

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

**DEIS EVALUATION**

**REPORT**

<b>School Name</b>	St. Peter's Primary School
<b>School Address</b>	Hawthorn Road Bray Co Wicklow
<b>Roll number</b>	18464S

**Date of Evaluation: 24-04-2017**



## **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; progression; literacy; numeracy; educational attainment (including examination attainment); 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 inspector(s) 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## DEIS Evaluation

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Dates(s) of inspection</b>	24-04-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Examination of school's current action plans for improvement</li><li>• Observation of DEIS-related activities and interventions</li><li>• Pupil focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent focus-group interview</li><li>• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Peter's Primary School participates in Band I of the Department of Education and Skill's Delivering Equality in School's (DEIS) programme. It has the services of a full-time home-school-community-liaison (HSCL) coordinator, a full-time Headlamps project worker and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). In the 2014/2015 school year the school changed its status from a single sex boys' school to a mixed, co-educational school. At the time of the evaluation there were 160 pupils enrolled in the school.

### 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:**

- Led by a highly dedicated and committed principal and deputy principal, a very effective and meaningful planning process which is impacting positively across the DEIS themes has been developed.
- Teachers have high expectations for the pupils and the school's focus on ensuring that all initiatives are child-centred and firmly grounded in enhancing pupils' learning and development is commended; there is scope to include the pupils' voice more fully in the DEIS action planning process.
- The school's awareness of the importance of ongoing professional development and collaborative decision-making in the planning and implementation of initiatives is praised.
- There are high levels of skills and expertise among staff members with a large number of teachers having completed post-graduate qualifications and other training; there is scope for the development of processes and structures by which teachers can share their skills and expertise.
- The planning process is yielding significant improvements across the DEIS themes, in particular the school's work on numeracy through its DEIS action planning process has resulted in significant gains in Mathematics amongst the pupils with the achievements of many pupils in Mathematics now at a very good level.
- The school is praised for its very positive and effective engagement with parents and the school community.

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

- The voice of pupils should be enhanced and made more meaningful in selecting and designing interventions and in assessing the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning.
- School leadership should develop processes and structures by which very good practice and expertise among the staff can be effectively shared; this could include the phased introduction of collaborative peer review.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT**

The school is praised for the quality of the planning undertaken to date. The practice of target setting is well established in the school. Targets are based on data and are specific, measurable, relevant and attainable (SMART). Very effective use is made of statistical data and its year-on-year analysis to provide baseline information that informs the improvement targets for the school. Some attitudinal data from surveys of teachers, parents and pupils has also been used to inform the target-setting process. There is scope for incorporating the voice of pupils more fully into the planning process, including provision for the systematic, frequent gathering of information about pupils' attitudes, learning dispositions and interests, and to use that information to inform the choice of interventions and the subsequent monitoring of the effect the interventions have had on pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and are highly committed to securing ongoing school improvement.

Led by a highly dedicated and committed principal and deputy principal, a very effective and meaningful planning process which is impacting positively on classroom practices and pupils' attainment has been developed. A collaborative approach has been adopted to planning with clear roles and responsibilities assigned to individual members of staff. A wide range of clear, relevant and appropriate strategies to improve attendance levels, parental involvement and pupil attainment in literacy and numeracy has been agreed and implemented successfully. The school's focus on ensuring that all interventions and strategies are clearly aimed at improving learning outcomes for pupils is praised. The teachers demonstrate very good awareness of the importance of ongoing professional development and collaborative decision-making. A large number of staff hold post-graduate qualifications and staff have accessed training in a range of areas concerned with students' safety and well-being, including training in autism and in the management of challenging behaviour. Under the guidance of school leadership, and building on existing flexibilities in the school in relation to team-teaching, the school is well placed to develop processes by which very good practice and expertise among the staff can be effectively shared; this could include the phased introduction of collaborative peer review. The school's use of DEIS resources to support the strategies is highly effective.

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 and Numeracy**

#### ***Literacy***

Very good practice in relation to action planning for improvement in literacy outcomes is evident in the school. The targets for improvement which have been set are practical and adhere to the key elements of the SMART acronym. Detailed analysis of standardised test outcomes has been very well used to identify priority targets and interventions for securing improvements in oral language, reading and writing. The agreed interventions are implemented in a systematic and consistent manner across the school. Interventions include *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, use of *Reading Recovery* strategies, *First Steps*, *Write a Book Project*, paired reading, guided reading, station teaching and the discrete teaching of comprehension strategies. Approaches are effectively co-ordinated, highly organised and well resourced. Commendable support for pupils' literacy development under the DEIS planning process is also provided by the learning support and resource teachers in both mainstream classrooms and special education settings in the school. Consequently, teachers' classroom practices in this area are informed, coherent and are likely to bring significant benefits to the pupils in the long term.

The *Aistear* framework has been implemented successfully in the infant classes. A challenge for the school is to monitor the implementation of this programme carefully in order to determine the learning outcomes for the children, their evolving interests and dispositions, and to subsequently incorporate that information into the planning for pupils in older classes.

The school's guided reading programme is implemented effectively in classes across the school. Suitable resources have been put in place to support the programme. There is very good involvement of parents in reading activities in the school. While in the questionnaire returns a healthy majority of pupils state that they like reading, consideration should nonetheless be given to establishing ways in which this figure can be improved. Including the voice of pupils in the selection of novels through the establishment of book clubs at each class level could be pursued as one means of seeking to improve pupils' attitude to reading. Assessment practices in the school are very good. Assessment of learning (AoL) and assessment for learning (AfL) are central planks of teachers' practice and this is planned for in a very effective manner. Of particular note is the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support assessment of pupils' learning.

#### ***Numeracy***

The quality of target-setting for improvement in numeracy is excellent. Mathematics targets are informed by rigorous norm-referenced and criterion-referenced analysis of the outcomes of standardised tests, teachers' own daily, weekly and monthly assessments of the children's mathematics learning based on the mathematics curriculum taught to date, parental perspectives on children's mathematics progress from month to month, and teachers' own observations of the children's engagement in mathematical processes.

A number of successful whole-school strategies to achieve numeracy targets are consistently implemented across the school. These include, at the senior end of the school, 'Morning Maths' which comprises a daily task for the pupils requiring them to do one addition sum, one subtraction sum, one division sum, one multiplication sum and one word problem. The pupils themselves play an active role in assessing their progress with the 'Morning Maths' tasks and they also actively assess how they are

doing in relation to mental mathematics and the recall of number operations. The school also has an agreed approach to mathematics problem solving which is rigorously followed, with considerable positive impact on the pupils' problem-solving capacities. A strong, fun and vibrant whole-school emphasis is placed on oral mathematics games. Skilled in-class support of pupils' mathematics learning is provided by the learning-support team.

Monitoring of pupil progress in Mathematics is excellent. A whole-school daily, weekly, monthly and yearly approach to monitoring of pupil learning in Mathematics is in place. In addition to annual school reports, parents are provided with monthly reports on their child's progress in Mathematics and are invited to give their views on that progress. Of particular note in relation to the school's success in the area of Mathematics is the incorporation of ICT into mathematics learning in the school and its use for speedy, individualised and class monitoring of how pupils engage in and succeed with their mathematics learning. The use of ICT to provide real-time formative assessment data adds to the responsive, customised nature of the mathematics lessons experienced by a number of the senior pupils in the school. It is advised that, as a next step in enriching the planning, delivery, and assessment of the mathematics curriculum in this school, the pupils' perspectives on mathematics learning and information about their particular mathematics interests be regularly elicited and used to inform these processes. It is advised that a suitably challenging, spiral mathematics curriculum be available to children with a particular capacity for mathematics.

The school's work on numeracy through its DEIS action planning process has resulted in significant gains in Mathematics amongst the pupils, with the achievements of many pupils in Mathematics now at a very good level. The analytical, rational, step-by-step approach to mathematics teaching and learning in this school is highly commended.

## **2.2 Attendance, Retention, Progression**

There is commendable practice around the promotion of good attendance. SMART targets have been set and attendance rates in the school have been improving incrementally. Over the past two years in particular the school has sought to improve the attendance of problematic non-attendees i.e. those pupils who are absent for more than twenty days per year. Specific targets and appropriate strategies, have been put in place to achieve this. These include breakfast club, homework club and a praiseworthy range of after-schools clubs and activities facilitated by staff members on a voluntary basis. The HSCL and SCP co-ordinators very effectively promote the importance of regular attendance among parents. Where a pupil's attendance pattern is giving cause for concern, the HSCL coordinator or the principal follows up on this with a phone call or a meeting. The school successfully retains all of its pupils and they all progress to second level. Strategies in place to support this include regular reminders to parents of sixth class and first class pupils, a transition programme for sixth class, and a summer camp with one of the local post-primary schools for target pupils. In the pupil questionnaires all pupils responded that they would progress to second level provision.

## **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. Effective strategies are undertaken to

develop parental involvement in their children's education. These include a wide range of parenting courses and a range of in-class initiatives in literacy, numeracy and arts activities. Interventions are monitored appropriately. The school is commended on the quality and frequency of information given to parents about their child's progress in school. In the questionnaires, all parents stated that the school is a warm and welcoming place to be. 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. The school has an active parents' association which gives ongoing support to the school. There are very good links between the school and range of external partners.

## **Appendix**

School response to the report

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of St Peter's Primary School would like to acknowledge the extremely positive affirmation of the work of all staff, students and parents contained in the DEIS Evaluation report. As a school we will continue to be led by a dedicated Principal and will work towards improving on the good practices which were identified in the report.

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

The Board of Management accepts the recommendation of increasing the inclusion of the students' voice. Data was gathered from small focus group discussions, as well as our yearly student questionnaires, in June 2017. Information from both sources will be used to improve the school and to inform our DEIS plan 2017-2020. A section for 'student comments' has been included in our Monthly reports (2017-2018) and a Maths Learning Log has been included in the students' self-assessment folders (2017-2018).

The Board of Management also accepts the recommendation of developing processes and structures by which teachers can share their skills and expertise. The Principal has arranged for a 'teach meet' style workshop to take place in September where staff can share what they have learned from Summer Courses.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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' 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 <b>very good</b> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;