

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Our Lady of Lourdes National School
School Address	Rosbrien Limerick
Roll number	196670

Date of Evaluation: 24-10-2018



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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

Date of inspection	24-10-2018
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	<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 National School is a co-educational primary school in Limerick city. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. The school participates in Band I of DEIS. It has the services of a full-time home-school community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). The school participates in the Early Start Programme for pre-school children. The staff comprises an administrative principal, eight mainstream class teachers, an Early Start teacher and eight special education teachers (SETs) which are based in the school. An additional SET teacher is shared with another local school. The school also has shared access to an additional teacher as part of the Limerick DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Network. At the time of the evaluation there were 149 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 demonstrates very good commitment to the future development of the school; the leadership of DEIS action planning for improvement is satisfactory, overall.
- The overall quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is good; elements of the support for pupils' wellbeing are very good.
- The overall quality of DEIS planning for improvement is satisfactory; the implementation of the DEIS planning process is not monitored or evaluated effectively.
- The implementation of agreed strategies and initiatives in literacy and numeracy ranges from satisfactory to excellent in learning settings across the school.
- Overall, the quality of the implementation of the DEIS action plans for improvement in attendance, retention and transitions is good; the attendance levels of a significant minority of pupils are poor.
- The overall quality of partnership with parents and others is good; pupils and parents are not engaged effectively in the DEIS action-planning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The DEIS action-planning process should be co-ordinated and implemented consistently; targets should be reviewed to ensure they are specific and measurable.
- The in-school management team should ensure all DEIS initiatives are more carefully monitored and evaluated; the current roles and responsibilities of the in-school management team should be reviewed, in accordance with Circular 0063/2017, to support this process.
- Additional strategies to improve the attendance and transitions of a significant minority of pupils should be developed including the establishment of a school breakfast club.
- Partnership with parents and pupils should be further developed to encourage greater engagement in the DEIS action-planning process.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The overall quality of DEIS action planning for improvement is satisfactory. The school management has recently conducted a review of the DEIS action-planning process. However, there was limited evidence that the school had evaluated its previous DEIS plans to inform the setting of its current targets.
- The school's DEIS action plan outlines a wide range of actions across all DEIS themes. Specific target groups for most of the initiatives have been identified. However, the targets for the majority of the DEIS themes are not time bound or easily measurable.
- The school leaders should further review each of the DEIS action plans to ensure that the targets are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed (SMART). Targets should be more clearly based on the analysis of relevant data.
- The school implements a variety of initiatives across all DEIS themes. During the evaluation the quality of the implementation of these initiatives ranged from satisfactory to excellent. The quality and consistency of the implementation of the initiatives should be more closely monitored.
- Assessment data from the initiatives should be presented clearly and analysed robustly to determine each initiative's effectiveness. The current roles and responsibilities of the in-school management team should be reviewed, in accordance with Circular 0063/2017, to support the monitoring and evaluation of the DEIS action-planning process.
- A wide range of teaching aids is used to support the implementation of DEIS initiatives; this is commendable. Additional teaching resources are used effectively to provide differentiated instruction in literacy and numeracy through small-group instruction and station teaching.
- The quality of the DEIS action planning to improve pupils' wellbeing is good. Teachers have engaged in a wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) to support this process. The implementation of initiatives such as The Incredible Years, the Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem Solving curriculum (DINA) and yoga to enhance pupils' wellbeing is commendable. It was reported that the school intends to implement the FRIENDS for Life programme in the middle and senior classes during the current school year.
- During the parent focus-group meeting, parents praised the school principal for his commitment to school development and to pupils' wellbeing.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

- The DEIS action planning for improvement in literacy is fair. A formal DEIS action plan for literacy needs to be devised. This plan should include a clear analysis of a range of assessment data.
- School leadership has identified improvement targets in literacy for specific groups of pupils. These targets are not currently measurable. SMART targets should be identified for oral language, reading and writing.
- Overall, the quality of the implementation of DEIS improvement planning for literacy is good. Teachers implement a range of initiatives to improve learner outcomes in literacy for the target groups. Commendably, pre-testing has been conducted for the majority of literacy initiatives. The quality of the practice observed during the lessons evaluated ranged from satisfactory to very good. Very good quality initiatives observed included Reading Recovery, Little Voices Speech and Language Therapy and Talk Boost. To build on this good practice, it is recommended that the Senior Talk Boost be introduced for the pupils in the middle and senior classes.
- In the Early Start classroom and in the junior classes *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is used effectively to support pupils' early language development. Additional support for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) should be planned and implemented. Teachers in all classrooms should display subject-specific language for the various curricular areas.
- Initiatives such as Literacy Lift Off and small group literacy instruction (SGLI) provide for the effective differentiation of reading for the majority of pupils. This differentiated instruction should be implemented more effectively in some of the senior classes. More attention should be given to enhancing pupils' comprehension skills at a whole-school level.
- The quality of the whole-school implementation of First Steps Writing is good. Overall in writing, however, pupils' learning should be more effectively consolidated and samples of pupils' writing in a variety of genres should be displayed in classrooms and throughout the school.

Numeracy

- The overall quality of DEIS action planning for improvement in numeracy is good. There was evidence during the evaluation that the implementation of the DEIS initiatives is having a positive impact on pupils' learner experiences and on learner outcomes. The current numeracy targets need to be reviewed, however, to ensure they are SMART.
- Overall, the quality of the implementation of the DEIS improvement plan for numeracy was good. Teachers implement a wide range of initiatives to improve learner outcomes for the target groups in numeracy. These include, Maths Recovery, Maths Blast and Mata sa Rang. Teachers use a wide variety of high-quality concrete teaching resources to enhance pupils' learner experiences during lessons.
- The differentiated provision for pupils through small-group instruction and station teaching is particularly praiseworthy. This is facilitated effectively through the use of in-class support by SETs and through the additional shared teaching resource provided through the Limerick DEIS network.
- Where highly effective practice was evident, teachers used a wide range of strategies, including pupil discussion and collaborative group work, to focus directly on the DEIS target areas. The ongoing monitoring of pupils' progress during initiatives such as Maths Blast is a highly commendable example of successful monitoring. The implementation of agreed strategies in relation to number operations and problem-solving varies across the school.

Overall, there should be more effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the DEIS action plan for numeracy.

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

- The overall quality of DEIS action planning for improvement in attendance, retention and transitions is good. Positive strategies have been developed to improve the overall attendance of pupils. While there is evidence of an improvement in overall annual attendance, the attendance levels of a significant minority of pupils are poor. Appropriately, improving the attendance of this group of pupils is a target of the school's current DEIS action plan. The establishment of closer contact between school and home through the HSCL co-ordinator has been identified as a priority in achieving this target.
- Parents and pupils should be consulted in identifying additional strategies to promote regular attendance. In the pupil and parent questionnaires, for example, the majority of parents and pupils felt that a breakfast club was a good idea; therefore, establishing a breakfast club in the school should be considered.
- A good range of initiatives has been implemented to support the retention of pupils in school. These include Blue Box Creative Art Therapy and Doodle Den. The school reported that all pupils stay in school up to the end of sixth class and all pupils transfer to post-primary school. In the pupil questionnaires, all of the pupils stated that they would stay in secondary school.
- The progression of pupils from early-years settings to primary school and onwards to post-primary school is supported successfully. The HSCL and the SCP co-ordinators facilitate the pupils' transition to post-primary school effectively.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

- The overall quality of the DEIS action planning for partnership with parents and others is good. A detailed action plan for this partnership has been devised. The targets in this plan should be reviewed, however, to ensure they are SMART.
- It is notable that the school has forged links with a very wide range of community agencies. It is praiseworthy that Transition Year (TY) students from a local post-primary school support the pupils with their homework as part of the SCP. The further expansion of after-school homework provision should be considered by the school management.
- The parents' association meets regularly in the school's parents' room. The school implements a good range of initiatives to facilitate the involvement of parents in pupils' learning. The school has also developed an action plan to support the inclusion of families of pupils with EAL. It is notable that intercultural days are celebrated.
- The school provides classes to assist parents with their personal and educational development. Almost all of the parents stated in the parent questionnaires that they feel welcome in the school. To build on this commendable practice, both parents and pupils should be encouraged to become more involved in the DEIS action-planning and review process.

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;