



**Meeting the Challenge of
SEN Pupils in Mainstream
Schools**



Leading and Learning

Current Situation

- NCSE currently deciding on dates for the coming year
- First will be a request for the leavers. This will dictate how many posts are coming back into the pot (SNAs & Teachers)
- Secondly a deadline for submission of complete applications.
- Complication at present with the DEIS schools
- A further complication is GAM & Resource being separated



Leading and Learning

Inclusion ?

- **Inclusion – key policy objective**
- **Elusive concept**
- **No universal definition**
- **Initially – people with disabilities & learning difficulties**
- **Then included those marginalised or excluded for any reason**
- **Now we look at barriers to learning and participation and resources to support this**

1. Who can learn
2. What can they learn?
3. How should opportunities for learning be directed?
4. To whom should such opportunities be directed?
5. Do we value all children equally?



Leading and Learning

Key Questions

In answering the previous 5 questions we also need to examine:

1. How far should schools go?
2. How important is potential academic achievement/social growth in making placement decisions?
3. What are the rights of the other children?



Inclusion - Rationale

Leading and Learning

- *“The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.”*

Salamanca Framework for Action(UNESCO 1994)



Role of the Principal

Leading and Learning

“Schools that have made a commitment to inclusion are characterised by particular kinds of ‘culture’, usually related to a set of inclusive values and frequently in response to principals who take a stand on these values, and who engage the staff to work together to accept and value difference” (Ainscow et al, 2006)

Can the principal shift the focus from the pupil to the school?

“a shift from seeing the child as the problem to seeing the educational system as the problem” (UNESCO 2005)



Leading and Learning

Inclusion v Integration

- Many schools stuck in the mode of integration based on the assimilation model, ie., providing supports to individual pupils to 'fit them' into a mainstream school.
- Inclusion is about the pupil's right to participate, the focus is shifted from the pupil to the school. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than keeping up with the other students)

1. Self-evaluation of teaching provision, mainstream/SEN
2. Teaching Styles (Auditory, Visual, Tactile, Kinesthetic)
3. Organisation – roles & workload
4. Types of intervention – withdrawal v. In-class support
5. Three staged approach:
 - (1) Class teacher administers screening tests – draws up a short simple plan
 - (2) Pupil referred to learning/resource – diagnostic testing
 - (3) School may formally request consultation/assessment from outside specialist)



Leading and Learning

Intervention

***Let me get this straight -
- I'm falling behind the
other kids, so you're
gonna take me outta
class, work me half as
hard, cover half the
stuff, teach me slower
and expect me to
catch up!?"***





Leading and Learning

Types of Learners

Auditory : someone who learns best by talking & listening

Visual: someone who learns best by using their eyes to see information

Kinesthetic: learns best through movement, e.g. role-playing, projects..

Tactile: learns best through their sense of touch



Type of Learner

Leading and Learning

Teachers, on average, spend
70% of their time talking.

“If we were meant to talk more
than listen, we would have
two mouths and one ear”

Mark Twain





In-class Support

Leading and Learning

- A more integrated approach between class teacher and support teacher
- ‘Resource Pupils’ very often get a much longer input from support teacher
- Less discipline issues
- New and experienced teachers working together
- A variety of teaching methods



Leading and Learning

Changing to In-Class Support

- Overall staff decision
- For a fixed period, eg., last term
- Start with one class group , if necessary.
- Change personnel, if your circumstances allow

On average in Ireland 25-30% of all primary teachers work in supporting SEN

In Scoil Mhuire - in 2012 - 38%, 2010 - 35%

In Scoil Mhuire we view inclusion as school improvement rather than an add-on.

- Change is a process,
not an event

**“Success is a journey,
Not a destination”**

Chaim Ginott

**“We must become the
Change we want to see”**

Mahatma Gandhi





Leading and Learning
