

# Case Study

## Kilronan School







## SEN Case Studies

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From 2011 to 2013, CCEA Regulation conducted development work with special schools and Learning Support Centres to look at how to promote and recognise the achievements of learners with SEN. The context for this work was the Entitlement Framework (EF). It was important to ensure that learners with SEN could fully realise the benefits of the EF through better recognition and promotion.

From September 2011 to June 2013 a number of special Schools and Learning Support Centres trialled the use of Learning Programmes. These are programmes of qualifications, at entry level and Level 1, accredited to both the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

Schools that took part in trialling Learning Programmes reported a positive experience. They have indicated a willingness to continue to use Learning Programmes of accredited qualifications with their learners. These case studies document their experiences. The case studies should provide you with insight and guidance on how to identify Learning Programmes and introduce them into your school.



“The increase in the range and level of qualifications we are making available means that all pupils aged 14+ can have their work accredited.”



**Kilronan School**, Magherafelt, caters for pupils, from 3 to 19 years old, with severe learning difficulties. Based in the North Eastern Education and Library



**Bernie McCormick**

Board (NEELB) area, the school currently has 87 pupils who come from a wide rural catchment area. The school has 10 classes, including a pre-school class and a school leavers' class (aged 16–19).

The school is part of the Magherafelt Learning Community (MLC). Through the MLC, it has established links with other post-primary schools in Magherafelt. Effective and long established partnerships with Northern Regional College (NRC), Magherafelt, and South West College (SWC), Dungannon, continue to grow and develop. The school also has links with Sperrinview Special School in Dungannon, with joint attendance at courses at SWC.

Kilronan started using Learning Programmes (LPs) as part of the SEN project in September 2011. The project team developed a project resource booklet to advise on suitable qualifications for learners with SEN. The booklet made us aware of the range of qualifications available. Some of our teachers began training for new QCF qualifications to help

prepare us for using them in LPs we had identified. One teacher received training from OCR in its Life and Living Skills qualification. Three others received training in the Personal Progress qualification from ASDAN.

### **LEARNING PROGRAMMES**

As part of the SEN project, we identified LPs of accredited qualifications covering Entry Level and Level 1. In these LPs, it was recommended that we should aim to cover three strands:

- Literacy and Numeracy;
- Learning for Life and Work (LLW); and
- a vocational element.

We developed LPs for pupils aged 14 and above.

Staff and management agreed that we should introduce LPs gradually, as we all needed to become familiar with the new qualifications. With this in mind, we devised LPs in collaboration with NRC and SWC that would offer pupils accreditation in subjects such as ICT, Manufacturing and Work Skills. We used units from QCF qualifications to cover these subjects. We then expanded this offer, by adding units in Health and Safety and Participating in a Mini Enterprise Project.

The units selected offered accreditation at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3. We followed these LPs to ensure that all pupils in the two most senior classes could access accredited courses to receive formal recognition for their learning.

**“Pupils now have a wider range of experiences and skills.”**

# SEN Learning Programmes Project

In collaboration with local post-primary schools, some pupils also participated in Occupational Studies Level 1 in Horticulture and Beauty and CCEA Creative Crafts Level 1.

“Pupils are more motivated to learn and work as the levels are more achievable.”

Example 1: Year 1

	Pupil A	Pupil B	Pupil C	Pupil D	Pupil E	Pupil F	Pupil G	Pupil H	Pupil I
Manufacturing	√	√	√	√	√				
Health and Safety	√			√	√	√			
ICT	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
Mini Enterprise		√	√				√		√
Work Skills					√	√	√		
Creative Craft		√	√				√		√
OS Horticulture	√		√						
OS Beauty								√	

Example 1 shows that pupils undertook between one and five units/qualifications of work, with most of the units/qualifications within the vocational element.

The SEN project recommended that an LP should aim to cover the three areas of Literacy and Numeracy, LLW and a vocational element. We felt it was more beneficial for our pupils to concentrate on only one of these strands in the first year. We planned to incorporate units/qualifications covering the other strands gradually in the following years. In the first year of the project, we concentrated on the vocational strand. By the end of Year 1, 17 pupils had successfully achieved units and qualifications within their individual LPs.

In Year 2 of the project, beginning in September 2012, twenty pupils in Years 11 to 15 followed LPs. They have studied accredited units/qualifications in Literacy and Numeracy as well as other units/qualifications in ICT, Car Maintenance, Basic Personal Hygiene and Retail.



## Example 2: Year 2

	Pupil A	Pupil B	Pupil C	Pupil D	Pupil E	Pupil F	Pupil G	Pupil H	Pupil I
Literacy	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Numeracy	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
ICT	√	√	√		√	√	√		
Taking Part in a Performance	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Work Skills									√
OS Retail	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
OS Beauty							√	√	
Media	√	√			√			√	
Car Maintenance			√	√					
Personal Hygiene						√			

By the end of Year 2 pupils cover all three strands of an LP, although only a few pupils study Personal and Social Development (PSD). We anticipate that in Year 3 we will emphasise the PSD strand with all pupils participating in units of work in this area.

### LINKS WITH OTHER PROVIDERS

Kilronan School had long established links with NRC and SWC before the project began. The determination of both the school and the colleges to expand the curriculum offer to the pupils has led to increased collaboration. In 2012–2013, we were able to make courses available at college for a group of less able pupils who previously had been unable to access college provision.

With the formation of a local Area Learning Community, we have established firm links with two local post-primary schools. Pupils from Kilronan attend both schools for courses and a class from one high school attends Kilronan for Occupational Studies in Horticulture.

Timetabling in mainstream schools, with differing





lengths of lessons, has been a difficult obstacle to overcome when providing collaborative courses. The school's rural location means it is difficult to form links with training providers. This can be because of difficulties travelling to other providers and/or lack of provision of discrete courses for young people with special needs.

Providing an increased number of accredited qualifications for the pupils in Kilronan has raised a number of issues.

- Costs: we incurred additional costs, such as centre approval and pupil registration fees, in providing a greater offer of accredited qualifications for our learners;
- Time: in a small school, teachers must take on a number of roles and, as we don't have a dedicated examinations officer, offering accredited qualifications adds to this number. Our workload has increased because of this and we have had to become familiar with and adopt new assessment and examination procedures.



## LEARNER EXPERIENCES

The increase in the range and level of qualifications we are making available means that all pupils aged 14+ can have their work accredited. Pupils now have a wider range of experiences and skills. The flexibility of QCF qualifications means that subjects that have traditionally been difficult to accredit, such as Literacy and Numeracy, are now available in small units.

Pupils are more motivated to learn and work, as the levels are more achievable. Pupils can choose which units of work to take, which increases their levels of interest. They are now able to have an element of choice in their learning.



## TEACHER EXPERIENCE

To access the benefits that QCF qualifications offer our learners with SEN, we needed to be more proactive in our approach to accreditation. While we had been involved in accredited courses/ qualifications for a number of years, these were all on the NQF. We needed to familiarise ourselves with QCF qualifications, and the opportunity for unit accreditation. To do this, we had to undergo new training and research to find a qualifications offer that would suit us as a school.

At this stage, I became involved in the development work with CCEA Regulation. I became aware, through the project resource document, of the many qualifications at entry level and above that were available from different awarding organisations. When the SEN project began, I was delighted to be involved as this meant that I had support from other teachers as well as from CCEA Regulation staff.

As a school we embarked on a new curriculum offer of accredited qualifications. We received initial training from the awarding organisations we had chosen. However, because these qualifications were very new to us, we realised that we needed greater guidance and support. This is something that I would recommend schools insist on when taking on new qualifications.

The SEN project organised conferences and seminars that awarding organisations attended. These were a great opportunity to discuss which type of qualifications we needed for our pupils. We are now more than halfway through Year 2 of the project and I have noticed a lack of qualifications in vocational subjects at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3. I would like to see awarding organisations reviewing their existing provision and considering the needs of teachers and pupils.



“I hope that as a result of this project, more schools will become involved in the provision of Learning Programmes for their pupils and that the case studies help them in the provision of suitable qualifications.”

As part of the SEN project, teachers met once a term at CCEA. We were able to share ideas and issues, and help each other if we had already come across the same issue. CCEA Regulation staff facilitated these meetings. They were on hand to help solve our issues, both at the meetings and by email and telephone. They helped us to cope with new paperwork and provided the project resource document, which has been an invaluable resource.



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