

Hi

I work as a post-primary SPiM teacher and would like to provide evidence for the enquiry.

I have found that many mainstream staff are not clear on SPiM and it's purpose. There exists a feeling of otherness within schools and SPiM classes are seen as other and not a part of the school as a result.

Mainstream teachers have not received training on how best to support SPiM pupils and these teachers reported feeling untrained for supporting them.

There needs to be a whole school approach to integrating SPiM pupils and there is so much time spent on waiting for classrooms and chasing this around that there is no focus on training staff and making them aware of what is going to take place in the school.

There is also lack of clarity in the role SLT should pay to support SPiM teachers and support staff. Also, regarding reasonable adaptations to later start time, uniform adaptations, timetable adjustments and so on. If a child has joined from mainstream already a pupil in the school, there is an expectation that they maintain their uniform as before rather than making adjustments.

Other students in the school are not informed of what is happening either. It is almost as though the SPiM is unknown as it was not talked about in form time or assemblies.

If there was clear guidance and the appointment of an SSST link before the September start of SPiM classes it would be very beneficial.

Funding is not clear and especially if there is renovation work to be completed. I was told that I could not order furniture until the room had been completed. There was no option to just have a room painted. It needed to be a full spec which I understand but this resulted in several months of waiting.

Pupils with SEN had to wait for more than a year for a classroom with promises that it would be completed in time. This is very different for pupils who rely on routine.

Some pupils are being taught in temporary accommodation while renovation work is being completed, some of which is completely unsuitable and has been chosen by the EA. Only later on it is seen and deemed unsuitable.

Overall, there needs to be a solid framework for SPiM that looks at case studies and offers support from designated officers from the outset for all aspects of setting up classes throughout the entire school.

Kind regards,

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