

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Le Chéile National School
School Address	Roxboro Road Limerick
Roll number	204590

Date of Evaluation: 23-03-2017



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; educational 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 DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	21-23 March 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, teachers and chairperson of the board of management

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Le Chéile National School is a Catholic, co-educational primary school in Limerick city. The school was established in 2015 as a result of the amalgamation of Southill Junior School and Galvone National School. Le Chéile National School participates in Band I of DEIS. It has the services of a full-time home school community liaison (HSCL) coordinator. It also participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). The school has an administrative principal, ten mainstream class teachers, ten support teachers, one teacher in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class, and one Early Start teacher. There are ten ancillary staff working in the school. At the time of the evaluation there were 187 pupils enrolled in the school. The school's pupils come from the area around Roxboro Road and from Southill.

Le Chéile National School has been provided with a new school building, although some school activities are still conducted in the adjoining former school building. Currently there is an insufficient number of support classrooms in the school. This has resulted in some learning-support and resource teaching taking place in the school corridors. Similarly, there are far fewer car parking spaces available than are required by the school staff. This has resulted in staff members regularly having to park in areas originally designated for drop-off and collection. Extra facilities, including some new classrooms, are expected to be added to the school in the coming months. This should alleviate some of the current challenges. There remains a concern, however, that the school yard and outdoor facilities will be restricted as a result of the expanded building. It is recommended that the board of management continue to strive to secure the best facilities possible for its pupils.

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:

- There is an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere in the school.
- The overall quality of the DEIS action planning for improvement process is good, with many very good aspects. However, opportunities exist to set more specific targets and, in particular, to monitor and evaluate the impact of selected actions and interventions across each of the DEIS themes.
- The quality of DEIS action planning for improvement in literacy is good. Teachers demonstrate very good commitment to the implementation of a wide range of innovative approaches and strategies. These are having a positive impact on pupils' learning outcomes.

- The DEIS action planning process for improvement in numeracy is satisfactory. Opportunities for improvement exist in ensuring that the targets set are specific and that they address the needs of pupils who are experiencing greatest difficulties.
- The DEIS action planning for attendance, retention and progression is good overall, with some very good aspects. Opportunities exist to improve the selection and monitoring of strategies to improve attendance.
- The quality of the partnership with parents and others is very good overall and is one of the key strengths of the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The targets set out as part of the DEIS action planning for improvement process should be reviewed to ensure that each target is easily measurable. The impact of each DEIS intervention should be monitored to ensure that it is assisting the school in reaching the targets set.
- Targets in Mathematics should be explicitly based on the strands of the curriculum identified for improvement. These strand-based targets should be integral to each teacher's individual planning and central to daily activities and lessons in each classroom.
- New strategies should be devised, implemented and monitored to encourage all pupils to attend school more regularly. As part of this, efforts should be made to improve pupils' attitude to school and to enhance pupils' experience in school.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT

- The overall quality of DEIS action planning for improvement is good. Under the effective leadership of the principal and assigned co-ordinators, a well-organised and well-structured DEIS plan has been drafted and systems are in place to monitor and evaluate its impact on pupil attainment. Appropriate attention is given to the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.
- A wide range of evidence is analysed in setting targets for improvement. This evidence includes standardised and diagnostic test results, pupil surveys, teacher observation and other relevant data.
- While targets are linked to areas identified for development, there is a need for some of these targets to be more specific. It is recommended that each target be reviewed to ensure that it is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timed (SMART).
- The selection and implementation of strategies is based on the identified targets. Teachers at each class level, and in the support settings, understand these strategies and are committed to implementing them. Innovative teaching approaches, including very good station and team teaching and collaborative learning, have been implemented at each class level. To further enhance the teaching and learning process, it is recommended that each teacher's individual planning reflect the targets set and the actions required to achieve them.
- A wide range of teaching aids and resources are available to assist in the DEIS action planning process. DEIS resources in particular are employed very effectively to enhance teaching and learning.

- The school has implemented an effective system for monitoring the impact of most interventions. The impact of some of these, however, is not sufficiently monitored. It would be worthwhile ensuring that a system be devised to monitor, evaluate and record the impact of all interventions. This should assist in ascertaining the value of each intervention and whether specific interventions are worth continuing.
- 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 provision for literacy in the school is good, with some very good practice noted in the implementation of group teaching approaches and in-class support.
- The planning process for literacy is good. Effective analysis of data has resulted in the identification of some high quality targets. A range of teaching strategies is selected to implement the actions required for improvement. Planning for improvement in literacy would be enhanced if the targets set were more specific and if a monitoring system for each intervention were adopted.
- The implementation of strategies for improving standards in literacy, many involving successful team teaching approaches throughout the school, for example *Literacy Lift-Off*, is very good. Teachers demonstrate very good commitment to implementing these approaches.
- The overall learning outcomes for some pupils in literacy have improved as a result of the implementation of the strategies selected. Many pupils are making good progress in literacy. There remains, however, a significant number of pupils whose attainment in literacy is a cause for concern.
- Monitoring the impact of many of the interventions and strategies has ensured that useful data is available on the progress made by individual pupils. In some cases there is a need to analyse data more carefully to ensure that the specific needs of pupils in literacy are being appropriately addressed. Consideration should be given in these cases to broadening the range of diagnostic tests used. This should assist in focusing on developing the skills that most need to be improved.

Numeracy

- The quality of provision for numeracy in the school is good overall. Particularly praiseworthy is the very good differentiated support provided for pupils in most mainstream classrooms. Teachers work very well together in teams to provide this support.
- The planning process for numeracy is generally satisfactory with scope for development in planning for improvement and in the implementation of strategies. While some appropriate targets have been set, for example the target to increase the number of pupils in certain percentile bands, possibilities for improvement exist. It is recommended that the scope of the targets set be widened to include targets based on specific strands of the curriculum identified

by the school as needing improvement. These strand-based targets should not be confined to the DEIS action plan for numeracy. They should also form an integral part of each teacher's individual planning.

- The implementation of strategies and initiatives selected to improve pupil attainment in numeracy is satisfactory overall, with many good aspects observed at each class level. Very good practice in the teaching and learning of Mathematics was observed in a small number of settings. Some very good practice was observed in the use of mathematical teaching aids and resources to enhance the learning process for pupils. There are opportunities to make more effective use of concrete materials to inculcate concepts and to improve pupils' understanding, particularly in some of the senior classes.
- The monitoring and evaluating of the impact of strategies is satisfactory, with especially effective monitoring of the strategies for pupils as they move up through the classes. Placing more emphasis on monitoring strategies in numeracy for younger pupils should help to improve the progress made in pupil attainment.

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Progression

- DEIS action planning for attendance is satisfactory. The school's record keeping of the frequency and reasons for pupil absences is very good and some good targets for improved attendance have been set. Possibilities for improvement exist in the identification of increased strategies to promote regular attendance and to enhance pupils' attitudes and experiences in school, particularly for those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Identified interventions need to be systematically implemented, monitored and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.
- DEIS planning for improvement in retention and progression is good to very good. All pupils in the school successfully transfer to post-primary school. The work of the HSCL and SCP coordinators has assisted in the successful implementation of identified strategies. There is a need however, to enhance the monitoring of the impact of these strategies and to evaluate progress in retention and progression of pupils. Documentation already available from outside agencies could be used as a starting point in the monitoring and evaluation process.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

- DEIS action planning for partnership with parents and others is good to very good. The DEIS action plan outlines targets to improve the quality of partnership with parents and others. The parent questionnaires distributed indicate that the parents have very positive feelings towards the school. At the focus-group meeting held with parents as part of this evaluation, parents reported that they feel welcome in the school and that they can get advice about a range of educational and other matters. This advice has helped many parents in supporting their children's education.
- The HSCL coordinator works effectively in encouraging parent to visit the school regularly and to actively participate in literacy and numeracy interventions, for example *Maths for Fun*. Parents are offered regular opportunities to participate in a variety of courses and activities organised by the school. All of this parental involvement enhances the inclusive atmosphere in the school.
- It would be worthwhile regularly consulting with parents to ensure that they are aware of the targets under each of the DEIS themes. Parents should regularly be asked for their feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of the targets set. Parents' opinions should also be sought on the strategies implemented to reach the targets.

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 would like to acknowledge the affirmation of the work of the school contained in the report. As yet a very new entity post amalgamation, we are encouraged by the recognition of achievements so far, particularly the positive atmosphere and attention to the care of our pupils which has been our main focus from the outset.

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 of Management is supportive of the recommendations and will use the evaluation to guide future planning. Post inspection, an additional initiative has been put in place to encourage attendance. The recommendations in the area of planning for Maths will guide our review of the first year of the Maths initiatives scheduled for later in June and will be included as we formulate an expanded three year plan. We intend also to consider how we can record in greater detail the monitoring and evaluation of HSCL initiatives.

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;