Hansfield ETSS

NCSE Practice-Based Research Programme 2025/26 School Research Summary

Hansfield ETSS
Learning Through Discovery

Hansfield ETSS is a Post-Primary Educate Together school with 817 students and three autism classes. We are based in Dublin 15 and 57% of our students do not speak English as their first language.

School and project details



Name of school: Hansfield ETSS

Practicing teacher lead: Julie Rogers

Research theme: Leadership and Management – Implementing targeted Teacher Professional development for the inclusive classroom

Research aim: The aim of this study is to increase teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge in teaching within an inclusive classroom through the provision of targeted, in-school professional development opportunities for teachers of two specific class groups (one mainstream class and one Autism class).

Research Question 1:
Have teachers received professional development in the area of inclusion?

Research Question 2:
With the professional development they have/have not received, do they feel prepared for the inclusive classroom?

Research in practice

Methods

A pre and post intervention questionnaire was completed by participants. The questionnaire included both quantitative and qualitative questions. Research Question 1 captured numerical data related to teacher professional development experience. Research Question 2 explored teachers' feelings and experiences, which were best understood through open ended questions.

All Participants completed a targeted professional development session from the NCSE and participated in a community of practice facilitated by Oide in L2LP.

Participants

There were 11 participants including Post-Primary Teachers who teach in an autism class and who are teaching in mainstream and deliver the Level 2 Learning Programme.

Research findings

Key themes that emerged from the Pre- intervention questionnaire:

1. **Desire for more professional development (PD)**
   A clear majority said they would have liked PD more in the last 18 months.
2. **Barriers to professional development**
   46% of participants identified time as the biggest barrier. Other barriers included being new to teaching, lack of suitable courses, and competing PD commitments.
3. **Willingness to attend training**
   90.9% advised would attend in-school training if it were provided.
4. **Teachers feel overwhelmed**
   On teachers' emotional responses, many initially described feeling nervous, overwhelmed, anxious, or unsure, especially when they were new to the class or unfamiliar with students' needs. After several months, many reported feeling more comfortable, positive, and better able to support students, often because they had built relationships, understood student needs more clearly, and established routines. However, a few still felt stressed or concerned, especially about time, planning demands, and meeting the needs of all students.

Overall, the findings suggest that staff are committed and willing, but they would benefit from more time, more targeted training, and greater involvement in support planning.

Top three findings

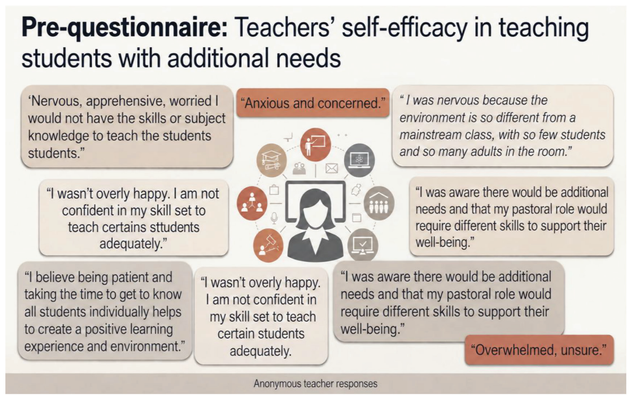
1. **Time and workload remained the biggest issue**
   In both the pre- and post-questionnaires, teachers said these classes required more preparation than other classes, and lack of time was the main barrier to doing more professional development.
2. **Teachers were willing and engaged but still needed more support**
   Teachers were broadly positive about inclusive teaching and were willing to attend training. The post-intervention comments suggest the training was useful. Their written comments suggest that the training was seen as helpful and relevant. However, teachers still reported difficulties with meeting a wide range of student needs.
3. **Confidence was strongest in Autism and Dyslexia, but weaker in other areas**
   Across the data, Teachers were most confident supporting students with Autism and Dyslexia, highlighting a need for targeted training in other areas.

Pre-intervention findings

PRE-INTERVENTION

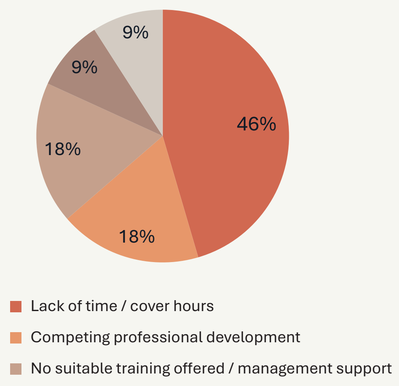
Teachers' self-efficacy and barriers to participating in professional development

Teachers' self-efficacy



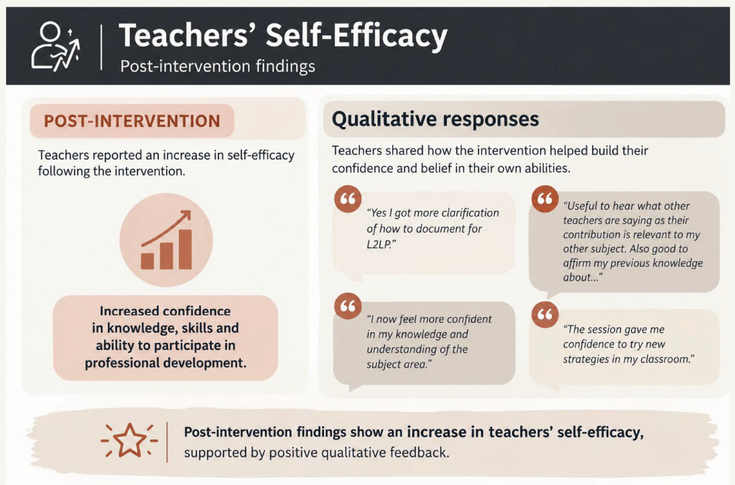
Pre-questionnaire responses highlight apprehension, uncertainty and concerns about skills.

Barriers to professional development

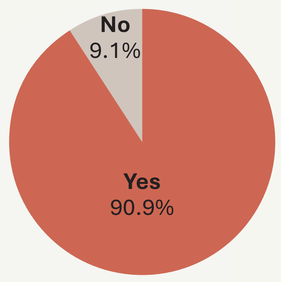


Post-intervention findings

Teachers' self-efficacy and barriers to participating in professional development



Willingness to attend and engage with school professional development



Impact of our research

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, this research highlights the importance of professional learning in inclusion for increasing staff knowledge and confidence. More importantly, it has identified the practical barriers that prevent teachers from engaging in such training.

As a result of these findings, the school has prioritised in-school training and has created opportunities for teachers to attend during the school day. This was achieved by scheduling training sessions and communities of practice during exam periods and by removing participating teachers from the supervision roster to allow them to attend training. This now takes place twice per year and will continue next year in order to build on the training provided this year.

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