

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

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Scoil Cholmcille Junior NS
School Address	Ballybrack Co. Dublin
Roll number	19641T

Date of Evaluation: 04-04-2017



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; 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

Dates of inspection	4 April – 6 April 2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal, teachers and other personnel• Examination of school's current action plans• Observation of DEIS-related activities and interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent focus-group interview• Analysis of parent questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to chairperson of the board, principal, teachers, and chairperson of parents' association

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Cholmcille Junior NS is a co-educational junior primary school. It participates in Band I of the DEIS programme. It has the services of a shared home school community liaison (HSCL) coordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme. At the time of the evaluation there were 154 pupils enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

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

- DEIS action planning for improvement in this school is highly effective.
- Through her strategic and dynamic leadership at both policy and instructional levels, the principal promotes a staff culture that is focused on and committed to the achievement of DEIS goals and the staff is now well positioned to develop monitoring processes even further.
- Planning processes for literacy and numeracy are very good; there have been some gains in the reading and comprehension standards of the pupils as well as a gradual, steady improvement in pupils' mathematical learning, particularly in the area of number.
- There is scope for including the pupils more fully in elements of the DEIS action planning process.
- The implementation of strategies on a whole-school level to promote attendance has been highly successful.
- The school has engaged very positively and very effectively with parents and the community through its DEIS action planning processes (including the commendable work of the HSCL coordinator) and, building on the strong school-community links, the connections between the school and the pre-schools in the area could now be strengthened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- There is a need to make provision for the systematic, frequent gathering of information about pupils' attitudes, learning dispositions and interests, and to use that information in the DEIS action planning process.

- The development and implementation of a transitions policy to enable the school to connect with the range of pre-schools from which children transfer to junior infants, is recommended.
- It is recommended that the teachers, under the guidance of the principal develop DEIS monitoring processes even further to include the staged introduction of collaborative peer review.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT

- DEIS action planning for improvement in this school is highly effective. Through her strategic and dynamic leadership at both policy and instructional levels, the principal promotes a staff culture that is focused on and committed to the achievement of DEIS goals. Teachers have clearly articulated roles and responsibilities in relation to planning for improvement, and the implementation of specific actions to bring about improvement.
- The quality of target-setting for improvement is very good. Very effective use is made of statistical data to provide baseline information that informs the priority improvement targets of the school. Some attitudinal data arising from surveys of parents and pupils has also been used to inform planning. There is scope for incorporating the pupils more fully into elements of the planning process. In particular, there is a need to make provision for the systematic, frequent gathering of information about pupils' attitudes, learning dispositions and interests, and to use that information in target-setting, the implementation of interventions, and the subsequent monitoring of the extent to which targets have been achieved.
- The school's targets for each of the DEIS themes are clearly reflected in the teaching and learning in classrooms and special education settings, the interactions with parents, and in the whole-school implementation of strategic actions, interventions and initiatives.
- Teaching and learning activities in classrooms and special education settings are very effective in pursuing and achieving DEIS goals.
- Monitoring of the school's progress in achieving its goals under the DEIS planning process is rigorous. The teachers, under the guidance of the principal and building on existing flexibilities in the school in relation to team teaching, are well placed to develop monitoring processes even further up to the staged introduction of collaborative peer review.
- The school's use of DEIS resources to support the strategies selected 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

- The quality of target-setting for improvement in literacy is very good. Analysis of standardised test outcomes has been very well used to identify the development of the pupils' phonemic and phonological awareness as a priority literacy goal. Overall targets for

literacy are specific and reasonable, with identifiable success criteria. There is scope for enriching literacy planning processes by incorporating more qualitative, attitudinal data that captures the perspectives of pupils in both target setting and review.

- The principal and other members of the in-school management team very effectively coordinate the DEIS action plan and its associated actions for improving literacy standards. A number of very effective interventions are being successfully implemented. They include a well-coordinated whole-school approach to teaching phonological awareness, very good use of *First Steps Reading*, the delivery of *Literacy Lift Off* station teaching in senior infant classes, an emphasis on developing pre-school children's aural awareness in the Early Start classroom, a highly effective buddy reading system, and the involvement of parents in a range of school literacy projects.
- The teachers in this school are very committed to ongoing professional development in relation to the teaching of literacy. This is impacting very positively on the delivery of specific literacy initiatives and on day-to-day literacy teaching and learning. Commendable support for children's literacy development is provided by the learning support and resource teachers. The special-needs assistants also provide valuable assistance in relation to literacy interventions.
- There have been some gains in the overall reading and comprehension standards of the pupils. Further, children engage in paired, individual and group reading with confidence and enjoyment. All of the parents surveyed agreed that their child is doing well with reading and that the school encourages their child to read books at home. The teachers have rightly identified the further development of word recognition skills as a priority goal. To complement this, targeted development of word study skills linked to the programme for the children's oral language, is advised.
- The school adopts a methodical, analytical approach to ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of its literacy programme and interventions.

Numeracy

- Planning processes for numeracy are very effective. Detailed analysis of standardised test results in mathematics takes place. The outcomes of that analysis inform whole-school actions in relation to mathematics teaching and the selection and implementation of mathematics programmes and initiatives. Teachers' planning for mathematics is clear, concise and generally reflective of whole-school targets. In a number of learning settings in the school, planning for mathematics is also informed by qualitative information about pupils' attitudes to mathematics and, very importantly, their mathematics learning dispositions. It is recommended that increased use be made of teacher observation of pupils' learning in mathematics. In particular, teachers are advised to gather and systematically use information about how the pupils engage in mathematics processes. This will require close individual monitoring by teachers of the pupils' practical and written mathematics tasks. The information arising can enrich the mathematics targets set, the selection of mathematics strategies and interventions, how those strategies and interventions are implemented and the monitoring of their impact.
- Very effective mathematics teaching was noted in many mainstream and support contexts. The skilled incorporation of principles of *Maths Recovery* into mathematics teaching in classrooms was also noted. In a small number of classrooms, there was scope for increasing the pupils' individual and paired access to mathematics materials.

- Standardised test results suggest that there has been a gradual, steady improvement in pupils' mathematics learning, particularly in the area of number. To further support pupil learning in mathematics, it is advised that information about pupils' interests, their preferred learning styles and their strengths be incorporated into the planning and delivery of mathematics lessons. Further, it is advised that supplementary materials be provided to support and challenge pupils who have a particular capacity for mathematics. In this regard, the option of digital mathematics and coding could be further explored.

2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression

- The quality of planning processes to support pupils' attendance and their retention in primary school are very good. In addition to specific, measurable attendance targets for all children, the school has set out specific targets for children for whom maintaining a good attendance level has proved particularly challenging.
- Support for achievement of school attendance targets is extremely well coordinated through the work of the HSCL coordinator, the leadership of the principal, the School Completion Programme, and the ongoing vigilance and responsiveness of each teacher with regard to school attendance matters. The running of an attendance 'campaign' at intervals over the course of the school year, the awarding of termly attendance certificates, and the use of 'Text-a-parent' are among the specific strategies contributing to the school's notable success in relation to attendance. The work of the parents' association in supporting school attendance is praiseworthy.
- Absence and attendance matters are very diligently monitored and analysed; follow-up on attendance problems is swiftly and sensitively carried out by the HSCL coordinator and principal; good attendance is celebrated at whole-school level. The school is commended for the very good progress made in relation to overall attendance and the attendance patterns of children experiencing difficulties in this regard. The comments of parents during the focus group discussion demonstrates a keen awareness amongst parents of school attendance policy and their commitment to supporting school attendance goals. Similarly, all of the parents surveyed indicated that their child goes to school most days, likes going to school, and is doing well in school.

2.3. Partnership with parents and others

- The quality of DEIS action planning to support partnership with parents and professionals involved in supporting pupils in this school is very good. Targets in this area are clear and comprise practical goals that are connected to furthering the pupils' learning and development.
- The implementation of the school's specific home-school targets takes place in a context where the principal and teachers welcome parents into the school in a meaningful way, are responsive to their queries and concerns, and actively seek out their involvement in the life of the school. The observations of parents during the focus group meeting illustrate this: 'We are in the school an awful lot', 'A lot of fun goes on in the school', and 'If you have a problem you know who you can talk to'. Similarly, all parent respondents to the survey agreed that the school welcomes parents.
- The work of the HSCL coordinator in supporting home-school partnership is very effective. At her invitation, parents actively take part in and support educational activities in classrooms.

In addition, a very good selection of courses is provided for parents for their further education and development.

- Through the school's Early Start provision, connections are made with pre-school children and their parents, thereby supporting their transition to junior infants. The development and implementation of a transitions policy to enable the school to connect with the range of pre-schools from which children transfer is recommended. This is important in the context of ensuring continuity and progression in the children's learning and development.
- Very good mechanisms are in place for liaising and consulting with relevant professionals about planning for children's educational provision.
- The school is commended on its very 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 of Management of Scoil Cholmcille Junior is delighted with this very positive report on the recent DEIS evaluation. We are not surprised by this enthusiastic endorsement of the quality of teaching and learning in our school. The findings reflect the commitment, diligence and dedication of all staff, parents and our supportive community.

We are delighted with the acknowledgement that our DEIS action planning for improvement is highly effective and that the implementation of strategies to promote attendance has been highly successful. The report praises the quality of target setting in literacy and details the number of very effective interventions that are in place to improve literacy standards. It also praises the very effective mathematics teaching and the skilled incorporation of principles of Maths Recovery in mainstream and support settings.

We are pleased that the atmosphere of welcome, joy, mutual respect and inclusiveness was clearly evident and acknowledged during the time of the inspection.

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 accepts the recommendations outlined in the report. We are pleased that the recommendations are building on existing good practice to ensure continued excellence in the quality of teaching and learning. As part of this process we will continue to incorporate data on pupils' attitudes, learning dispositions and interests into our school planning.

We note the acknowledgement of our highly effective DEIS monitoring processes and we will explore the opportunities for the introduction of collaborative peer review.

The Board agrees to continue developing our links with feeder pre-schools and to establish effective links with pre-schools within the local community. This should further enhance the smooth transition into Junior Infants.

During the final term the Principal and HSCL visited many pre-school services in the local and surrounding areas and met key personnel.

Following the recommendations in the report, a formal Transition document for our school was created with the assistance of the pre-school staff. We will continue to liaise with the local services and will build on the links within our local community to implement our transition programme. This important work will inform our transition policy and this will be available on our school website www.colmcillejunior.com

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below.

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;