

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Coláiste Cois Siúire
School Address	Mooncoin Co. Kilkenny
Roll number	70620C

Date of Evaluation: 10-11-2016



WHAT IS A DEIS EVALUATION?

In 2005 the Department published *DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools): An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion*. The aim of this action plan is to ensure that the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities are met.

Schools are expected to develop action plans for improvement in the following areas (referred to as the DEIS themes): attendance; retention; educational progression; examination attainment; literacy; numeracy; partnership with parents; partnership with other schools and educational providers, and with external agencies. The DEIS Evaluation model evaluates and reports on the school's action planning for improvement.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated the school's action planning for improvement under the following headings:

1. DEIS action planning for improvement
2. DEIS themes

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	8-10 November 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Examination of school's current action plans for improvement• Observation of DEIS-related activities and interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent focus-group interview• Analysis of parent and student questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Coláiste Cois Siúire has participated in DEIS since 2007. It has the services of a part-time home school community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). At the time of the evaluation there were 145 students enrolled in the school. It offers the Junior Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and the established Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

The following key findings arise from this evaluation:

- Senior management and staff with DEIS-related responsibilities demonstrate good commitment to DEIS.
- Targets have been established and a number of interventions initiated in all areas of DEIS; some of these targets are overly broad.
- While teachers generally endeavour to fulfil their DEIS-related responsibilities there is a lack of whole-school cohesion and focus on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives undertaken.
- Attainment is the main DEIS theme for development.
- Initiatives provided through the SCP are very supportive of targeted students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key recommendations arise from this evaluation:

- The DEIS core team, with the support of the principal and the board of management, should lead the process of engaging the whole staff in DEIS, in particular the implementation and monitoring of initiatives.
- Greater attention should be given to raising attainment, through whole-school professional development on differentiation and assessment for learning, and improved homework practices.

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

The overall quality of DEIS action planning for improvement is satisfactory. Targets have been set and a number of initiatives proposed for each DEIS theme. The baseline data used to inform these targets dates from 2011. It is recommended that baseline data be generated at the end of one DEIS cycle and used to inform the next cycle. This would acknowledge successes achieved and serve to prioritise the areas most in need of further development. Some detail on the baseline data should also be included in the DEIS plan to set the context for the targets established and to facilitate evaluating improvement. While the initiatives link with the targets established, some are overly broad, making it difficult to implement them in a cohesive manner and to monitor their progress. This has resulted in the ineffective measurement of outcomes.

There is scope for development in the leadership of DEIS action planning for improvement. The core team comprises the Deputy Principal, the School Completion Programme (SCP) co-ordinator, the Guidance Counsellor and the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher. Notwithstanding the good work being carried out by this team, the evidence accrued during the evaluation indicates the need for all teachers to embrace the DEIS initiative as a whole-school activity requiring whole-school ownership and accountability.

To ensure that DEIS in its entirety becomes a whole-school initiative, the core team should be expanded to include the literacy and numeracy link teachers and the co-ordinator of special education needs. The team should then lead the whole staff in developing a cohesive approach to DEIS planning and implementation. This includes integrating identified targets and measures for each theme into everyday teaching and learning, monitoring progress, adjusting targets as appropriate and evaluating overall outcomes.

DEIS should be included on the agenda of every staff meeting and appropriate planning time given. Planning for and implementation of DEIS targets should also be consistently referenced in subject-planning documentation.

A targeted cohort of students has been identified for particular attention by the DEIS team, which is also the student support team. The target list evolves in response to the needs of the student cohort. This is good practice.

Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools (2011) without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2011).

2. DEIS Themes

2.1. Literacy, Numeracy and Examination Attainment

The targets and initiatives for literacy, numeracy and examination attainment vary in their quality and effectiveness, ranging from fair to good.

Literacy

The school has a draft literacy policy identifying the school's strengths and areas for development. However, to better support its implementation, some up-to-date base-line data should be garnered through the sampling of students' attitudes and experiences regarding literacy, along with the standardised tests administered on entry into the school. In order to assess progress, the testing and retesting of a sample of students should also be undertaken before and after specific literacy initiatives. This is not currently happening.

A literacy link teacher has been appointed and is due to attend relevant in-service. This is welcomed as it should support the introduction of more specific literacy targets. Current targets which comprise improving interest in reading, oracy skills and key words are not specific enough to bring about measureable improvement and there is no co-ordinated approach to implementing initiatives.

While key-word charts were displayed in the classrooms visited, their use was not maximised by students. A more cohesive approach to the key-word initiative is recommended, where students are afforded opportunities to extend, embed and enrich their general vocabulary as well as subject-specific vocabulary.

The range of books in the school library has increased and boxes of books have been made available for teachers to bring into their classrooms to encourage reading. Students can borrow books weekly. However, according to the student questionnaires, over half the students do not read at home. To address this, consideration should be given to expanding the range of newspapers, periodicals and magazines made available for borrowing.

Class discussion and group work were resources identified in the plan to promote oral literacy. While good practice was noted in some lessons, the general evidence accrued indicated scope for development in the use of group work and purposeful class discussion in order to build up students' communicative confidence and competence.

Numeracy

Good progress in promoting numeracy in the school has resulted in some positive and measurable outcomes. The numbers of students taking foundation-level Mathematics at Junior Certificate has reduced significantly in recent years. Students are also encouraged to follow the higher-level Mathematics programme both in junior and senior cycle.

As teachers of mathematics, the principal and the numeracy link teacher encourage consistent practice across subject departments in the teaching of numeracy-related concepts.

Examination Attainment

The examination attainment targets in the DEIS plan cite an increase in student numbers taking higher-level English and Mathematics in junior cycle and following the higher-level programmes in fifth year. While this is welcomed, these targets should be extended to include all subjects, particularly those where there is currently significant uptake of ordinary level in Junior Certificate.

Teacher professional development, cited as a resource to improve attainment, has not been sufficiently prioritised. In-service training for differentiation and assessment for learning should be sought forthwith to support teachers in their work.

The principal has initiated work on tracking students' progress from entry into the school to Junior Certificate. Plans to expand this good practice into a whole-school activity across all subjects are timely.

Examination of a sample of student journals in junior cycle indicated that homework is not regularly assigned in certain subjects. This needs to be addressed in order to support improved attainment. The success of initiatives such as the homework club and the planned tracking of progress also necessitate students being given regular and sufficient homework.

2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression

Attendance and retention are very good in the school. While some students had records of significant absence, they were adequately explained. Parents reported good school support for students frequently absent through illness.

The number of suspensions has increased. This is of concern particularly if those suspended are students targeted under DEIS. Given the successes already achieved with the use of restorative practices by members of the SCP, it is recommended that restorative justice become a whole-school approach to discipline. This would better support the positive approach to behaviour cited in the DEIS plan.

There is good uptake of the after-school homework club by the general body of students in first and second year. However, only three of the sixteen attendees are from the targeted list of students and two are absenting themselves more as the term progresses. These issues of participation and attendance should be addressed.

The sole target for educational progression is that 100% of students will progress to further education or an apprenticeship. Notwithstanding the very good work carried out by the guidance service, it is essential that educational progression becomes a whole-staff priority in terms of motivating students and particularly where there are subject-specific requirements for entry into third-level courses.

2.3. Partnership with parents and others

Participation in the parents' association is currently very low. Furthermore, the targets to improve partnership with parents do not align with the initiatives identified to achieve them. The attendance at the meeting with parents and the very good response to the parents' questionnaire for the DEIS evaluation indicate good support for the school and the students. A review of the targets and initiatives should be undertaken in order to benefit from this demonstration of support.

Parents with experience of the HSCL service reported positively on its work. However, parents would welcome courses that would help them support students completing homework and progressing academically.

The SCP promotes community partnerships through its summer camp for targeted students and the additional educational and social supports for small groups or individual students as required. It is recommended that the staff avail of the professional development offered by the SCP to consolidate successful outcomes of a study skills programme delivered to students. Partnerships with local third-level institutions have also been fostered.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of students' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on students' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;