



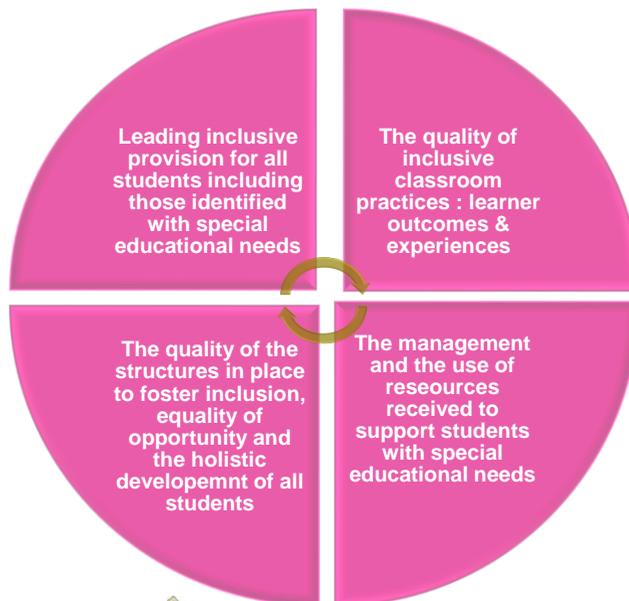
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agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

# Leading inclusive provision for students in Post-Primary Schools

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)  
February 2024

Shirley B. Murphy  
Senior Inspector  
Department of Education

## Aims





## Priorities

# Context & Priorities 2024

Promoting inclusive education is an important national and international priority

Ensuring all students including those special educational needs have access to high quality learning experiences is central to a quality education system

Evaluating and supporting inclusive provision for students is central to our work as inspectors

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# What is inclusion?



Inclusion is an **ongoing process** aimed at offering **quality education for all** while **respecting diversity** and **the different** needs, abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of all.

**Removing barriers** so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling

Inclusion is **not** about labels, numbers or places



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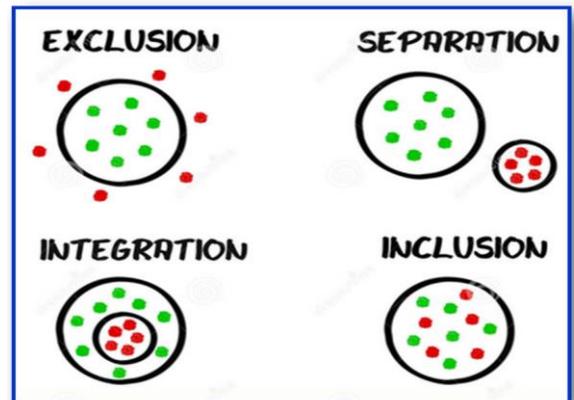
# What is inclusion?



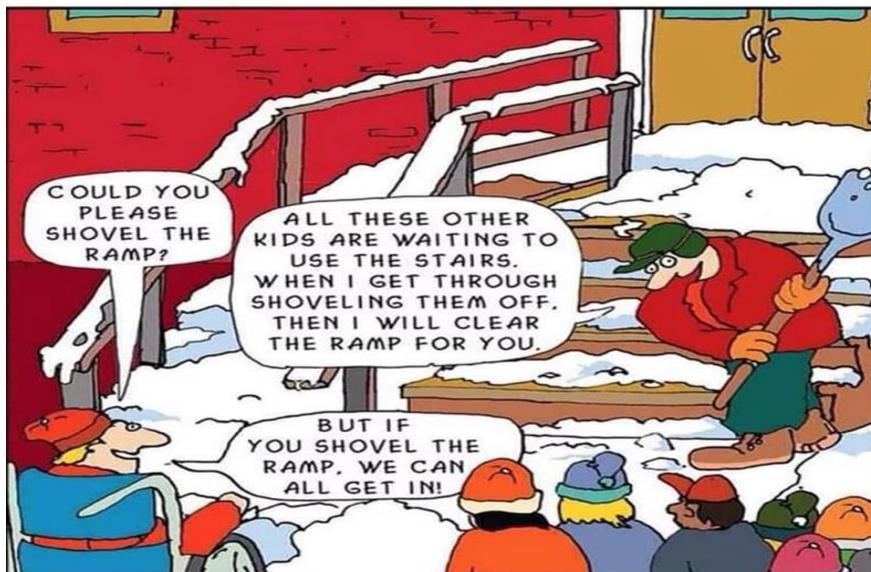
*“Inclusion is not about placing children in mainstream schools.*

*It is about changing schools to make them more responsive to the needs of all children.”*

NCSE



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# Leadership of inclusion and evaluating provision



How good are **the learning outcomes** for students with additional and special educational needs?

How good are **the learning experiences** of students with additional and special educational needs?

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How well is the school **using the resources** it receives for students with additional and special educational needs **to improve learning experiences and learning outcomes**?

The **quality of the structures** in place to foster **inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development** of all students

## Circular 0014/2017

Individual learning needs can be addressed in a variety of ways and should not be solely equated with withdrawal from class for one-to-one or group tuition.

Team-teaching may provide an appropriate model for supporting the individual needs of students in the collective setting of the classroom.

As necessary this can be combined with withdrawal for intensive and focused teaching of specific skills, based on level of need.





Standard in Looking at Our School

Principle

## Managing the organisation

Special education teaching supports provided to schools should be used **solely for the support of students with identified special educational needs**, including those students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).

**Students with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support**, and whenever possible, these students should be supported by **teachers with relevant expertise** who can provide **continuity** of support.

Schools should establish and maintain a **core team** of teachers to meet the needs of students with special educational needs.



Standard in Looking at Our School

Principle

## Leading teaching and learning

Resources provided to support students with special educational needs should be used to facilitate the development of truly inclusive schools.

Supports provided to students with special educational needs should be based on **identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress** (in consultation with parents and students) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines.

The **subject teacher has primary responsibility** for the progress and care of all students in the classroom, including students with special educational needs

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Rannóg Oideachais Speisialta  
Cor na Madadh  
Álba Luain  
Contae na hIarmhí



Department of Education and Skills  
Special Education Section  
Comanacády  
Athone  
Co. Westmeath

Circular No 0014/2017

Circular to the Management Authorities of all Post-Primary Schools; Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards

Special Education Teaching Allocation

1 Páirce

Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools  
Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

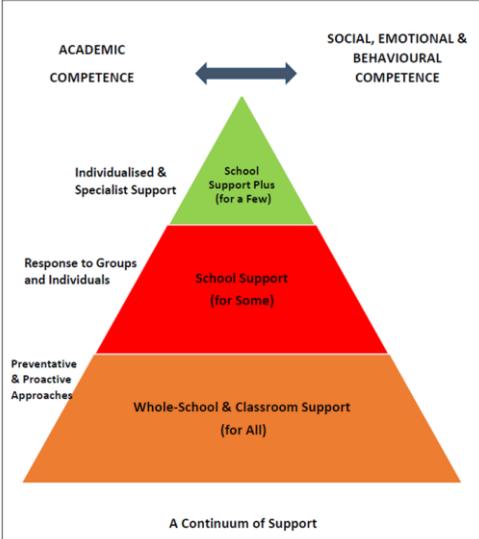






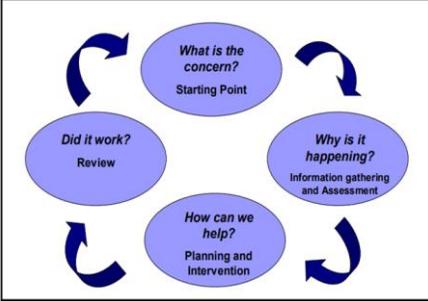

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A Continuum of Support

Identify





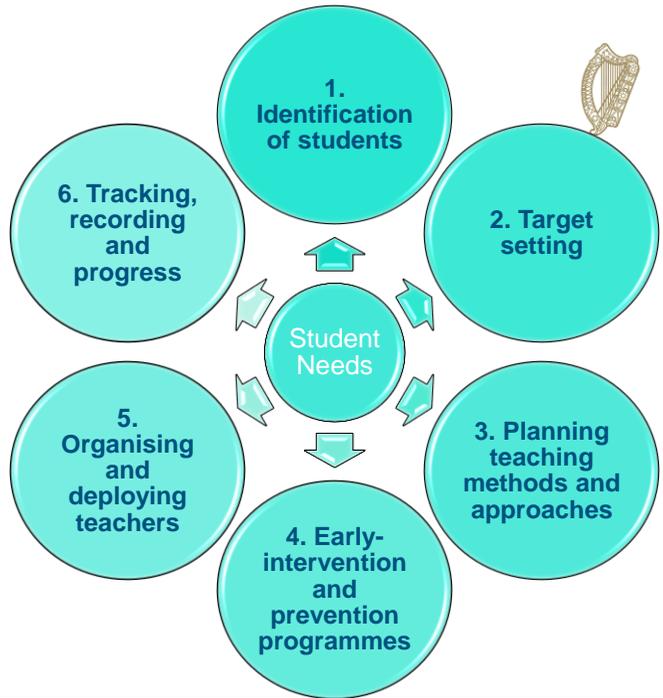
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# Effective Planning



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# Assessment

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Circular: 0001/2023

To: Boards of Management, Principals and Teaching Staff of Post-Primary Schools and CEOs of ETBs

Advice on the use of assessment instruments/tests for Guidance or for additional and special educational needs (SEN) in post-primary schools (Revising Circulars 0067/2020 and 0058/2019)



[AfL Presentation.pptx \(live.com\)](#)

## Formal

- Standardised & diagnostic tests\*
- Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts



## Informal

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Parent and student



- Assessment of learning and assessment for learning
- Pre-test and post-test assessments
- Assessment records should be clear, useful and easy to interpret and share



**Oide**

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

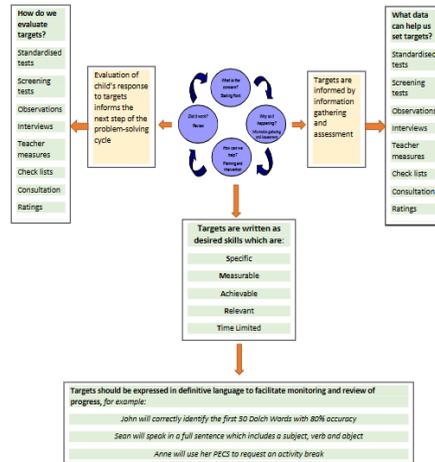
Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers



# Target setting



Appendix 1: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving framework



The **school's ethos** expresses a clear commitment to the inclusion of students with special educational needs and there is evidence of this in practice

Staff identify and engage in **CPD** that **addresses** the **needs** of all students in the school and develops their professional **capacity**

**School leaders monitor** the impact and outcomes of policies and actions on special education

## Key Indicators of Good And Very Good Inclusive Practices – Whole School

School leaders use resources in a manner that ensures those with the **greatest level of need** receive the **highest level of support**

The school is **student-centred** – It listens to the student's voice and promotes self-advocacy



Collaboration across mainstream, SET teachers, relevant professionals, parents and students is central to provision.



Teachers hold appropriately high expectations for all students



**Key indicators of good and very good inclusive practices in schools**

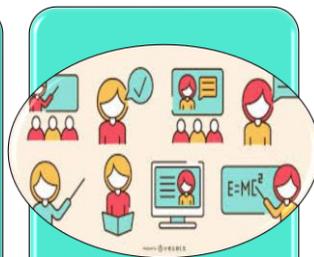
All support is provided with dignity and respect for the student in mind.



Learning activities are carefully aligned to meet the full range of learning needs including students' social, emotional and behavioural needs



Teachers set learning intentions that are clearly related to students' prior learning and that are contextualised to their learning need



Teachers' preparation for lessons includes preparing

- Language required for learning
- Learning tasks and activities suitable for students' needs
- Required resources



Teaching approaches are appropriate for the learning intention and for students' learning needs



Varieties of provision (team teaching, one-to-one) are **well-thought out** and impact positively on learning

**Key indicators: The quality of teaching of ALL students including those with identified with SEN**



Teaching is directed at eliciting **purposeful** student engagement and reflects a good balance between teacher input and **productive** student engagement



Teachers are aware of students' individual learning needs and adapt their teaching and learning practices to ensure all students are **purposefully engaged in learning**



**Assessment is seen as integral** to teaching and learning in the lesson

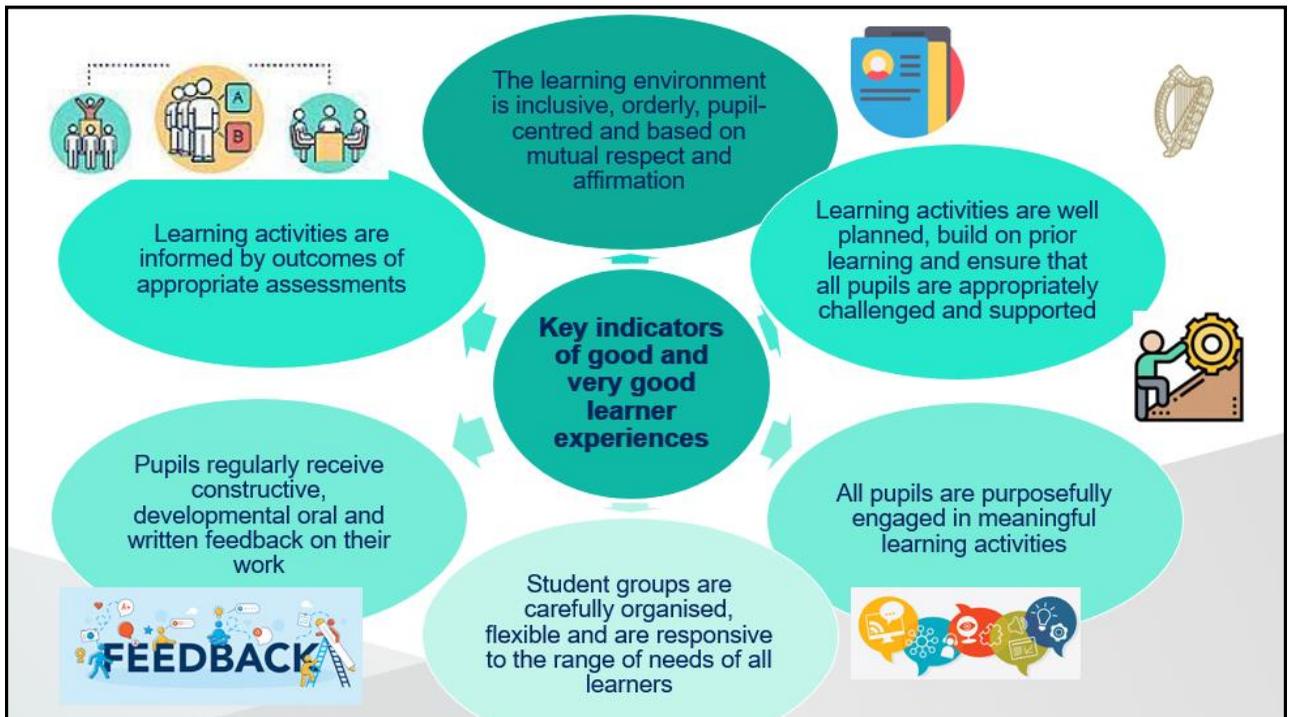
Key indicators: The quality of teaching of ALL students including those identified with SEN

## Learning: Learning outcomes



- Are priority needs identified?
- Include social and emotional domains?
- Challenging, realistic and in line with potential, strengths and need?
- Goals or targets progressive?
- Strategies linked to the targets and are interventions implemented?
- Use and apply the skills that are transferable including in literacy, numeracy and life skills?





## Learning: Learner experiences

Purposefully engaged in meaningful learning activities?



Respectful classroom interactions and positive relationships with at least one adult in the school and with peers?



Learning experiences challenging and supportive?



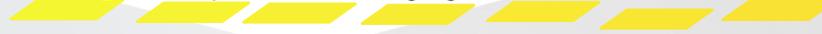
Reflect on their own progress as learners?



Experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning?



Wellbeing and experience belonging and connectedness to the school?

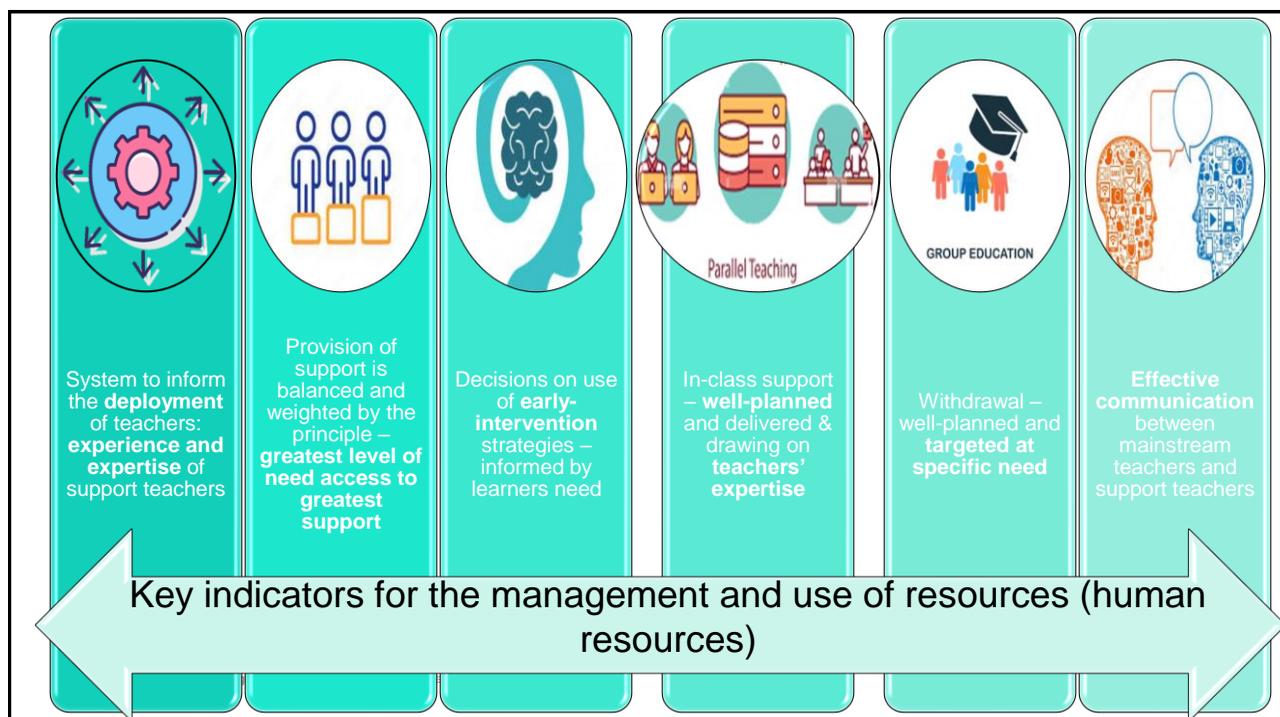


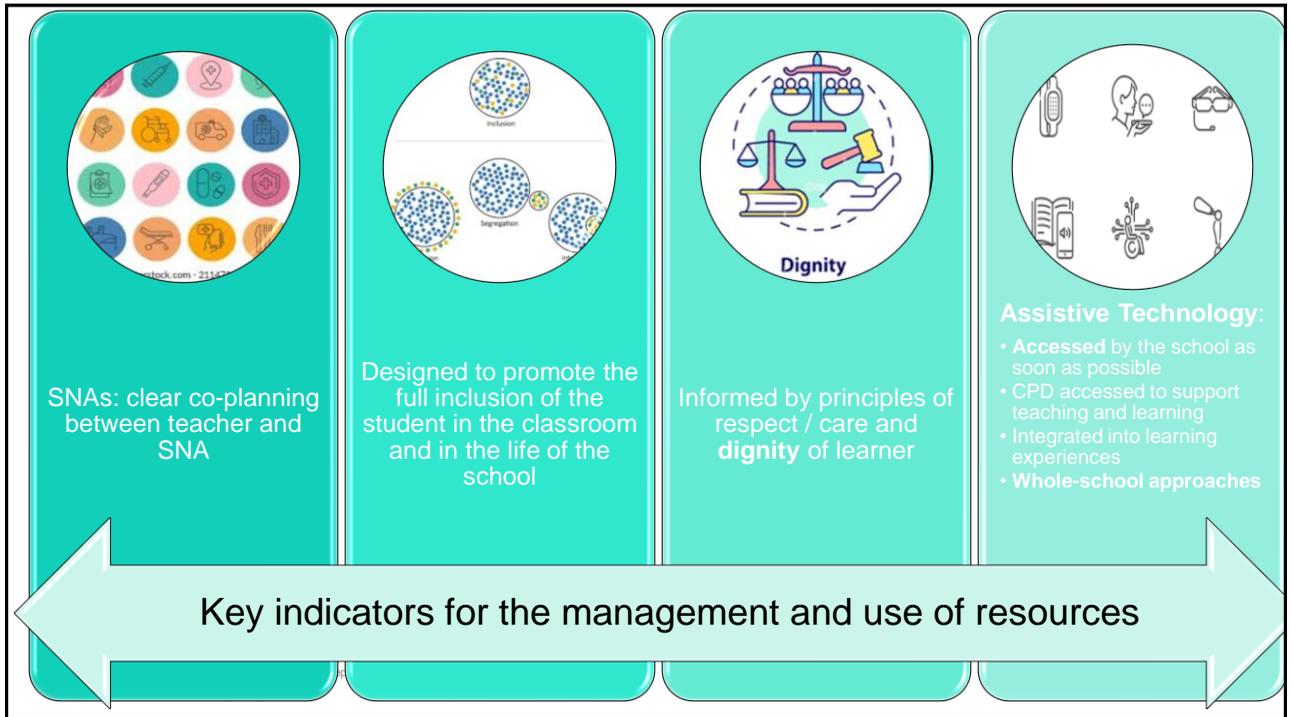


# The management and use of resources

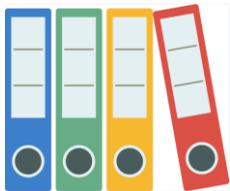
<b>Leading teaching and learning</b>	<p>School leaders:</p> <p>promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment</p> <p>foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each pupil</p> <p>manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum</p> <p>foster teacher professional learning that enriches teachers' and pupils' learning</p>
<b>Managing the organisation</b>	<p>School leaders:</p> <p>create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful learning environment, and sustain it through effective communication</p> <p>manage the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation</p> <p>manage challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice</p> <p>develop and implement a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability</p>
<b>Leading school development</b>	<p>School leaders:</p> <p>communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation</p> <p>lead the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation</p> <p>build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community</p> <p>manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education</p>

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# Document Review



- Student Support Files including assessment
- Policy on additional and special educational needs
- Assessment policy
- Enrolment policy
- Policy on staff deployment (if available)
- Policy on special needs assistants (if available)





# REMEMBER...



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More in common than differences

range of emotions

range of interests

range of learning preferences

need for belonging

need to be heard  
(opinions, goals, choices)

need for affirmation

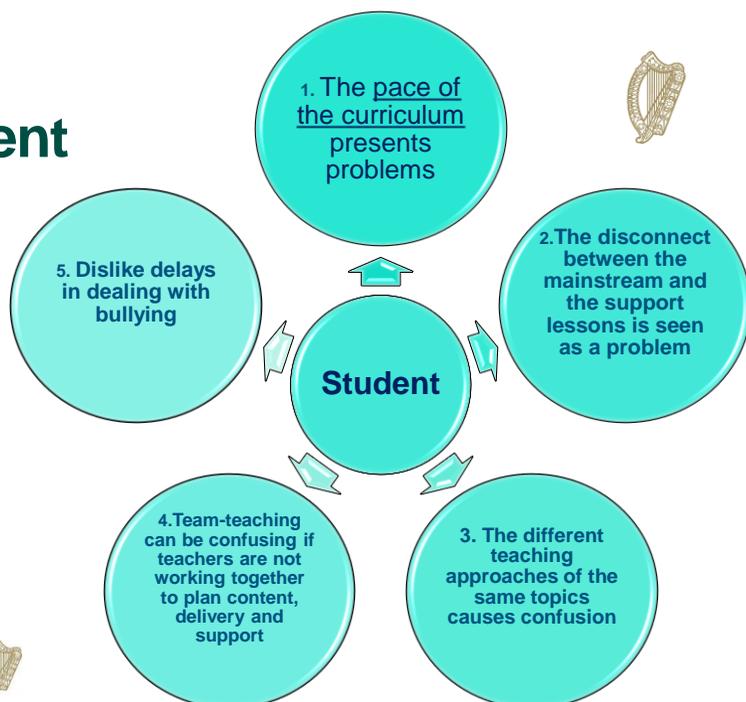
valuable insights into own learning



# Voice of the student



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## Over to you...



Reflect on....

- What is working well in your school? How do you know?
- What areas of provision would you like to develop further?
- How could you do this?



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Thank you