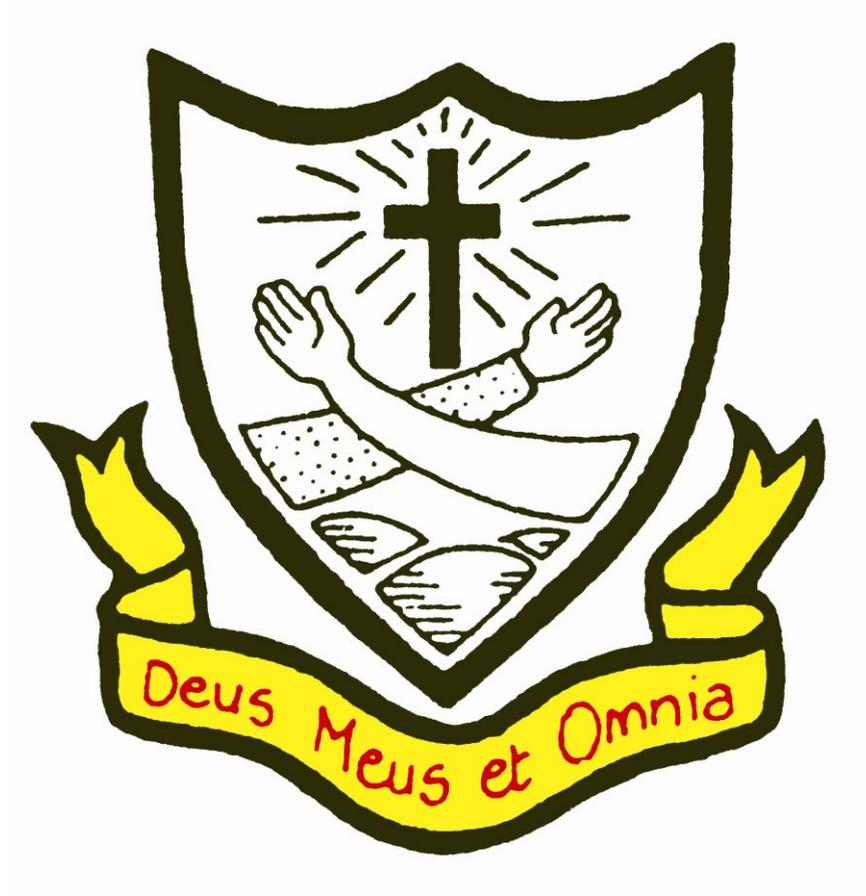


School Self-Evaluation Report



**St. Clare's Primary School
Harold's Cross Road
Dublin 6W
Roll No: 16651H**

**Evaluation period: September 2012 – June 2013
Report issue date: 01.09.2013**

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St. Clare's Primary School was undertaken during the period September 2011 to June 2013. Following this period of analysis and consultation, St. Clare's decided to focus on Literacy for 2011-2012; Numeracy for 2012-2013; and Physical Education for 2013-2014.

1.2 School context

St. Clare's Convent Primary School is situated in Harold's Cross on a beautiful landscaped site. It was founded in 1803. St. Clare's is a co-educational vertical school with an ASD Unit catering for classes for early intervention and primary school aged pupils, together with special needs pupils integrated in mainstream classes. 375 students are enrolled in the school. The staff consists of 21.2 teachers and 7 Special Needs Assistants. There are twelve mainstream class teachers, four resource teachers for special needs pupils, two special class teachers for ASD students and 2.2 GAM teachers providing learning support. The school has a part time secretary and part time caretaker/gardener.

In St. Clare's we maintain an orderly school environment based on the Catholic principles and values so that the school in close co-operation with parents can fulfil its mission statement to promote the spiritual, social, emotional, academic and physical development of all our students. In order to achieve this we promote self-discipline, responsibility for an individual's actions and respect for others, their property and the environment. We strive to be constantly aware of the dignity of each person. We try to show gentleness, courtesy and consideration for each other at all times. We recognise the need to grow ourselves in order that we can help our students grow. We recognise that the school must set, for all students, clear educational goals and opportunities to achieve success.

This stated ethos is clearly evidenced in the daily operation of the school with a clear sense of purpose and identity present among both students and staff. This is supported by the maintenance and development of a high quality learning environment. Although the school building is almost 36 years old, the learning environment has been consistently updated, enhanced and enriched so that the students truly do have a learning environment that is fit for purpose.

St. Clare's is focused on achieving high quality teaching and learning experiences for every student, every day. Our learning facilities provide a technology-rich environment bringing greater flexibility to our curriculum. We want our students to develop an enjoyment of learning and a curiosity to discover more. At St. Clare's we want every student to flourish. Our school provides a great education, which challenges and extends students of all abilities and helps to prepare them for life. Our students are provided with opportunities that will prepare them for life-long learning thus enabling them to develop skills that will set them apart.

We recognise that health and well being are critical to the development and success of our students and accordingly we take these responsibilities very seriously. In order to ensure that our students are healthy and well, we have put in place a number of programmes and initiatives both within school and outside of school. These include:

- outdoor play ground equipment for early morning, midday and lunch time play;

- broad, balanced and consistently implemented PE programme;
- Health Education programme as part of the SPHE curriculum;
- Broad range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities;
- Integration of Skipping Challenge to our award programmes (Star Award).

Time, effort and attention are allocated to ensuring that positive relationships exist at all levels within the school community and this investment is rewarded by staff and students consistently working together in a purposeful and supportive manner.

St. Clare's has a well developed policy of keeping parents informed about the school and about their child's progress by many means including end of year and mid-year reports (3rd – 6th classes), newsletters, open days, science exhibitions, art exhibition, parent-teacher meetings, induction meetings and the school website.

The staff of St. Clare's Convent Primary School is committed to furthering their personal and professional learning and growth. The staff engages in a wide range of in-service and professional learning opportunities. Staff attends courses in the following areas:

- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Using ICT to support literacy and numeracy of SEN pupils
- ✓ Supporting Literacy through the Arts
- ✓ Music and Drama in the classroom
- ✓ Teaching games in primary school
- ✓ Developing e-learning in school
- ✓ Using Technology in the Primary Classroom
- ✓ Practical Irish for Primary School Teachers
- ✓ Teaching of Mathematics
- ✓ Aistear programme

It is common practice at St. Clare's for staff, who has attended professional learning opportunities to feed back and share with their colleagues their learning experiences during staff meetings or at planning sessions.

St. Clare's has been involved in Green Flag Programme since 1998 and have been awarded seven Green Flags to date. In June 2013 St. Clare's was awarded the Blue Star Flag. Since 2003 the Board of Management publishes an Annual Report.

2. The Findings

The Process

We gathered both quantitative and qualitative data set out below in order to construct our targets.

1. The standardised tests are administered to all students in 1st to 6th classes annually during May/June. Since 2004 we collate and analyse the results of the Standardised Tests (Micra T & Sigma T) and present the findings to staff and to the Board of Management in table form. The tests are interpreted in the following ways:-
 - a. Individual student results were analysed and tracked;
 - b. Tests are examined from a whole class perspective;

- c. Whole school – identifying trends, emerging patterns and whole school strengths and weaknesses.
2. We value the home school partnership that exists in St. Clare's. As a school, we value the support that we receive from the parent body. In November 2011 we circulated a questionnaire to every parent in the school. The questionnaire was designed to identify strengths and areas for improvement. 225 questionnaires were circulated and 180 were completed and returned, representing an 80% response. The feedback received was analysed and used to enhance our self evaluation and identify future needs for our school improvement plan.

In May 2013 our focus group on literacy formulated a questionnaire on the parents' perception of the teaching and learning in Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd classes. This survey was administered using Survey Monkey online tool. We had a total of 92 responses with a broad variety of opinions and suggestions. While we take on board all of the feedback we received and will attempt to address any issues raised, we shall be mainly focusing on three key areas as listed below, which were highlighted more than others in the questionnaire:

- a. Time spent on Homework
 - b. Feedback to Parents
 - c. Number of workbooks in the junior classes
3. Literacy, Numeracy and Physical Education Focus Groups discussion on best practice in teaching approaches. Analysis of Learning Support provision and its suitability in meeting the demographic needs of the school in literacy and Maths.

Preparation for teaching

Teaching and learning is at the heart of our school's work. Written plans are collaboratively prepared between class teachers learning support teachers and resource teachers clearly indicate the teaching approaches, resources and activities that will facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes for the students.

- Long term planning in St. Clare's takes the form of half-yearly plans. Copies of half-yearly plans are submitted to the Principal on third Friday in September and second Friday in January. They are examined to ensure continuity from infants to 6th class.
- Short term planning takes the form of fortnightly schemes where the work planned is laid out in greater detail. An agreed template is used by all teachers.
- Teachers who are on probation plan on a weekly basis using the template supplied. Weekly notes by the teachers on probation are submitted to the Principal on Monday of each week for consideration and examination.
- Record keeping is equally important if continuity of learning is to be ensured. Teachers record the work the class has completed at the end of the month in the '**Cuntas ar Dhul Cinn**'. This is done by completing the CM column in the fortnightly scheme template. A copy of this kept in the school office for two years for future reference. This is a valuable resource in maintaining continuity from year to year and during the year in the event of teacher absence.

Teaching Approaches

The teaching of comprehension strategies, data handling and problem solving were identified as an area needing attention. Following CPD, discrete teaching of comprehension strategies will be introduced in all classes from September 2013. Teachers also had CPD training in Maths and the use of concrete materials in all classes for all strands.

Pupils' engagement in learning

There is a strong culture of learning in St. Clare's and students are proud of their achievements.

Management of Students

St. Clare's is fully inclusive and all students irrespective of their special educational needs are welcome in St. Clare's, are well supported, have the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from being educated in a Catholic Convent school and make progress commensurate with their ability. Students with special educational needs are included in mainstream classes where and when appropriate.

In St. Clare's Primary School we maintain an orderly school environment based on the Catholic principles and values so that the school in close co-operation with parents can fulfil its mission statement to promote the spiritual, social, emotional, academic and physical development of all our students. In order to achieve this we promote self-discipline, responsibility for an individual's actions and respect for others, their property and the environment. The strategies which are utilised include:

- High, consistent expectations of students;
- Regular communication with parents;
- Full implementation of our code of behaviour policy which places great emphasis on the promotion of the positive behaviour. This is inclusive of our student of the week system, early morning and lunch time constructive play routine, and our reward system;
- Full implementation of our pastoral care policy which supports all students;
- High visibility of senior staff throughout each school day;
- Regular and appropriate staff development for all staff;
- Early diagnosis and intervention for relevant students;
- Utilisation of the support of outside agencies as appropriate;
- Use of buddy system in 5th & 6th classes, Green School Committee, Cuiditheoirí, Official Helper, Playground Buddy, Skipping Coaches and Active Schools Committee.

As a result of the full implementation of our pastoral care and associated policies, there is consistent good behaviour by the vast majority of students. Incidents of poor behaviour are mainly a direct result of specific issues associated with individual students and these are addressed in co-operation with parents and the appropriate implementation of the school code of behaviour policy. The development of our 'cuiditheoirí system' has had a very positive impact on the management of behaviour. In addition, due to the exceptional needs of some students we have introduced a playground buddy system into school. This has also had a significant positive impact on securing positive behaviour.

Incidents of indiscipline are very rare and are readily resolved. This is a result of our positive discipline system, our reward system, our merit award system and the positive relationships

that exist within the school as well as the high expectations and quality of the school organisation.

The effectiveness of our pastoral programmes is evidenced by the fact that we have never had to expel a pupil and we have no incidents of student suspension. In addition, our parent and student body readily access the services that we provide.

At St. Clare's, the role of parents in the education process is well recognised and respected. As a school, we value the support that we receive from the parent body. The continuation of this support is nurtured via excellent communication, regular meetings, information sessions and weekly paper/electronic communications. In addition, we appreciate the excellent response we receive from parents to various curricular, pastoral and extra-curricular events.

Assessment

The main purpose of assessment in St. Clare's Primary School is to facilitate progress in a student's learning and therefore assessment should indicate both a student's level of performance and his/her potential. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods; provide accurate feedback for the student and the teacher as well indicates student progress. We recognise the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the student from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study. Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term learning needs of the student and plans future work accordingly.

A broad range of assessment tools are used including assessment for learning and assessment of learning to evaluate student understanding, progress and achievement of expected learning outcomes in each curricular area.

Standardised tests are administered and used to inform our Learning Support provision. Where students are identified as possibly needing Learning Support on the basis of scores in the standardised tests, further diagnostic testing may be undertaken by Learning Support teacher in consultation with class teacher and following parental consent. (refer to Assessment Policy)

3. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

- The rigorous process of school development planning and the strong culture of self-evaluation supported by well focused staff development, which has led to significant improvements in attainments of students in Micra T & Sigma T standardised tests year on year.
- There is a marked improvement in the overall standards attained in Micra T & Sigma T by each student year on year.
- The better use made of data to identify low and under-achieving students in literacy and numeracy.
- The improved consistency of teaching in nearly all classes.
- Collaborative planning
- Greater variety of reading material for Senior Infants and First classes.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has **strengths** in the following areas:

Literacy

Reading:

- Jolly Phonics programme has improved word decoding skills of all pupils;
- Weekly trips to the school library have fostered the student's interest in reading;
- Fortnightly book reports in 3rd and 4th classes have kept the students focused on finishing their library book within a reasonable time frame;
- Reading logs help to motivate the students to read more;
- **DEAR** time is a working well in some classes but needs to be built upon and adhered to more rigorously in others;
- Paired reading has been working very successfully in the school. Parent information evenings on paired reading have helped to involve parents in their child's learning;
- Students enjoy reading and completing activities around their class novel;
- There is a wide variety of big books in the Infant classes;
- There are a number of literacy resources in classrooms and the resource room to extend and challenge high achieving students;
- Students are given the opportunity to develop their confidence in reading by reading to students in the infant classes.
- Parents are provided information on how they can develop their child's literacy at home through paired reading information meeting, hand-outs and the school website.

Writing:

- Handwriting has improved across the school in general;
- Students are given the opportunity to engage in a variety of writing genres, however this needs further structure;
- Posting on the school blog gives students the opportunity to report on school events and work completed in class.

Oral Language:

- Personal dictionaries in 3rd and 4th class have helped improve the student's vocabulary;
- Teachers use rich and varied language when speaking to the students;
- Teachers have been focusing on orally developing the student's language through structured discussions around a topic; using KWL charts, word walls, mind maps etc;
- Students are given opportunities to present their work on a topic orally to the class and the whole school, for example the Listening and Responding presentations at assembly every Friday.

Maths

- Mental maths is encouraged across all the strands and is an integral component of each maths lesson;
- There is an agreed approach to the teaching of subtraction, tables and number facts;
- A successful Paired Maths Programme involving first classes takes place annually year from mid January until the Easter holidays;
- Classes for Exceptionally Able Students every second Monday from mid February to June for students in 3rd – 6th classes who have scored above 90th percentile on Sigma T;
- Students in 5th and 6th class participate in the Primary Maths Challenge annually in November;
- Maths Trails integrated with PE for all classes from Junior Infants – 6th class

- Annual Maths Week;
- Recording Data and presenting it at our weekly assembly for the Walk to School Survey; and the Meter Reading data of light and heat used in the school;
- A variety of strategies are used to cater for differentiation, both for extension and reinforcement including classes for EAS;
- ICT is used to support students in their learning and teachers in their delivery of differing teaching approaches.

Physical Education

- Staff qualifications;
- Willingness of staff organise and run extra-curricular activities;
- Willingness of parents to participate in extra-curricular activities;
- Equipment and facilities;
- Partnerships with local clubs – Kevins Hurling Club, Templeogue Synge St GAA, Swan Leisure, Rathmines, Tennis Ireland;
- Each class receives the one hour PE class each week.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

Literacy

- Discrete teaching of comprehension strategies in all classes;
- Vocabulary development in all classes;
- Communication with parents regarding oral language and comprehension strategies;
- Open learning evenings for parents in oral language and comprehension strategies

Maths

- Provide a greater involvement of parents in their child's learning – parental information evenings on various areas of the Maths curriculum;
- Parental participation in open learning evenings in Maths;
- Providing tips for parents and short video clips on Parent Section the school website in how Maths is taught, what to expect at each class level and how they can support their child at home;
- Teachers to use concrete materials during every Maths lesson;
- Students need more experience of problem solving;

Physical Education

- Dry land aquatics for all class levels
- Swimming for 4th and 5th classes and fun swim for 6th class
- Teacher CPD – Inclusive physical activities,
 - ✓ Buntus,
 - ✓ Action for Life,
 - ✓ Be Active ASAP
 - ✓ Hurling Coaching Level 1
 - ✓ Yoga in the Classroom
 - ✓ Orienteering Lesson Plans
 - ✓ Active School Flag
- Introduction of non-competitive activities

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

- Review of Homework Policy following parental feedback
- Review and Update PE Policy

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report Legislative and regulatory checklist

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Time in school - Length of school year - minimum of 183 days - Length of school day 4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1 st -6 th classes)	Circular 11/95	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arrangements for parent/ teacher and staff meetings	Circular 14/04	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular P24/02 Staffing Schedule for current school year	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Retention of pupils	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing and reporting literacy and numeracy	Circular 0056/11 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed								
achievement											
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No									
Implementation of child protection procedures	<p>Circular 0065/2011</p> <p>Please ensure the following in relation to child protection</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="371 678 810 1261"> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 678 810 954"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE </td> <td data-bbox="810 678 954 954">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 954 810 1093"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed </td> <td data-bbox="810 954 954 1093">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1093 810 1209"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made </td> <td data-bbox="810 1093 954 1209">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1209 810 1261"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed </td> <td data-bbox="810 1209 954 1261">0</td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed 	0	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
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Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	<p>Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act</p> <p>Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007</p> <p>Please consider the following in relation to complaints</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="371 1503 954 1666"> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1503 954 1554"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal parental complaints received </td> <td data-bbox="954 1503 1254 1554"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1554 954 1606"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal complaints processed </td> <td data-bbox="954 1554 1254 1606"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1606 954 1666"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year </td> <td data-bbox="954 1606 1254 1666"></td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal parental complaints received 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal complaints processed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year 		✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
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Refusal to enrol	<p>Section 29 Education Act 1998</p> <p>Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="371 1809 954 2054"> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1809 687 1904">Number of section 29 cases taken against the school</td> <td data-bbox="687 1809 954 1904">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1904 687 1998">Number of cases processed at informal stage</td> <td data-bbox="687 1904 954 1998">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1998 687 2054">Number of cases heard</td> <td data-bbox="687 1998 954 2054">0</td> </tr> </table>	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	0	Number of cases processed at informal stage	0	Number of cases heard	0	N/A			
Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	0										
Number of cases processed at informal stage	0										
Number of cases heard	0										

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
	Number of appeals upheld	0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	0		
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	0		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	0		
	Number of cases heard	0		
	Number of appeals upheld	0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	0		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	0		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	0		
	Number of cases heard	0		
	Number of appeals upheld	0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	0		
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998		✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Code of behaviour ¹ including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993 NEWB Guidelines		✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

¹ Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the school's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated.

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
	Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000		
Special education needs policy ²	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) ³ 2004 Disability Act 2005	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Public service (Croke Park) agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	✓ Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other			

² Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school to “use its available resources” to identify and provide for the educational needs of those “with a disability or other special educational needs.”

³ The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for pupils with special educational needs.