

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

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Talbot Senior NS
School Address	Bawnogue Clondalkin Dublin 22
Roll number	19510E

Date of Evaluation: 07-11-2018



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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 1 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	7-11-18
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	<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

Talbot Senior NS participates in Band I of the DEIS action plan. It has the services of a full-time home school community liaison (HSCL) coordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). At the time of the evaluation there were 293 pupils enrolled in the school. Enrolment numbers have decreased slightly over the last three years. The current three-year DEIS plan addresses the period from 2018 to 2021 and some of the initiatives observed during the evaluation are in the early implementation stage.

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 and leadership of the DEIS action-planning process is very good with specific target-setting guiding implementation of DEIS interventions.
- Very effective team-teaching approaches are implemented for English reading and Mathematics; there is scope in some classrooms to provide more supportive feedback on pupils' written work.
- Human resources are deployed very effectively to support the achievement of the targets in the DEIS plan and staff members share expertise from continuing professional development courses with their colleagues.
- Many valuable and caring interventions are implemented to support pupils' wellbeing and to make school attractive.
- Over the past three years there has been a concerning increase in the number of pupils absent from school for more than twenty days per year.
- The school has established effective links with parents and the local community; however, there is scope to increase the frequency of home visits, including to the homes of poor attenders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Planning for the HSCL role should prioritise regular home visits to the families of pupils with poor attendance.

- The DEIS plan should focus more directly on identifying and setting specific improvement targets for attendance for the various groups whose attendance has dis-improved over the last three years and the attendance team should meet more frequently to monitor implementation.
- A whole-school approach should be devised and implemented to ensure that all pupils are provided with constructive and formative feedback on their written work.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership of DEIS action planning for improvement is very good. A dedicated core DEIS team is well established under the current leadership of the acting principal and its members assume responsibility for leading the planning and implementing the initiatives for the various DEIS themes. Leadership roles are distributed very effectively and team members have amassed very good expertise through continuing professional development (CPD). Commendably, this expertise is shared generously with other members of staff.
- The quality of the current DEIS plan has been enhanced through the school self-evaluation (SSE) process of gathering and analysing data to inform specific and measurable targets for each theme. To foster a whole-school approach, the DEIS plan has been very effectively summarised and communicated to staff, parents, the student council and the board of management.
- There is evidence that the DEIS planning process is making a very positive impact on teaching and learning, overall. In order to link targets for attendance to teaching and learning, it is recommended that the school examines the feasibility of tailoring its curriculum to timetable more pupil-friendly morning activities for classrooms with consistently poor attenders.
- In all classrooms there is praiseworthy emphasis on pupils' wellbeing as well as on the development of reading and writing strategies and pupils' organisational and learning skills. Teachers and other staff have cultivated a very caring and supportive environment for pupils. The student council is very inclusive and well organised and it affords pupils an authentic voice in many school activities.
- Classroom interventions in literacy and numeracy often involve well-organised team teaching approaches guided by DEIS targets. While there is good planning for these interventions in most cases, there is scope in some classrooms for teachers to assess and monitor pupils' work in literacy and numeracy more consistently and to ensure that all pupils receive regular constructive formative feedback on their written work. It is recommended that a target on assessment and formative feedback, informed by the Department's *Looking at Our School 2016* document, be included in the DEIS plan.
- Human resources are deployed very effectively to support the targets of the DEIS Plan. All staff members are aware of the DEIS priorities and dedicated to their implementation. There is very effective collaborative planning for team-teaching approaches through agreed templates and the use of shared information and communications technology (ICT) resources.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

- The quality of planning for literacy is very good. The school has identified specific and measurable targets to raise reading standards for various cohorts of pupils and to increase pupils' use of twelve comprehension strategies. The targets have been devised through a comprehensive analysis of school data and baseline evidence from review of earlier DEIS plans. These targets are carefully matched to a range of whole-school approaches and specific interventions focused on the required improvements.
- Members of the DEIS team demonstrate a very good understanding of literacy teaching and they have communicated the school's priorities in literacy very effectively. At classroom level, teachers are aware of the priorities, the target pupils and the rationale for interventions. Team-teaching approaches are very well organised and there is a high level of collaborative planning between class teachers and support teachers.
- Reading material is carefully matched to pupils' needs to ensure a good balance between confidence and challenge. Programmes such as First Steps are implemented very effectively across the strands and there is commendable emphasis on improving pupils' oral vocabulary and comprehension. Pupils' reading is also supported through initiatives such as DEAR and paired/peer reading time.
- During lessons, pupils receive frequent opportunities to work collaboratively and to express their ideas in a supportive environment. There is evidence that learning outcomes for pupils in literacy are improving under the influence of the DEIS planning process.

Numeracy

- The quality of DEIS planning for numeracy is very good. Using analysis of assessment data, the school has identified a range of specific and measurable school-wide targets to improve attainment for particular cohorts of pupils. The targets also focus on specific strands and place commendable emphasis on problem-solving and on pupils grappling with deep mathematical content. The plan emphasises the importance of pupils building their mathematical understanding by exploring concepts initially through concrete materials before progressing on to the representational and abstract levels. The targets and priorities of the DEIS plan for numeracy are communicated very effectively to all teachers and the rationale for resulting initiatives is understood clearly.
- Members of the numeracy team have built up a high level of expertise in support teaching for numeracy and this is shared very effectively. During lessons, pupils are encouraged and supported in their knowledge of number patterns and oral Mathematics. Team-teaching lessons are structured carefully to provide for specific small group instruction while also providing opportunities for pupils to practise their new knowledge independently.

- Commendable emphasis is placed on the use of correct mathematical language and linkage of concepts with real-life situations. Throughout the school there is a praiseworthy emphasis on daily problem-solving challenges and pupils engage with a range of mathematical initiatives such as Maths Week, Maths Eyes, Maths for Fun and Make Maths Matter. Pupils are afforded additional opportunities to explore Mathematics and computational thinking through the use of iPads, Lego We Do and the Mathletics website.
- Overall, standards in numeracy are good and there is evidence that interventions are implemented successfully to address the school's priorities

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

- The quality of planning for attendance is satisfactory. The school maintains effective records of attendance and punctuality, and good attendance is encouraged through a reward system. Specific whole-school targets have been outlined in the current DEIS plan for improving overall attendance and decreasing the number of pupils absent for more than twenty days each year. However, over the lifetime of the previous DEIS plan there were notable dis-improvements in both of these outcomes, with a particularly concerning rise in the number of poorly attending pupils, despite a fall in overall enrolments.
- Responding to the Inspectorate survey, a majority of sixth class pupils indicated that they liked coming to school, but a similar proportion indicated that they sometimes stay out of school when they are not sick. While the targets in the current DEIS plan identify this issue, there needs to be a robust approach to implementing strategies to improve attendance for this cohort of pupils. It is recommended that the attendance team meet more frequently to monitor attendance at all levels and that written notifications be issued proactively to families whenever a trend of poor attendance is becoming evident. Notwithstanding commendable efforts to make school attractive to pupils through parental involvement and the Breakfast, Homework and After School clubs, it is recommended that planning for the HSCL role should prioritise regular home visits including visits to the families of pupils with poor attendance.
- The quality of planning for retention is good. Targets have been identified to ensure that a core group of vulnerable pupils is supported to remain within the educational system. The targets are supported by a range of interventions to support pupils' wellbeing and behaviour, including It's Good to be Me, Friends for Life and The Art of Friendship. It is also reported that the Restorative Practice intervention has been very successful in resolving disputes between pupils. Throughout the school pupils appear to be well supported by the care team, and overall, their interactions with school staff and each other are mutually respectful. While there is no evidence of pupils dropping out of school over their period of enrolment, improved systems of monitoring should be implemented to ensure tracking of each class group, new entrants and any pupils who leave the school before the end of sixth class.
- The quality of planning for transitions is good. A clear target has been identified to ensure the arrival of all pupils who enrol from the junior school. This target could be supplemented by monitoring the arrival of all pupils who successfully applied for entry to the school. A target has been identified to ensure that all sixth class pupils transfer successfully to post-primary education. The HSCL has successfully tracked this transfer by contacting the local post-primary schools. Pupils in fifth and sixth classes are provided with information about their local post-primary schools and they are encouraged to attend the open days. To assist pupils and parents in choosing post-primary schools, attendance at open days in a variety of local schools could be further supported through organisation of transport.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

- The quality of DEIS planning for partnership with parents and others is very good. Specific and measurable targets to increase parental involvement have been identified through analysis of baseline data. The school communicates effectively with parents through newsletters, text messages, telephone calls and opportunities for parents to visit the school. Responding to the Inspectorate questionnaire, almost all parents of the sixth class pupils stated the school welcomes parents and that their children were doing well in school, especially with reading and Mathematics. The survey also indicates that very few of these families have received home visits from school personnel. Parents in the focus group were very positive towards the school. However, some parents would like more regular updates on their children's progress at school.
- The school benefits greatly from the support of a very committed parents' association whose members visit the school frequently to plan and implement a range of school activities. The HSCL co-ordinator organises a range of interesting courses for parents including courses on cookery and Athletics. To develop this aspect further, it is recommended that targets be devised in the DEIS plan, and that sustained efforts be made to involve the families of poor attenders in visits to the school, particularly in courses likely to help them to support their children's learning.
- The school has established valuable links with a range of local and community organisations to provide additional supports and programmes for pupils. These links include initiatives involving post-primary schools, Bawnogue Community Centre, Deansrath Parents' Centre, the Spiritan Education Trust and the ISPCC.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management acknowledges the exemplary work of the staff in Talbot SNS in the devising and implementation of the DEIS Action Plan for Improvement as outlined in the inspection report. The BOM recognises the overall quality and leadership of the DEIS Action Planning for Improvement process as very good and sees the benefit of this process for teaching and learning in Talbot SNS.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

To address the concerning issue around attendance, a sub-committee of the attendance committee- the Attendance Strategy Committee has been established. The aim of this committee is to monitor attendance, particularly for those groups of pupils who are likely to miss 20 days or more.

They will:

- Meet more frequently to monitor implementation of revised DEIS Action Plan for Improvement in Attendance measures.
- Devise more specific targets for the various groups of children whose attendance has improved.

This committee has already devised a Whole-School Approach for the steps and procedures to be followed when a child is absent. This approach has been adopted whole-heartedly by the staff. Progress in this will be monitored by the Attendance Strategy Committee.

A collaborative approach to improve attendance has been implemented, focusing on encouraging children with attendance issues to come to school. Supports have also been put in place to work with parents around this issue e.g. Home-School Supports and preventative measures by Educational Welfare Officer.

A whole-school approach to the provision of constructive and formative feedback on the pupils' written work will be devised and implemented with the help of the *Looking at Our Schools 2016* document. This will be reflected in our DEIS Action Plan for Improvement with relevant targets and measures identified.

The HSCL teacher and principal will be working together with the Integrated Services Manager for the Home School Community Liaison Scheme around planning for HSCL role and home visitation.

The school is committed to continuing engagement with the School Self Evaluation Process and view the Action plans as working documents with emphasis on monitoring, gathering information and evaluating. Targets will evolve depending on identified needs which will have a direct influence on the teaching and learning in the school and improved learner outcomes.