



Bunscoil Chríost Rí - Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

2021/22

We in Bunscoil Chríost Rí have a Special Educational Needs Department comprising of nine support teachers (SEN teachers). We now also have an ASD unit comprising of one teacher assisted by two SNA's. Our SEN department strives to enhance inclusive practices within the school, both as support to mainstream class teachers and children with special educational needs.

Our Special Educational Needs Department has:

1. Nine SEN teachers.
2. Four special needs assistants (SNAs).
3. One EAL Teacher

Our ASD Unit has:

1. One SEN teacher.
2. Two special needs assistants (SNAs).

Our Special Educational Needs Department will strive to support and prioritise children with the greatest need in our school.

We aim to make maximum use of these resources and ensure that the department as a whole is a compact, well-structured and unified body whose policy is agreed by the whole school community.

- Henceforth in this document special educational needs will be known as SEN

Aims, Considerations and A Continuum of Support

Aims

We aim in Bunscoil Chríost Rí to provide an inclusive education for all our children. We will support every child, especially those with SEN so that they can leave school with the basic skills required to be an active member of society and have the opportunities to access the curriculum being taught in our school. In particular the SEN department aims to provide support to children whom:

1. English is not their first language.
2. Children with emotional and behavioural circumstance which may affect their ability to access the curriculum.
3. Children who have difficulties accessing the curriculum for a variety of sensory, cognitive, social and developmental needs.
4. Children who have been identified as a result of whole-school assessments, teacher observations and further specific diagnostic tests to have major difficulties in literacy and numeracy.
5. Children who need extra challenges to enhance their learning.
6. Children who have been diagnosed by psychologist and require extra support to access the curriculum at their own level.

Our school will use support services such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) when necessary to aid our principal, SEN team and class teachers when dealing with and identifying children with complex needs so that we can implement effective teaching and management policies to help them.

Considerations

Our support staff will consider all aspects of a child's development when deciding on which supports will be most beneficial to the children.

We consider both academic and social development as vital areas around special educational needs provisions.

We identify pupils experiencing learning difficulties as:

1. Those whose achievement is at a very low level and who are at risk of not reaching adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy.
2. Those who are at risk of not accessing the curriculum or developing alongside their peers socially for sensory, social, behavioural or developmental reasons.

These pupils may be experiencing difficulty for a variety of reasons including:

1. Low intellectual ability.
2. Slow learners (difficulties in reading, writing, spelling and/or maths).
3. Limited language skills.
4. Diagnosed needs.
5. Ill-health / absenteeism.
6. Minor visual and/or auditory impairments.
7. Sensory impairments

A Continuum of Support

We in Bunscoil Chríost Rí aim to adopt the model of a Continuum of Support in our school. School wide supports will be put in place with the implementation of the staged approach. The Staged Approach is a continuum of support where children in need will be identified as early as possible in our school and then we will implement the next steps in their education.

The continuum of support fosters a step towards inclusion with the class teachers being able to draw on more in-class supports to differentiate for the children under their care.

Classroom Support

The continuum promotes **classroom supports** as the first step in responding to a SEN Child's needs. This will entail support teachers working with classroom teachers in areas around behaviour management and differentiation of school work and observations to further support the child.

School Support

School supports systems will then provide supports to a child experiencing difficulty through group work or more intense provision around an area of need. SEN and class teachers will especially strive to liaise and work very closely and co-operatively in the area of planning, monitoring, provision and evaluating for a struggling child.

School Support Plus

School Support Plus will be operated in our school to provide intensive supports to children whose needs are more severe or persistent. If a child is in need of school support plus, the school will use NEPS as a guide to aiding their development. Children

at this level of support will need to have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) in place for specific semesters to map out their academic and developmental aims.

Special Class

We have one special class in Bunscoil Chriost Ri comprising of one class teacher and two SNAs. This class is specifically for children with a diagnosis of ASD who have been specifically recommended for an ASD class. The children in this class should have a cognitive ability of MILD General Learning Difficulty or above as confirmed by an educational psychologist. The purpose of the special class is to integrate the pupils fully by 6th class. Children in the class should have the ability to integrate to some degree in a mainstream setting by 4th class. No child will be discharged from the special class into the mainstream setting before 3rd class. Children will remain in the ASD class until they can attend mainstream classes with limited SNA support.

Reading Recovery

Reading recovery is a highly intensive intervention for struggling readers. We have one teacher CH who is specially trained to provide this intervention. This teacher will have full control and responsibility for the implementation of the program.

Roles And Responsibilities

1. Principal

The principal has overall control of the Special Educational Needs Department

2. Class Teacher

The class teacher has the first line of responsibility for the pupils' learning needs including those chosen for supplementary teaching.

3. Support Staff (SEN Teachers)

- A. The SENCO will deal with matters arising in the SEN department. The SENCO will provide information and guidance in areas around best practice around special education needs. He/she will liaise with outside agencies in conjunction with the principal.
- B. The support staff will provide supplementary teaching to teachers where necessary.

- C. Support staff will provide screening and diagnostic assessment of children who are in stage two and three of the continua of support.
- D. Support staff will monitor and record pupils' progress.
- E. Testing should be used to determine and assess children's needs.
- F. Support staff will be a link between outside agencies, principal, parents, pupils and class teachers.
- G. The SENCO will maintain all student reports and records. Each report will be signed out if a teacher needs it.
- H. Support staff will work in co-ordination with class teachers in intervention and prevention programmes.
- I. Support staff will design Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for children in stage three of the continuum of support. These plans will be working documents which will be put together by class teachers, support teachers, parents and the children themselves (where possible).
- J. Support staff will keep plans and records of all children in stage two of the continuum of support.
- K. Support staff will plan with the class teachers to support all models of co-teaching in the school.

4. Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

Special needs assistants are assigned children to work with by the principal. They will be expected to work closely with both class teachers and support teachers. SNAs will be expected to provide Personal Pupil Profiles (PPP) on the children they are assigned to.

5. Parents

- A. Parents are a valuable support to the school especially when working with SEN children.
- B. All parents of children in stages two and three of the continuum will be invited to attend a meeting with their child's support teacher to discuss the steps which will be taken by the school to improve their child's attainment levels.

6. Pupils

Children who are receiving extra supports in the school will be expected to:
 Attend school regularly.
 Play a role (where possible), in the development and reviews of IEPs.

7. Board of Management (B.O.M.)

Oversee the implementation and review of the Special Educational Needs Policy and the provisions of adequate resources and storage.

Senior and Junior Infants

We aim to use prevention strategies in the form of intensive co-teaching in Junior and Senior infants to make sure all students have a strong base in both Literacy and Numeracy.

These prevention strategies will be primarily focused around in-class group work and station teaching. These early intervention programmes will support and supplement all class-based learning.

These intervention strategies will be reviewed by the SEN team and infant teachers informally during each term. We will meet twice a year to review the system in place.

The SEN department will play a role in the planning and implementation of all these interventions.

The morning block of the school day will be entirely focused on the Infant classes. Support teachers will provide extra teaching to support and enhance all children's learning.

The withdrawal models for special educational needs provisions will only be used in circumstances where it is in the best interests of the child.

The children in Senior Infants will be tested at the end of the school year to determine if any of them will require supplementary support teaching in First Class.

We will use:

1. The MIST test.
2. Drumcondra Early Literacy Test.
3. Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test.

These tests are being primarily undertaken in order to get information for instructional planning or to assist in the making of placement or grouping decisions.

The intervention strategies implemented at infants level in Literacy and Numeracy will focus primarily on:

Literacy Focus:

1. Building up a sight vocabulary base of 300 words.
2. Pre-reading activities.
3. Stories, rhymes and songs.
4. Oral language and laying the foundation for meaningful reading.
5. Strong emphasis on phonemic and phonological awareness.
6. A structured word-attack programme.
7. Ginn 360 library book programme.
8. PM Readers

Numeracy Focus:

1. Mathematical language.
2. Basic computation - addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
3. Place value and the control of number.
4. Problem-solving

First Class to Sixth Class

The SEN Department will provide support to children from 1st - 6th Class who are at stage two and three of the continuum of support.

The SEN Department will look at diagnostic assessments, teacher reports, attendance and social circumstances when evaluating what support a child may need.

The SEN Department will aim to provide adequate support for every special educational needs child to access the curriculum being taught in the school.

The support provided for the children may include:

1. Co-teaching with the class teacher.
2. Withdrawal.
3. One to one support.
4. Small group withdrawal.

The support teacher will work in conjunction with the class teachers to decide on which support is necessary for any child.

The support teacher will have final say on the support provided to children on stage three of the continuum.

The children from 1st - 6th Class will be tested at the end of each year (third week in May). Children falling below the **15% percentile** will continue to be on the Supports stage of the continuum.

Class teachers and supports staff may decide to provide children at stage one of the continuums of support with extra supports through smaller group work both inside and outside of the classroom.

Assessments Used From First to Sixth Class

Assessments are carried out on the third week of May at the moment.

First Class

1. Literacy - Drumcondra (Level 1)
2. Numeracy - Drumcondra (Level 1)

Second Class

1. Literacy- Drumcondra (Level 2)
2. Numeracy - Drumcondra (Level 1)

Third Class

1. Literacy - Drumcondra (Level 3)
2. Numeracy - Drumcondra (Level 3)

Fourth Class

1. Literacy - Drumcondra (Level 4)
2. Numeracy - Drumcondra (Level 4)

Fifth Class

1. Literacy - Drumcondra (Level 5)
2. Numeracy - Drumcondra (Level 5)

Sixth Class

1. Literacy- Drumcondra (Level 6)
2. Numeracy - Drumcondra (Level 6)

Diagnostic Assessments to be used by Support Staff at Stage Two of the continuum of support. Note that the approach will be eclectic i.e. they will be used as required.

1. York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension.
2. Drumcondra Tests of Early Literacy/Numeracy.
3. Daniels & Diack Diagnostic Assessment (2nd. - 6th. class)
4. Aston Index (They test specific areas in literacy from 1st. - 3rd.)
5. Belfield Pre-Reading / Motor Skills (S.I. Jackson Phonics Test (2nd. - 6th. class)
6. Bunscoil Chríost Rí Phonics Test (Ordinary & Higher Order Phonics)
7. Marino & Schonell word recognition test.
8. MIST (From S.I. - 1st. Class)
9. Dolch Sight Word List of 200 words
10. Murray/McNally Sight Word list of 100 words
11. Quest Diagnostic Tests (Literacy & Numeracy) - 1st. Class
12. Comprehension tests with literal/inferential questions (3rd. - 6th. Class)
13. Hatcher Sound Linkage - To test phonological & phonemic awareness
14. Bangor Dyslexic Test
15. Tests devised by Bunscoil Chríost Rí to test basic mathematical concepts at the start of 1st. & 3rd. class
16. Department of Education Maths Tests to test basic concepts (Incl. problem-solving) in 2nd. / 5th. / 6th. Classes.

Assessments to be used by Support Staff at Stage Three of the continuum of support will use:

- A. York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension
- B. NRIT - Non-Reading Intelligence Test
- C. WIAT Assessment

The objectives of the use of diagnostic assessments are:

1. Identify those aspects of literacy/numeracy in which a pupil has particular strengths or learning difficulties.
2. To discover within a particular skill area what a child can do already or has mastered.
3. To locate a point of failure or misunderstanding and isolate the specific difficulties.
4. To gain information which will indicate the next step that is required in the teaching programmes.
5. To identify any deficiencies in underlying skills or processes, which may require highly specific remediation, or, in some cases, may indicate a need to select a teaching method which will bypass the weakness.

Support staff will review all children in Stage Two of the continuum at the end of each term.

Support staff in consultation with class teachers will decide if a child's support will be discontinued.

Support staff where necessary will provide extra support to classes with higher levels of need through co-teaching strategies.

Support staff will be required to develop Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for all children at Stage Three of the continuum. These plans will be developed in conjunction with parents, class teachers, outside professionals and pupils (where possible).

Support staff will be required to develop Individual Pupil Learning Profiles (IPLP's) for all children at Stage two of the continuum.

Partnership With Parents

Bunscoil Chríost Rí aims to have a strong partnership with all parents, especially those who have children with special educational needs.

Teachers have a responsibility to notify parents of concerns regarding their children at the earliest possible signs of problems developing.

We aim to enhance our teaching by using parents' knowledge of their own children thus improving their children's ability to access the curriculum and develop socially and academically.

Parents will be consulted with at all three stages of the continuum.

1. At stage one teachers will meet with them informally to discuss strategies or voice concerns they are having with a child.
2. At stage two parents will meet both class teachers and support teachers before any formal interventions have been undertaken. They will also meet both class and support teachers at the parent-teacher meeting days.
3. At stage three parents will be directly involved in the implementation of their child's IEP. Parent's knowledge and expertise around their child's needs will be utilised to enhance the child's development. Parents will be formally met twice each school year to discuss their child's IEP.

Supports staff will provide information and supports to parents of children with special educational needs.

Parents of children with more complex needs will be met more regularly in an informal manner.

E.A.L. Policy

English as an additional language (E.A.L.) will be a support within the new SEN framework provided by SEN teachers during the school day. Children for whom English is not their first language, are entitled to avail of this teaching support. A child can access this language support service for two years consecutively. If a child requires continuing support after the two year period in the opinion of the class teacher in consultation with the principal and the SEN team then provision will be made to meet the child's language needs.

The EAL classes will focus on developing oral language specifically when working with children who do not have English as a first language.

Tests Used:

Primary School Assessment Kit

Support teachers will assess children receiving E.A.L. support with the Primary School Assessment Kit.

Children will be tested twice a year from 1st to 6th.

Record-Keeping

The importance of keeping records of each pupil's progress is undeniable and can be of enormous benefit to class teachers, the principal, parents and outside agencies such as NEPS. Each pupil has a personal record file and the following is the procedure for keeping records:

1. All support staff will be required to keep up to date files on their children. These files will be available to class teachers at the beginning of the school year.
2. Children at stages two and three of the continuum will have Individual Education Plans (IEP's) or Individual Pupil Learning Profiles (IPLP's). Support teachers will maintain these files.

3. The SENCO will keep all assessments and documents from outside agencies in secure files. These files will be signed out if needed and put back within twenty-four hours.
4. All test results and personal information will be available on Aladdin.
5. Class teachers will be updated on all developments made by a SEN pupil. They will be aware of all testing both inside and outside the school.

Professional Agencies

Support staff will deal with relevant outside agencies regarding too whom they are providing supports.

The SENCO and the school principal will be made aware of any new developments around a child's needs or care in the school.

Support staff and class teachers will jointly liaise with outside agencies where necessary.

Outside agencies will be used as a support to aid teacher's understandings of any needs they meet when dealing with a special needs child

Parents will be encouraged to provide the school with documents regarding the special needs of a SEN Child.

The school will not require an official assessment to provide extra supports to SEN children.

Review

Support staff will deal with relevant outside agencies regarding children to whom they are providing supports.

The SEN co-ordinator and school principal will be made aware of any new developments around a child's needs or care in the school.

Support staff and class teachers will jointly liaise with outside agencies where necessary.

Outside agencies will be used as a support to aid teacher's understandings of any needs they meet when dealing with a special educational needs child.

Parents will be encouraged to provide the school with documents regarding the special needs of a SEN child.

The school will not require an official assessment to provide extra supports to SEN children.

Learning Support - Policy On Screening Pupils For Supplementary Teaching

In order to detect who in each class may be experiencing learning difficulties in literacy/numeracy the learning support teachers and the class teachers will co-operate in issuing nationally standardised tests. The tests are of limited diagnostic value but they;

- Are economical of time.
 - Give a rough indication of the spread of ability in the class.
 - Point to pupils needing further diagnostic assessment.
 - Are useful for discussing a pupil's progress from year to year with their parents.
- Over a five year period we have found that the percentile results and the pupil's position in the class tend to be consistent for most.

These tests are primarily being undertaken in order to get information for instructional planning or to assist in the making of placement or grouping decisions. The staff in conjunction with departmental guidelines and giving it due consideration have decided that this is best accomplished if these tests are administered at **the end of the school year i.e. mid May**. The staff acknowledges that the focus of the tests is on monitoring progress, evaluating results and deciding on strategies for improvement thereof. Hence the latter stages of the school year are best to achieve this i.e. May/June.

Outside our early intervention programme for senior Infants the results of the screening tests will determine which pupils will be chosen for further diagnostic testing. The following criteria will be used:

1. Who achieve scores at or below the 10th. percentile.
2. Who have scored between the 10th. and the 20th. percentile but in the opinion of their immediate present and past teachers are experiencing learning difficulties in the normal classroom situation and require more detailed diagnostic assessment.

3. Pupils who have attended other schools and enrol in Bunscoil Chríost Rí will be screened when necessary in consultation with class teachers.

Diagnostic Assessment As A Result Of Class Screening

A pupil is selected for diagnostic assessment, following screening procedures, consultation with the class teacher and parental permission. The learning support teacher (who has access to a range of diagnostic tests and guidelines on interpreting results), will proceed with the administration of the tests.

Schonell believes that the fundamental principle in the interpretation of diagnostic tests is that the qualitative examination of the testee's work is much more important than any estimates of it. They must yield far more valuable information with implications for teaching than does attainment testing alone. Results should lead to diagnostic teaching i.e. particular approaches to the child's problem should be adopted.

The **Objectives** of the diagnostic assessment are:

1. Identify those aspects of literacy/numeracy in which a pupil has particular strengths or learning difficulties.
2. To discover within a particular skill area precisely what a child can do already or has mastered.
3. To locate the point of failure or misunderstanding and isolate the specific difficulties.
4. To gain information which will indicate the next step that is required in the teaching programmes.
5. To identify any deficiencies in underlying skills or processes, which may need highly specific remediation, or, in some cases, may indicate a need to select a teaching method, which will bypass the weakness.

Continuing / Discontinuing SEN Support - Stage Two

Each pupil in the learning support class has a file outlining his/her main weaknesses and the main targets for him/her in the L.S. class as well as a record of continuous assessment throughout the year. Teacher planning is based on overall yearly goals, medium goals based on each term and daily plans.

1. Following the end of each instructional term or at other appropriate times during the year a decision will be made to continue / discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching for each pupil. However our experience is that most pupils in the learning support class require supplementary teaching for the entire school year.
2. The criteria on which the decision is based include:
 - Has the pupil achieved all/ most of the learning targets set?
 - Will the pupil be able to adequately cope in the normal classroom context?
3. The decision-making process involves consultation between the class teacher, the learning support teacher, the principal and the pupil's parents. Account is also taken of the overall learning support demands in the school.
4. New pupils will be admitted to the learning support class throughout the year if their class teacher feels they are finding it hard to cope in class in specific areas. The usual procedure of testing and consultation will apply in each case.

Signed: Chair of BOM



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