

Investigating Inclusive Education in Ireland: Constructing Case Studies for the Identification of Commonalities and Exceptionalities

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Project IRIS

(Inclusive Research in Irish Schools)

A four year longitudinal research project, funded by the National Council for Special Education, conducting the most in-depth study of special and inclusive education conducted in Ireland to date.

[WWW.projectiris.org](http://www.projectiris.org)

Project Phases

Phase 1: Construction of national and international literature reviews (Rose, Shevlin, Winter & O'Raw (2010)

Development of research instruments.

Focus groups with service users and providers

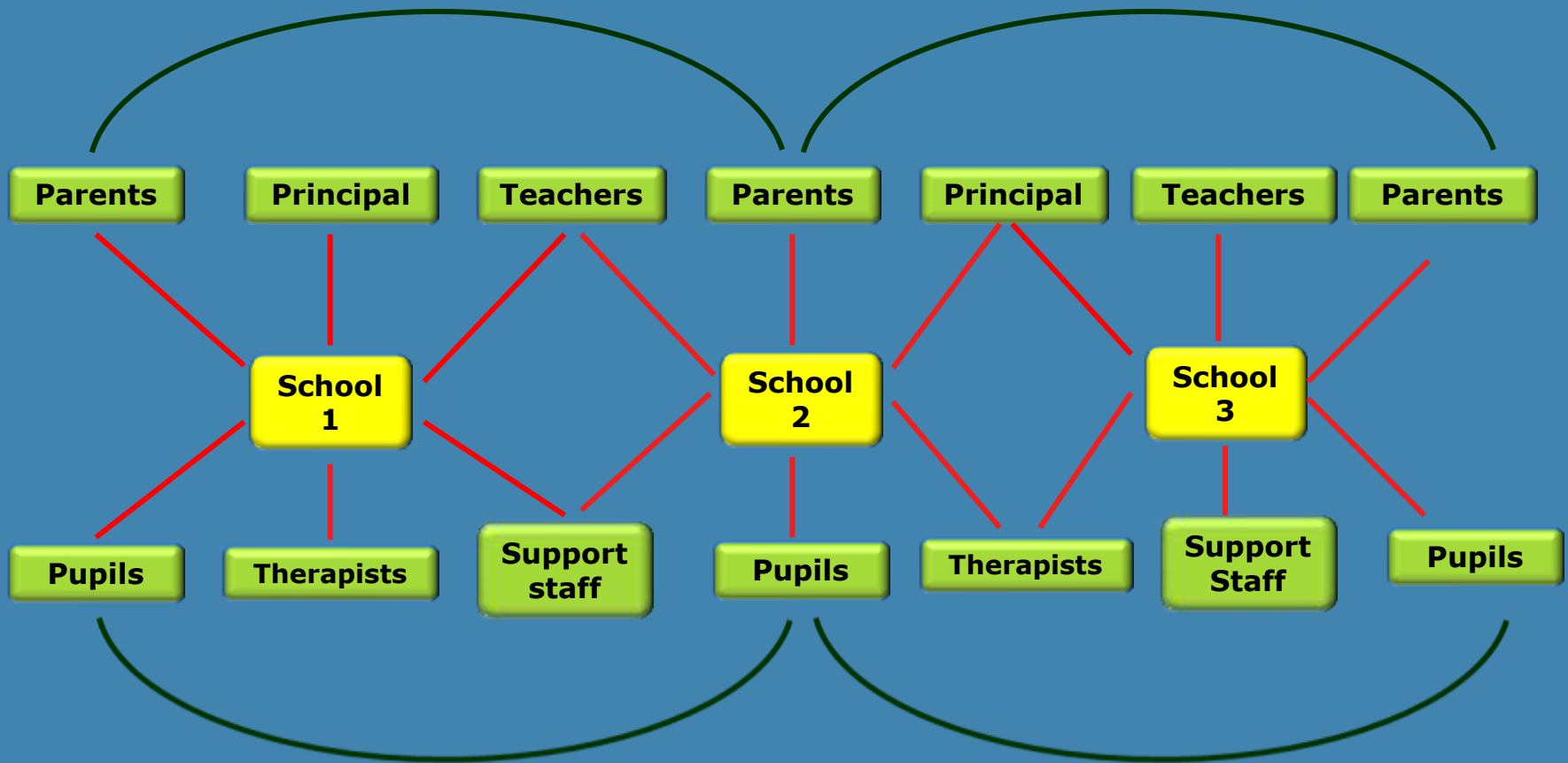
Phase 2: National electronic survey of schools.

Field work in primary schools and construction of case studies

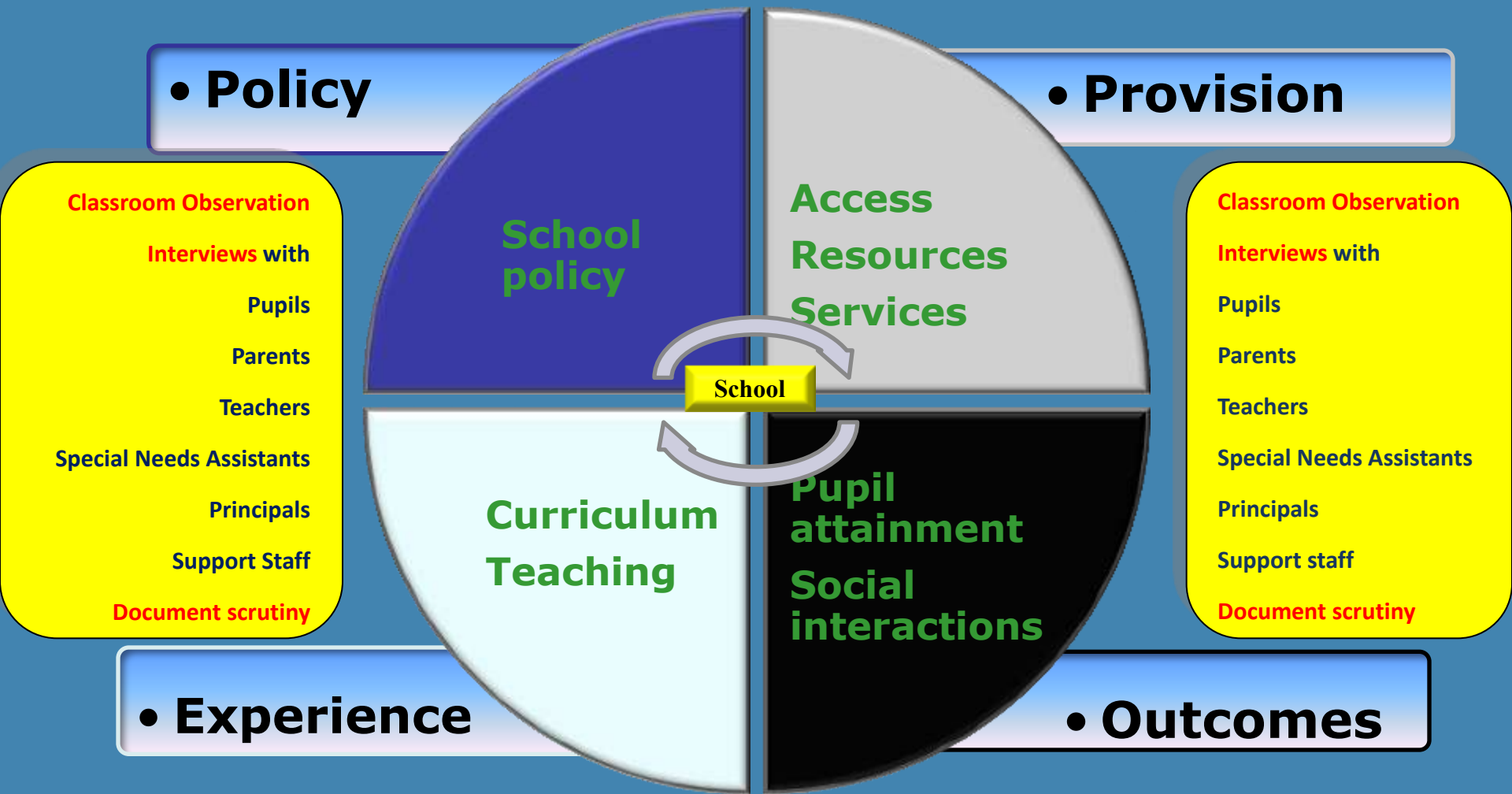
Phase 3: Field work in post-primary schools and construction of case studies

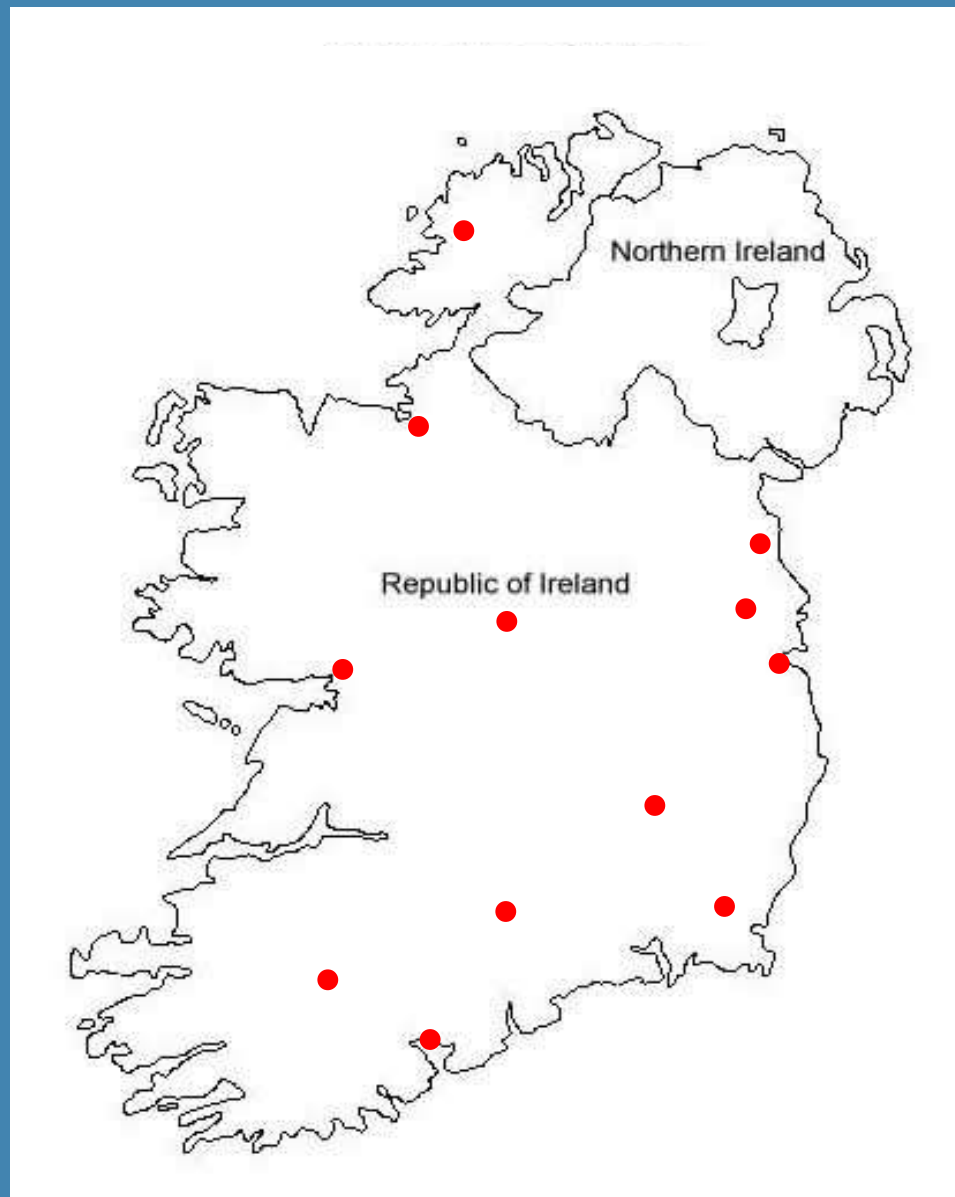
Phase 4: Return visit to primary schools

Phase 5: Reporting



Case Study Model – Based on Ragin (1987)





Variables	
Urban/rural	
Catholic National School	
Non-catholic denominational	
Educate Together	No religious affiliation - secular
Gael Scoil	(majority of curriculum delivered through Irish medium)
Large/medium/small	<100, 101-400, >400
Socio-economic status	

Data set	Primary 1	Primary 2	Primary 3	Primary 4	Primary 5	Primary 6	Primary 7	Primary 8	Primary 9	Primary 10	Special 1	Special 2	N=
Interviews	21	21	29	33	29	26	18	12	19	22	23	17	270
Documents	20	38	35	20	24	19	2	3	34	17	45	6	266
Observation	5	9	9	5	7	3	3	7	8	7	5	2	70
Photograph pictures	2	0	0	0	21	5	6	0	4	10	17	16	81
Video	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Website	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	10
Total data set =													706

Average interview time = 34 minutes

Analysis

All data coded at two levels using Creswell's data reduction approach (Creswell 2008).

All findings verified and triangulated through a multi-methods approach.

Verified findings used to establish a bank of statements which described the response of a school to the policy, provision experiences and outcomes in relation to pupils with special educational needs.

Those common to schools used to define the current status of approaches to SEN in Ireland. Others less frequently seen identified as exceptionalities.

COMMONALITIES

Those procedures, approaches and resource provisions for addressing special educational needs that are common across schools.

- How effective are these?
- Why do schools (commonly) adopt these?

EXCEPTIONALITIES

Those procedures, approaches and resource provisions for addressing special educational needs that are seen in very few schools.

- How effective are these?
- Why do some schools adopt these?
- Why are these not more commonly used?

Initial findings related to specific schools will not be presented until the final report is delivered to NCSE. However, it is possible to indicate an example from these in relation to Lewis' (1991) model for the provision of differentiated learning experiences.

Our initial findings for primary schools indicates that whilst all schools provide some examples of differentiated learning, this is inconsistent and varies across the schools.

Project IRIS: Types of differentiation observed during case study visits in primary schools using Lewis' (1991) Model	Definition Example	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	School 7	School 8	School 9	School 10
Differentiation of content	Pupils in a group all work towards a single aim, such as reading competence, but use several different reading schemes to get there.										
Differentiation by interest	All pupils are producing graphs, but their graphs represent different data according to personal interest.										
Differentiation of Pace	All pupils work at the same task, or with the same materials, but the teacher has different expectations of the time required for completion.										
Differentiation of access	Materials or methods of working is different for individual pupils. E.g. whilst one pupil writes with a pencil another uses a computer and another produces pictorial work.										

Differentiation of outcome	One pupil writes a story, another draws a picture to tell the story and another records the story on audio tape.										
Differentiation of curricular sequence	Pupils enter the curriculum at different points or take part in the curriculum in a different order from that of his peers										
Differentiation of structure	Some pupils work on a step by step (task analysed curriculum) whilst others work on “chunks”.										
Differentiation of teacher time	The teacher gives more time to some pupils during specific tasks in order to ensure access.										
Differentiation of teaching style	Some pupils may require individual instruction whilst others can work in small groups or pairs.										
Differentiation of level	All pupils work through a similar sequence, in maths for example, but at a variety of levels										
Differentiation by grouping	the teacher groups particular pupils together for specific activities. Pupils act as supporters, or work with peers with whom they are comfortable or confident										

References

Creswell, J.W. (2008) (3rd edition) *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. New Jersey: Pearson

Lewis, A. (1991) *Primary Special Needs and the National Curriculum*. London: Routledge

Ragin, C. (1987) *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Los Angeles: University of California Press

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