team of researchers from the School of Education in University College Cork was contracted to assist the NCSE in developing the framework. Dr Paul Conway, Ms Jessica Amberson and Mr Dan O'Sullivan, working with NCSE staff and the advisory group, have researched and prepared the various iterations of the NCSE Inclusive Education Framework. The process involved a thorough review of international best practice. Further detail on the literature underpinning the framework's development is provided in Appendix 3. There was also an extensive consultation process that resulted in feedback from 49 education stakeholders; a field test in ten Irish schools incorporating staff feedback from these schools; and regular review and discussion of various drafts of the Inclusive Education Framework with advisory group members.

Structure and Content of this Framework Pack

The NCSE Inclusive Education Framework is presented in four remaining sections:

- **Section 2: Principles**

- **Section 3: Framework Structure**

- **Section 4: Framework Cycle**

- **Section 5: Self-Reflection Templates.**

There are also a number of appendices.

Principles

2

Detailed consideration was given to developing the key principles underpinning the Inclusive Education Framework. An extensive review of the international literature helped to identify these principles which are listed below (Winter and O' Raw, 2010).

Key Principles

1. Ownership by whole-school community

The framework engages the whole-school community in a reflective process. This promotes a shared understanding of inclusion for pupils with special educational needs and a commitment to its development. Successful engagement with the framework is facilitated by whole-school ownership of the process.

2. Reflective of pupil and school diversity

Pupils with special educational needs have diverse abilities, characteristics, learning needs and styles. They are educated in mainstream primary, post-primary and special schools. These vary in size, enrolment, patronage, location and disadvantage status. The framework is organised under thematic headings which are not setting specific but instead seek to reflect the many forms of educational settings and the diversity of the pupils they serve.

3. Supporting engagement

All schools have a responsibility to be inclusive in their policies and practices. Schools are invited to determine how best to use the Inclusive Education Framework, how to interpret the outcome and set their own priorities. The framework is designed to allow maximum flexibility for use across settings and is non-prescriptive. Schools engage in a process of self-assessment with the framework to measure their levels of inclusion.

Key Principles (continued)

4. Embedded in ongoing whole-school planning

Engagement with the framework is designed to integrate with and inform school development planning activities and continuing professional development programmes. The templates facilitate schools to document evidence of current policies and practice, identify strengths and prioritise areas for development in relation to pupils with special educational needs. The value is in the process itself as there is no one point at which inclusion is achieved. It is an ongoing and dynamic process.

5. Evidence and practice based

The framework is based on a thorough review of the international literature on inclusive education of pupils with special educational needs. An initial draft of the framework was the subject of an extensive consultative process with the major educational partners; staff in the ten pilot schools also provided feedback. An advisory group, which represents key education and other stakeholders in Ireland, was continuously involved in reviewing drafts and overseeing development.

Framework
Structure

3

The framework is structured as follows: ten themes are identified as fundamentally important. Four (Themes 5, 8, 9 & 10) are divided into sub-themes. These themes (1-10) and sub-themes, where applicable, are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes of NCSE Inclusive Education Framework

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Leadership and Management	
2. Whole-School Development Planning	
3. Whole-School Environment	
4. Communication	
5. Pupil and Staff Well-being	a) Fulfilling Pupil Potential b) Fulfilling Staff Potential
6. Curriculum Planning for Inclusion	
7. Individualised Education Planning	
8. Teaching and Learning Strategies	a) The Learning Experience b) The Teaching Experience
9. Classroom Management	a) Classroom Protocols and Rules b) Curriculum Implementation
10. Support for and Recognition of Learning	a) Informal and Formal Assessment b) External Assessment and Certification (post-primary aged pupils)

The nature and scope of each theme within the Inclusive Education Framework is elaborated by a descriptive summary that outlines the goal to be achieved. Each theme has a list of five or six criteria that provide guidelines for or indicators of good practice. Exemplars of good practice are also provided for each theme in the form of vignettes. These are illustrative only and their content does not cover all criteria under each theme.

3.1 Complete Framework: Themes, Sub-themes, Descriptions, Criteria and Vignettes

This section presents the Inclusive Education Framework in full, showing the ten themes, sub-themes (where applicable), descriptions, criteria and vignettes. Useful references and further reading associated with each individual theme is provided in Appendix 2.

Theme 1   Leadership and Management

Description

Leadership is visionary and provides a motivating force for change towards models of good practice in educating pupils with special educational needs. Leadership is participatory and distributed across all members of the school community including the board of management, principal, teachers, in-school management and special needs teams, ancillary staff, parents/guardians and pupils. Leadership happens through formal and informal mechanisms. The principal plays a pivotal role informed by consultation and collaboration.

CRITERIA

1. Leaders recognise the school's role in serving the community and are committed to the right of pupils with special educational needs to receive an inclusive education.

2. Leaders are a source of advice, mediation and collaborative problem-solving for pupils with special educational needs and their teachers.

3. Leaders respect confidentiality while taking account of recognised child protection guidelines and a duty of care to all pupils and staff.

4. Leaders ensure school resources are deployed in an equitable and beneficial manner to address the learning needs and outcomes of pupils with special educational needs.

5. Leaders know the professional skills of their teachers, deploy them for the maximum benefit of pupils with special educational needs and consult with a range of other professionals for advice and collaborative problem-solving as required.

6. Leaders monitor the impact and outcomes of policies and actions on special education and seek feedback to inform school planning.

VIGNETTE

Ms Sheehan is the principal of St Kevin's College, a post-primary school with 650-plus pupils. She leads her staff and pupils and works with the board of management to assist them in running the school. Ms Sheehan has many roles that serve pupils, parents, teachers, other staff and the board.

She considers her main job is to make sure that all her pupils get a good quality education suitable to their needs and to ensure that the school is a safe place for pupils, teachers, staff and school visitors. She takes a particular interest in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are meaningfully included in classroom and school-based activities, and that they are making progress with their learning.

To do this, Ms Sheehan sets time aside with staff to think about where the school is at now regarding the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Working together they document evidence of current policies and practice, identify the school's strengths and prioritise areas for development in this area. The school chooses a particular focus for each term and documents its progress on a large chart which is displayed in the school office.

Ms Sheehan and the staff in St Kevin's know that everyone has to work together to bring about change and development for pupils with special educational needs. Members of the St Kevin's school community are clear about their part and responsibility in this process. This can be as:

- an individual teacher or pupil in the classroom setting, on the sports pitch, at break-time, on the corridor and/or

- a member of a group such as the student council, Green Flag committee, parents association, or senior management team in making sure that the views of pupils with special educational needs are adequately and fairly represented.

Ms Sheehan is a principal who leads by example and is well supported by the board of management and senior management team. Together they send a clear message to all school staff, parents, pupils and personnel from external agencies that in this school everyone has a role to play in the development of school policy and procedures for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. This means that the school community:

- shares ideas, knowledge, expertise, experience and advice

- looks for professional advice and support and acts on that basis

- searches for solutions to challenges posed by the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs

- reviews the impact of decisions taken and events that happen

- welcomes all who come to the school, including pupils, parents, staff members and personnel from external agencies.

Theme 2 Whole-School Development Planning

Description

Whole-school development planning is an ongoing process that enables the school to enhance quality and manage change. It considers the aims and values of the school community, sets out a vision for future development and charts a course of action towards realising that vision. School development planning includes policies, practices and procedures in all areas of school life. It therefore provides a foundation of inclusive principles against which progress towards inclusion for pupils with special educational needs can be measured.

CRITERIA

1. The school's statement of mission and vision expresses a clear commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs which underpins the school's planning process.

2. Strategic planning facilitates the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs through the equitable and effective deployment of resources, funding and staffing.

3. School policies, practices and procedures take careful account of pupils with special educational needs and are communicated to the school community including parents/guardians where appropriate.

4. School policy and planning decisions are discussed and outcomes assessed and reviewed regularly by a whole-school team to ensure compliance with good inclusion practices.

5. The school plan provides for ongoing professional development and training to all staff in special education.

6. The school actively promotes the development of pupils' social and emotional competence and positive behaviour. It makes reasonable accommodations and fosters coping skills for pupils with special educational needs who may experience difficulties in adhering to the school's code of behaviour.

VIGNETTE

The board of management of St Paul's National School set up a school committee on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Today, this committee has organised a planning meeting to take place as part of a scheduled staff meeting. The teaching staff, including the principal and deputy principal, is divided into working teams to debate and explore the challenges, solutions and approaches associated with the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Following a brief discussion, each group reports back on their priorities, suggestions and solutions. They also nominate relevant members of staff to continue planning and complete any identified action points. Nominated staff members report back to the principal on a monthly basis.

At the last committee meeting, staff were asked to look at the school's physical environment and to discuss ideas for improving and maintaining accessibility. Four teachers were nominated to research collaboratively and report to the principal on the emergency evacuation of those with special educational needs in the event of a fire or other emergency. The outcome of their investigations included advice on:

- setting up a system for emergency evacuation of the building which addresses specifically the needs of pupils with physical and sensory disabilities

- costings for essential equipment to evacuate pupils from the upper storey when the lift cannot be used

- scheduling training in use of specialist evacuation equipment.

This working group will report at today's meeting.

Previously, the committee on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs has:

- studied the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities and reported to their colleagues

- produced suggestions for more inclusive activities and strategies for the open day

- considered the materials and supports needed to accommodate the enrolment of two pupils, (one with a physical disability and one with a visual impairment) into junior and first class respectively

- put forward amendments to the school's bullying and harassment policy to take into account the impact of stereotyping and labelling of pupils with special educational needs

- produced information concerning the cost and availability of an accessible football and indoor games equipment (high visibility soccer gear, large print monopoly, playing cards etc).

Theme 3   Whole-School Environment

Description

Reasonable accommodations are made to enable the enrolment and participation of pupils with special educational needs. Accessible transport, buildings, materials, equipment, facilities, activities and strategies facilitate a welcoming and inclusive environment. Accessibility and health and safety matters are actively considered in the planning and procurement of new developments and equipment, and when planning and carrying out maintenance work. Information on accessible facilities and restrictions is disseminated to the school community.

CRITERIA

1. Accessibility is guided by the principles of universal design, good practice recommendations and current legislation and is the responsibility of everyone in the school.

2. The accessibility of the school environment is proactively maintained and audited. An action plan is developed to ensure that barriers are removed and good practice implemented.

3. Accessible resources, equipment and strategies are provided for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to participate fully in school activities.

4. The school's activities provide for meaningful participation of pupils with special educational needs.

5. Safety and fire drills are designed and scheduled to cater for the particular requirements of those with special educational needs.

6. Assistance is delivered with dignity and safety in mind. Staff are trained in the use of specialist equipment and strategies.

VIGNETTE

John, aged 10, has a mild general learning disability and a visual impairment. He is in fourth class at St Finnbarr's Special School. Every day he takes the bus to school from his home which is seven miles away. All the pupils are dropped at the same point each day. He meets the bus there again for his journey home which is great because he can find the bus easily when it is in the same spot all the time.

There are other things about the school which make it easier for John to attend. There are the ramps with high visibility markers and handrails, the colour coded classroom doors with large print signs showing teachers' names and photographs, the lift to the upper levels (recently installed using the Summer Works Scheme). The classroom has a work-station with a computer adapted with a large key-board which John can easily use.

When John is sitting at his desk he uses his laptop with a single ear piece so he can listen to his computer and his teacher. His computer has a range of software installed to assist John with reading the class material. He can email his work to himself at home, or sometimes carry the laptop home in his backpack. He can also use large print books. He wishes the table was a bit bigger where he sits as he has a lot of stuff in front of him.

The Visiting Teacher sees him regularly at the school to check his progress. Sometimes his class teacher sits in on these meetings and he likes that his two teachers agree on how he is getting on.

John plays sports at school and his favourite is football where his class uses a brightly coloured ball with a bell inside. This helps everyone spot the ball easily and John has scored two goals this year already. The fluorescent colours on the sides of the goal and worn by his team mates are good too.

His school is currently planning the school trip and John has met the principal with his parents to review the options. John hopes they choose the water park as he is a good swimmer and wants to teach his best friend, Peter, some of the tricks he knows. Peter is his "buddy" and helps John if he has trouble finding his way around the school.

Theme 4 **Communication**

Description

Communication is based on mutual respect between staff, pupils, parents and others in the school community. Communication between members of the school community takes place through different modes including verbal and non-verbal, signing, written and visual, as appropriate. Management and staff are aware of the power of non-verbal communication and body language which contributes to the quality of interpersonal relations and inclusion across the school. Reciprocal, open lines of communication take into account the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

CRITERIA

1. Communication in the school community is conducted in modes, language and format(s) appropriate to the requirements of pupils with special educational need and their parents/guardians. Its purpose is clearly stated and any required response is outlined.

2. The school has mechanisms in place to share information among relevant staff members about pupils with special educational needs, where appropriate and in a sensitive manner.

3. Confidentiality, if required, is stated, agreed and respected while taking account of recognised child protection guidelines and a duty of care to all pupils and staff.

4. The location and timing of communication and meetings is agreed and respected, and parents/ guardians in particular know how and when to contact the school.

5. At meetings everybody's contribution is respected and facilitated.

6. Where conflict or disagreement arises, resources are provided to implement appropriate resolution and mediation strategies.

VIGNETTE

Denise has just started second year in Coláiste Mhuire and now has some important decisions to make before her Junior Certificate year next year. She has special educational needs due to a brain injury she acquired in a car accident. This has affected her short-term memory and at times her ability to concentrate for long periods. This means that sometimes she can deal with the workload in school but at other times she struggles to keep up. It is important that her Mum, Trish, is kept informed about how Denise is doing at school and has an idea of her attention span because Denise doesn't always know when she is slipping behind. The school has a room where, if necessary, pupils with medical conditions can lie down during the day. Denise has only used this once since she started in Coláiste Mhuire but she is relieved to know that the room is there if she needs to use it.

The teachers help Denise to stay focused in class and to concentrate on her work. In particular they help her to complete the homework journal. The teachers enter notes about particular assignments and comments about Denise's participation in the activities of the class-room. This is a valuable source of information for her and her mother. The school also keeps parents informed about upcoming events and deadlines such as specific projects, day trips, parent-teacher meetings and information nights via email, text messaging and by post.

Trish understands that she must make an appointment to speak to Denise's teachers or the principal and a time will be arranged for a meeting as it really isn't possible to drop in for a chat. If at times the teachers or the principal are unavailable, Trish knows that as soon as possible, they will make time to talk to her on the phone and a time will be arranged for a meeting.

In Denise's school, teachers work closely with each other and with the principal so everyone has a good picture of Denise's development. The parents' committee is also very supportive and has been instrumental in sourcing assertiveness training for parents, running local workshops on special educational needs and the rights and entitlements of pupils and their families.

Trish and Denise are more confident about Denise attending this school because communication is very effective there. In an emergency or conflict situation, they know that their voice will be heard. Trish always wanted Denise to go to a school that would allow her to be involved in Denise's academic and social development.

Theme 5 Pupil and Staff Well-being

Sub-theme: 5(a) Fulfilling Pupil Potential

Description

Promoting pupils' well-being and their emotional and physical safety is a fundamental feature of school life. Continuous monitoring of their attendance, participation, well-being and performance promotes the attainment of each pupil's full potential through personal academic and social goals. Diversity awareness is critical in creating an inclusive culture within schools and promotes equality of educational access and participation of pupils with special educational needs.

CRITERIA

1. The school is pupil-centred and fosters the development of the skills, knowledge and confidence of pupils with special educational needs, affirms their range of abilities and responds to their diverse academic and personal needs.

2. Pupils' rights to learn are embedded in all school practices and activities. This is supported by an inclusive curriculum and appropriate personnel and interventions.

3. The school listens to the pupil's voice, promotes pupil self-advocacy and encourages pupils to express personal experiences and identities.

4. Diversity awareness is integrated into all aspects of pupil and staff learning, communication and behaviour to foster an understanding of and facilitate the removal of barriers to inclusion.

5. Regular contact is maintained with parents/guardians on a pupil's academic and personal progress.

6. Individual pupil well-being is promoted and safeguarded through an effective pastoral care system with clearly defined roles.

Sub-theme: 5(b) Fulfilling Staff Potential

Description

Staff well-being is prioritised along with that of pupils and is also based on a rights perspective. The welfare of all school staff is safeguarded and staff are encouraged to support their colleagues. Open communication and informed awareness encourage early detection of potential difficulties and collaborative agreed solutions to problems. Access to continuing professional development and support from management and colleagues equips staff with knowledge and expertise in the education of pupils with special educational needs.

CRITERIA

1. Staff rights to general well-being, respect, personal safety and professional fulfilment are embedded in the school's policies and practices.

2. Staff are encouraged to meet personal and professional development goals and are given access to appropriate continuing professional development in special education.

3. The school supports staff experiencing exceptionally stressful circumstances arising from their work.

4. Staff members recognise their responsibility to support their colleagues. An induction and mentoring system is in place.

5. The school actively supports staff through difficult personal circumstances including illness and disability.

VIGNETTE 5(A) AND 5(B)

The management and staff at Scoil Íde understand that pupil and staff well-being is critical to providing a high quality education. In practice, this means that the school must provide a safe, nurturing and productive learning and working environment for all teachers and pupils. Respect for individuals and their property is promoted at all times. The school makes a special effort to ensure that pupils with special educational needs feel safe and valued.

Pupils at Scoil Ide know that success and achievement are valued highly in the school. However, they understand that participation and experience are equally prized. All pupils, especially those for whom academic learning is difficult, are encouraged and rewarded for their efforts as well as their achievements. The school recognises achievements in many areas including academic, social, personal, sporting and aesthetic. This allows for the achievements of pupils with special educational needs to be publicly recognised and valued.

There is a strong physical activity and "sport for all" emphasis in the school where participation is encouraged and valued. Many different kinds of social, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are fostered to facilitate the participation of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly encouraged and supported practically to take part as far as possible in all school-based activities.

The board of management, parents and teachers play an active role in the development of school policy and practice on special education. Teachers support each other by co-teaching in the classroom.

Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to take part on student councils and/or to have their views represented. Individually, pupils and staff are welcome to consult the principal on matters of concern to them. Pupils are encouraged to listen to each other, respect different views and work collaboratively on curricular projects and assignments.

Theme 6 Curriculum Planning for Inclusion

Description

School management and staff engage in curriculum planning as a core component of inclusive teaching and learning. Curriculum planning for inclusion aims for learning experiences which feature differentiated content (material taught), process (methods, materials and activities used) or outcomes (ways pupils demonstrate their learning). These activities are designed to engage pupils with special educational needs in a broad range of learning experiences to reach their maximum potential.

CRITERIA

1. Curriculum planning maximises opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to learn within a community of learners while recognising individual abilities, learning styles, needs and preferences.

2. Curriculum planning involves differentiation of curricular content, processes and outcomes.

3. Curriculum planning maximises pupil engagement while maintaining the integrity of the subject matter and providing meaningful access to a wide, rich and age-appropriate curriculum.

4. Pupil participation, self-esteem, sense of competence as a learner and learning outcomes are enhanced by curriculum planning for inclusion.

5. Teachers hold and communicate high expectations for all pupils in the class and are aware of the potential impact of stereotyping for pupils with special educational needs.

VIGNETTE

Sinéad is in second year in post-primary school and has just started studying Spanish. Sinéad finds it very hard to keep up with her subjects in secondary school because she has a mild general learning disability. She doesn't think she is very good at languages but really wants to learn Spanish. She has been to Spain before with her family and has mentioned this to her teacher. The school has agreed to let her take this subject as an option. The resource teacher helps the Spanish teacher to plan lessons which take account of Sinéad's learning difficulties and enable her to participate in the class.

Sinéad usually sits in the second row of the class which is great because she can see the whiteboard really well from there. She thinks she might need glasses but hasn't told anyone yet. For certain small group activities, Sinéad sits beside Jean who doesn't hear very well and she sometimes has to repeat things for her. This gives Sinéad extra practice in learning the words.

In each lesson, the teacher tells the class what she would like them to pay particular attention to. At the end of class, she sometimes tells them what they will be doing the next day. Sinéad finds this useful because when she knows what the class will be doing the next day, she does some practice in advance. At her last parent-teacher meeting her teacher gave her mother some very valuable feedback about areas Sinéad could improve on and praised her reading for class. Sometimes at the end of class, Sinéad knows she can ask her teacher about things she hasn't understood. She learns a lot from this.

Her teacher brings in lots of different material as well – she brought in some Spanish food in packages and they had to figure out what it was. She played some Spanish pop and rock songs and asked them to pick out words they know. She also brought in some newspapers and magazines. The class uses the Internet and YouTube to watch and listen to items in the Spanish language. In art class, the teacher has encouraged Sinéad to use photographs and items collected on her Spanish holiday as part of her work. In home economics, the teacher has given out recipes for Spanish food and the class has made tapas.

Her teacher told her that she knows she doesn't always like to speak out loud in class but that she is doing really well and should keep pushing herself to do this because this is how she will learn best. Sinéad would like to try the oral test in the Junior Cert next year where she will have to talk to an examiner but her teacher told her that they talk about things like holidays, music, food and family.

The class has a Spanish project to complete over the mid-term. The teacher has given them different topics to choose from such as their likes and dislikes, a Spanish holiday or someone who is Spanish. Sinéad thinks she might write about her trip to Spain last year. She has been blogging with a Spanish girl whom she met and who will send her photos and pictures etc. Her teacher said they could use pictures and drawings but it was also okay if they just wanted to write about the topic. The teacher has given the class a plan for writing the project. Sinéad finds this useful as it gives her ideas on how to structure the project, what to include and dates by which different sections should be completed.

Theme 7 Individualised Education Planning

Description

Planning for individual needs is an essential part of a whole-school policy on inclusion. Individualised planning is supplementary to the planning common to all pupils. It sets out how teaching and learning take place within a differentiated curriculum. In the context of a continuum of support, pupils with special educational needs may require individualised education planning, which can take many forms ranging from relatively minor changes through to more detailed individualised programmes. Meeting individual needs may involve differentiation, a range of teaching methods, resources and supports as appropriate.

CRITERIA

1. Whole-school policies and procedures outline how the diverse needs of pupils are met across curricular and social areas, at transition points and refer specifically to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

2. Individualised education planning outlines a pupil's learning strengths, needs, goals and targets. It records the teaching and learning strategies to be used and sets out the role of mainstream and additional teachers, support staff and parents in the pupil's education.

3. All teachers take responsibility for differentiated lesson planning and homework that recognise the learning requirements of pupils with special educational needs.

4. Specific, measurable and realistic targets are devised by classroom teachers, learning support and resource teachers, along with other relevant school staff, pupils, parents/guardians and where appropriate, external educational professionals.

5. Learning goals are reviewed regularly and new targets set as appropriate. Transitional arrangements are included in the review process.

6. Parent/guardian involvement in individualised education planning, implementation and review is facilitated and welcomed.
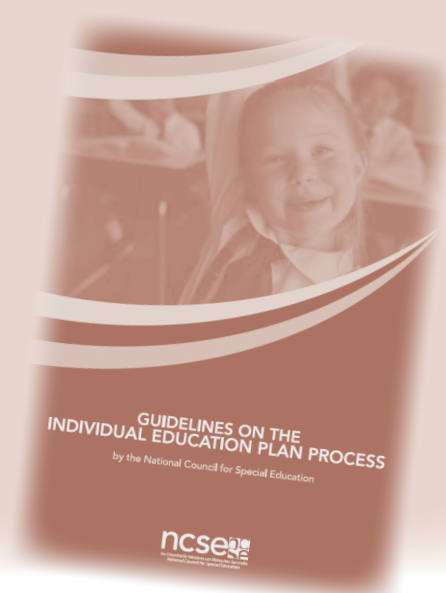
VIGNETTE

Mark, a third class pupil, is good at maths and geography and usually completes his homework well in these subjects, doing very good diagrams, drawings and maps. He is struggling however with his writing, reading and has difficulty concentrating in English, Irish and history. Although his written work across the curriculum is not developing as hoped, the school has consistently fostered his strengths through meaningful recognition of his skills. He was asked to paint a picture for the cover of the school's 50th anniversary book, and his work is displayed prominently within his class and the school corridor. Ms Clarke, the learning support teacher, Mr Barry, the third class teacher, and the principal are meeting Mark's parents today as they all feel that Mark needs additional support to help him achieve his full potential.

This is the third time they have all met. Before Christmas, his parents met his class teacher and learning support teacher twice. Together with Mark they identified and agreed clear learning goals, targets and strategies which helped him and his parents to understand what he should be achieving. The learning targets agreed related to reading and written expression, spelling and grammar.

Since then his progress has been regularly assessed and it is now clear that after almost five months, Mark is not progressing as he should be. His class teacher has advised his parents that Mark may have a specific learning disability. His parents have asked for a bit of time to talk to Mark about this at home and consider what they would like to do next. This meeting today is to outline what actions have been taken, discuss what Mark and his parents want to do and agree future steps together.

There are a few possibilities – maybe they will decide that Mark should spend more time working towards his goals within the mainstream class with support at home, or even begin some withdrawal learning support with a couple of other pupils from his class. The principal will recommend that Mark should be referred to an educational psychologist for an assessment of his learning needs. These are some of the options available to Mark and together his teachers and his parents will consider the best option.

GUIDELINES ON THE
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Theme 8 Teaching and Learning Strategies

Sub-theme: 8(a) The Learning Experience

Description

Every pupil learns differently and has individual needs. A pupil's learning experience is enhanced by a commitment to inclusion through differentiation, positive classroom relations and family involvement. Positive learning experiences increase participation, enhance academic and social skills and increase attendance and retention rates.

CRITERIA

1. The school culture recognises that the abilities of pupils with special educational needs are not fixed and can be developed and improved given suitable learning experiences.

2. The school recognises that pupils with special educational needs have a right to learn and positively acknowledges their efforts and achievements.

3. Pupils with special educational needs are engaged in educationally meaningful and appropriately challenging tasks. Engagement is fostered through independent and co-operative learning both in the classroom and in co-curricular activities.

4. Learning is success oriented and equips pupils to manage educational setbacks and develop successful coping skills. Setbacks and mistakes are acknowledged and learning through them is encouraged.

5. Classroom culture fosters positive effort and promotes the idea of learning as an enjoyable activity.

6. Pupils with special educational needs agree learning strategies with staff and are involved in setting and monitoring their learning goals.

Sub-theme: 8(b) The Teaching Experience

Description

Effective teaching involves the use of suitable teaching and learning methodologies, materials and arrangements. These include co-operative teaching, differentiation and the promotion of positive classroom relationships. A positive teaching experience enriches a teacher's role and creates meaningful classroom experiences.

CRITERIA

1. The school encourages teachers to develop reflective practices and share a range of diverse teaching methodologies and strategies to develop a classroom climate that supports the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

2. Teaching and assessment methodologies are aligned so that each is informed by the other.

3. Teachers focus on creating learning experiences that are positive, success oriented, and foster learning through authentic learning activities.

4. Pupils with special educational needs see meaningful learning tasks modelled by teachers/classroom peers in whole class, small group and individualised settings.

5. School management recognises that teachers may require additional support in developing and using teaching and learning strategies that optimise the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

VIGNETTE 8(A) AND 8(B)

The sixth year biology class is working on a practical task this afternoon. Their teacher, Mr Jones, has brought in some kidneys for dissection as part of the study of the excretory system. Mr Jones is covering both the higher and ordinary level syllabus in his classes. Mr Jones knows that some pupils will be squeamish about the dissection and that one pupil will need additional support because of the pupil's significant psychomotor and dexterity difficulties. Mr Jones believes it is important to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have an active role in any "hands on" lab activity so he provides adaptive devices for a few students, such as large forceps and self-opening scissors as well as additional time if necessary.

To support all students, he provides images, tactile drawings and a three-dimensional model to highlight key concepts. The pupils will also be required to draw and label a diagram of the kidney. After introducing the lesson, Mr Jones asks his pupils to identify the safety rules relevant to the dissection. He also puts key words on the whiteboard. He is particularly concerned that pupils develop an understanding of kidney function so he also includes the words filtration, re-absorption and secretion. He initiates a whole-class discussion on what these terms mean generally and what they might mean in terms of the kidney.

Mr Jones regularly uses mixed-ability groups to facilitate co-operative learning. He finds that routinely changing the arrangement of groups, based on pupils' strengths and needs as well as the learning activity works well. For the dissection, he ensures that squeamish students do not work together. Although all pupils are expected and encouraged to perform the dissection, they also adopt distinct roles so that everyone is clear about what they have to do and accountable for their own as well as the group's actions. Today, the roles within each group are reader, recorder and reporter. The reader ensures that all instructions are followed correctly; the recorder ensures that all material necessary for the report is identified and recorded and the reporter keeps an eye on progress and reports back to the teacher during the lesson.

At the end of the class he shows his pupils a short animation of the kidney in action and checks that pupils are becoming familiar with the material by asking questions. This also gives pupils the opportunity to practice using new terminology. Mr Jones consciously makes his "thinking like a biologist" evident by thinking aloud so pupils can get inside the thought process of a biologist, for example what is the function of each part of the kidney? What would happen if specific parts of the kidney were damaged? For homework, Mr Jones asks his pupils to summarise the role of the kidney by writing a paragraph, drawing a concept map or completing a table.

Theme 9 Classroom Management

Sub-theme: 9(a) Classroom Protocols and Rules

Description

Classroom management and organisation in terms of layout, access to materials, visual structure, schedules and predictability all contribute to a positive classroom experience for pupils. Learning opportunities are seized wherever possible and pupil ownership of behaviour and learning outcomes is encouraged. Classroom protocols and rules function in line with overall school protocols to promote learning and address challenging behaviour. Positive behaviour is promoted throughout the school. Clear guidelines about acceptable behaviours contribute to the creation of a safe and secure environment for pupils' academic, social and personal development.

CRITERIA

1. Pupils with special educational needs feel welcome and discipline is based on mutual respect. Rules exist to support the creation of a safe, secure and positive learning environment for all members of the school community. Positive behaviour is regularly and publicly celebrated in the school.

2. Classroom rules reflect the school's code of behaviour and are communicated clearly and regularly to pupils with special educational needs. Group-specific rules are negotiated and reviewed to reflect current pupil interests and needs.

3. School rules are few and are presented in accessible forms for pupils with special educational needs. Reasonable accommodations are made to take account of the individual needs of those pupils who may require an individualised response.

4. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to self-regulate, to take ownership of their behaviour and learning and to demonstrate understanding of where a rule has been broken.

5. Pupils with special educational needs understand the consequences of breaking rules and the importance of the rule is communicated to pupils. Disciplinary procedures are based on proportionate responses to (mis)behaviour.

6. The school addresses any fear, threat or injury in a serious manner and responds according to its code of behaviour. It may be necessary to review procedures, provide additional training and attend to the well-being of those involved.

Sub-theme: 9(b) Curriculum Implementation

Description

Teachers and pupils play interdependent roles in the classroom. Teachers facilitate and engage pupils in their learning. Pupils participate appropriately in the learning activities. Good classroom management facilitates the organisation of these processes. The learning goals outlined within the curriculum are promoted and pupil well-being and engagement are prioritised.

CRITERIA

1. Teaching is planned, differentiated and informed by whole-school planning to enable pupils with special educational needs to access the curriculum in a meaningful manner. Clearly established systems are in place for teachers to share planning with colleagues.

2. Teaching periods are well prepared with a range of evidence-based teaching methods, approaches and materials employed to enhance learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs.

3. Lesson content is differentiated to accommodate specific needs and abilities of pupils with special educational needs and is appropriate to age, ability and required outcomes.

4. Classroom groups are flexible, temporary and generally organised on a mixed ability basis according to criteria such as learning preference, strengths, interests and co-operative learning principles. A clear rationale is made when using fixed ability grouping.

5. Objectives and expectations are outlined at the start of lessons and learning outcomes are summed up at the end.

6. Teaching periods are suitably challenging and enjoyable to the greatest possible degree.

VIGNETTE 9(A) AND 9(B)

It is the first day of sixth class. The teacher is aware that the class had a very difficult time over the last school year. Some pupils found it very hard to learn and pay attention in class time. At times a few of these pupils would shout at each other, be out of their seats and refuse to do what they were told. One boy, Philip found it especially hard to control his behaviour and has since been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He has access to a special needs assistant to give him further support.

On the first day of sixth class, Ms Murphy discusses classroom rules with her new pupils and asks them to offer some ideas about what ground rules they think would be useful. She makes some suggestions about respecting each other's differences and similarities, agreeing signals for silence, asking permission to leave the room, and pupils only speaking one at a time. The pupils think these are fair rules and suggest that they have time every Monday morning to check in with each other for five minutes before class starts. Each pupil will talk to their neighbour and one pupil will report back to the class each week on how their neighbour has got on over the weekend. Ms Murphy agrees to try this out for a month and review it at that stage. She tells the pupils that while she knows it is hard always to follow rules, if they are broken deliberately, privileges will be taken away.

Ms Murphy describes clearly what the school day will be like and sticks up a weekly visual planner so pupils know what to expect. She explains the aim of each lesson and checks that they understand. She responds to pupils who are doing well with more challenging questions while making sure that the quieter pupils are participating and meeting curriculum goals.

Classroom activities include reading, drawing, writing, completing worksheets, discussing the lesson with their neighbours and setting homework. Ms Murphy always has a plentiful supply of extra pens, pencils and drawing material. Each lesson has a specific goal and begins with a visual or oral picture of what successful learning looks like. Ms Murphy always uses a variety of materials, strategies and approaches in her lessons and gives her pupils a range of tasks which are suited to the diverse needs of individual pupils. On three occasions during the week the resource teacher comes into the class and teaches with Ms Murphy. Sometimes the class is divided into groups at this time and the two teachers work with different groups.

Ms Murphy asks pupils to think about what they want to learn and what they wish to change this year. She helps all the pupils to keep a weekly learning journal on new things they have learned and what other things they'd like to learn. She asks them to note what they liked about

different lessons and to talk to her about any problems or questions they might have. Ms Murphy uses her assessments of the pupils to guide her in planning future lessons and to inform her about their strengths and difficulties. The pupils themselves always know what they are aiming for in every lesson.

An individual behaviour plan has been drawn up for Philip that sets out targets for him to achieve over a six-week period. At the moment he is working on two targets: to bring the correct books to school and to enter the classroom quietly and sit at his assigned place. Philip, his parents and teacher were involved in agreeing these targets and will review the plan after six weeks. Philip, his parents, the teacher and the SNA are all clear about what is to happen if Philip seriously misbehaves in the classroom.
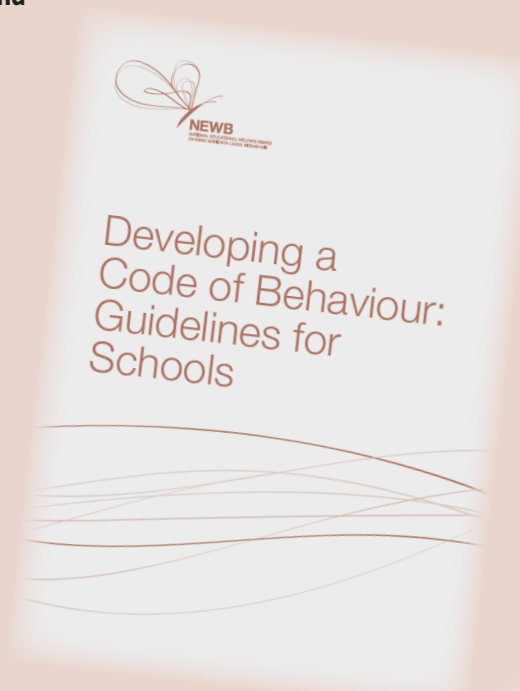
NEWB

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools

Theme 10 Support for and Recognition of Learning

Sub-theme: 10(a) Informal and Formal Assessment

Description

Assessment and recognition of achievement form an integral part of the cycle of learning, building a picture of a pupil's progress over time and informing the next stage of learning. Inclusive assessment provides meaningful experiences and feedback to pupils and parents/guardians and is age and curriculum appropriate. Inclusive assessment includes both formal and informal methods.

CRITERIA

1. The school's assessment policy is learner-focused and outlines: purpose/use of assessment; roles and responsibilities of those involved; links between assessment and outcomes; planning for teaching and learning; and opportunities for peer and self-assessment.

2. Teachers employ formative and summative assessment approaches that are flexible, matched to the ability of the pupils and are age and curriculum appropriate.

3. Teachers are competent to administer and interpret a range of assessment materials including standardised tests.

4. The school adopts a continuum of support model in the identification of special educational needs and in meeting those needs.

5. Learning targets for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed in line with the outcomes of assessment to ensure each pupil's maximum potential is realised and to inform planning for future learning.

6. Pupils with special educational needs and parents/guardians are involved in identifying, developing and evaluating learning targets. Pupils get feedback and reporting to parents/guardians is regular.

Sub-theme: 10(b) External Assessment and Certification (post-primary aged pupils)

Description

Most pupils of post-primary age take external assessments and examinations at different stages and need careful preparation for this process. As pupils progress, they take more responsibility for their academic preparation. Suitable levels of support, including appropriate assessment and feedback, are provided.

CRITERIA

1. The school provides a range of programmes for pupils with special educational needs that lead to external assessment and certification to match abilities.

2. Pupils are made aware of compulsory examination subjects, applicable exemptions and reasonable accommodations.

3. Lessons prepare pupils for required post-primary assessments and examinations.

4. Early identification of those pupils eligible for RACE (Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations) is facilitated and applications are completed where necessary.

5. Pupils eligible for RACE get practice and experience in the use of applicable exam accommodations under appropriate conditions before the State examinations.

6. Career guidance and information is available to pupils with special educational needs on suitable choice of exam subjects, certification options and future pathways to education, training and employment.

VIGNETTE 10(A) AND 10(B)

Staff at St John's school strive to support pupils to achieve their full potential in both in-house and State exams, at whatever their ability level. The school recognises that pupils with special educational needs may need additional support to do this. The school acknowledges and values many different types of competencies, skills, interest, learning and achievement.

Pupils are regularly assessed in curriculum-based subjects in Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programmes. Continuous assessment is available to pupils through the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) and the LCA. This requires the teachers to work together across subject areas, to assist the pupils in preparing and completing assignments and to liaise with external examiners, as necessary. The school is also investigating the possibility of developing programmes which lead to alternative certification for those unable to achieve Junior Certificate level.

Resource and learning support teachers also have a system of assessment in place for pupils with special educational needs which is sufficiently refined to measure their attainments. Pupil performance is measured against individual learning plans and in relation to their peers. Records and reports use language and grading systems which are respectful of pupils with special educational needs and are filed confidentially within the school. Such records are shared with parents and guardians, and with teachers on a need-to-know basis.

The school also places an emphasis on co-curricular and extra-curricular pupil participation and achievement, for example in sports, art, photography, performance, creative writing and invention. Teachers with an interest in specific areas are encouraged and supported in their commitment and contribution to pupil development in extra-curricular fields. For example, Mr Smith takes a drama group every Wednesday afternoon and together they are writing a play for a national young playwrights' competition. Ms Wall supervises two groups of pupils who are working towards the Young Scientist exhibition next year. Pupils with special educational needs are represented on both of these groups.

The school newsletter and notice boards regularly feature details of pupil achievement in these kinds of activities. Social, sporting and academic achievement is also publicly recognised by the principal at school assemblies, through a periodic awards system and annually through the Pupil of the Year awards.

Framework
Cycle
4

This section outlines how schools can use the Inclusive Education Framework to assess the quality of inclusive practice and to put in place a process of development and improvement. The following five steps are suggested:

1. **Preparation**

2. **Completion of the self-reflection templates**

3. **Action planning**

4. **Implementation**

5. **Implementation review**

The value of the framework lies in its use by principals, teachers, and other staff and draws on their varied experience, opinions and knowledge to enrich potential outcomes. Schools are advised to complete one full cycle within three academic years; some may do so within a shorter timescale. Engagement with these materials should provoke active discussion, collaborative solutions and strategic planning for inclusion. The steps for the various stages in the cycle are outlined below.

Stages in the three-year cycle
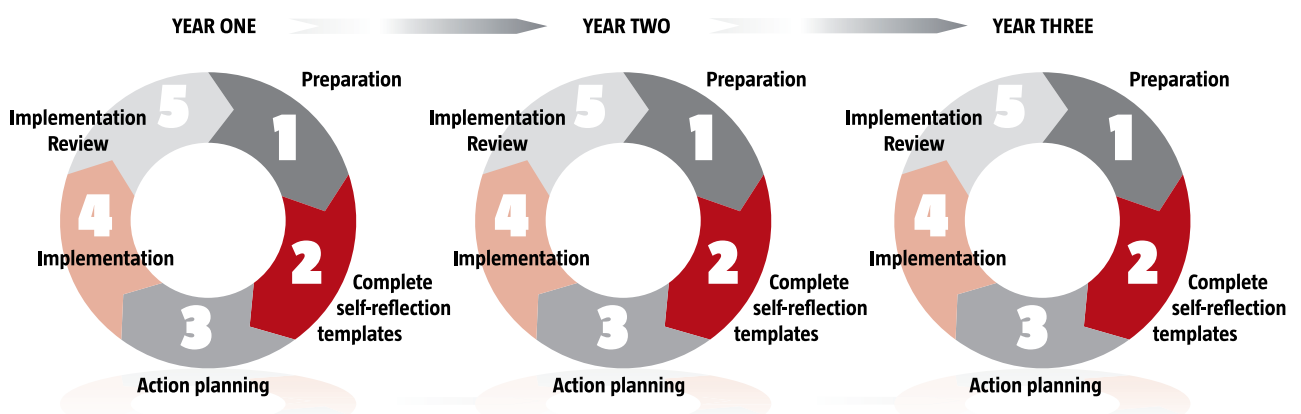
YEAR ONE   YEAR TWO   YEAR THREE

Preparation
1
2 — Complete self-reflection templates
3 — Action planning
4 — Implementation
5 — Implementation Review

Inclusive Education Framework

.... School

is participating in
The NCSE Inclusive Education Framework Initiative
A guide for schools on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs

NCSE Chief Executive Officer   NCSE Chairperson

Schools will receive a certificate of participation upon notification to their local special educational needs organiser (SENO) of their decision to engage in the Inclusive Education Framework process. This certificate may be displayed within the school or on the school's website as a public display of the school's commitment to inclusion.

4.1 Step 1: Preparation

Implementing change and introducing policies or practices involves a preparatory period for collecting information, raising awareness, and developing commitment to the process. Schools need time to assess and understand the many issues that change can involve. Therefore, they should identify the individual factors that relate to inclusion and develop a timeframe that suits them for completing the full cycle. This means reviewing current policies and administrative systems. This phase may involve:

- Enabling staff to explore and become familiar with the Inclusive Education Framework and self-reflection templates.

- Taking feedback, questions and queries from staff.

- Nominating people to a core team, drawn from the whole-school community, including the board of management and principal, to oversee the process. They will take careful account of school dynamics and put forward strategic proposals about managing change in the school. The size of the core team will depend on the school's size and the issues to be addressed. It is recommended, however, that the core team should include the principal and representation from teaching staff (class, learning support and resource teachers), parents, SNAs, administrative and ancillary staff and board of management.

- From this core team, sub teams may address certain themes. Staff, other than those on the core team, and pupils with special educational needs may be co-opted to these sub teams as appropriate. It is important to capture the experience of the pupil with special educational needs in this process. This can be done by including the pupil's parent or the pupil themselves, as appropriate.

- Evaluating current approaches to school planning and development.

- Developing a timeframe for completing the Inclusive Education Framework cycle.

- Prioritising the order in which the themes will be worked through. This could be done through discussion and reflection on the urgency or importance attached to each theme or it could be linked to priorities already identified through the school development planning process. It should be noted that the themes are interlinked and so schools should engage with and complete all ten themes over the three-year cycle.

4.1.1 Introductory Seminars

The NCSE has provided training to special educational needs organisers (SENOs) to enable them to introduce the framework to schools and to provide support in understanding it and completing the self-reflection templates. SENOs will provide a two-hour introductory seminar on the subject which can be delivered individually or as part of a cluster with other local schools. A school can contact the local SENO to organise this seminar.

4.2 Step 2: Complete the Self-Reflection Templates

The self-reflection template helps schools to record and evaluate progress made on the themes outlined in the Inclusive Education Framework. It provides a means to reflect on the range of inclusive practices in use or under consideration by a school and to share and develop consistent practices for teachers, classes and subjects. By recording progress, this template facilitates comparative analysis, stage by stage and year by year, throughout the journey towards inclusion.

There is one template per theme or sub-theme. Schools are invited to consider the strategy below for engaging with the Inclusive Education Framework and using the self-reflection templates.

- The core team agrees dates for meetings to engage with the framework. These could be part of regular staff meetings, have their own time slot or be specifically allocated to a planning day. In each school year, three to four meetings would be required.

- Once the first theme is chosen, a school can document evidence of their performance in the self-reflection templates.

- Each template contains a core question, where are we now? In order to assist schools to explore the answer to this question, a series of additional questions are provided in Table 2 below. Schools should consider the criteria of good practice associated with each theme when formulating responses. The core team

and sub teams should work collaboratively to reach agreement on the evidence to be provided. Existing strengths should be noted and areas for improvement and development identified. It is recognised that agreement may be difficult to reach as inclusion is a complex topic which affects all areas of school life. It is essential therefore, that as far as possible, responses should be evidence based, objective and measurable. For progress to be effective and measured satisfactorily, observations should be recorded and supported by concrete examples so that they can be consulted for comparative purposes at a later date.

Table 2 **Where are we now? Additional questions**

Where are we now?	
	What policies and practices relevant to this theme are currently in place in our school to foster the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs?
	Which of these policies and practices are working well?
	Which are not working well?
	Are any of these policies and practices potentially exclusionary?
	List the supports available for this theme that facilitate the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
	List the barriers for this theme that hinder the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
	How well does current practice for this theme match the criteria?
	Identify gaps and weaknesses to be addressed for this theme.

- Based on the descriptive evidence elicited by the questions in Table 2, schools need to consider performance in each theme. A qualitative measurement scale is provided for this as follows:

  - no start made

  - getting started

  - some progress made

  - good progress made

  - good practice in place.

- Finally, schools should complete this part of the process by identifying their top three priorities for action, based on the evidence they have collected.

An illustration of the template for Theme 1 Leadership and Management is provided in Figure 1 below. All 14 templates are provided in Section 5 and on the accompanying CD.

Figure 1 **Self- Reflection Template (not to scale)**

Theme 1 **Leadership and Management – Self-Reflection**

Description

Leadership is visionary and provides a motivating force for change towards models of good practice in educating pupils with special educational needs. Leadership is participatory and distributed across all members of the school community including the board of management, principal, teachers, in-school management and special needs teams, ancillary staff, parents/ guardians and pupils. Leadership happens through formal and informal mechanisms. The principal plays a pivotal role informed by consultation and collaboration.

Criteria

1. Leaders recognise the school's role in serving the community and are committed to the right of pupils with special educational needs to receive an inclusive education.
2. Leaders are a source of advice, mediation and collaborative problem-solving for pupils with special educational needs and teachers.
3. Leaders respect confidentiality while taking account of recognised child protection guidelines and a duty of care to all pupils and staff.
4. Leaders ensure school resources are deployed in an equitable and beneficial manner to address the learning needs and outcomes of pupils with special educational needs.
5. Leaders know the professional skills of their teachers, deploy them for the maximum benefit of pupils with special educational needs and consult with a range of other professionals for advice and collaborative problem-solving as required.
6. Leaders monitor the impact and outcomes of policies and actions on special educational provision and seek feedback to inform school planning.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Leadership and Management where are we now?

In relation to Leadership and Management, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Leadership and Management what are our priorities for action?
List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 1 **Leadership and Ma**
Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Leadership and Management wha
listed in the Self-Ref

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken   Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken   Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

4.2.1 Overall inclusion qualitative measurement

At the end of the process, when all 14 themes and sub themes have a qualitative measure, the school can determine an overall inclusion qualitative measurement. An example of how this might look is provided in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: **Overall Inclusion Qualitative Measurement Example**

No start made	No themes
Getting started	Theme 7: Individualised Education Planning Theme 10: Support for and Recognition of Learning (a) Informal and Formal Assessment
Some progress made	Theme 2: Whole-School Development Planning Theme 3: Whole-School Environment Theme 4: Communication Theme 6: Curriculum Planning for Inclusion Theme 8: Teaching and Learning Strategies (a) The Learning Experience and (b) The Teaching Experience
Good progress made	Theme 1: Leadership and Management Theme 9: Classroom Management (a) Classroom Protocols and Rules and (b) Curriculum Implementation Theme 10: Support for and Recognition of Learning (b) External Assessment and Certification (post-primary aged pupils)
Good practice in place	Theme 5: Pupil and Staff Well-being (a) Fulfilling Pupil Potential and (b) Fulfilling Staff Potential

And in graphic format:

Performance	Attained in each category													
	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	6	7	8a	8b	9a	9b	10a	10b
No start made														
Getting started								✔					✔	
Some progress made		✔	✔	✔			✔		✔	✔				
Good progress made	✔										✔	✔		✔
Good practice in place					✔	✔								

4.3 Step 3: Action Planning

Having completed step 2 above, a school then develops action plans to address the identified priorities for improvement.

The school could immediately address those areas it considers high priority and/ or those areas where it is at the initial stages of development ("no start made", "getting started"). Specific actions that can be effected without significant planning may also emerge from the assessment. A school might decide to prioritise a theme for further action or development, despite having made good progress because the school considers it a high priority. Finally, a fixed schedule to review progress should be agreed. Clearly the implementation of some actions may be long term and may fall outside the three-year cycle and this should be noted when drawing up action plans.

Some questions that teams should consider in developing action plans are:

1. What actions do we propose to take to address the priorities identified?

2. What strategies should we adopt for the development of more inclusive practices for this theme?

3. What specific resources will we need to implement our proposed actions?

4. Who will be involved in planning, implementing and monitoring the actions?

5. Who will have lead responsibility?

6. What timeframes will we set for the implementation of the actions?

7. What arrangements will be made for monitoring our progress and evaluating the impact of our actions?

8. What feedback, discussion or professional development opportunities will be scheduled to promote inclusion in this area?

9. What other supports could we provide to develop this area?

10. What resources, approaches or training are needed to overcome the barriers to inclusion that have been identified for this theme?

At this point, schools may have a heightened awareness of the staff's professional development needs in special education and may be prompted to identify and utilise existing expertise to support this. They may also request guidance and support from the Special Education Support Service (SESS) or the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), or seek accredited specialist training for teachers from colleges of education or universities.

An illustration of the Action and Improvement Plan section of the template is provided in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: **Action and Improvement Plan Section (not to scale)**

Theme 1 **Leadership and Management – Action and Improvement Plan Section**

In relation to Leadership and Management what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template		

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken / Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken / Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken / Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

An example of a completed Self-Reflection Template for Theme 1 Leadership and Management is provided in Appendix 1.

4.4 Step 4: Implementation

Maintaining any change that occurs over time demands commitment from participants and energy. This phase of development is based on findings from previous sections. It involves:

- putting actions agreed into place
- sustaining the momentum for change
- recording progress.

4.5 Step 5: Implementation Review

This phase involves reviewing progress made in implementing the actions agreed. Schools may use the action and improvement plan section of the template for this. This involves:

- reviewing the progress made
- discussing what worked well, acknowledging successful steps and identifying and documenting any additional progress made beyond actions agreed
- identifying any further development required
- the completion of the cycle informs the start of the next cycle in which long-term actions are included.

4.6 Cycle Steps and Proposed Timescales

Figure 4 below provides suggested guidance for completing the various steps in the cycle over three years. Some schools may complete the cycle in less time, for example two years. Implementation of long-term actions may fall outside the proposed timeframe and span more than one cycle of the framework, for example, a building project to make the school more accessible. The start date for the implementation of certain actions may fall naturally at the beginning of a school year as outlined in Figure 4 below. Where this is not the case, timeframes should be adjusted accordingly.

Figure 4: Proposed timeline for three-year completion

Year 1: Three themes to be completed	
Phase	Time
1. Preparation	September-end October
2. Complete self-reflection templates	End October-end January
3. Action planning	End January-mid February
4. Implementation	Mid Feb-mid May
5. Implementation review	Mid May-end May
Year 2: Four themes to be completed	
Phase	Time
1. Preparation	September
2. Complete self-reflection templates	October-end December
3. Action planning	January
4. Implementation	January-mid May
5. Implementation review	Mid May-end May
Year 3: Three themes to be completed	
Phase	Time
1. Preparation	September
2. Complete self-reflection templates	October-end November
3. Action planning	December
4. Implementation	January-April
5. Implementation review	May (to include overall three-year review)

4.7 Conclusion

There has been growing international awareness of the need to provide schools with tools to measure their levels of inclusion of pupils with special educational need. The Index for Inclusion in the UK is one example of a tool that was developed in response to this need.

The NCSE has published the Inclusive Education Framework as a guide to Irish schools on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. The framework invites schools to reflect critically on inclusive values and practices within their schools, to prioritise areas for improvement and to implement change.

The NCSE acknowledges the progress that schools have already made towards inclusion. The framework is intended to support and enhance school's work in this regard. Successful use of the framework depends on the individual school's commitment to engage in an ongoing and evolving journey of self reflection, evaluation and review.

Self-Reflection Templates

5

This section provides 14 blank self-reflection templates which include the action and improvement plan section; one for each theme and sub theme. They are also available on the accompanying CD so that supporting evidence may be recorded electronically. Please refer to Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this document for guidance on how to complete the templates.

An example of a completed template for Theme 1: Leadership and Management that provides possible evidence is included in Appendix 1. Please also refer to the additional questions to be answered when providing supporting evidence, which are outlined in Table 2 in Section 4.2 and are repeated below; and the vignettes for each theme in Section 3 that are exemplars of good practice.

Table 2: Where are we now? Additional questions

Where are we now?	
	What policies and practices relevant to this theme are currently in place in our school to foster the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs?
	Which of these policies and practices are working well?
	Which are not working well?
	Are any of these policies and practices potentially exclusionary?
	List the supports available for this theme that facilitate the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
	List the barriers for this theme that hinder the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
	How well does current practice for this theme match the criteria?
	Identify gaps and weaknesses to be addressed for this theme.

Please also refer to the questions to be considered in developing the action and improvement plan sections, which are outlined in Section 4.3 and are repeated below.

1. What actions do we propose to take to address the priorities identified?
2. What strategies should we adopt for the development of more inclusive practices for this theme?
3. What specific resources will we need to implement our proposed actions?
4. Who will be involved in planning, implementing and monitoring the actions?
5. Who will have lead responsibility?
6. What timeframes will we set for implementation of the actions?
7. What arrangements will be made for monitoring our progress and evaluating the impact of our actions?
8. What feedback, discussion or professional development opportunities will be scheduled to promote inclusion in this area?
9. What other supports could we provide to develop this area?
10. What resources, approaches or training are needed to overcome the barriers to inclusion that have been identified for this theme?

Theme 1   **Leadership and Management – Self-Reflection**

Description

Leadership is visionary and provides a motivating force for change towards models of good practice in educating pupils with special educational needs. Leadership is participatory and distributed across all members of the school community including the board of management, principal, teachers, in-school management and special needs teams, ancillary staff, parents/ guardians and pupils. Leadership happens through formal and informal mechanisms. The principal plays a pivotal role informed by consultation and collaboration.

Criteria

1. Leaders recognise the school's role in serving the community and are committed to the right of pupils with special educational needs to receive an inclusive education.
2. Leaders are a source of advice, mediation and collaborative problem-solving for pupils with special educational needs and teachers.
3. Leaders respect confidentiality while taking account of recognised child protection guidelines and a duty of care to all pupils and staff.
4. Leaders ensure school resources are deployed in an equitable and beneficial manner to address the learning needs and outcomes of pupils with special educational needs.
5. Leaders know the professional skills of their teachers, deploy them for the maximum benefit of pupils with special educational needs and consult with a range of other professionals for advice and collaborative problem-solving as required.
6. Leaders monitor the impact and outcomes of policies and actions on special education and seek feedback to inform school planning.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Leadership and Management where are we now?

In relation to Leadership and Management where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Leadership and Management, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Leadership and Management what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 1 **Leadership and Management – Action and Improvement Plan Section**

In relation to Leadership and Management what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template			

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken | Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken | Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken | Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

Notes

Theme 2: **Whole-School Development Planning – Self-Reflection**

Description

Whole-school development planning is an ongoing process that enables the school to enhance quality and manage change. It considers the aims and values of the school community, sets out a vision for future development and charts a course of action towards realising that vision. School development planning includes policies, practices and procedures in all areas of school life. It therefore provides a foundation of inclusive principles against which progress towards inclusion for pupils with special educational needs can be measured.

Criteria

1. The school's statement of mission and vision expresses a clear commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs which underpins the school's planning process.

2. Strategic planning facilitates the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs through the equitable and effective deployment of resources, funding and staffing.

3. School policies, practices and procedures take careful account of pupils with special educational needs and are communicated to the school community including parents/guardians where appropriate.

4. School policy and planning decisions are discussed and outcomes assessed and reviewed regularly by a whole-school team to ensure compliance with good inclusion practices.

5. The school plan provides for ongoing professional development and training to all staff in special education.

6. The school actively promotes the development of pupils' social and emotional competence and positive behaviour. It makes reasonable accommodations and fosters coping skills for pupils with special educational needs who may experience difficulties in adhering to the school's code of behaviour.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Whole-School Development Planning where are we now?

In relation to Whole-School Development Planning where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Whole-School Development Planning, how would we rate our progress overall?

No start made	Getting started	Some progress made	Good progress made	Good practice in place
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In relation to Whole-School Development Planning what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 2 Whole-School Development Planning – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Whole-School Development Planning what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

Notes

Theme 3: **Whole-School Environment – Self-Reflection**

Description

Reasonable accommodations are made to enable the enrolment and participation of pupils with special educational needs. Accessible transport, buildings, materials, equipment, facilities, activities and strategies facilitate a welcoming and inclusive environment. Accessibility and health and safety matters are actively considered in the planning and procurement of new developments and equipment, and when planning and carrying out maintenance work. Information on accessible facilities and restrictions is disseminated to the school community.

Criteria

1. Accessibility is guided by the principles of universal design, good practice recommendations and current legislation and is the responsibility of everyone in the school.

2. The accessibility of the school environment is proactively maintained and audited. An action plan is developed to ensure that barriers are removed and good practice implemented.

3. Accessible resources, equipment and strategies are provided for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to participate fully in school activities.

4. The school's activities provide meaningful participation for pupils with special educational needs.

5. Safety and fire drills are designed and scheduled to cater for the particular requirements of those with special educational needs.

6. Assistance is delivered with dignity and safety in mind. Staff are trained in the use of specialist equipment and strategies.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Whole-School Environment where are we now?

In relation to Whole-School Environment where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Whole-School Environment, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	Getting started	Some progress made	Good progress made	Good practice in place

In relation to Whole-School Environment what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 3 **Whole-School Environment – Action and Improvement Plan Section**

In relation to Whole-School Environment what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

Notes

Theme 4: **Communication – Self-Reflection**

Description

Communication is based on mutual respect between staff, pupils, parents and others in the school community. Communication between members of the school community takes place through different modes including verbal and non-verbal, signing, written and visual, as appropriate. Management and staff are aware of the power of non-verbal communication and body language which contributes to the quality of interpersonal relations and inclusion across the school. Reciprocal, open lines of communication take into account the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

Criteria

1. Communication in the school community is conducted in modes, language and format(s) appropriate to the requirements of pupils with special educational need and their parents/guardians. Its purpose is clearly stated and any required response is outlined.

2. The school has mechanisms in place to share information among relevant staff members about pupils with special educational needs, where appropriate and in a sensitive manner.

3. Confidentiality, if required, is stated, agreed and respected while taking account of recognised child protection guidelines and a duty of care to all pupils and staff.

4. The location and timing of communication and meetings is agreed and respected, and parents/guardians in particular know how and when to contact the school.

5. At meetings everybody's contribution is respected and facilitated.

6. Where conflict or disagreement arises, resources are provided to implement appropriate resolution and mediation strategies.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Communication where are we now?

In relation to Communication where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Communication, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Communication what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 4: **Communication – Action and Improvement Plan Section**

In relation to Communication what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template			
PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	**Resources**		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			
PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	**Resources**		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			
PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	**Resources**		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

Notes

Theme 5: **Pupil and Staff Well-being. Sub Theme 5(a): Fulfilling Pupil Potential – Self-Reflection**

Description

Promoting pupils' well-being and their emotional and physical safety is a fundamental feature of school life. Continuous monitoring of their attendance, participation, well-being and performance promotes the attainment of each pupil's full potential through personal academic and social goals. Diversity awareness is critical in creating an inclusive culture within schools and promotes equality of educational access and participation of pupils with special educational needs.

Criteria

1. The school is pupil-centred and fosters the development of the skills, knowledge and confidence of pupils with special educational needs, affirms their range of abilities and responds to their diverse academic and personal needs.

2. Pupils' rights to learn are embedded in all school practices and activities. This is supported by an inclusive curriculum and appropriate personnel and interventions.

3. The school listens to the pupil's voice, promotes pupil self-advocacy and encourages pupils to express personal experiences and identities.

4. Diversity awareness is integrated into all aspects of pupil and staff learning, communication and behaviour to foster an understanding of and facilitate the removal of barriers to inclusion.

5. Regular contact is maintained with parents/guardians on a pupil's academic and personal progress.

6. Individual pupil well-being is promoted and safeguarded through an effective pastoral care system with clearly defined roles.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Pupil Potential, where are we now?

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Pupil Potential, where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Pupil Potential, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Pupil Potential, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 5: Pupil and Staff Well-being. Sub Theme 5(a): Fulfilling Pupil Potential – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Pupil Potential, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template			

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

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Notes

Theme 5: Pupil and Staff Well-being. Sub-theme: 5(b) Fulfilling Staff Potential – Self-Reflection

Description

Staff well-being is prioritised along with that of pupils and is also based on a rights perspective. The welfare of all school staff is safeguarded and staff are encouraged to support their colleagues. Open communication and informed awareness encourage early detection of potential difficulties and collaborative agreed solutions to problems. Access to continuing professional development and support from management and colleagues equips staff with knowledge and expertise in the education of pupils with special educational needs.

Criteria

1. Staff rights to general well-being, respect, personal safety and professional fulfilment are embedded in the school's policies and practices.

2. Staff are encouraged to meet personal and professional development goals and are given access to appropriate continuing professional development in special education.

3. The school supports staff experiencing exceptionally stressful circumstances arising from their work.

4. Staff members recognise their responsibility to support their colleagues. An induction and mentoring system is in place.

5. The school actively supports staff through difficult personal circumstances including illness and disability.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Staff Potential, where are we now?

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Staff Potential, where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Staff Potential, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Staff Potential, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 5: Pupil and Staff Well-being. Sub-theme: 5(b) Fulfilling Staff Potential – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Pupil and Staff Well-being: Fulfilling Staff Potential, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template			
PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	**Resources**		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			
PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	**Resources**		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			
PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	**Resources**		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

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Notes

Theme 6: **Curriculum Planning for Inclusion – Self-Reflection**

Description

School management and staff engage in curriculum planning as a core component of inclusive teaching and learning. Curriculum planning for inclusion aims for learning experiences which feature differentiated content (material taught), process (methods, materials and activities used) or outcomes (ways pupils demonstrate their learning). These activities are designed to engage pupils with special educational needs in a broad range of learning experiences to reach their maximum potential.

Criteria

1. Curriculum planning maximises opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to learn within a community of learners while recognising individual abilities, learning styles, needs and preferences.

2. Curriculum planning involves differentiation of curricular content, processes and outcomes.

3. Curriculum planning maximises pupils' engagement, while maintaining the integrity of the subject matter and providing meaningful access to a wide, rich and age-appropriate curriculum.

4. Pupil participation, self-esteem, sense of competence as a learner and learning outcomes are enhanced by curriculum planning for inclusion.

5. Teachers hold and communicate high expectations for all pupils in the class and are aware of the potential impact of stereotyping for pupils with special educational needs.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Curriculum Planning for Inclusion where are we now?

In relation to Curriculum Planning for Inclusion where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Curriculum Planning for Inclusion, how would we rate our progress overall?				
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	Getting started	Some progress made	Good progress made	Good practice in place

In relation to Curriculum Planning for Inclusion, what are our priorities for action?
List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 6: Curriculum Planning for Inclusion – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Curriculum Planning for Inclusion, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

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Notes

Theme 7: **Individualised Education Planning – Self-Reflection**

Description

Planning for individual needs is an essential part of a whole-school policy on inclusion. Individualised planning is supplementary to the planning common to all pupils. It sets out how teaching and learning take place within a differentiated curriculum. In the context of a continuum of support, pupils with special educational needs may require individualised education planning, which can take many forms ranging from relatively minor changes through to more detailed individualised programmes. Meeting individual needs may involve differentiation, a range of teaching methods, resources and supports as appropriate.

Criteria

1. Whole-school policies and procedures outline how the diverse needs of pupils are met across curricular and social areas, at transition points and refer specifically to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
2. Individualised education planning outlines a pupil's learning strengths, needs, goals and targets. It records the teaching and learning strategies to be used and sets out the role of mainstream and additional teachers, support staff and parents in the pupil's education.
3. All teachers take responsibility for differentiated lesson planning and homework that recognises the learning requirements of pupils with special educational needs.
4. Specific, measurable and realistic targets are devised by classroom teachers, learning support and resource teachers, along with other relevant school staff, pupils, parents/guardians and where appropriate, external educational professionals.
5. Learning goals are reviewed regularly and new targets set as appropriate. Transitional arrangements are included in the review process.
6. Parent/guardian involvement in individualised education planning, implementation and review is facilitated and welcomed.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Individualised Education Planning where are we now?

In relation to Individualised Education Planning where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Individualised Education Planning, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Individualised Education Planning what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 7: **Individualised Education Planning – Action and Improvement Plan Section**

In relation to Individualised Education Planning what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

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Notes

Theme 8: **Teaching and Learning Strategies. Sub-theme 8(a): The Learning Experience – Self-Reflection**

Description

Every pupil learns differently and has individual needs. A pupil's learning experience is enhanced by a commitment to inclusion through differentiation, positive classroom relations and family involvement. Positive learning experiences increase participation, enhance academic and social skills and increase attendance and retention rates.

Criteria

1. The school culture recognises that the abilities of pupils with special educational needs are not fixed and can be developed and improved given suitable learning experiences.

2. The school recognises that pupils with special educational needs have a right to learn and positively acknowledges their efforts and achievements.

3. Pupils with special educational needs are engaged in educationally meaningful and appropriately challenging tasks. Engagement is fostered through independent and co-operative learning both in the classroom and in co-curricular activities.

4. Learning is success oriented and equips pupils to manage educational setbacks and develop successful coping skills. Setbacks and mistakes are acknowledged and learning through them is encouraged.

5. Classroom culture fosters positive effort and promotes the idea of learning as an enjoyable activity.

6. Pupils with special educational needs agree learning strategies with staff and are involved in setting and monitoring their learning goals.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Learning Experience, where are we now?

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Learning Experience, where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Learning Experience, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Learning Experience, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 8: **Teaching and Learning Strategies. Sub-theme 8(a): The Learning Experience – Action and Improvement Plan Section**

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Learning Experience, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

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Notes

Theme 8: **Teaching and Learning Strategies. Sub-theme 8(b): The Teaching Experience – Self-Reflection**

Description

Effective teaching involves the use of suitable teaching and learning methodologies, materials and arrangements. These include co-operative teaching, differentiation and the promotion of positive classroom relationships. A positive teaching experience enriches a teacher's role and creates meaningful classroom experiences.

Criteria

1. The school encourages teachers to develop reflective practices and share a range of diverse teaching methodologies and strategies to develop a classroom climate that supports the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
2. Teaching and assessment methodologies are aligned so that each is informed by the other.
3. Teachers focus on creating learning experiences that are positive, success oriented, and foster learning through authentic learning activities.

4. Pupils with special educational needs see meaningful learning tasks modelled by teachers/classroom peers in whole class, small group and individualised settings.
5. School management recognises that teachers may require additional support in developing and using teaching and learning strategies that optimise the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Teaching Experience, where are we now?

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Teaching Experience, where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Teaching Experience, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Teaching Experience, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 8: **Teaching and Learning Strategies. Sub-theme 8(b):**
The Teaching Experience – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Teaching and Learning Strategies: The Teaching Experience, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date
Implementation Review			

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Notes

Theme 9: **Classroom Management. Sub-theme 9(a): Classroom Protocols and Rules – Self-Reflection**

Description

Classroom management and organisation in terms of layout, access to materials, visual structure, schedules and predictability all contribute to a positive classroom experience for pupils. Learning opportunities are seized wherever possible and pupil ownership of behaviour and learning outcomes is encouraged. Classroom protocols and rules function in line with overall school protocols to promote learning and address challenging behaviour. Positive behaviour is promoted throughout the school. Clear guidelines about acceptable behaviours contribute to the creation of a safe and secure environment for pupils' academic, social and personal development.

Criteria

1. Pupils with special educational needs feel welcome and discipline is based on mutual respect. Rules exist to support the creation of a safe, secure and positive learning environment for all members of the school community. Positive behaviour is regularly and publicly celebrated in the school.

2. Classroom rules reflect the school's code of behaviour and are communicated clearly and regularly to pupils with special educational needs. Group-specific rules are negotiated and reviewed to reflect current pupil interests and needs.

3. School rules are few and are presented in accessible forms for pupils with special educational needs. Reasonable accommodations are made to take account of the individual needs of those pupils who may require an individualised response.

4. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to self-regulate, to take ownership of their behaviour and learning and to demonstrate understanding of where a rule has been broken.

5. Pupils with special educational needs understand the consequences of breaking rules and the importance of the rule is communicated to pupils. Disciplinary procedures are based on proportionate responses to (mis) behaviour.

6. The school addresses any fear, threat or injury in a serious manner and responds according to its code of behaviour. It may be necessary to review procedures, provide additional training and attend to the well-being of those involved.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Classroom Management: Classroom Protocols and Rules, where are we now?

In relation to Classroom Management: Classroom Protocols and Rules, where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Classroom Management: Classroom Protocols and Rules, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Classroom Management: Classroom Protocols and Rules, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 9: Classroom Management. Sub-theme 9(a): Classroom Protocols and Rules – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Classroom Management: Classroom Protocols and Rules, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

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Theme 9: **Classroom Management. Sub-theme 9(b): Curriculum Implementation – Self-Reflection**

Description

Teachers and pupils play interdependent roles in the classroom. Teachers facilitate and engage pupils in their learning. Pupils participate appropriately in the learning activities. Good classroom management facilitates the organisation of these processes. The learning goals outlined within the curriculum are promoted and pupil well-being and engagement are prioritised.

Criteria

1. Teaching is planned, differentiated and informed by whole-school planning to enable pupils with special educational needs to access the curriculum in a meaningful manner. Clearly established systems are in place for teachers to share planning with colleagues.

2. Teaching periods are well prepared with a range of evidence-based teaching methods, approaches and materials employed to enhance learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs.

3. Lesson content is differentiated to accommodate specific needs and abilities of pupils with special educational needs and is appropriate to age, ability and required outcomes.

4. Classroom groups are flexible, temporary and generally organised on a mixed ability basis according to criteria such as learning preference, strengths, interests and co-operative learning principles. A clear rationale is made when using fixed ability grouping.

5. Objectives and expectations are outlined at the start of lessons and learning outcomes are summed up at the end.

6. Teaching periods are suitably challenging and enjoyable to the greatest possible degree.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Classroom Management: Curriculum Implementation, where are we now?

In relation to Classroom Management: Curriculum Implementation, where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Classroom Management: Curriculum Implementation, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Classroom Management: Curriculum Implementation, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 9: Classroom Management. Sub-theme 9(b): Curriculum Implementation – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Classroom Management: Curriculum Implementation, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date

Implementation Review

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Theme 10: Support for and Recognition of Learning
Sub-theme 10(a): Informal and Formal Assessment
– Self-Reflection

Description

Assessment and recognition of achievement form an integral part of the cycle of learning, building a picture of a pupil's progress over time and informing the next stage of learning. Inclusive assessment provides meaningful experiences and feedback to pupils and parents/guardians and is age and curriculum appropriate. Inclusive assessment includes both formal and informal methods.

Criteria

1. The school's assessment policy is learner-focused and outlines: purpose/use of assessment; roles and responsibilities of those involved; links between assessment and outcomes; planning for teaching and learning; and opportunities for peer and self-assessment.

2. Teachers employ formative and summative assessment approaches that are flexible, matched to the ability of the pupils and are age and curriculum appropriate.

3. Teachers are competent to administer and interpret a range of assessment materials including standardised tests.

4. The school adopts a continuum of support model in the identification of special educational needs and in meeting those needs.

5. Learning targets for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed in line with the outcomes of assessment to ensure each pupil's maximum potential is realised and to inform planning for future learning.

6. Pupils with special educational needs and parents/guardians are involved in identifying, developing and evaluating learning targets. Pupils get feedback and reporting to parents/guardians is regular.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: Informal and Formal Assessment, where are we now?

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: Informal and Formal Assessment, where are we now? (cont.)

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: Informal and Formal Assessment, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	Getting started	Some progress made	Good progress made	Good practice in place

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: Informal and Formal Assessment, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 10: Support for and Recognition of Learning. Sub-theme 10(a): Informal and Formal Assessment – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: Informal and Formal Assessment, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

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Theme 10 **Support for and Recognition of Learning Sub-theme 10(b): External Assessment and Certification (post-primary aged pupils) – Self-Reflection**

Description

Most pupils of post-primary age take external assessments and examinations at different stages and need careful preparation for this process. As pupils progress, they take more responsibility for their academic preparation. Suitable levels of support including appropriate assessment and feedback are provided.

Criteria

1. The school provides for a range of programmes for pupils with special educational needs that lead to external assessment and certification to match abilities.
2. Pupils are made aware of compulsory examination subjects, applicable exemptions and reasonable accommodations.
3. Lessons prepare pupils for required post-primary assessments and examinations.
4. Early identification of those pupils eligible for RACE (Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations) is facilitated and applications are completed where necessary.
5. Pupils eligible for RACE get practice and experience in the use of applicable exam accommodations under appropriate conditions before the State examinations.
6. Career guidance and information is available to pupils with special educational needs regarding suitable choice of exam subjects, certification options, and future pathways to education, training and employment.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: External Assessment and Certification, where are we now?

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: External Assessment and Certification, where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: External Assessment and Certification, how would we rate our progress overall?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No start made	**Getting started**	**Some progress made**	**Good progress made**	**Good practice in place**

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: External Assessment and Certification, what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	
2	
3	

Theme 10 Support for and Recognition of Learning. Sub-theme 10(b): External Assessment and Certification (post-primary aged pupils) – Action and Improvement Plan Section

In relation to Support for and Recognition of Learning: External Assessment and Certification, what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources		
Who is responsible for leading the action?	**Start date**	**Finish date**	**Review date**
Implementation Review			

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Appendices

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Appendix 1: Example of Completed Self-Reflection Template

Theme 1 Leadership and Management – Self-Reflection

Description

Leadership is visionary and provides a motivating force for change towards models of good practice in educating pupils with special educational needs. Leadership is participatory and distributed across all members of the school community including the board of management, principal, teachers, in-school management and special needs teams, ancillary staff, parents/guardians and pupils. Leadership happens through formal and informal mechanisms. The principal plays a pivotal role informed by consultation and collaboration.

Criteria

1. Leaders recognise the school's role in serving the community and are committed to the right of pupils with special educational needs to receive an inclusive education.
2. Leaders are a source of advice, mediation and collaborative problem-solving for pupils with special educational needs and teachers.
3. Leaders respect confidentiality while taking account of recognised child protection guidelines and a duty of care to all pupils and staff.
4. Leaders ensure school resources are deployed in an equitable and beneficial manner to address the learning needs and outcomes of pupils with special educational needs.
5. Leaders know the professional skills of their teachers, deploy them for the maximum benefit of pupils with special educational needs and consult with a range of other professionals for advice and collaborative problem-solving as required.
6. Leaders monitor the impact and outcomes of policies and actions on special education and seek feedback to inform school planning.

Complete the sections below, providing descriptive answers that supply **supporting examples and evidence.** Refer to additional questions provided in Table 2 in Section 4.2 above for further guidance.

In relation to Leadership and Management where are we now?
The school has a plan and a mission statement that addresses the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs but the documents are not yet publicly available.

The school has a plan and a mission statement that addresses the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs but the documents are not yet publicly available.

The school is using some of its additional teaching hours to provide in-class support for pupils with special educational needs.

A special education team is established in the school. The principal or deputy principal attends the special education team meetings. However, it is sometimes difficult to find time to review all of the pupils with special educational needs referred to the team.

The timetable for special education is drawn up in consultation with staff.

A policy on child protection guidelines is in place. However, guidelines for confidentiality on staff issues have not been developed.

The SESS and NEPS have provided in-service training and advice regarding pupils with special educational needs.

In relation to Leadership and Management where are we now? (continued)

In relation to Leadership and Management, how would we rate our progress overall?

No start made	Getting started	Some progress made	Good progress made	Good practice in place
☐	☐	☐	☑	☐

In relation to Leadership and Management what are our priorities for action?

List your top three priorities in order

1	Publish the school's plan and mission statement on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs
2	Re-structure special education team meetings
3	Confidentiality on staff issues to be addressed

Theme 1 **Leadership and Management – Action and Improvement Plan Section**

In relation to Leadership and Management what is our plan of action for the 3 priorities listed in the Self-Reflection Template

PRIORITY 1: Action to be taken	Resources		
Publish the school's plan and mission statement on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs 1. Publish the school's plan and mission statement on the school's website. 2. Make these documents available in the school's office.	Time at BOM meeting		

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date
Board of management (BOM)	February current school year	May current school year	September of following school year

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 2: Action to be taken	Resources		
Re-structure special education team meetings 1. Start meetings on time. 2. Set agenda for meeting. 3. Chair appointed for each meeting.	None required		

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date
Special educational needs (SEN) team	At next scheduled meeting of SEN team.	On-going	End of school year

Implementation Review

PRIORITY 3: Action to be taken	Resources		
Confidentiality on staff issues to be addressed Draw up a written policy	1. Time 2. Possible external professional advice		

Who is responsible for leading the action?	Start date	Finish date	Review date
Principal and BOM	February current school year	May current school year	September of following school year

Implementation Review

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Appendix 2: Useful References by Framework Theme

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Appendix 3: Literature Unde rpinning the Development of the Inclusive Education Framework

Introduction

An extensive literature review supported the initial conceptualisation and development of the themes within the Inclusive Education Framework. This work commenced in 2008 with the NCSE's consultative forum and culminated in the Winter and O'Raw (2010) literature review referred to in the Introduction of this document. In 2009, an advisory group was established and the services of the School of Education in UCC were enlisted to assist the NCSE in the development of the Inclusive Education Framework. A further review of the literature was conducted and the advisory group reviewed the array of potential themes by analysing a range of key inclusion documents. The group agreed a draft framework after extensive consideration and deliberation over 12 months. This draft was subjected to a consultation process, a pilot phase and further consideration by the advisory group. This section outlines some of the key documents that influenced the development of the framework and the major themes emerging from them.

Key sources influencing the development of the Inclusive Education Framework

Details of the main influential sources consulted during the development of the framework and the main principles and themes within them are presented below in chronological order. Please note that many other references were reviewed as can be seen in Appendices 2 and 5.

Lipsky and Gartner (1997)

This US-based report studied over 1,000 school districts that returned recommendations and observations across a multitude of areas including how facilitating inclusion should be seen in tandem with a process of school improvement. Lipsky and Gartner are one of the most respected research teams in educational inclusion. They identified common factors in schools where inclusion was flourishing:

- Visionary educational leadership
- Collaboration between everyone concerned
- Refocused use of assessment
- Support for staff and students
- Appropriate funding levels
- Parental involvement
- Curriculum adaptations and instructional practices.

The Index for Inclusion (CSIE, 2002)

The Index for Inclusion, first published in 2000 and subsequently reviewed in 2002, is a comprehensive resource to support the development of inclusive

practices in schools. The index has undergone two field trials, subsequent redrafting in 2002 and ongoing practical use in 27,000 schools in England, all schools in Wales and there are an additional 10,000 copies in private use internationally (Thomas and Vaughan, 2004). It offers schools "a supportive process of self-review and development, which draws on the views of staff, governors, students and parents/carers, as well as members of the surrounding communities" and is a resource to "support the inclusive development of schools […] that can help everyone to find their own next steps in developing their setting" (CSIE, 2002: 1).

The index guides schools through a five-phase or work cycle structure, using major dimensions, six sections, supplemented by criteria, subtle guidelines and questions. Together, these form a "review framework to structure a school development plan" (CSIE, 2002: 8). It is a time appropriate "improvement strategy" designed to complement extant school level priorities and activities within stated timeframes (Ainscrow, Booth and Dyson, 2001: 4). The Inclusive Education Framework holds similar goals in mind and through its use of evidence-based recording and documentation aims to combat some of the negative charges levied against its UK counterpart.

Routledge Falmer Reader on Inclusive Education (Topping, K. and Malony, S., 2005)

Florian's chapter (Chapter 2) from the Routledge Falmer Reader on Inclusive Education (Topping, K. and Malony, S. 2005) is entitled "Inclusive Practice: What, why and how?" It primarily attempts to answer some of the key questions asked of inclusive practitioners by drawing on a multitude of sources. In so doing, Florian presents a comprehensive overview of the main principles of inclusion across the globe including research findings from Giangreco's cited study (1997). Giangreco's study identifies these common features in schools where inclusion is "thriving":

- Collaborative framework
- A shared framework
- Family involvement
- General educator ownership
- Clear role relationships among professionals
- Effective use of support staff
- Meaningful individual education plans (IEPs)
- Procedures for evaluating effectiveness. (Giangreco, 1997)

UNESCO (2005)

UNESCO's Guidelines for Inclusion (2005) were compiled to fill an identified gap in advisory documentation relating to the implementation of national strategies on inclusive education. It is "a response to the need for a systematic approach for identifying excluded groups. It is intended to be a 'living document' which serves as a dynamic tool of analysis which will be revised in the coming years to reflect the reality of marginalized and excluded children" (UNESCO, 2005: 1). It is an extensive

practical manual with an international perspective to enable participant countries to identify pitfalls and succeed in their commitment to inclusion and is informed by expert consultation with practitioners such as Mel Ainscow, co-author of the Index for Inclusion (CSIE, 2002).

These guidelines identify four key elements in the conceptualisation of inclusion as outlined below.

Inclusion is a process. It has to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. It is about learning how to live with difference and learning how to learn from difference. Differences come to be seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning, among children and adults.

Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers. It involves collecting, collating, and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It is about using evidence of various kinds to stimulate creativity and problem-solving.

Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all pupils. "Presence" is concerned with where children are educated, and how reliably and punctually they attend; "participation" relates to the quality of their experiences and must incorporate the views of learners; and "achievement" is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not just test and exam results.

Inclusion invokes a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or under-achievement. This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those at risk are carefully monitored, and that steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation, and achievement in the education system (UNESCO, 2005: 15).

Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines (DES, 2007)

The Department of Education and Skills [Science] in Ireland issued guidelines and advice "to support the development of inclusive school environments for pupils with special educational needs at post-primary level" (DES, 2007: 5). It focuses on planning at a whole-school level, organisational and teaching issues, role descriptions and suggestions for collaboration between mainstream, resource and other specialist teachers. It was influenced by contributions from third level experts, the Special Education Support Service, School Development and Planning Initiative, parents, teacher management bodies and unions.

These guidelines advocate that the effective teaching of pupils in an inclusive setting is enhanced when the following practices are in place:

- a variety of teaching strategies and approaches

- clear learning objectives outlined at the beginning of the lesson, reference made to them during the lesson, and a review with the students of what has been learned occurs at the end of the lesson

- formative assessment strategies for identifying the students' progress that are used to help inform teaching approaches

- the content of lessons is matched to the needs of the students and to their levels of ability

- multi-sensory approaches to learning and teaching

- materials, including concrete materials, are appropriate to the needs, ages, interests, and aptitudes of the students

- deviations from lesson plans when unexpected learning opportunities arise do not result in the loss of the original objectives of the lesson

- appropriate time is allowed for practice, reinforcement, and application of new knowledge and skills in practical situations

- students are reinforced and affirmed for knowledge and skills learned

- opportunities are in place throughout the curriculum to enable students to develop language and communication skills (eg listening, speaking, reading, writing)

- opportunities are taken throughout the curriculum to develop personal and social skills

- students are encouraged to explore links with other areas of the curriculum

- homework is designed to consolidate and extend, to promote independent learning, to monitor individual students' and class progress, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning (DES, 2007: 105).

Towards Inclusive Education: Examples of Good Practices of Inclusive Education (Inclusion Europe, 2007)

This document, produced by Inclusion Europe, a non profit organisation which campaigns for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities across 36 countries, is a short introduction to the international inclusive debate and outlines six examples of good practice in educational inclusion from across Europe including examples from the UK, Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina, among others. The featured examples all "follow the conceptual elements" in UNESCO's Guidelines for Inclusion (2005). It also provides useful references and information from a European perspective.

Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2009)

This document is a synthesis of the main policy findings that have emerged from project-based thematic analyses conducted by the agency in partnership with international policy makers. It "highlights recommendations regarding key aspects of educational policy that seem to be effective in supporting the inclusion of learners with different types of special educational needs (SEN) within mainstream provision" (EADSNE, 2009: 7). The relevant projects used a variety of methodologies and resulted in a range of multimedia outputs. The agency

outlined seven interconnected areas of key principles, each with a number of recommendations, as follows:

1. widening participation to increase educational opportunity for all learners

2. education and training in inclusive education for all teachers

3. organisational culture and ethos that promotes inclusion

4. support structures so as to promote inclusion

5. flexible resourcing systems that promote inclusion

6. policies that promote inclusion

7. legislation that promotes inclusion.

Literature Review on the Principles and Practices relating to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs. (Winter and O' Raw, 2010)

A commissioned literature review by the National Council for Special Education and developed in consultation with the NCSE's consultative forum, this document provides an overview of inclusion related research issues concluding with a list of 10 dominant or recurrent themes in the field of inclusion. They also provide a list of activities, practices and attitudes present in schools where inclusion is successfully implemented:

- understanding and acknowledging inclusion as a continuing and evolving process

- creating learning environments that respond to the needs of all learners and have the greatest impact on their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development

- undertaking a broad, relevant, appropriate and stimulating curriculum that can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners

- strengthening and sustaining the participation of pupils, teachers, parents and community members in the work of the school

- providing educational settings that focus on identifying and reducing barriers to learning and participation

- restructuring cultures, policies and practices in schools to respond to the diversity of pupils

- identifying and providing the necessary support for […] staff as well as pupils

- engaging in appropriate training and professional development for all staff

- ensuring fully transparent and accessible information on inclusive policies and practices within the school for pupils, parents, support staff and other persons involved with the education of the pupil (Winter and O'Raw, 2010: 24).

The table below summaries the major themes that feature in the sources described above.

Table 1: Summary of themes within major sources

Source	Themes
Lipsky and Gartner (1997)	Clear/effective professional roles Management/leadership Whole-school approach Pupil & school assessment Professional development Effective funding Communication Curriculum design
Index for Inclusion (CSIE, 2002)	Whole-school approach Holistic/person-centred Communications Student & school assessment School development and planning Community-based Management/leadership Cultures of inclusion Inclusive policies and values
Florian (2005)	Whole-school approach Holistic/person-centred Communications Clear/effective professional roles Individual education plans (IEPs) Lesson planning Pupil & school assessment
UNESCO (2005)	School development & planning Improved access to resources Physical accessibility Curriculum accessibility Holistic/person-centred Curriculum design Professional development Whole-school approach
Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines (DES, 2007)	Teaching strategies Lesson Planning/Structure School & Assessment IEPs Holistic/person-centred Positive reinforcement Curriculum design Independent development
Towards Inclusive Education, Examples of Good Practice of Inclusive Education (Inclusion Europe, 2007)	Teaching Strategies Professional roles Accessible environments Professional development Family & community involvement

Source	Themes
Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education (EADSNE, 2009)	Widening access and participation Teacher skills, competencies and knowledge Positive culture and ethos Support structures and services Flexible resourcing system Inclusive school policies Legislation that promotes inclusion
Winter and O'Raw (2010)	Provision of information Physical features Inclusive school policies IEPs Pupil interactions Staffing and personnel External links Assessment of achievement Curriculum Teaching strategies

By removing repeated themes, the table below condenses the main themes identified above.

Table 2: Variety of inclusion associated themes

Dominant Inclusion Themes	
1. Provision of information/ communications	13. Independent development
2. Physical features/school environment	14. Improved access to education resources
3. Inclusive school policies	15. Continuing professional development/ training
4. Pupil interactions	16. Clear & effective professional roles
5. Staffing and personnel	17. Effective funding
6. External links/ community development	18. Transport
7. Pupil welfare	19. Learning supports
8. School management/leadership	20. Individual education plans (IEPs)
9. Parental involvement	21. Assessment of achievement
10. Review/school development & planning	22. Curriculum adaptation & design
11. Holistic/person-centred	23. Teaching strategies
12. Positive reinforcement	24. Classroom preparation

These 24 themes were condensed according to shared and similar characteristics into the following ten themes:

1. Leadership and Management

2. Whole-School Development Planning

3. Whole-School Environment

4. Communication

5. Pupil and Staff Well-being

6. Curriculum Planning for Inclusion

7.   Individualised Education Planning

8.   Teaching and Learning Strategies

9.   Classroom Management

10. Support for and Recognition of Learning.

The NCSE advisory group considered these themes and the associated criteria within the themes in detail. This reflective process resulted in a number of sub themes within four of the themes as outlined below.

Table 3: Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes (where applicable)
1. Leadership and Management	
2. Whole-School Development Planning	
3. Whole-School Environment	
4. Communication	
5. Pupil and Staff Well-being	a) Fulfilling Pupil Potential b) Fulfilling Staff Potential
6. Curriculum Planning for Inclusion	
7. Individualised Education Planning	
8. Teaching and Learning Strategies	a) The Learning Experience b) The Teaching Experience
9. Classroom Management	a) Classroom Protocols and Rules b) Curriculum Implementation
10. Support for and Recognition of Learning	a) Informal and Formal Assessment b) External Assessment and Certification (post-primary aged pupils)

Appendix 4: Advisory Group

Members of the advisory group are:

Jennifer Doran, NCSE (Chair)

Sinéad Breathnach, Professional Development Service for Teachers (formally School Development Planning Initiative)

Mary Byrne, NCSE

Paul Conway, University College Cork

Seán Gallagher, Professional Development Service for Teachers (formally Primary Professional Development Service)

Cathy Goss, NCSE

Gabrielle Greene, National Educational Psychological Service, DES

Mary Horan (replaced by Terry Reynolds), Special Education Department, DES

Valerie Monaghan, Special School Principal

Sean O'Leary, Special Education Support Service

Ruth O'Reilly, National Disability Authority

Liam Walsh, Inspectorate, DES

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