

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Francis St. C.B.S.
School Address	John Dillon St. Dublin 8
Roll number	18477E

Date of Evaluation: 08-12-2016



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; 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 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 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.

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	06-12-2016 to 08-12-2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal, teachers and other relevant personnel• Examination of school's current action plans• 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 chairperson of the board of management, principal and teachers• Review of documentation

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Francis St C.B.S. participates in Band I of DEIS. It has the services of a full-time home school community liaison (HSCL) coordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme. At the time of the evaluation there were 130 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:

- The principal's leadership of DEIS action planning for improvement is exemplary.
- The commitment of the staff to the school's priority goals within a culture which consistently and thoughtfully promotes the well-being of pupils and respect for all is outstanding.
- The school's work on literacy through the DEIS action planning process has resulted in literacy gains amongst the pupils, most notably in relation to their oral language skills, their reading standards and their great interest in books.
- The implementation of strategies on a whole-school level to promote attendance, retention and progression has been highly successful.
- Planning processes to support partnership with parents and with the community more broadly are excellent.
- There is scope for developing the use of assessment information in planning written mathematics tasks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- To support pupil learning further in Mathematics, there is a need to ensure alignment between where the children are at in Mathematics and the kinds of independent written tasks they are given to do.
- It is advised that the staff, under the leadership of the principal, develop existing monitoring processes to include the staged introduction of collaborative peer review.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT

- The leadership of DEIS action planning for improvement in this school is exemplary. Through her responsive, transformational leadership and her promotion of a collaborative, collegial culture, the principal empowers staff members to participate in and lead DEIS planning processes in a highly effective way. The commitment of the staff to the school's priority goals within a culture which consistently and thoughtfully promotes the well-being of pupils and respect for all is outstanding. DEIS planning processes in this school are led and developed in a way that impacts positively on the pupils as individuals, as members of groups within the school, and as members of their local community.
- The quality of target-setting for improvement is very good. Targets for each of the DEIS themes are informed by a rich and relevant range of baseline information that includes authentic qualitative, attitudinal, and statistical information and incorporates the perspectives of pupils, teachers, parents and other parties working with the pupils. The agreed targets are clearly linked to strategic actions which have been agreed at a whole-school level. The rationale for the strategic actions under each of the DEIS themes is clearly understood by the staff. Further, the staff demonstrate a profound commitment to the school's ethos of promoting an equal chance for all children to access, participate in and benefit from education.
- It is advised that the staff, under the leadership of the principal, develop existing monitoring processes to include the staged introduction of collaborative peer review.
- The school's use of DEIS resources to support the strategies selected is exemplary.
- 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

- The quality of target-setting for improvement in literacy is excellent. The school has a clearly defined core literacy programme which has, at its essence, enrichment of oral language and the raising of literacy levels through the promotion of a love of reading amongst the children. Literacy targets are judiciously informed by whole-school assessment information, teachers' observations of pupils' individual literacy learning and experiences, and information about the perspectives of the children and their parents on aspects of language learning in school.
- A number of very successful whole-school strategies to achieve literacy targets are implemented. Most notable in this regard are the individualised, customised reading programmes for children, the introduction of book clubs from third to sixth class, daily guided reading for pupils in second class, the school's engagement in the Write to Read Programme, and the implementation of the First Steps oral language programme in all classes. Pupils' progress with regard to the DEIS literacy targets is carefully monitored, both at an individual pupil level and at a whole-school level. Strategies such as co-teaching of English lessons and

the support given by special needs assistants to pupils are also impacting positively on the delivery of literacy interventions.

- The school's work on literacy through the DEIS action planning process has resulted in literacy gains amongst the pupils, most notably in relation to their oral language skills, their reading standards and their great interest in books. The children's love of reading was clearly conveyed in the focus group with pupils. Similarly, pupil responses to questionnaires indicate that almost all pupils surveyed like reading. Almost all parents surveyed agreed that the school encourages their child to read at home and all parent respondents were of the view that their child is doing well with reading. The pupils' ability to speak confidently and articulately was very apparent across the range of learning settings visited during the evaluation.
- Through their very strong school self-evaluation of literacy, the teachers, led by a literacy team, anticipate the next issues in the literacy learning of the pupils. To complement the targets that have arisen from such self-evaluation and in light of the school's literacy successes to date, it is advised that consideration now be given to supporting the learning of spelling in context, and to developing word recognition and word study skills further. It is also advised that approaches to writing be revisited with a view to increasing the accessibility of children's writing (through improved penmanship), and providing pupils with regular constructive information about ways in which their writing can be developed.
- The school is commended for its systematic approach to ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of its literacy programme and interventions.

Numeracy

- The quality of the planning process for numeracy is commendable. Mathematics targets have been informed by criterion-referenced analysis of standardised tests, teachers' own observations and assessments of pupils, and parent and pupil questionnaires. Teachers set out clear and concise yearly and fortnightly mathematics plans for each class which are linked to the school's priority targets for Mathematics. The fortnightly plans are prepared at one-month intervals. It is advised that this practice be reviewed to allow for greater flexibility in the planning from fortnight to fortnight so that, in addition to an overall mathematics plan, an emerging mathematics curriculum that is responsive to pupils' needs as they arise can be more easily accommodated and pursued.
- Strategies to improve pupil attainment in Mathematics are clearly related to the identified school targets. Highly effective team-teaching, station teaching, co-teaching, structured problem-solving and use of mathematics resources to achieve school targets were noted during the evaluation.
- Monitoring of pupil progress in Mathematics at whole-school level is rigorous. There is some variation amongst individual teachers in how they monitor written mathematics tasks. Overall, there is a need for more individual correction and review by teachers of the pupils' written mathematics tasks, and further use of assessment for learning approaches, so that the pupils' engagement in mathematical processes can be more closely monitored, discussed and used as learning opportunities.
- To support pupil learning further in Mathematics, there is a need to ensure alignment between where the children are at in Mathematics and the kinds of independent written tasks they are given to do. To this end, it is advised that teachers agree targets for a core mathematics curriculum, ensure that written tasks are judiciously selected and aligned with the curriculum taught, monitor and facilitate two-way discussion about pupils' written

mathematics tasks (with a particular emphasis on stepping out mathematics processes), and provide supplementary materials to support and challenge pupils with a particular capacity for Mathematics. At a very practical level, consideration needs to be given to the space available to children to experiment with and illustrate Mathematics and to lay out the steps in mathematics problems. The creation of journals of key mathematics learning milestones in which the children can document mathematics processes and record their reflections on those processes is advised.

2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression

- The quality of planning processes to support pupils' attendance at school and their transition to post-primary school is excellent. Francis St CBS is part of an integrated collaborative approach between a number of local schools to systematically support school attendance and pupils' ongoing participation in education at post-primary level and beyond. That approach includes the School Completion Programme, the home-school-community liaison co-ordinator, and the SOLAS project in Dublin 8. The selection of strategies to support attendance of pupils generally, and of target pupils in particular, is informed by sound baseline information.
- The implementation of strategies on a whole-school level to promote attendance, retention and progression has been highly successful, as evidenced in the significantly improved attendance of pupils in recent years, the pupils' individual pride in maintaining very good attendance levels, and the efforts they and their families make to ensure they do not miss time in school. Of particular note in this regard is the work of the home-school-community liaison co-ordinator, the welcome given to the pupils and families as they arrive at the school door each morning, and the school's celebration of pupil attendance at assemblies and through attendance awards. Given the wide range of possible post-primary schools to which the children from Francis St CBS can transfer, the work of the school in linking with post-primary schools and in helping parents to make informed choices about schools is very valuable.
- The school is commended for its monitoring of attendance, its ongoing evaluation of the impact of its school attendance strategies, and the very good progress made with regard to attendance, retention and progression. The school's success in these areas is underpinned in a critical way by the highly positive, inclusive and happy school culture that exists – a culture in which every boy is respected and his well-being actively and thoughtfully supported. Strikingly, 100% of the pupils surveyed indicated that they like coming to school and like the things they do in school.

2.3. Partnership with parents and others

- Planning processes to support partnership with parents and with the community more broadly are excellent. Targets in this regard are reflective of the staff's recognition of parents as active participants in the work of the school and of the importance of the school's location in a community working in an integrated way for the benefit of the children. Parents actively participate in and support activities in classrooms. Examples include art and crafts activities, Maths for Fun, and the Roots of Empathy Programme. Courses run by the home-school-community liaison co-ordinator for parents are responsive to and respectful of parent wishes.

A laudable feature of many of those courses is the emphasis on children and parents working together. The school has a plot in a community garden, a number of boys participate in a range of programmes provided by SOLAS that focus on empowering young children, and there are established links with third-level college personnel.

- Regular, active consultation with parents is undertaken as part of the school's self-evaluation and DEIS action planning processes. In the focus group, parents expressed great satisfaction with the work of the school and their involvement as parents in that work. A recurring theme in parental contributions to the evaluation was how fairly and kindly the school treats their children and how they, as parents are welcomed in the school.
- The school is commended on its respectful, responsive and very positive and effective engagement with parents and the community through its DEIS action planning processes.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board considers this to be a very professional, fair and comprehensive DEIS Evaluation Report.

We note the use of the language used to describe the leadership and work rate of the principal as 'exemplary' and the commitment of school staff to pupil learning and welfare as 'outstanding'.

We were delighted to hear of 'commendable' progress made amongst pupils in relation to oral language, reading and interest in books and that plans and strategies to improve attendance, retention and progression have been 'highly successful'. Efforts to promote partnership with parents and community were described as 'excellent'.

The Board accepts the Inspectors' Report and will encourage all school stakeholders to support and implement the recommendations listed. We trust that the evaluations will inform school policies and strategies for years to come.

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 will continue to recognise the role of the parents as the primary stakeholders in the education of their children. The school, through its Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, will provide advice and information on how parents can support their children especially in areas of oral language, numeracy, literacy and digital skills.

The Board will continue to support the principal and staff as leaders of learning, in areas of professional development, school self-evaluation and actions for the improvement of literacy, numeracy and digital skills while keeping the child central to the education process at all times.

The Board will continue to encourage the notion that each child in our school can be challenged and stretched to reach his full potential and to become the very best he can be. Positive experiences and expectations along with children's enjoyment of school are important factors in the promotion of all aspects of learning across the curriculum.

The Board wishes to point out that a number of 'priority actions' in numeracy as listed on page 21 of the Interim Review Document 2011-2016 Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020, launched by the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, during a recent visit to our school in Francis Street, have already been put in train.

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 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 very good 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' 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;