

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

**DEIS EVALUATION**

**REPORT**

<b>School Name</b>	Marian College
<b>School Address</b>	Ballsbridge Dublin 4
<b>Roll number</b>	60500J

**Date of Evaluation: 02-04-2017**



## **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; 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 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 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	3-5 April 2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussions with principal and teachers</li><li>• Examination of school's current action plans for improvement</li><li>• Observation of DEIS-related activities and interventions</li><li>• Student focus group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent focus group interview</li><li>• Analysis of parent and student questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Feedback to core DEIS planning team</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Marian College participates in 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 provides an optional Transition Year (TY) programme. There are 425 students 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:

- There is a high level of commitment to the Marist ethos of care for the educationally disadvantaged in the school.
- To strengthen the school's capacity to bring about improved outcomes, more strategic and better-communicated DEIS action planning for improvement is necessary.
- Rich data in relation to outcomes in the DEIS themes is being gathered and monitored, but it could be better used to inform target setting, decision making and whole-school actions.
- Many good measures are taken by key personnel to support attendance and retention, but there is a lack of consistency in the implementation of agreed actions for attendance, and retention could be further supported by greater breadth and balance in the school curriculum.
- The very high levels of respect demonstrated by students towards their teachers and each other provides a very positive foundation for high-quality learning to take place and could be availed of to gain improvements in educational attainment, especially where examination outcomes are poor.
- There were noticeably high levels of motivation for and awareness of valuable educational progression routes among both students and parents.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Senior management should take action to bring about a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to the planning, implementation and monitoring of actions for improvement.
- Those with leadership roles should make greater use of the available data to inform target setting and to prompt necessary adjustments to whole-school actions.
- All teachers should use the examination and assessment data to inform their teaching and learning practices and raise attainment; in subjects where the examination outcomes are poor, more effective teaching and learning practices should be identified and implemented.
- All teachers should implement whole-school actions for attendance, including assiduously recording attendance, and management should lead an appraisal of the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of students.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT

- There is a high level of commitment to the Marist ethos of care for the educationally disadvantaged in the school. To build on this foundation and to strengthen the school's capacity to bring about improved outcomes, more structured and better-communicated DEIS action planning for improvement is necessary.
- In the context of upcoming changes in senior management, the school should consider how DEIS action planning is to be led into the future. Those leading the process have been very focused on care and support for students but they acknowledge the need now for a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to the planning, implementation and monitoring of actions for improvement. Leadership actions are now required to improve these specific areas.
- The school has set out a DEIS action plan with a number of action targets and attainment targets.
- Those with specific DEIS-related roles have an understanding of their responsibilities. What is now required is that they take on ownership of the target-setting process in order for it to purposefully guide their work.
- Significant change is required to achieve a whole-school approach to DEIS action planning for improvement and to embed DEIS action planning as a way of working among all teachers. DEIS action planning should be on the agenda of staff and subject-department meetings. In order to achieve the necessary consistency with regard to agreed actions for each theme, teachers should regularly discuss their implementation and progress. To further support consistency, a shared awareness of the identity and needs of all targeted students must be facilitated.
- The impact of DEIS planning on teaching and learning has been limited and this requires action for improvement. Some very important data, particularly in relation to attendance and educational attainment, has been gathered and senior management has conducted some very detailed analyses of the data. However, better use should be made of this information by both management and teachers to inform necessary improvements in some teachers' practices.
- DEIS resources were being used by the school with satisfactory effectiveness and efficiency.
- 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 and Examination Attainment

- Senior management and teachers were aware of literacy and numeracy as key skills for accessing all areas of the curriculum. Action targets and attainment targets for literacy and numeracy have been set. A number of literacy and numeracy initiatives have been introduced.
- In the lessons observed, some focus was being placed on the development of language skills and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Students demonstrated good skills in oral literacy. They contributed opinions and experiences with confidence and were interested in the opinions and experiences of others. They demonstrated a high level of motivation and enjoyed engaging orally in their lessons. Learner outcomes could be further strengthened by more considered inclusion of literacy and numeracy strategies in all lessons in each subject.
- The school should examine its compliance and engagement with the school self-evaluation process, including the extent to which agreed interventions are effectively implemented and the impact on teaching and learning.

- The opportunities to develop essential skills in literacy and numeracy are limited because of timetabling that currently provides only four periods per week for English and Mathematics in each year of junior cycle. It is therefore welcome that senior management is considering adjustments to increase this provision to a lesson per day in these subjects.
- A lot of data in relation to student outcomes in a range of examinations, both certificate examinations and in-house examinations, is being gathered and monitored, but neither attainment targets nor actions for improvement have been developed in the attainment theme. This should be addressed.
- The attainment data reveals that in some subjects, examination attainment is poor. Teachers should routinely use the very clear information presented in the data to regularly review and, where necessary, adjust their classroom practices in order to improve outcomes for learners. Students demonstrated very high levels of respect towards their teachers and each other. This provides a very positive foundation for high-quality learning to take place and could be availed of to gain improvements in educational attainment.
- Students in a focus-group meeting said that they were motivated to learn when the learning experiences were interactive and active, rather than passive, when they were guided to understand how to make improvements to their learning and when they felt they were making progress in the subject. However, they reported that these experiences were not extensive, and, in a few instances, students were very concerned about their attainment in the subject and felt insufficiently challenged.
- In light of the evidence gathered from the questionnaire responses and the clear motivation for educational progression among students and parents, greater emphasis needs to be placed on increasing educational attainment and raising expectations. Formative assessment practices observed during the evaluation ranged from good to less than satisfactory. A drive to raise attainment could be supported through extending formative assessment practices that guide learners on how to improve their work, and by improving the balance between the use of formative and summative assessment.
- As well as the year-on-year analysis of certificate examination outcomes for subjects, trend analysis should be introduced as this would give a much clearer picture of actual progress.
- The school should consider facilitating student focus-group meetings on a regular basis in order both to inform and monitor effective teaching and learning practices.

## **2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression**

- The target set to reduce the overall rate of absenteeism is realistic. Setting additional targets for discrete cohorts is advised, however; for example, separate analysis of patterns of absences at junior and senior cycle has taken place and this could be used to inform further target setting.
- While good work is being done in responding to the needs of individual students, the overall attendance rate is not improving. Actions being taken to improve attendance are not changing quickly enough in response to evidence in the data. A structured follow up on weekly data is required. The acknowledgement by a significant minority of students, that they missed a lot of days last year, provides a basis for engaging with them in a solution-focused approach. It is welcome that senior management is considering texting parents on the day of each absence.
- Leadership in the area of improving attendance has been placed with the HSCL co-ordinator and this arrangement has the potential to drive improvements but whole-school support and consistency is also necessary. While there is a growing awareness of the attendance problem and its impact on attainment, the electronic recording system is not being used by all teachers for every lesson as intended; the challenges being experienced in embedding this in routine practice should be addressed immediately.
- The school should review its attendance strategies using *Tusla's* guidelines: *Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance* (2015).

- Senior management and staff demonstrate commitment to students targeted for retention. Personnel in guidance counselling and HSCL make considerable efforts to work one-to-one with students and, where possible, their parents. This is supported by the work of pastoral care team meetings. The team should consider how it can best lead and inform the necessary whole-school approaches to supporting targeted students. The Departments' publication: *Students Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools* may be useful in guiding their work, particularly in communicating and evaluating interventions.
- The work of the HSCL, SCP and guidance services, selected lunchtime activities for target groups, extra-curricular activities, after-school study, student awards and the breakfast and homework club support retention.
- The school curriculum is weighted towards academic subjects. The school should examine students' response to the statement 'I like the subjects I do in school'. An appraisal of the curriculum with input from students, teachers and parents is recommended with the aim of offering greater breadth and balance, and providing practical and technological subjects.
- TY is seen by the school, parents and students as a powerful tool in supporting retention. The very high uptake of TY is an endorsement of the programme provided. However, it is noteworthy that more than half of the students with critical absenteeism in fifth year had not done TY and this merits further investigation and action.
- Extra-curricular sporting opportunities were welcomed by parents and students. For some students these activities serve to support their retention. However, the school should minimise the impact of the schedule of matches on tuition time by both students and teachers. In addition, study periods in sixth-year should be replaced with tuition in aspects of the curriculum.
- Educational progression is clearly important to staff and management. The school has set a number of worthwhile action targets in this theme.
- The level of awareness of and prospects for educational progression routes to college or further training were notably high among students and their parents.
- *College for Every Student* is a very welcome and potentially very powerful initiative in promoting college and career awareness. The school's approach to beginning this focus early in the junior cycle, with the second-year students, is commendable.
- *College Awareness Week* is used by subject teachers to promote progression routes in their subjects. This could be extended throughout the year with the addition of regular careers notices in each classroom.

### **2.3. Partnership with parents and others**

- The school has cultivated positive relationships with parents. There is a high turnout for parent-teacher meetings.
- Parents saw the school as very welcoming and praised the approachability of key staff including senior management and the HSCL co-ordinator but they saw scope for development in: texting when their child is absent, the educational guidance service, the reporting on their child's progress and the broadening of the school curriculum. Some parents would welcome the provision of a course in helping their child's studies, particularly with the Mathematics curriculum and this ought to be pursued.
- Very good links have been forged with Trinity College, other educational providers and companies and business in the locality that extend learning opportunities and possibilities for students.

# **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 welcomes the DEIS evaluation report. It particularly welcomes the many references to the excellent relationships within the school where students of all backgrounds are encouraged to aim for excellence. It is pleased that the inspectors' sessions with both the students and the parents had been particularly positive and powerful, and it welcomes the inspectors' endorsement of the school's DEIS philosophy and the school's approach to educational progression. The Board welcomes the inspectors' suggestions for system improvements but it is disappointed that there is no reference to the national industrial relations climate which meant that no staff meetings could take place in voluntary secondary schools over the past year. It is hoped that the recent announcement of the cessation of all industrial action will mean that the data and plans (which were acknowledged by the inspectors) can be used and fully implemented over the coming academic year.

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

- Action planning will resume with the lifting of the national industrial action by teachers. This will include target setting for attainment and will deal with the small number of situations where exam outcomes have been poor. DEIS action planning will be incorporated into regular staff meetings.
- The school is part of the Trinity College TA 21 programme which incorporates staff discussion of 21<sup>st</sup> century practice in teaching and learning. The full introduction of the Junior Cycle programme in 2017/18 will allow for professional development in a number of areas, including formative assessment.
- A newer, more teacher-friendly, computer package will be introduced in September 2017 to ensure full staff involvement in the improvement of attendance, particularly at senior cycle.
- A review of the curriculum and timetable was begun in May and will continue into the next academic year. In the short term, Maths and English are being increased to five periods per week in 2017/18. In the longer term, research into ways of broadening the curriculum to enhance retention will be undertaken with a view to changes being made in 2018/19. In addition, the balance between extra-curricular activities and tuition time is part of the review of the school timetable.
- The development of student leadership will continue through the Student Council, the Prefects, the Marist Leaders programme and the College for Every Student (CFES) programmes

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;