

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	North Monastery Secondary School
School Address	Our Lady's Mount North Monastery Rd. Cork
Roll number	62530F

Date of Evaluation: 28-11-2018



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 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.

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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 2 and 7 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	28-11-2018
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• Student focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent focus-group interview• Analysis of parent and student questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

North Monastery Secondary School participates in the DEIS action plan. It has the services of a full-time home school community liaison (HSCL) coordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). It offers the Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE). At the time of the evaluation there were 389 students 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:

- Overall, leadership of the DEIS action-planning for improvement process is good; opportunities exist for further development.
- The quality of planning for improvement is good overall; communication of the plan across the school community could be enhanced while some monitoring and evaluation arrangements are not clear.
- Some subject departments engage with the DEIS action plan and include analyses of results in the certificate examinations.
- A range of targets has been set as part of DEIS action planning, including a number of SMART targets.
- The implementation of a number of classroom measures included in the plan was observed.
- The school is implementing new data-gathering measures in the area of attendance; this will support other necessary developments in this part of the DEIS plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The school should take a number of measures to enhance leadership, communication and ownership of the DEIS plan.
- Explicit monitoring and evaluation arrangements should be highlighted in all sections of the DEIS plan.
- Action is required on the part of all members of the school community to improve aspects of the school's approach to DEIS planning for examination attainment.

- The school should expand the range of measures in the DEIS action plan linked to the area of attendance.
- The current review of the code of behaviour should be completed, with a strong focus on communication of the code and how it supports student care and key elements of the DEIS plan.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Overall, leadership and coherence of the action-planning-for-improvement process is good. A DEIS planning team is in place. As part of recent considerations regarding leadership responsibilities in the school, the need for a DEIS co-ordinator to assume overarching responsibility for DEIS action planning has been identified. It is recommended that an appointment in this area be made in order to ensure that a consistent, strategic approach can be developed for the DEIS action plan.

There has been a recent move on the part of the DEIS planning team to review the DEIS plan and its processes in a number of areas. A previous DEIS plan has been superseded by the development of an initial one-year plan. It is advised that this one-year plan should be viewed as an interim measure, leading to the development of an overarching three-year DEIS plan. In addition, there have been proactive moves to seek out and incorporate best practice from other DEIS schools. As part of this, the team has identified a need to communicate more effectively with the wider school staff and school community regarding all aspects of the DEIS action plan, its targets and measures. It is recommended that whole-staff meetings should include a regular agenda item devoted to the planning and implementation of the DEIS plan. In addition, the organisation of key DEIS teams, each headed by a member of the core DEIS committee, should be advanced. A summary of key elements of the DEIS plan should be published on the school website and incorporated in all subject department plans.

The quality of planning for improvement is good overall. The gathering of appropriate baseline data is evident in different sections of the plan, however, there is a need to continue to gather and collate further appropriate baseline data across the plan. School management and teachers in the context of the new DEIS planning process have begun to address this as a means of supporting the setting of SMART targets, measures, and monitoring and evaluation procedures.

A range of targets has been set and, in a number of instances, these are SMART targets, arising from relevant baseline data. In other examples, targets are not measurable and should be clarified further on the basis of the new baseline data currently being gathered.

Appropriate measures linked to relevant SMART targets are evident in different sections of the plan. On occasion, the number of measures could be reduced somewhat, while in other areas, some key measures which are effectively supporting DEIS targets would be worth including. Some measures related to classroom practice are included in the new DEIS plan, although these should be more limited, specific, and common to various themes, where possible.

Currently, monitoring, review and evaluation processes are not set out clearly in the new DEIS plan, although very good work in this area was evident during the evaluation. It is important that explicit monitoring and evaluation arrangements should be highlighted in all sections of the new DEIS plan.

In relation to the DEIS themes, the use of resources observed during the evaluation was effective as a support for enhanced student attainment.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

Overall, the quality of DEIS action planning in the area of literacy is good. Very good measures have been undertaken, with the school's analysis of student outcomes suggesting very positive progress has been made in addressing challenges faced by students at all levels in the area of literacy. However, key initiatives relevant to these achievements have not yet been incorporated in the written DEIS plan. This should be addressed.

Very good baseline data has been collated by the special educational needs (SEN) department with regard to students' levels of achievement in reading literacy. This has resulted in the setting of a SMART target related to the improvement of students' reading scores. In addition, a SMART target has been set in the area of reading for pleasure, although this is not linked to related baseline data. The collection of baseline data to inform this target is planned, and this should be advanced at the earliest opportunity. Measures related to these targets are appropriate. A particularly positive aspect of this area of the school's work is the high level of awareness among parents of the emphasis placed on reading for pleasure, as expressed in parent questionnaires distributed during the evaluation.

Another target in the area of oral literacy is not SMART and this should be addressed. Baseline data with regard to students' oral literacy will also need to be defined and collated.

A number of classroom measures noted in the literacy element of the DEIS plan were observed regularly during the evaluation. Very good work in the monitoring and evaluation of students' achievement in the area of reading scores is underway. It is advised that a specific section of the literacy element of the DEIS plan should relate to monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

Numeracy

Overall, DEIS action planning for the area of numeracy is of a good quality. Some very good work has been completed in the area of numeracy. However, the school has yet to incorporate the results of these endeavours in the DEIS plan. It is good to note that one of the numeracy targets, which is SMART, places an emphasis on increasing confidence and building competence in numeracy for living skills. While the other target is SMART, it would be worthwhile to use a test that would measure progress in a broader range of mathematical areas. In recent times the school has gathered a good level of baseline data using tests which evaluate competence in a range of specific areas of Mathematics and numeracy. The school is advised to use this baseline data to prioritise areas for improvement and set targets in identifiable areas of mathematical competency.

In lesson observations there was evidence of considerable awareness of the importance of integrating numeracy skills where opportunities arise. A range of strategies has been included in the current numeracy plan. It is commendable that some of these are focused on enhancing teaching and learning in the classroom. Building on this good practice, the school should reduce the number of strategies identified and narrow the focus of the in-class strategies. This would more easily facilitate the use of the same strategies across subject departments, as appropriate, and enable monitoring of the use and effectiveness of these strategies in order to achieve the targets set.

Examination attainment

Action is required to improve some aspects of the school's approach to DEIS planning for improvement in examination attainment. The renewed focus on DEIS planning that has taken place this year has resulted in the setting of one new SMART target and another target which is not SMART. The school should re-examine the latter target with a view to making it SMART. In addition, consideration should be given to setting a target which would challenge students with higher academic ability. Some measures identified in the plan are general, while others are specific. It is recommended that measures agreed also include those in relation to teaching and learning in the classroom.

While some subject plans indicate that the departments have analysed student attainment in the certificate examinations, other subject plans do not contain data in relation to student attainment. This should be rectified. Beyond this, it is recommended that departments set specific targets in relation to enhancing student attainment in the certificate examinations. Targets set at subject department level should then inform target setting in relation to examination attainment at whole-school level. In addition, all subject plans should include a section detailing how the subject will support key elements of the school's DEIS plan, particularly with regard to measures in the classroom.

Overall, the school's performance in the certificate examinations is below expectations given the particular context of the school. It is suggested that a formalised, more individualised, academic monitoring system for students be implemented to ensure that the educational needs of all students are being addressed and to enhance expectations. Particular consideration should be given to the impact of current arrangements with regard to the organisation of classes in Junior Cycle. The school currently sets students in different ability levels from first year. This is a very early stage of students' learning development at which to assign students in this way and careful consideration should be given to the affective and motivational impact of this arrangement on all students.

Beyond this, it is recommended that a review of subject choice arrangements should be undertaken. Questionnaires distributed to students during the evaluation suggested a relatively low level of satisfaction with the subjects being studied.

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

The quality of DEIS action planning in the areas of attendance and retention is good, although there are opportunities to further develop measures taken.

SMART targets have been set in the area of retention with one focused on a target group and a second aimed at the wider student population. In the area of attendance, one SMART target has been set while one target is not SMART. The school has begun to develop its use of data in the area of attendance through a new information and communications technology (ICT) system and this will enhance its capacity for monitoring and evaluation in the area of attendance. The analysis of new baseline data garnered from the new ICT system will be important in identifying more effective SMART targets in the near future.

It is recommended that the school expand the range of measures in the DEIS plan linked to attendance, including measures related to teaching and learning, and include some others that are already underway. The school is currently piloting a new text-messaging system to inform parents if their child is late or absent from school. It is important that this measure be expanded to the whole school as

rapidly as possible in light of questionnaires distributed during the evaluation which suggested this would be a valuable addition to home-school communication.

The contribution of a Behaviour for Learning programme was noted as worthwhile in this area. In the context of attendance and retention, the school has begun a review of the code of behaviour. This review should be completed, with a strong focus on communication of the code and how it supports student care and key elements of the DEIS plan. The SCP provides a number of worthwhile initiatives for students to support their continued engagement with and retention in school.

Good work is underway in the area of DEIS planning for transitions from primary school, Junior Cycle, and senior cycle. Good baseline data is available from the SCP and from a wide range of contacts with primary schools. However, there is a need to create clearer SMART targets regarding transitions in the DEIS plan. A number of relevant measures have been identified, although the inclusion of other measures underway should be considered. Worthwhile measures have been defined in the area and evidence of tracking of student movement from each level was presented during the evaluation.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

The quality of partnership with parents and others in the area of DEIS action planning is good. Very good work is being undertaken in this area. A number of targets have been set, some of which are not SMART. In any future review of this plan the school should consider how measurable targets could be set in this area.

A broad range of effective measures was noted, including home visits and classes for parents. Parents interviewed stressed the important role played by the HSCL co-ordinator in the school. Beyond this, questionnaires suggest that a review of mechanisms through which communication regarding students' progress is communicated to the general parent body could be worthwhile.

Effective partnerships have been forged with external agencies. Of particular note are those links which have been developed with industry and third-level institutions to provide mentoring support and supplementary tuition for students.

Ongoing monitoring of partnerships takes place, albeit informally. Such monitoring and evaluation of the impact and progress made with regard to partnership should be included in the DEIS plan.

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;

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 in conjunction with school management is developing an action plan for improvement in the areas for development.

The continuance of gathering baseline data as appropriate to assist in smart targets has begun. Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating this area for development is a key part of the plan.

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

Child Protection (2)

The risk assessment was not on the DES template. This was transferred immediately once indicated by the DES Inspectorate.

Child Protection (7)

School Planning now indicates full provision for the relevant section of the curriculum.

Staff are now trained or in training for the relevant SPHE/RSE aspects of the Curriculum. RSE will be taught in Senior Cycle RE.

An SPHE Co-ordinator is in place.