

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Scoil Náisiúnta Bhantiarna Lourdes
School Address	Hospital Hill, Bunclody, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford
Roll number	03633H

Date of Evaluation: 22-11-2018



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
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DEIS EVALUATION

In 2017, the Department published the DEIS (*Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools*) Plan. The aim of this plan is to ensure better educational outcomes for learners in schools from disadvantaged communities and to maximise the chances of every child getting the best possible opportunity to fulfil her/his potential in life.

Schools are expected to develop action plans for improvement in the following areas (referred to as the DEIS themes): attendance; retention; transitions; literacy; numeracy; partnership with parents; partnership with other schools and educational providers, and with external agencies. Post-primary schools are also expected to develop action plans for improvement in examination attainment.

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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	22-11-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview with principal and relevant staff• Examination of school's current action plans for improvement• Observation of DEIS-related activities and interventions• Pupil focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent focus-group interview• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Our Lady of Lourdes NS is a co-educational primary school in the town of Bunclody in North-West Wexford. It participates in Band 1 of the Department of Education and Skill's Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools (DEIS) programme. It has the services of a full-time home school community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). At the time of the evaluation there were 259 pupils enrolled in the school. The staff comprises an administrative principal, thirteen mainstream class teachers, five support teachers based in the school and two support teachers who are based in other schools.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

The key findings in relation to the DEIS action planning for improvement process in this school are the following:

- The overall quality of action planning for improvement is good; there is scope to further develop literacy and numeracy targets for pupils.
- The quality of literacy planning, provision and pupil attainment is good overall with a range of interventions implemented; there is a need to regularly review these interventions to ensure their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the target pupils.
- The overall quality of action planning for improvement in the areas of attendance, retention and progression is very good.
- Classrooms are managed very effectively and the learning environment throughout the school is very positive and supportive.
- The principal is highly praised for developing and encouraging a wide-ranging and innovative selection of co-curricular and extracurricular initiatives which support the varied interests and ability levels of the pupils.
- The school implements a number of successful interventions to encourage parental involvement and parents hold the school in very high regard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aspects of the DEIS action planning for improvement process that require development in this school include:

- There is scope in the literacy and numeracy plans to express some of the targets in more specific and measurable language to guide classroom interventions and identify intended improvement in pupils' learning.
- Literacy interventions should be regularly analysed to ensure their effectiveness.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The leadership and quality of the DEIS action-planning process is of a good standard overall. The school has collaboratively devised action plans for each of the DEIS themes which outline the targets and actions for improvement. In literacy and numeracy these targets are based on improving standardised test results. The targets are monitored and reviewed systematically with effective use made of statistical data. There is evidence that the plans are impacting positively on teaching and learning.
- Notwithstanding this, there is scope in the literacy and numeracy plans to express some of the targets in more specific and measurable language to guide classroom interventions and identify intended improvement in pupils' learning. This would support teachers in planning for differentiation. These targets should then be used to assess pupils' progress. The school is advised to follow the six-step approach to school self-evaluation (SSE) as outlined in the SSE guidelines.
- A range of approaches and initiatives linked to the DEIS targets is implemented across each of the five DEIS themes. The frequent gathering of information about pupils' attitudes and interests supports the selection of interventions and ensures that pupils are involved in the planning process. It is advised that the approaches and initiatives be regularly monitored to assess their effectiveness. A very broad range of DEIS resources is used effectively and efficiently.
- The school has identified the importance of pupils' wellbeing and is strongly committed to supporting pupils in a variety of ways. Classrooms are managed very effectively and the learning environment throughout the school is very positive and supportive. Pupils' achievements are acknowledged and celebrated and pupils of the week and month are chosen and presented with certificates at the weekly assembly. The school works closely with the School Completion Programme co-ordinator who together with project workers provide play therapy, counselling and social skills programmes for a range of pupils including the target pupils. The school has identified continuing professional development needs and teachers engage in courses to address these needs.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

- The quality of DEIS action-planning for literacy is good overall. Targets linked to improving standardised test results have been set and a broad variety of interventions including Literacy

Lift-Off, *Aistear*; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, group writing projects, station teaching and the explicit teaching of the comprehension strategies and writing genres is implemented across the school. Improvements in pupils' attainment in literacy are evident and the school is continuing to develop pupils' literacy skills.

- The use of baseline data to analyse the effectiveness of Literacy Lift Off on pupils reading is praised and it is advised that this highly effective practice be extended to all literacy initiatives.
- The school provides a very print-rich environment which includes high quality pupils' writing across the genres. The school has a well-resourced library and pupils in the early years read a wide range of interesting and suitable graded readers. Further differentiation of texts in the middle and senior classes would support the incremental development of pupils' reading skills and ensure that they are reading according to their ability levels. The school is praised for actively encouraging pupils to become members of the local library and for regularly bringing pupils on visits. The school works to support parents in developing their children's literacy skills and they are also encouraged to take part in classroom activities that promote literacy.

Numeracy

- The quality of action-planning for improvement in numeracy is very good and is impacting very positively on pupils' learning. A number of very successful whole-school strategies designed to achieve numeracy targets are consistently implemented across the school. These include the agreeing of how Mathematics lessons should be structured and the importance of consistently spending time on mental Mathematics and problem-solving during lessons. High quality resources are available and employed to support pupils' learning while maths games are used to increase pupils' engagement with Mathematics. Almost all pupils reported that they like Mathematics and in the focus-group interview the pupils spoke very positively about their learning in Mathematics.
- It is evident from the observation of teaching and learning in Mathematics that the pupils enjoy their learning and engage very positively with the activities. Opportunities for pupils to explain and justify their answers is a praiseworthy feature of lessons. Suitably challenging activities are available for the pupils with a particular capacity for Mathematics including the entering of pupils in national competitions such as the Pangea Maths Challenge and the Bebras Thinking and Computational Challenge. Chess and computer coding are taught to interested pupils to encourage their lateral thinking.

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

- The overall quality of action planning for improvement in the areas of attendance, retention and transitions is very good. The level of attendance in the school is high. Specific targets and appropriate strategies, have been put in place to achieve this. These include the establishing of a breakfast club and a homework club, in-school activities including volleyball and soccer at lunch-times and a particularly praiseworthy range of after-school clubs and activities facilitated by the principal, staff members and SCP. These activities cater for the wide range of interests of the pupils from sports to chess and languages.

- The school in general, and the principal and HSCL in particular, have established very positive relationships with parents and actively encourage and support them in improving their children's attendance. In the questionnaire responses all parents report that their children come to school most days. Effective monitoring is undertaken and parents are informed at regular intervals of their children's attendance.
- The school successfully sets targets to support the retention of all of its pupils and they all progress to second level provision. Strategies in place to support this include supporting parents to complete the enrolment forms for the secondary schools, a transition programme for sixth classes which includes a day-long visit to a local secondary school and a SCP summer camp in a secondary school. Very close links are also established with the local play schools and children from these schools are invited to attend various events during the year and an open week for parents and children is held each year.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

- The quality of the DEIS action planning to support partnership with parents and other professionals involved in supporting pupils in this school is very good. The work of the HSCL co-ordinator in supporting home-school partnership is highly effective. Parental involvement is planned for in a strategic and effective manner. Targets in this area are clear and comprise practical goals that are connected to improving pupils' learning and development. The HSCL co-ordinator visits families regularly and works effectively in encouraging parents to visit the school and to actively participate in a range of activities, for example Maths and Reading for Fun, *Aistear* and station work with small groups. Parents are also offered opportunities to participate in courses organised by the school. Of particular value is the weekly toddler group, during which, parents are encouraged to play with their children. Parental involvement enhances the inclusive atmosphere in the school.
- It is evident from the responses to the parent questionnaires and comments from parents during the focus-group discussion that parents hold the school in very high regard. It is noteworthy that all parents reported that they feel welcome in the school. The school has an active parents' association which gives ongoing support to the school. There are very good links between the school and a range of external partners, including the Ferns Diocesan Youth Service, the local library and GAA and soccer coaches.

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 of 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 pupils'/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. 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 pupils'/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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board is delighted with the findings of the school's report:

- "The school has identified the importance of pupils' wellbeing and is strongly committed to supporting pupils"
- "Classrooms are managed very effectively and the learning environment throughout the school is very positive and supportive"
- "It is evident from the observation of teaching and learning in Mathematics that the pupils enjoy their learning and engage very positively with the activities"
- "parents hold the school in very high regard. It is noteworthy that all parents reported that they feel welcome in the school."
- "The school provides a very print-rich environment..."
- "Almost all pupils reported that they like Mathematics"
- "...highly praised for developing and encouraging a wide-ranging and innovative selection of co-curricular and extracurricular initiatives which support the varied interests and ability levels of the pupils."
- "There is evidence that the plans are impacting positively on teaching and learning"

The Board acknowledges and deeply appreciates the work of the school staff and their dedication to supporting our pupils and in particular to the provision of co-curricular and extracurricular initiatives. It thanks the parents for their continued support of, and involvement, in the life of the school.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Recommendation 1 re Further Development of Literacy and Numeracy Targets

The school's Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators in conjunction with the other teachers have now expressed some of the targets for Literacy and Numeracy in more specific and measurable language to guide classroom interventions as recommended by the report. The revised plans are now available on the school's website.

Recommendation 2 re Review of Interventions

The school's Literacy Co-ordinator has scheduled a half-termly review of each specific measure undertaken to achieve focused targets in Literacy to assess their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the target pupils. These reviews will be available on the school's website. Similar half-termly reviews will take place to monitor and evaluate progress in Numeracy to ensure the very high standards in Numeracy are maintained.