



CF122

**Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
Office of the Minister for Education and Skills

Mr. Finian McGrath TD  
Minister of State at the Departments of Employment Affairs & Social Protection,  
Justice & Equality and Health  
Dáil Éireann, Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**PLEASE QUOTE REF NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE.**

Our Ref: DES-CU-01703-2019

18<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Dear Finian,

Thank you for your recent correspondence on behalf of Ms. Barbara Reilly, South Dublin County Council in relation to the Speech Therapy/Occupational Therapy pilot programme rolled out within schools, including schools in the Lucan area.

You may be aware that a demonstration project to provide in-school and pre-school therapy services has been introduced for the 2018/19 school year.

The demonstration project has been developed by a Working Group which includes representatives from the Departments of Education, Children and Youth Affairs, Health, and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

The project is being managed and co-ordinated by the National Council for Special Education with clinical support also being provided by two HSE Therapy Managers which have been assigned to the project.

The purpose of the project is to test a model of tailored therapeutic supports that allows for early intervention in terms of providing speech and language and occupational therapy within 'educational settings'. This innovative pilot will complement existing HSE funded provision of essential therapy services.

The project is taking place in Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) 7 Region of South West Dublin, Kildare, and West Wicklow.

This region has been selected to ensure that the pre-school and in-school therapy model can be tested in both urban and rural locations and with a suitable mix of various types of schools and pre-schools.



75 schools, including a representative sample of primary, post primary, and special schools are taking part in the project.

75 Pre-school settings associated with primary schools participating in the project are being included in order to provide for therapy interventions to be made at the earliest possible time and to create linkages between pre-school and primary school provision.

In total, 150 settings are participating in the demonstration project.

The list of the participating schools and pre-schools has been published on my Departments website.

The model is designed to provide for a clinical Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy service delivery model of Specialist, Targeted and Universal supports in line with best practice for pupils which will see them receiving supports along a continuum of provision depending on the extent or severity of needs of the child/pupil.

The project has been taking place over the course of the 2018/19 school year and is on going.

The project is being evaluated over the course of the 2018/19 school year and this evaluation will be completed as soon as possible.


The evaluation will inform considerations regarding any possible extensions of the service to other areas or regions.

You may be aware, however, that my Department also recently announced the trialing of a School Inclusion Model – a new model of support for students with special educational and additional care needs over the course of the 2019/20 school year.

This will build on the one-year in school therapy pilot which was commenced in September 2018. The model will be considerably expanded on this initial pilot, and will be offered to the 75 schools that participated in this initial work.

As part of the School Inclusion Model, it is therefore intended to also continue to develop in school therapy project over the course of the 2019/20 school year.

Yours sincerely,



---

Joe McHugh TD

Minister for Education and Skills