

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

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Thornleigh Educate Together National School
School Address	Thornleigh Green Applewood Village Swords, County Dublin
Roll number	20302E

Date of Evaluation: 31-03-2017



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

Date of inspection	31-03-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• 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 teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Thornleigh Educate Together National School 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 (SCP). At the time of this evaluation, there were 343 pupils enrolled. Attendance levels are good and continue to improve. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language.

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 DEIS action planning for improvement process results in good-quality learning outcomes for pupils; some action planning lacks the necessary strategic element to impact optimally on pupils' learning.
- Teachers are collaborating very effectively to deliver meaningful and focused learning experiences for pupils; the most effective practice is characterised by clearly defined learning outcomes and the monitoring and tracking of pupil progress.
- DEIS action planning targets in literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently focused to optimise the impact of the very good-quality teaching that was observed.
- Good planning frames support teaching for pupils with particular learning and language needs in most settings; systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress require further development in many settings.
- The school is successfully monitoring and improving pupil attendance.
- Parents, both through their questionnaire responses and the focus-group meeting, indicate high levels of satisfaction with their children's learning and how the school communicates with them about that learning; they see potential in further engagement with the school around how they can be equipped as parents to support their children's learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- A more strategic approach to DEIS planning is advocated outlining the cycle of preparation, implementation and review more clearly.

- Learning in both literacy and numeracy will be further enhanced by a target-setting approach that is informed more clearly by data identifying pupils' cognitive ability levels.
- In a significant minority of instances, learning initiatives and support teaching for pupils with particular learning needs, including language, should be framed by plans which identify anticipated learning outcomes; in many instances, these initiatives and this teaching should be supported by the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT

- Overall, DEIS action planning for improvement is of a good quality. The leadership of the DEIS planning process is effective. Specific targets have been set across most DEIS themes and a broad range of appropriate actions are implemented successfully resulting in good-quality outcomes for pupils.
- The current DEIS plan does not indicate how actions evolve over the three-year span of the plan. Therefore, a more strategic approach is recommended which outlines the cycle of preparation, implementation and review more clearly.
- Target-setting for improvement in literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently focused to optimise the impact of the very good-quality teaching that was observed. While comprehensive records of pupil achievement are maintained, these assessment records do not easily facilitate the correlation of pupil achievement with pupils' ability levels. Teaching and learning will be further enhanced by a target-setting approach that is informed more clearly by data identifying pupils' cognitive ability levels.
- The school has created an attractive learning environment which celebrates pupils' achievements and promotes agreed whole-school strategies across the DEIS themes, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Resources are of a very good quality and are specific to the actions identified in the DEIS plans. The strategic deployment of teachers is integral to the successful implementation of these initiatives.
- Clear systems are in place for monitoring progress towards the achievements of targets in attendance, progression, literacy and numeracy. Further emphasis could be paid to monitoring progress towards achieving the targets set for developing partnership with parents.
- 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 DEIS planning process for literacy is of a good quality. Provision for literacy is enhanced very effectively by the wide range of appropriate initiatives. The strong emphasis on developing teachers' collective practice and the sharing of expertise in relation to these

literacy initiatives result in very skilful teaching and good-quality learning for pupils. Many of these initiatives are supported by clearly identified learning outcomes and the appropriate monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress. This good practice should characterise all literacy initiatives in order to optimise impact for pupils. Given that almost all pupils speak English as an additional language, there is further capacity for initiatives to incorporate specific language-acquisition strategies. While a specific target has been identified to guide the development of literacy, it should be reviewed in order to more fully incorporate assessment findings thereby guiding the development of pupils' literacy more effectively. In their questionnaire responses, most pupils agreed that they like English and are doing well with both reading and writing.

Numeracy

- The DEIS planning process for numeracy is of a high standard. Similar to target-setting in literacy, the target-setting process for numeracy should be reviewed so as to incorporate assessment findings more comprehensively. A broad range of initiatives extending from *'Ready, Set Go Maths'* and *'Maths Recovery'* has been identified to promote attainment in numeracy. Where best practice applies, these initiatives are planned carefully, anticipated learning outcomes are identified clearly and pupils' progress is tracked and monitored. Teachers' commitment to collaboration and the sharing of expertise in relation to initiatives have contributed to the development of very skilled teaching in numeracy. A clearly articulated whole-school approach to problem solving in Mathematics is implemented in classrooms and is known and understood by pupils. Going forward, problem solving should be aligned more strategically to pupil-ability level. In their questionnaire responses, most pupils agreed that they like Mathematics and are doing well with the subject.

2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression

- The DEIS action planning process for attendance, retention and progression is of a high standard. Clear and appropriate targets have been set. Attendance levels are monitored very effectively and the school has been very successful in reducing pupil absences. Liaison with the parents' association, regarding the promotion of attendance, is proving effective. Parents are aware and enthusiastic about the strategies to improve attendance and to facilitate their child's progression to post-primary school. In recent years, the school has noted patterns of transience in pupil population; much of this transience is reportedly due to parents re-locating in Ireland or returning to their countries of origin. The school also reports that some transience is due to parents wishing to send their children to schools populated by a greater number of native English-speaking pupils. The board should continue to monitor this pattern and seek to respond, as appropriate.

2.3. Partnership with parents and others

- The quality of DEIS action planning for partnership with parents is good. The work of the HSCL co-ordinator and of the SCP is focused very effectively on promoting actions identified in all areas of the DEIS plan and have met the evolving needs of this developing school successfully. The provision of English-language courses for parents at differentiated levels is particularly commended. Parents, both through questionnaire and focus-group meeting, indicated high levels of satisfaction with their children's learning and how the school communicates with

them about that learning. However, parents also see potential in further engagement with the school around how they can be equipped as parents to better support their children's learning. In further developing partnership with parents, the inclusion of a specific measure of improvement in the target-setting process will add to the usefulness of targets in guiding the improvement process. The school has cultivated links with a range of state and local agencies very successfully to support pupils' learning. There is evidence that these links are enhancing pupils' learning.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

We are happy with the content and language of the report. It cannot be underestimated the challenge faced by both the pupils and staff in relation to the high EAL (97%) presence in our school. We are happy that the excellent initiatives (well researched and thought out) have been recognised, as has the work being carried out with parents through the DEIS team, HSCL and SCP.

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

All classes have completed the NVRT in order to seek to track and build capacity within each student. *Mata sa Rang* has been reviewed and now incorporates individual pupil tracking. The principal has spoken to staff and worked closely with the Deputy Principal (Set team leader) to affect change. The DEIS team will meet in June/September to review and create more specific targets. Pupils have been nominated/selected from SIGMA/MICRA for tracking in 2017/2018.

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;