

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Saint Mary's Primary School
School Address	Saint Mary's Place Upper Dorset Street Dublin 7
Roll number	20436C

Date of Evaluation: 24-04-2017



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; 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

Dates(s) of inspection	24-04-2017
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• 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 principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Mary's Primary School participates in Band 1 of DEIS. It has the services of a full-time home-school-community liaison (HSCL) coordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). In 2013, two schools amalgamated to form Saint Mary's and at the time of the evaluation there were 226 pupils enrolled. Most pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). Attendance levels are very good.

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 leadership of the DEIS planning process is very effective.
- Analysis of assessment data is very comprehensive and focuses in a detailed manner on specific cohorts of pupils; extending this to include an in-depth analysis for all pupils would impact greatly on provision and the achievement of whole-school targets in literacy and numeracy.
- Overall, the DEIS planning process for literacy is of a good quality; specific language-acquisition strategies identified in the school plan are not yet fully incorporated in all settings.
- The DEIS planning process for numeracy focuses successfully on enhancing pupils' enjoyment and application of mathematics.
- The DEIS action planning process for attendance, retention and progression is very good.
- The quality of DEIS action planning for partnership with parents is good; in questionnaires, all parents agreed that the school is welcoming and that their child is doing well at school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Further analysis of all individual pupil assessment data is required to optimise pupils' learning potential and achieve whole-school targets in literacy and numeracy.
- The language-acquisition strategies, identified in the school plan, should be progressed more purposefully in all settings.

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 has been very effective in developing the current DEIS action plan. Clear and appropriate targets have been set in all DEIS themes. However, the implementation phase could be enhanced further by more systematic preparation in advance of carrying out agreed actions. A comprehensive suite of appropriate actions and a wide range of purposeful resources have been selected and they align very well with the identified targets. Progress in this regard is monitored effectively by all relevant personnel. The deployment of personnel to DEIS initiatives is very effective in progressing DEIS programmes and in contributing to the holistic development of pupils. A strong focus by the school on achieving improvement in the area of attendance has yielded notably successful results. The systematic analysis of individual pupil data for specific targeted cohorts of pupils is very commendable. Extending this very effective practice to include an analysis of assessment data for all pupils is now recommended in order to achieve whole-school targets in literacy and numeracy.
- 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, with some areas for improvement. Specific and valid targets for specific cohorts of pupils, based on a wide range of pupil assessment data, have been set to guide the school in improving attainment. While the implications of these targets have been considered for target pupils, they have not been fully explored for all pupils. Extending this good practice will enhance the impact of provision by better aligning learning activities with pupil potential. This will also enhance the capacity of the school to achieve its targets. The school implements a broad range of initiatives successfully based on programmes such as *First Steps* and *Reading Recovery*. Teachers' collective practice is very clearly informed by a shared understanding of these programmes, and this is impacting very positively on pupils' learning experiences. Potential exists, however, to extend the monitoring and assessment of pupils' learning during group-focused instruction. Effective provision for meeting the needs of pupils with EAL includes appropriate assessment, a variety of organisational settings, and useful resources such as dual-language texts. In order to progress language learning further, there is a need to incorporate more fully the specific language-acquisition strategies identified in the school plan in all literacy and numeracy initiatives and in all instruction across the curriculum. Learning plans are in place for all support provision. However, these plans lack sufficient content to optimally inform provision. In questionnaires, most pupils agreed that they like English and are doing well with their homework.

Numeracy

- The DEIS planning process for numeracy is of a good standard. Action plans are focused on enhancing pupils' engagement in mathematics, developing their awareness of mathematics in the real world and the relevance of mathematics to their future lives and careers. As with target-setting in literacy, the implications of the targets set in numeracy have been considered for target pupils. However, they have not been fully explored for all pupils. Extending this good practice will enhance the impact of provision by better aligning learning activities with pupil potential. This will also enhance the capacity of the school to achieve its targets. Initiatives such as *Ready, Set Go Maths* and *Maths Recovery* inform teaching approaches and learning experiences appropriately. The school plans to introduce *Maths Blast* as a means of extending pupils' access to *Maths Recovery* strategies within the mainstream setting; this should be a very worthwhile undertaking. The emphasis on mathematical language for problem solving observed during the evaluation is indicative of good practice and the identification and implementation of an agreed word problem-solving strategy are timely. In their questionnaire responses, a majority of pupils agreed that they are doing well at Maths.

2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression

- The DEIS action planning process for attendance, retention and progression is very good. Evidence-based and ambitious targets, relevant to different cohorts of pupils, have been set for attendance. Very effective measures and monitoring procedures are in place and result in improved pupil attendance. Parents are highly aware of the school's determination in this regard. They are aware of the targets that have been set and they are committed to achieving them. Progression of pupils from early-years settings to primary school and onwards to post-primary school is carefully monitored and is very successful.

2.3. Partnership with parents and others

- Overall, the quality of DEIS action planning for partnership with parents is good and leads to the effective implementation of the school's DEIS initiatives. Targets to promote partnership with parents and others focus on agreed priority areas and are supported by a complementary range of relevant actions. The work of the HSCL and SCP is directed towards implementation of these actions. In particular, English-language courses are identified by parents as impacting positively on their own language proficiency, and consequently on their capacity to support their children's learning. HSCL and SCP co-ordinators have created valuable links with a range of state and local agencies in order to support pupils' families and pupils' learning. While there is regular communication with parents, and they are consulted on a range of policies and procedures, a formal parents' association is not in place. The plan for setting up a parents' association should be progressed without delay. In a questionnaire completed as part of this evaluation, all parents agreed that the school is welcoming and that their child is doing well at school.

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 St. Mary's Primary School welcomes this positive report. We are proud that the report acknowledges our support for children's holistic development. We are an inclusive and diverse school with children (88% of our children come from homes where English is not the first language) and the strong relationships we foster with children and families is a fundamental part of our work in DEIS.

We are pleased that the improvement in children's attendance has been noted as a strength. This reflects the strong commitment from our families to both their children's learning and working in partnership with us.

The report praises the focused support children receive at our school, through quality teaching with targeted intervention and strong tracking systems to ensure every child makes good progress. We thank our dedicated and committed staff team for sharing their talents and expertise with our children each and every day. It is their positivity, willingness to innovate and flexible approach that enable our children to be successful.

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 two recommendations outlined in the report and is committed to improving our practice in the areas identified. We are pleased that the recommendations are building on existing good practice to ensure consistency across the school.

Since the inspection, the teaching team have already begun working on several key actions. We have had support from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) on oral language development, including looking at how we identify and plan for children's language acquisition across all settings and subjects. We will continue to explore this in greater depth as we implement the new primary language curriculum in the coming months.

We have ensured our action planning processes for next year are systematic and timely by trialling, resourcing and creating plans for initiatives such as 'Maths Blast' and 'Maths Factor' in the summer term so that they are ready for implementation in September. We are also devising clearer formats for planning in support settings and templates for the monitoring and assessment of group instruction that will reflect the targeted provision in place and maximise teaching and learning opportunities for children.

We are also exploring ways of refining and extending our comprehensive tracking systems to ensure our targets are carefully monitored for all children. This will be in place for the autumn term.

We are capitalising on our interested and engaged parent group by setting up a Parents' Association. We are working with the National Parents' Council and a facilitated training session for parents and carers has already taken place.

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 <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' 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;