



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Evaluation of Early Intervention Class for Children with Autism

Record of Feedback Provided

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Boher NS
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Boher, Ballina, Co. Tipperary.
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	09190G
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	23 November 2023

What is an evaluation of an early intervention class for children with autism?

Early intervention classes are available for children with autism aged between three and five years. They are intended to provide appropriate interventions for children with autism before they start school. They are established by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and are part of the school. The school's board of management has overall responsibility for the management of the class.

The Inspectorate conducted an evaluation of provision in a number of these classes in 2023. This is a record of feedback given following an evaluation of the class in Boher NS, Ballina on November 23 2023.

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The teacher and SNAs are aware of the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.

The school met the requirements in relation to the anti-bullying checks. It did not meet check 2 of the child safeguarding checks. The school subsequently provided evidence of compliance with this check.

Identification of need

- The quality of the process to support the identification of need was very good. The teacher gathered a range of useful data based on communication, sensory processing, play and social, motor, functional living and academic skills. This data was specifically used to inform priority learning needs and targets the learning programmes, interventions and teaching approaches.
- To further add to the quality of assessment data and targets, teachers should use some autism-specific assessments which are listed in the *Autism Good Practice Guidelines for Schools (2022)*.

Learning Programmes

- The quality of the learning programmes was very good. The programmes were based on comprehensive pupil profiles and were specifically aligned their individual needs. They included a highly effective rotation system which ensured that pupils navigated the day independently, and accessed one-to one, small group and whole-class teaching and learning activities. The learning programmes were commendably based on the domains listed in *Autism Good Practice Guidelines for Schools (2022)*.

Interventions

- The quality of the interventions provided was very good. Interventions were informed by the AISTEAR framework, and the teacher used a broad range of evidence-based interventions, such as TEACCH, the Hanen language programme and DIRFloortime. The interventions effectively supported the development of social, play, emotional, sensory regulation, communication and daily living skills. They placed a commendable emphasis on supporting transitions and independence. All interventions were very effectively supported by the use of appropriate autism-specific strategies.

Monitoring and reviewing outcomes

- The quality of the processes for monitoring and reviewing outcomes was very good. Student support plans were effectively linked to long and short term preparation. The teacher completed weekly and monthly assessment and progress reviews of relevant domains. This data was used very effectively to monitor progress and to inform the next steps in learning and development across the domains listed in the *Autism Good Practice Guidelines for Schools (2022)*.

Whole-school inclusive practices

- The quality of whole-school inclusive practices was very good. The class was an integral part of the school setting and wider school community. Teachers and special needs assistants collaborated very effectively to meaningfully include all children in school life.
- The physical outdoor and indoor environments were autism-friendly, appropriately adapted, and supported the needs and abilities of all pupils. The welcoming atmosphere and affirmative culture in the school contributed very positively to a nurturing and inclusive environment.

This feedback was discussed with the principal and class teacher. The school was also provided with an opportunity to factually verify this record.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <i>outstanding</i> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	<i>Good</i> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of students' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	<i>Fair</i> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on students' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	<i>Weak</i> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;